

## Speech-Language Guidelines for Schools

### Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

#### Definitions:

Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) appears in the Diagnostic and Statistical manual (DSM-4) under Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD). PDD is the umbrella term in this medical classification system that encompasses Autism, Asperger syndrome, PDD-NOS, Rett Syndrome and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder. All five of these disorders share some characteristics:

- They are pervasive in that they affect all aspects of an individual’s life.
- They are developmental in that they occur early in life and affect a child’s development.
- They adversely affect a student’s educational performance in one or more of the following performance areas:
  - Academic
  - Social
  - Behavioral

Autism Spectrum Disorder is characterized by qualitative impairments in reciprocal social interactions, qualitative impairments in communication, and restricted range of interests/repetitive behavior.

#### Major Characteristics

Autism	- qualitative impairments in reciprocal social interactions
	- qualitative impairments in communication
	- restricted range of interests/repetitive behavior
	- typically manifested before 36 months of age
Asperger Syndrome	- development of speech-language skills relatively on time
	- normal to above normal IQ
	- significant pragmatic deficits
	- extreme interest in routines
	- poor nonverbal communication
	- motor, learning and emotional problems
PDD-NOS	- egocentricity and poor social skills
	- marked impairment in communication and socialization
	- restricted interests
	-stereotypic behaviors
Rett Syndrome	- full criteria for autism not met because of late onset, atypical symptomology and/or threshold symptomology
	- initial development within normal limits
	- onset 6-18 mo.; may not be noticeable until 1-4 yrs.
	- progressive degeneration (begins 1-4 yrs)
Childhood Disintegrative Disorder	- severe loss of communication, cognitive ability, and motor skills
	- initial development normal (2-4 yrs); onset can be gradual or sudden
	- progressive degeneration in all developmental areas
	- severe loss of communication and cognitive ability
	- stereotypic behaviors
	- results in severe/profound mental retardation