

School-Based Occupational Therapy, Interstate Policy Variability, and the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact

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Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- 1 Discuss the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact including how to apply, potential benefits, and potential challenges
- 2 Identify key areas of interstate variability in IDEA interpretation among Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact member states and strategies to support compliance
- 3 Locate and apply knowledge of state-specific special education policies to inform clinical decision making in school-based occupational therapy practice across states



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Key Terms

OTC - Occupational Therapy Compact:

A formal agreement among member states to facilitate interstate practice

HSL - Home State License:

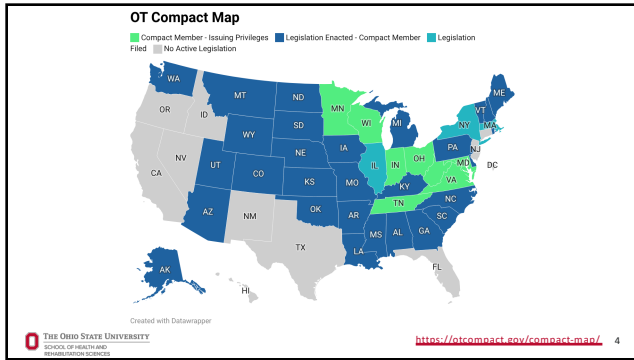
Occupational therapy license from state of residence; necessary for OTC PtP

PtP – Privilege to Practice:

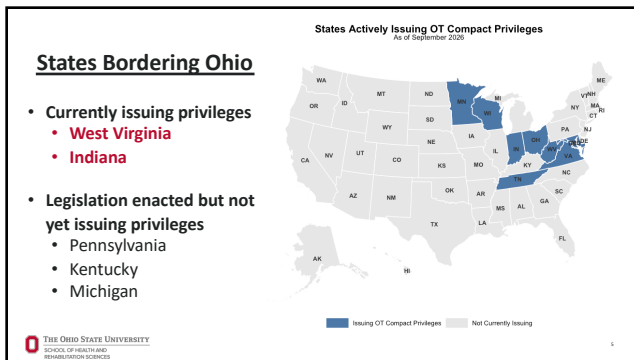
Equivalent to state license; must be licensed in good standing in a compact member state of residence to apply



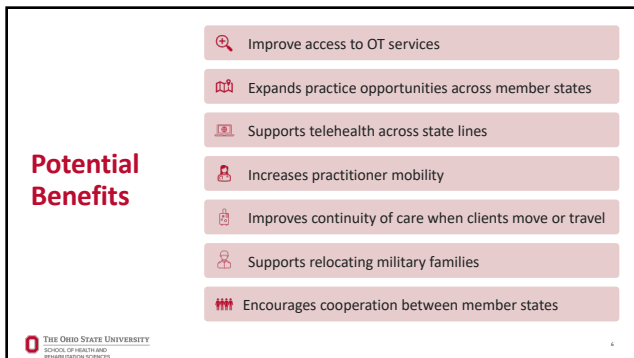
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Potential Challenges

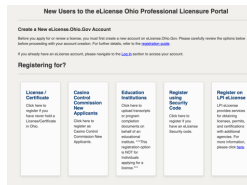
- Variations in state laws and scope of practice
- State specific jurisprudence requirements
- Additional costs for each state privilege
- Most states not currently accepting OTC applications
- Responsibility to understand each state's practice laws

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How to Apply for Home State Licensure

- Visit your home state's occupational therapy licensing board website
- Select the OT or OTA license application
- Complete the application and submit the required documents
- Pay the applicable licensing fees
- Wait for your state license to be issued

- *OTC = OT Compact
- *PTP = Privilege to practice
- *HSL = Home state license

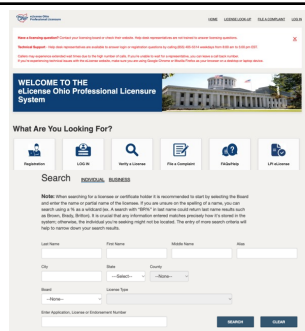


For Ohio Applicants: https://elicense.ohio.gov/OH_NewUserRegistration

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Verify Your OT or OTA License Is in Good Standing

