NEW TSPC SPECIALIZATION: AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Q and A

May 24, 2012

1. **What is a TSPC "Specialization"?**

   This is a new specialization on a license now offered by TSPC. The first TSPC "specialization" will be offered in the area of <u>Autism Spectrum Disorder</u>. Other specializations may be offered by TSPC in the future (e.g. math, ESD Superintendent).

   The following rule describes the "Specialization":

   584-066-0001 (Adopt) [New Division]
   Purpose of Specialization on a License

   (1) A specialization on a TSPC-issued license is an optional indication of specialized expertise or preparation in an area the (TSPC) Commission recognizes as "added value" on a license. A specialization indicates the educator has demonstrated exceptional knowledge, skills and related abilities in that area. A specialization must meet standards set by the Commission.

   (2) A specialization is distinguished from an endorsement or grade authorization in that a specialization is not required to teach or work in the specialized area, whereas both an endorsement and an authorization are required to work in those areas or at those grade levels. The specialization will be indicated as follows on the license: Example: Specialization: Autism Spectrum Disorder.

   (3) An educator may not be labeled as a specialist or call themselves a specialist in any area recognized by the Commission as requiring additional and exceptional preparation without actually holding the specialization on the license.

2. **What is purpose of the ASD Specialization?**

   The ASD specialization is intended to develop a pool of highly qualified ASD specialists to support EI/ECSE, districts, and ESDs to implement the Oregon Educational Guidelines for ASD. The ASD Specialists will teach and coach staff to use evidence-based interventions with fidelity when working with learners with ASD. The specialization is not intended to be required for special education staff providing direct instruction with these learners.

3. **When will the ASD Specialization be available?**

*Authorization of **584-066-0010** takes effect when TSPC registers the rules with the Secretary of State (June 1, 2012). TSPC will not monitor or review for compliance until after there are Approved programs, (generally University programs). Universities are in the process of preparing for program approval. An Alternative Pathway will also be available for individuals who can demonstrate the required competencies and experience.*

4. **Can school districts continue to use the term "ASD specialists" to identify staff assignments and job descriptions?**

Once the rules for 584-066-0001 are registered with the Secretary of State, they become effective. At that time an educator may not be labeled as a specialist or call themselves a specialist in any area recognized by the TSPC as requiring additional and exceptional preparation without actually holding the specialization on the license.

That said, TSPC cannot grant a specialization until there are approved programs. We anticipate there will be approved programs within the next 6 months. Once programs are approved then EI/ECSE, districts, and ESDs can only use the designation "ASD Specialist" for individuals who meet the competencies and obtain the specialization.

5. **Who is eligible to obtain the ASD Specialization?**

An Autism Spectrum Disorder Specialization may be indicated on any TSPC Basic, Standard, Initial or Continuing license with a special education endorsement so long as the educator qualifies for the specialization by demonstrated completion of a Commission-approved program for Autism Spectrum Disorder specialization.

Speech and Language Pathologists who hold a TSPC license for Communication Disorder are eligible for the Specialization. Those who hold ASHA licensure will need to obtain TSPC licensure for Communication Disorder prior to obtaining ASD Specialization.

6. **Is there a process for ASHA licensed SLPs and School Psychologists to obtain the ASD Specialization?**

The Oregon Commission on ASD recommended to TSPC that both Speech Language Pathologists and School Psychologists be eligible for the specialization as long as they able demonstrate competency. Ultimately, TSPC determined that the licensure issue was too complex and voted to only approve adding the ASD Specialization to a special education endorsement only. TSPC staff indicated either group could come back to TSPC to further discuss their specific issues.

7. **What are the competencies needed for obtaining the ASD specialization?**

   To be eligible to add an Autism Spectrum Disorder specialization on a TSPC license, the application must:

   (a) Hold a Basic, Standard, Initial or Continuing License with any special education endorsement;
   (b) Provide evidence of three years experience working with a range of ASD learners; and
   (c) Completed a TSPC Commission-approved program for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialization.

   This can be accomplished through completion and recommendation by an approved program or the programs' alternate pathway. Program completion implies meeting the following standards:

   584-066-0010 (Adopt)
   Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Licensed Specialist Standards and Competencies

   (1)(a) An Autism Spectrum Disorder Specialization may be indicated on any TSPC Basic, Standard, Initial or Continuing license with a special education endorsement so long as the educator qualifies for the specialization by demonstrated completion of a Commission-approved program for Autism Spectrum Disorder specialization.
   (b) Once the specialization is earned and placed on a license, it may only be removed at the educator's request.

   (2) Definitions:
   (a) [Core] **Academic** Curriculum: Language arts, mathematics, science, social sciences, health, physical education, world languages, and the arts;
   (b) Expanded **Functional** Core Curriculum: Communication development, social development, self-advocacy, cognitive development, sensory processing skills, organization skills, adaptive skills-life function, and transitional skills for life span.

