

Autism Preschool Classroom Placement Considerations and Guidelines

Student Characteristics: Screening (MCHAT-R) needs to be completed by the Birth to Three or ECSE Teacher or have the diagnosis of autism.

Students being considered for this program must have severe social and communication deficits. Appropriate candidates are students who:

- Struggle to initiate interactions
- Appear content to be in their own world
- If language is present, it is usually scripted or echolalic in nature
- Cannot initiate or maintain back and forth conversations
- Rarely uses eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions to share attention, emotions, and interests with others.
- A wide discrepancy in skills.

When deciding the appropriate placement, IEP teams should consider that most students with autism benefit from being educated with typically developing peers who exhibit age appropriate social and communication skills.

Due Process:

- To refer a student for placement in an autism preschool, the ECSE/Preschool Teacher must contact the ECSE school psychologist. If the student moves in from a district outside of the catchment area, the coordinator will contact the Early Intervention Teacher to initiate a screening to determine appropriateness of placement.
- If a student exhibits severe problem behavior, teams should be prepared to share interventions tried and data collected indicating what worked and what didn't work.
- Following screening by the autism teacher, the EC Coordinator will be contacted. At this time, it will either be recommended that the child attend the autism program or interventions and strategies will be provided to the current classroom teacher.

Curriculum:

The vision of the autism program is to assess students with autism and develop a program that will allow each student to be successful in the least restrictive environment. Evidence-based methods such as discrete trial teaching, naturalistic intervention and principles of structured teaching will be utilized. Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS), and visual supports are used to meet the academic, communication, and social-emotional needs of the students. Some students who have dual diagnosis of autism and intellectual disability may participate in alternative curriculum developed to address educational and functional needs.

Paraeducator Support:

Paraeducator support will be determined based on the number of students and the needs within the classroom.

Inclusion:

Students in the Cherokee Autism Program will have no interaction with non-disabled peers. The students attending the autism preschool program in Pittsburg (The Center) have limited contact with their non-disabled peers and when appropriate, students will be included with typical peers during the day at recess and in the adjacent ECSE classroom as the child's social skills and language improve. The ultimate goal is for the student to transition to an ECSE classroom. A plan will be developed outlining the teaching methods and interventions necessary for the student to be successful in an ECSE classroom.

School Calendar:

ECSE programs are four 1/2 days per week.

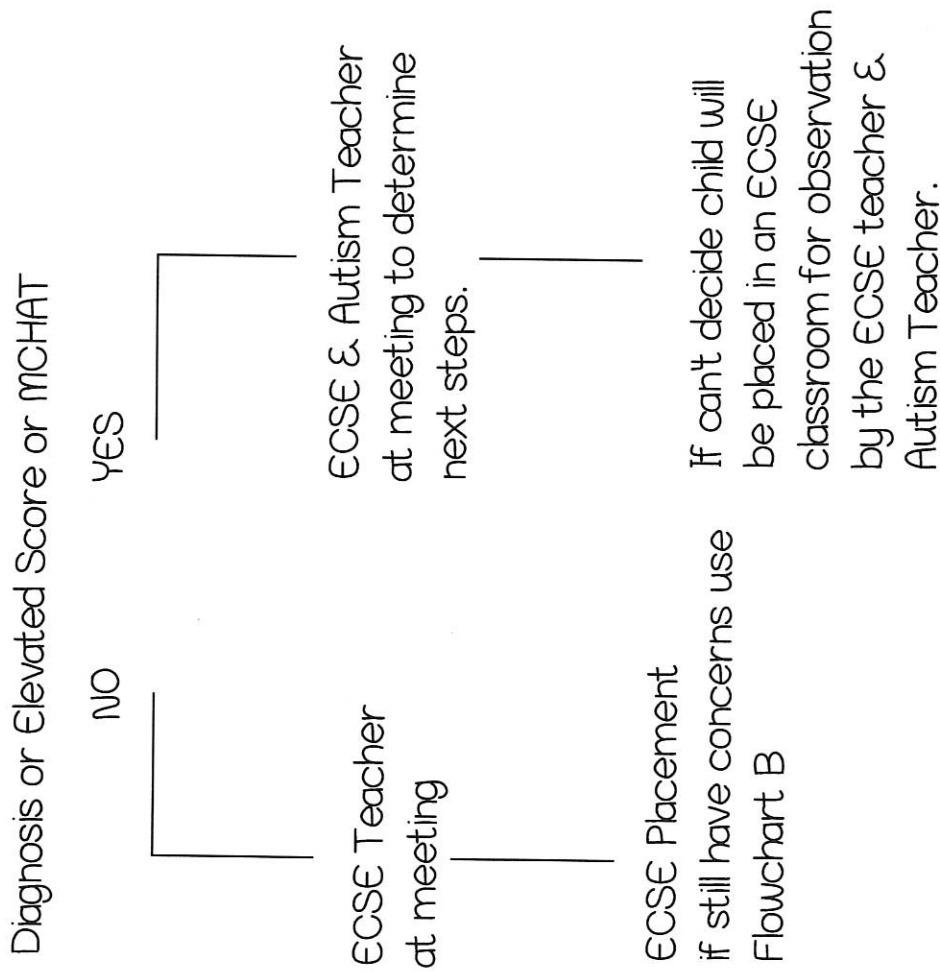
IEP Meetings (Initial and Re-Evaluations):

LEA representative for each student from home district should be invited.

01/06/17

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A. Birth to 3



B. ECSE Classroom