- Visit the: [Ohio eLicense website](https://elicense.ohio.gov)
- Click "Verify License"
- Enter your first and last name or OT License number
- Click "Search"
- Confirm your license is active, not expired, and in good standing, with no restrictions that would make it ineligible for the OT Compact



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Additional Verification: CompactConnect

1. Visit <https://app.compactconnect.org/Search>
2. Under **Profession Type**, select "Occupational Therapy"
3. Under **State/Jurisdiction**, select the state where you want to verify your privilege
4. Enter your **first and last name**
5. Click "Search" and review your Compact privilege status

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How to Apply for an OT Compact Privilege

1. Visit <https://otcompact.gov/>
2. Review the **Before You Apply** information for eligibility, fees, and state specific requirements
3. Click "Apply for OT Compact Privileges"
4. Follow the link to CompactConnect
5. Create an account or log in under **Practitioner Login**

*OTC = OT Compact
*PTP = Privilege to practice
*HSL = Home state license

<https://otcompact.gov/before-you-apply/>

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Completing your OT Compact Application

1. Select "Create an account" or "Login" under **Practitioner Login**
2. Once logged in, provide your information and identify your home state OT or OTA license
3. Select the participating state(s) where you want to practice
4. Review state-specific requirements and confirm that you meet all eligibility criteria.
5. Review the applicable fees and submit payment.

<https://app.compactconnect.org/Dashboard>

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Ohio OT Compact Requirements



Occupational Therapy Jurisprudence Examination

State	Accepting OT Applications?	Jurisprudence Information	State Regulations / Practice Acts	State Fee for OTs	State Fee for OTAs	OT Compact Fee for OTs and OTAs
North Carolina	Not Yet	NC Jurisprudence Requirements	NC OT Practice Act	TBD	TBD	\$75
North Dakota	Not Yet	ND Jurisprudence Requirements	ND OT Practice Act ND OT Law No Practice Act	TBD	TBD	\$75
Ohio	January 12, 2026	OH Jurisprudence Requirements	OH OT Law & Rules	\$45	\$45	\$75
Oklahoma	Not Yet	OK Jurisprudence Requirements	OK OT Practice Act	TBD	TBD	\$75
Rhode Island	Not Yet	not required	RI OT Practice Act RI OT State	\$40	\$40	\$75
South Carolina	Not Yet	Info Coming Soon	SC OT Practice Act SC OT Rules	\$0	\$0	\$75

<https://otcompact.gov/before-you-apply/>

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Ohio OT Compact Requirements



Occupational Therapy Jurisprudence Examination

REGULATIONS

<https://ototat.ohio.gov/occupational-therapy/continuing-education/ot-jurisprudence>

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Activity – OT Compact Requirements by State

	Date State Accepted OTC Applications	Jurisprudence Requirement	State Fee		OT Compact Fee	Total Cost (State Fee + OTC Fee)	
			OTs	OTAs		OTs	OTAs
Ohio	January 12, 2026	Required	\$25	\$25	\$75	\$100	\$100
Indiana							
West Virginia							
Minnesota							
Wisconsin							
Maryland							
Virginia							
Tennessee							

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Activity 1 – OT Compact Requirements by State



<https://otcompact.gov/before-you-apply/>

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Compact Connect

- <https://otcompact.gov/before-you-apply/>

ABOUT TOOLKIT BEFORE YOU APPLY PRACTITIONERS MEETINGS COMPACT MAP

COMPACT CONNECTION

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LAWS AND RULES

As of January 1, 2016, the following states have enacted legislation to support the OT Compact:

- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina

State	Accepting OT Applications?	Jurisdiction Information	State Regulations / Practice Act	State Fee for OTs	State Fee for OTAs	OT Compact Fee for OTs and OTAs
North Carolina	Not Yet	NC Acceptance Requirements	NC OT Practice Act	TBD	TBD	\$75
North Dakota	Not Yet	ND Acceptance Requirements	ND OT Practice Act ND OT Law ND OT Rules ND OT Rules	TBD	TBD	\$75
Ohio	January 1, 2016	OH Acceptance Requirements	OH OT Laws & Rules	\$45	\$45	\$75
Oklahoma	Not Yet	not required	OK OT Practice Act OK OT Rules	TBD	TBD	\$75
Rhode Island	Not Yet	not required	RI OT Practice Act RI OT Rules	\$140	\$140	\$75
South Carolina	Not Yet	Info Coming Soon	SC OT Practice Act	\$0	\$0	\$75

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Which laws govern your practice?

The client's physical location determines where OT practice occurs.

OT practitioner

Located in OHIO

Home-state license

Client/Patient/Student

Located in INDIANA

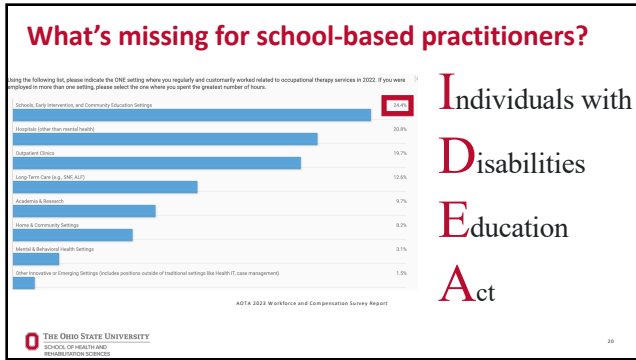
State where OT services occur

Indiana's OT laws and practice standards apply — even when the practitioner is in Ohio.

OT Compact = portability of practice, NOT uniformity of state statutes, regulations, or policies.

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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Federal law ensuring a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in U.S. public schools

Part A: Outlines general provisions and foundational definitions	Part B: Governs special education and related services for pre-K and school age children and youth	Part C: Governs early intervention services	Part D: Authorizes national grants and programs to improve special education
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<https://www.idea.ed.gov/initiative/about-idea>

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Special Education Professionals: IDEA Knowledge

Teacher candidates lack accurate knowledge of IDEA, misperceive their own knowledge level (Sanders, 2011)

Practitioners are expected to have adequate knowledge of special education law, are accountable for proper implementation of IDEA (Green et al., 2025; Sanders, 2015)

Building-level professionals are responsible for developing and implementing IDEA-compliant services and supports (Casale et al., 2024)

Poor legal literacy is a problem among special education professionals; reliance on colleagues often spreads misinformation (Brady et al., 2019; Schimmel & Militello, 2007; Strassfeld et al., 2024)

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Key Terms

Autism Eligibility:

Does the student qualify for special education and related services under the IDEA educational disability of autism?

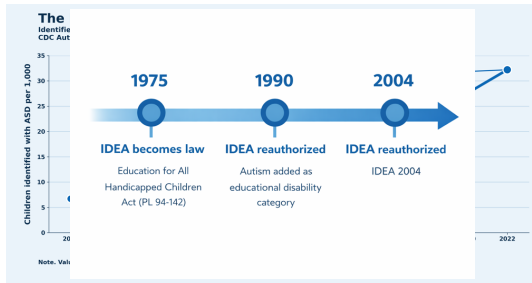
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OT Eligibility:

Does the student "qualify" for/need occupational therapy services to support their ability to access the educational curriculum and environment?

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Autism and IDEA



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Background and Significance

Clinical Diagnosis

≠

Educational Identification

- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)

- Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

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Are there any differences between the educational definition of autism in Ohio and the educational definition of autism in other OT Compact states that are currently accepting applications?

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Are there any differences between the legal assessment requirements for autism identification in Ohio compared to other OT Compact states that are currently accepting applications?