   (3) To be eligible to add an Autism Spectrum Disorder specialization on a TSPC license, the application must:
   (a) Hold a Basic, Standard, Initial or Continuing License with any special education endorsement;
   (b) Provide evidence of three years experience working with a range of ASD learners; and
   (c) Completed a Commission-approved program for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialization.

   (4) Candidates for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialization must demonstrate competency in the following standards:
   (a) **Standard 1: Foundations of ASD:** Candidates indicate knowledge of autism spectrum disorders including development and characteristics of learners. Candidates will:

(A) Describe unique developmental and behavioral characteristics of individuals with ASD as identified in DSM and how these: Differ from neuro-typical development; differ across people with ASD; change with age; and impact an individual's learning;

(B) Describe current theories of etiology for individuals with ASD;

(C) Describe State (OAR) and Federal requirements for assessment, eligibility, and education of individuals with ASD;

(D) Differentiate between medical diagnosis (current DSM definitions) and educational eligibility (federal and state requirements);

(E) Differentiate ASD from other disabilities (differential diagnosis) and identify co-existing conditions associated with ASD and their impact on learning and behavior;

(F) Describe unique learning characteristics of individuals with ASD;

(G) Describe the unique influence of stress, age, instruction, and environmental factors on individuals with ASD;

(H) Describe the standards for determining and a process for locating evidence-based instructional and behavioral interventions for individuals with ASD;

(I) Describe [core] **academic** curriculum and expanded **functional** core curriculum for individuals with ASD at various age levels;

(J) Describe current best family-centered practices;

(K) Describe a continuum of placements and services available for the individual with ASD and families;

(L) Describe health issues that potentially impact the individual with ASD and their families;

(M) Describe how to evaluate and access public and private systems and organizations that serve individuals with ASD;

(N) Describe concepts and impacts of self-determination, advocacy, community and family supports in the lives of individuals with ASD;

(O) Provide families with information about community support services such as respite care, in-home behavior support, home health care, transportation, and parent education for individuals with ASD;

(P) Describe typical child development milestones across domains; and

(Q) Identify strengths and needs for an individual with ASD across core and expanded core curricula.

(b) **Standard 2: ASD Service Needs**: Candidates indicate knowledge of ASD Assessments for Development and Educational Impact on ASD service needs. Candidates will:

(A) Describe the impact that ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity issues have on the assessment of the individual with ASD;

(B) Administer or assist in the completion of the required components of the identification assessment for initial and reevaluation of an individual with ASD;

(C) Select, administer, and assist with appropriate educational assessments to determine the present level of academic and functional performance for individuals with ASD;

(D) Interpret assessment data, write summaries, and report results to teams, including families, in a systematic manner that leads directly to programmatic recommendations for instruction for individuals with ASD;

(E) Collaborate with teams, including families, to identify unique needs and to develop appropriate, functional IFSP/IEP goals, matched to assessment information for individuals with ASD;

(F) Collaborate with teams, including families, to identify sufficient special education and related services to enable the individual with ASD to progress on his or her goals;

(G) Assist teams with development and maintenance of ongoing data collection, data analysis, and progress reports for individuals with ASD;

(H) Assist teams in the assessment of environmental conditions that impact access to learning for individuals with ASD;

(I) Assist teams with a functional behavior assessment (FBA) to design behavior support plans for the challenging behaviors of individuals with ASD;

(J) Describe typical child developmental milestones across domains; and

(K) Identify strengths and needs for an individual with ASD across core and expanded core curricula.

(c) **Standard 3: ASD Program Development and Implementation:** Candidates demonstrate knowledge of system-wide considerations. Candidates will:

(A) Encourage collaboration with the higher education community, foundations, nonprofit and other organizations engaged in researching critical educational issues;

(B) Facilitate the interpretation, communication and dissemination of research findings related to ASD;

(C) Implement expanded core **functional** curriculum designed to meet the needs of individual learners with ASD;

(D) Conduct expanded core **functional** curriculum-based assessment to determine areas to address specific skills to teach, and to identify the appropriate evidence-based interventions to implement for learners with ASD;

(E) Collect data on abilities in all skill areas identified from expanded core **functional** curriculum-based assessments and other performance-based measures for learners with ASD;

(F) Design, facilitate, monitor, and evaluate instruction that is appropriate for both age and skill level of the learner with ASD;

(G) Apply the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) within a variety of instructional formats with a variety of learners with ASD, in a variety of settings to teach the skills identified from a curriculum-based assessment;

(H) Utilize appropriate evidence-based curricula content appropriate for a full range of learners with ASD.

