

Autism Spectrum

Most Challenging/ most severe Autism features or those with dual diagnosis/cognitive limitations

Setting: typically self-contained, possible inclusion for specific targeted areas with one to one support.

Needs often seen:

- Modification in all general curriculum areas
- Alternative communication supports to spoken language
- Medication management for Autism related behaviors
- Adult supports for essentially all peer interactions
- Full time monitoring by adults for health, safety, skill acquisition
- Visual supports mandatory

Strengths: often persistent, relative strength in gross motor skills, work well with highly structured classroom, benefit from a “skills and drill” approach.

Most interesting/significant Autistic characteristics with high cognitive abilities

Setting: general education with supports or resource room with move to inclusion as able.

Needs often seen:

- Difficulty with peer social interactions
- Lack of completion of independent work tasks
- Difficulty negotiating small group work
- Low frustration tolerance/perfectionism
- Writing skills lag
- Verbal directions require demonstration or visual aids
- Often targets of bullying due to eccentricities

Strengths: often in technical or science skills, can use strategies if taught with roll model practice, often excel in a specific area which may “carry” student especially in high school.

Best Prognosis/ mildest cluster of autism features

Setting: often resource supports or full-time inclusion, participates in general education with “strategies” to support specific needs

Needs often seen:

- Organizational skills
- Classroom management skills (i.e., use of time, initiation of task, etc.)
- Higher level social skills (i.e., peer interactions, conversational exchange, understanding of higher level language, negotiating free time activities)
- Written output, often benefits from computer based technology.

Strengths: use of specific interest for academic success, often relate to adults, can use strategies with adult prompts and fading, more post secondary options, can be good candidates for social stories and circle of friends.