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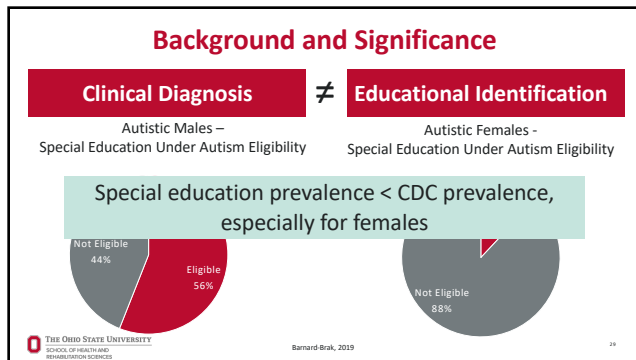
Background and Significance

Clinical Diagnosis	≠	Educational Identification
Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)		Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
Compare observed behaviors to DSM-5-TR criteria		Compare observed behaviors to IDEA, 51 DIFFERENT sets of state criteria
Diagnosis is portable, typically not location-bound		Eligibility criteria vary across states; no interstate reciprocity

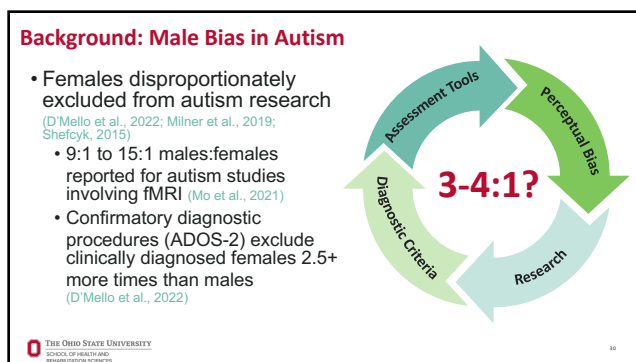


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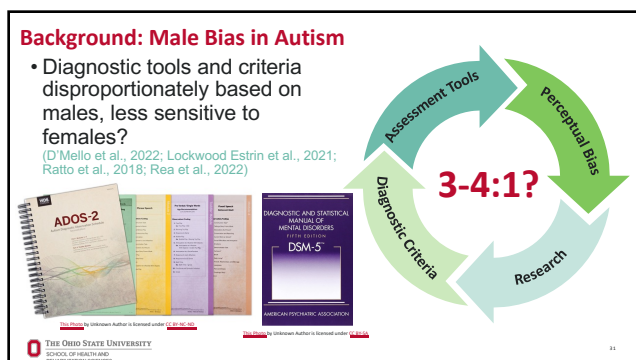
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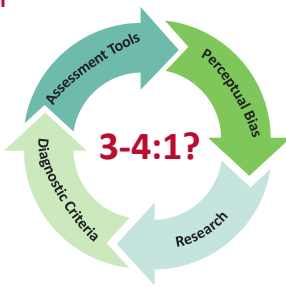
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Background: Male Bias in Autism

- 3-4 males: 1 female is questionable
(Bitsika & Sharpley, 2019; Burrows et al., 2022; Duvekot et al., 2017; Hull et al., 2020; Lockwood Estrin et al., 2021; Mo et al., 2021; Tsirigiotis et al., 2022)
- Reported prevalence varies (by sample) 2:1 to 7:1 males:females (Bitsika & Sharpley, 2019)
- 1:1 sex ratio found in prospective sample after accounting for measurement bias (Burrows et al., 2022)



3-4:1?

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OT Practitioners, Sensory Processing, and Autism Identification



Look for the whole pattern

Sensory processing is not peripheral to understanding autism—it is part of the pattern the team needs to consider for identification.