(I) Design, facilitate, monitor, and evaluate instructional strategies that promote generalization and maintenance of skills across domains and settings;

(J) Facilitate the identification of assistive technology (low-high) across all areas of skill development appropriate to meet the needs of the individual;

(K) Train and coach others to:

(i) Implement the appropriate evidence-based instructional interventions, curriculum content, accommodations, and modifications identified for the learner with ASD;

(ii) Use individual strengths of the learner with ASD to reinforce and maintain skills; and

(L) Plan with the families for the transition needs of the learner with ASD.

(d) **Standard 4: ASD Systematic Instruction:** Candidates demonstrate knowledge of evidence-based interventions to promote focused, engaged time for learners with ASD. Candidates will:

(A) Match evidence-based interventions with the needs of individual learners with ASD;

(B) Design evidence-based interventions based on components of core and expanded core curricula;

(C) Implement data based decision-making by:

(i) Collecting baseline data;

(ii) Collecting, reviewing, and interpreting ongoing data;

(iii) Modifying program as needed to promote performance; and

(D) Demonstrate with fidelity the implementation of evidence-based strategies across a range of learners with ASD;

(E) Design and implement plans to ensure generalization of skills across settings and materials for learners with ASD;

(F) Demonstrate knowledge of the general education [core] **academic** curriculum and supports necessary to facilitate the success of the learner with ASD;

(G) Design environmental plans that define expectations for appropriate behaviors across settings, utilizing evidence-based intervention strategies for learners with ASD;

(H) Design visual, auditory, and tactile supports to enable the learner with ASD to:

(i) Predict events and activities;

(ii) Anticipate change;

(iii) Understand expectations in a variety of settings;

(iv) Maintain or re-gain appropriate self regulation for learning; and

(v) Demonstrate independence;

(I) Assist in determining appropriate evidence-based assistive and/or augmentative communication systems;

(J) Plan and implement evidence-based strategies to support sustained peer interactions and memberships across all environments; and

(K) Demonstrate skills in teaching family members to implement expanded core **functional** curriculum at home.

(e) Standard 5: Training and Coaching of Adults Serving Individuals with ASD. Candidates will:

(A) Work with administrators to organize, set-up, and deliver the Oregon [Comprehensive] **Education Guidelines for** ASD Program and Self-Assessment.

(B) Identify appropriate technologies to deliver training and coaching;

(C) Collaborate with teams to analyze and interpret learner data to improve instruction and evaluate the impact of instructional interventions on learners with ASD;

(D) Work with teams to incorporate coaching in school, home, and community environments;

(E) Provide feedback to adults serving individuals with ASD to strengthen teaching practice and improve learning for the learner;

(F) Evaluate the effectiveness of the training and coaching to ensure implementation and improvement in progress for learners with ASD;

(G) Demonstrate how to investigate, access, and evaluate electronic and print resources on ASD;

(H) Assess, plan, and use an appropriate evidenced based format for training and coaching;

(I) Facilitate group processes to help team members work collaboratively to solve problems, manage conflict, and make decisions; and

(J) Model effective skills in listening, presenting ideas, leading discussions, clarifying, mediating and identifying the needs of self and others in order to advance shared goals and professional learning.

(f) Standard 6: Professional Practices for ASD Specialists. Candidates will:
(A) Advocate for professional resources, including financial support, human and other material resources, which allow for the implementation of the Oregon Comprehensive ASD Program;
(B) Represent and advocate for the profession in contexts outside of the classroom, such as:
(i) Be a member of committees or task forces addressing curriculum, assessment, professional development or other educational issues; and
(ii) Participate in local, state or national educational professional associations or professional standards boards;
(C) Access professional organizations and publications related to ASD to keep current on evidence based practices.
(D) Demonstrate professional skills;
(E) Comply with federal, state, and local policies and regulations;
(F) Maintain professional relationships with colleagues, employers, students, and families; and
(G) Participate in on-going professional development activities.

(g) Standard 7: Collaboration with Families and Communities. Candidates will:
(A) Identify access and share resources from community-based services to support individuals with ASD;
(B) Develop comprehensive strategies, including the use of technology, for engaging families and community members as partners in the educational process;
(C) Establish and maintain positive collaborative relationships with families in a manner which acknowledges culture, language, values, and parenting styles of the families;
(D) Apply effective strategies for participating, collaborating, and facilitating team processes; and
(E) Describe the impact of one's own experience, culture, language, race, and ethnicity on attitudes, beliefs, values, and ways of thinking, behaving, and teaching.

(h) Field Experience: Field experience will be designed in accordance with OAR 584-017-1038 through 584-017-1048 and be aligned with the TSPC Professional Standards Handbook.[1]

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[1] The Commission has adopted new standards for field experiences for all licensure programs. Field experiences must align with these new standards. See OAR 584-017-1038 through 584-017-1048 and the TSPC Professional Standards Handbook provisions related to Field Experiences.