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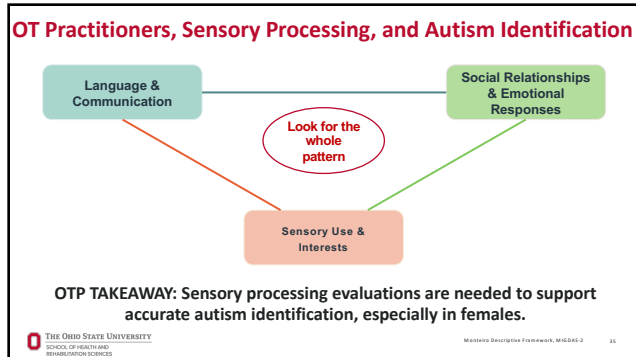
Do any of the OT compact states that are currently accepting applications require a sensory processing evaluation to determine whether a student qualifies for special education and related services under autism eligibility?

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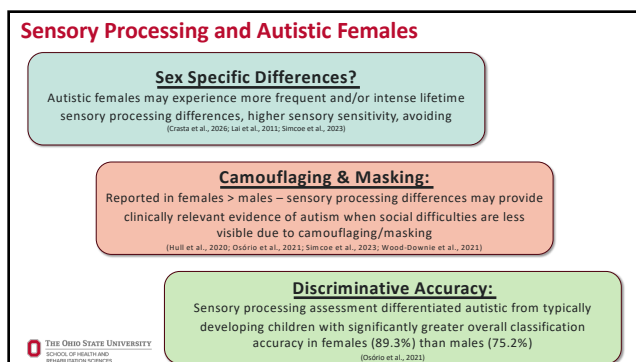
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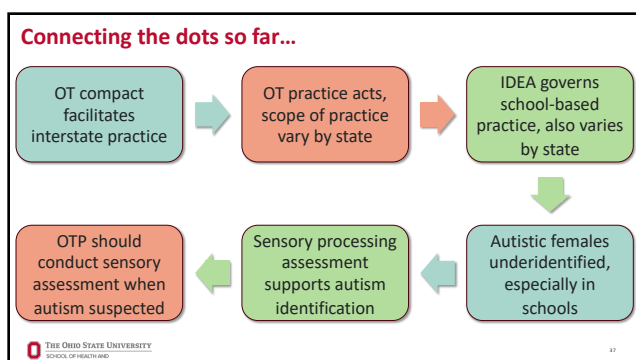
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IDEA 300.305 Additional requirements for evaluations and reevaluations.
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.305>

(a) Review of existing evaluation data. As part of an initial evaluation (if appropriate) and as part of any reevaluation under this part, the IEP Team and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, must—

IDEA 300.306 Determination of eligibility.
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.306>

(a) General. Upon completion of the administration of assessments and other evaluation measures—

(1) A group of qualified professionals and the parent of the child determines whether the child is a child with a disability, as defined in §300.8, in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section and the educational needs of the child;

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300.321 IEP Team.
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.321>

(a) General. The public agency must ensure that the IEP Team for each child with a disability includes—

- (1) The parents of the child;
- (2) Not less than one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment);
- (3) Not less than one special education teacher of the child, or where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the child;
- (4) A representative of the public agency who—
 - (i) Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
 - (ii) Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and
 - (iii) Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the public agency.
- (5) An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team described in paragraphs (a)(2) through (a)(6) of this section;
- (6) At the discretion of the parent or the agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate; and
- (7) Whenever appropriate, the child with a disability.

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State policy must follow IDEA minimum requirements, but...

FEDERAL LAW
No autism-specific team member requirement

→

STATE-LEVEL REQUIREMENTS
2 states explicitly require an **occupational therapy practitioner** on the multidisciplinary evaluation team when autism is suspected.

Same federal framework — different state expectations
For OTPs practicing across state lines, follow state requirements from the state where the student is physically located.

Federal law establishes baseline → Each state establishes specific rules

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Sensory Assessment ≠ OTP Involvement in State Law

State policy can expect sensory data without requiring an OT practitioner.

SENSORY PROCESSING
May be part of the state autism evaluation requirements

Required • Recommended • Implied

≠

OT PRACTITIONER
May not be identified as a required evaluation team member

Who provides the sensory expertise?

OTP TAKEAWAY: If sensory assessment is expected for autism eligibility, OTPs should be at the forefront in defining and delivering this service.

Sensory assessment is not synonymous with OTP involvement, but it should be.

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Methods

IDEA Part B Subpart A 300.308; Subpart D 300.304, 300.305, 300.306

Extract minimum requirements & create a priori coding framework

↓

State Legislative Websites

A priori & open coding of legislative policy for definition, eligibility criteria, & assessment requirements

↓

State Educational Agency (SEA) Websites

A priori & open coding of SEA policy for definition, eligibility criteria, & assessment requirements

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So, What Are States Actually Asking Teams to Assess?

I coded state autism policies to identify how/if sensory processing appears in evaluation requirements.

STATE AUTISM POLICIES

➡

EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

➡

SENSORY PROCESSING

Sensory Processing Coding Scheme

0 No mention

1 Suggested/Recommended/Conditional

2 Implied Requirement

3 Explicit Requirement

First, let's see what this looks like in OHIO.

Then you'll apply the same lens to other states.

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OHIO LAWS & ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

LAWS

ABOUT

CONTACT

RELATED SITES

GO TO

101-1-01

Go

Keyword Search

(d) Definitions of disability terms. The terms used in this definition of a "child with a disability" are defined as follows:

(i) "Autism" means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with "autism" are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and **unusual responses to sensory experiences.**

(a) Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in paragraph (B)(10)(d)(v) of this rule.

(b) A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism if the criteria in paragraph (B)(10)(d)(i) of this rule are satisfied.

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Source: Applicability of requirements and definitions (3301-51-01)

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Ohio Interpretation of IDEA

Ohio adopts IDEA autism definition (300.8) and assessment requirements (300.304) verbatim

IDEA 300.304: Must assess in **ALL** areas related to suspected disability

IDEA 300.304: Evaluation sufficiently comprehensive to address **ALL** special education & related services needs

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Activity – IDEA Interpretation by State

	How does the definition compare to IDEA?	Measurable eligibility criteria?	Autism-specific assessment guidance/ requirements?	Sensory processing assessment required?	Autism-specific OT or other team member requirements?	Other differences
Ohio						
Indiana						
West Virginia						
Minnesota						
Wisconsin						
Maryland						
Virginia						
Tennessee						

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Activity – IDEA Interpretation by State						
	How does the definition compare to IDEA?	Measurable eligibility criteria?	Autism-specific assessment guidance/requirements?	Sensory processing assessment required?	Autism-specific OT or other team member requirements?	Other differences
Ohio	verbatim	no	no	no	no	none
Indiana						
West Virginia						
Minnesota						
Wisconsin						
Maryland	Missing after age 3 statement; organized very differently	no	no	no	no	None noted
Virginia						
Tennessee						

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IDEA Sec. 300.8 (c) (1) (i) Autism -
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/300.8>

Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism if the criteria in paragraph (c)(1)(i) of this section are satisfied.

Library of Maryland Regulations

Library of Maryland Regulations > Code of Maryland Regulations > 13A.05.01.02(B)(8)

(B) "Autism" means a developmental disability that:

- (a) Does not include emotional disability as defined in 13B(2)(b) of this regulation;
- (b) Significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction;
- (c) Is generally evident before 3 years old;
- (d) Adversely affects a student's educational performance; and
- (e) May be characterized by:
 - (i) Engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements,
 - (ii) Resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and
 - (iii) Unusual responses to sensory experiences.

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Activity 2 – IDEA Interpretation by State

Indiana

Autism-Specific Information:

- Rule 41 Eligibility Criteria (p. 67-68 using page numbers at bottom of document/p. 73-74 when scrolling)

Other Information:

- 511 IAC 7-40-5 Conducting an Initial Evaluation (p. 60 using document page numbers, p. 67 when scrolling)

<https://www.in.gov/doe/files/Special-Education-Rules-Title-511-Article-7-May-2024.pdf>

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Indiana

511 IAC 7-41-1 Autism spectrum disorder

Sec. 1. (a) Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong developmental disability that includes autistic disorder, Asperger's syndrome, and other pervasive developmental disorders, as described in the current version of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. The disability is generally evident before three (3) years of age and significantly affects verbal, nonverbal, or pragmatic communication and social interaction skills and results in an adverse effect on the student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated include the following:

- (1) Engagement in:
 - (A) repetitive activities; and
 - (B) stereotyped movements.
- (2) Resistance to:
 - (A) environmental change; or
 - (B) change in daily routines.

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Indiana

511 IAC 7-41-1 Autism spectrum disorder

(3) Unusual responses to sensory experiences.

(b) Autism spectrum disorder does not apply if a student's educational performance is adversely affected primarily by:

- (1) an emotional disability;
- (2) blindness or low vision;
- (3) deaf-blindness; or
- (4) an intellectual disability;

unless the characteristics of autism spectrum disorder are demonstrated to a greater degree than is normally attributed to these disabilities.

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Indiana

511 IAC 7-41-1 Autism spectrum disorder

- Provides a list of autism-specific assessment requirements
- Sensory processing assessment is **ALWAYS REQUIRED** when considering autism eligibility
- OTP not explicitly required
- No measurable eligibility criteria

(c) Eligibility for special education as a student with autism spectrum disorder shall be determined by the student's CCC. This determination shall be based on the multidisciplinary team's educational evaluation report described in 511 IAC 7-40-5(e) and 511 IAC 7-40-5(f), which includes the following:

- (1) An assessment of the following:
 - (A) Current academic achievement as defined at 511 IAC 7-32-2.
 - (B) Functional skills or adaptive behavior across various environments from multiple sources.
 - (C) The student's receptive, expressive, pragmatic, and social communication skills that must include at least one (1) of the following:
 - (i) An individually administered norm-referenced assessment when appropriate for the student.
 - (ii) If adequate information cannot be obtained via an individually administered norm-referenced assessment, a criterion-referenced assessment that:
 - (AA) has been designed or may be adapted or modified for use with students who have autism spectrum disorder; and
 - (BB) is administered by a professional or professionals with knowledge of assessment strategies appropriate for the student.
- (2) A social and developmental history that may include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (A) Communication skills.
 - (B) Social interaction skills.
 - (C) Motor skills.
 - (D) Responses to sensory experiences.
 - (E) Relevant family and environmental information.
 - (F) Patterns of emotional adjustment.
 - (G) Unusual or atypical behaviors.
- (3) A systematic observation of the student across various environments.
- (4) Any other assessments and information, collected prior to referral or during the educational evaluation, necessary to:
 - (A) exclude the disabilities listed in subsection (b);
 - (B) determine eligibility for special education and related services; and
 - (C) inform the student's CCC of the student's special education and related services needs.

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Activity – IDEA Interpretation by State

	How does the definition compare to IDEA?	Measurable eligibility criteria?	Autism-specific assessment guidance/ requirements?	Sensory processing assessment required?	Autism-specific OT or other team member requirements?	Other differences
Ohio	verbatim	no	no	no	no	none
Indiana	Includes PDD, etc.; pragmatic communication; adds blindness, low vision, deaf-blindness, and ID as exclusionary criteria; organized very differently	no	yes	yes	no	School psych legally required for all disabilities except DD, SLI
West Virginia						
Minnesota						
Wisconsin						
Maryland	Missing after age 3 statement; organized very differently	no	no	no	no	None noted

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Activity 2 – IDEA Interpretation by State

West Virginia

- Autism-Specific Information:
- Autism-specific info: p. 51-52 (page numbers at bottom of document)
- General Information:
- Initial evaluation info: p. 40-47
 - IEP team info: p. 73-74



<https://apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/readfile.aspx?DocId=55985&Format=PDF>

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Activity 2 – IDEA Interpretation by State

Virginia



Section 10: Autism Definition
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter81/section10/>



Section 80: Eligibility Team & Rules
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter81/section80/>



ASD Guidelines (Advisory)
<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/7942/638010930376470000>

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Activity 2 – IDEA Interpretation by State

Minnesota

Autism-Specific Information:

- All autism-specific information is in the same place on this 2-page document



<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/3525.1325/>

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Activity 2 – IDEA Interpretation by State

Wisconsin



PI 11.36 (8) Autism Definition
https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/pi/11



Autism Educational Evaluation Guidelines (Advisory)
<https://dps.wis.gov/sites/default/files/mce/speid/pdf/elig-autism-eval.pdf>

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Activity 2 – IDEA Interpretation by State

Tennessee



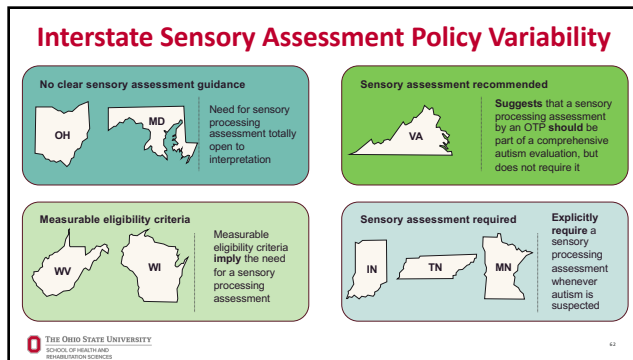
0520-01-09-.03 DISABILITY CATEGORIES.
<https://publications.trnsfiles.com/rules/0520/0520-01/0520-01-09-20241016.pdf>



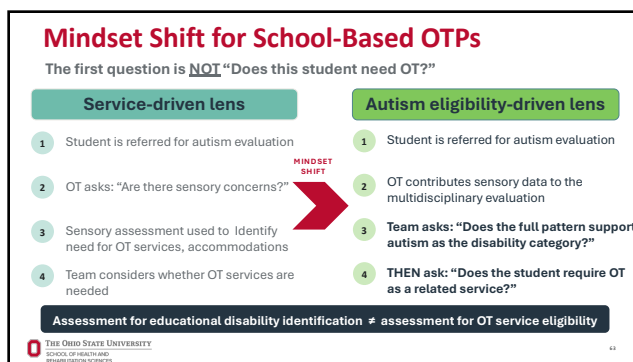
Autism Evaluation & Eligibility (Advisory)
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/eligibility/se_eligibility_autism.pdf

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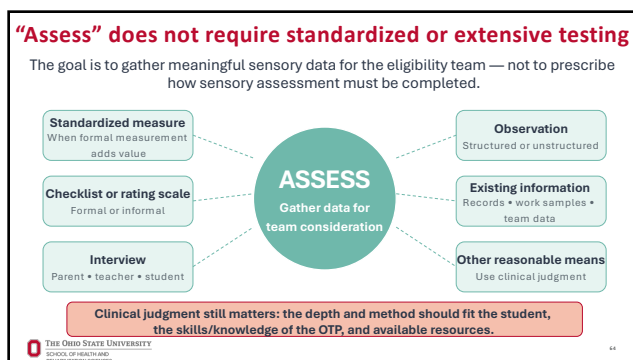
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Mindset shift changes SBOT role
OT service gatekeeper ➡ contributor to accurate autism identification

“What sensory information does this team need to understand whether this child’s overall pattern is consistent with autism?”

Assess to understand
Sensory data helps identify student strengths/needs

Contribute to Identification
OT sensory expertise supports accurate identification

Service Decisions are Secondary
Once eligibility established, determine service needs

Sensory assessment has value for the eligibility team even when the ultimate answer to “Does this student need school-based OT?” is no.

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Thank you!



<https://u.osu.edu/neurolab/>

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Thank you!

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Thank you for
your time and
attention, any
questions?

EVALUATION: School-
Based Occupational
Therapy, Interstate
Policy Variability, and
the Occupational
Therapy



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your evaluation

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