
GLOSSARY

Accommodations. Alterations to the environment, equipment, or format of a curriculum to allow equal access to the content. Unlike modifications, accommodations do not alter the actual content of the material being taught.

Adaptive behavior. An individual's manner of dealing with the demands of daily life, including self-care skills, organizational skills, basic interpersonal skills, and conformance to community standards (obeying rules, taking responsibility, etc.).

Analysis of variance (ANOVA). A method for analyzing the differences in the means of two or more groups.

Antecedent. An event that precedes a behavior.

Attention. The ability to concentrate as needed.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Any of a range of behavioral disorders in children characterized by symptoms that include poor concentration, an inability to focus on tasks, difficulty in paying attention, and impulsivity. A person can be predominantly inattentive (often referred to as ADD), predominantly hyperactive-impulsive, or a combination of these two.

Auditory processing. How the brain processes and interprets what is heard through the ear.

Baseline. Data collected prior to starting an intervention

Body language. Information about a person's thoughts or feelings that is unconsciously conveyed through physical mannerisms.

Central coherence. The brain's ability to process multiple chunks of information in a global way, connecting them and viewing them in context, in order to determine a higher level of meaning. Poor central coherence can make it difficult to generalize.

Cognition. Conscious mental activity, including thinking, perceiving, reasoning, and learning.

Cohen's Kappa. Measure of agreement.

Collaboration. Individuals working together for a common goal.

Communication. The deliberate conveying of information to another person.

Concurrent validity. The extent to which one test correlates with a nonidentical test.

Consequence. The response (positive or negative) to a behavior.

Construct validity. Measures how well an instrument performs in practice from the standpoint of the specialists who use it.

Contingency. Something that occurs as a result of another factor.

Convergent validity. Indicates the degree of agreement between measurements of the same trait obtained by different approaches supposed to measure the same trait.

Correlation. Indicates a relationship between two instruments or measures often indicated by *r*.

Criterion referenced. Score that indicated performance in relationship to specified subject matter.

Criterion-related validity. The performance of a measure against some criterion. How the test will perform related to its specific construct.

Curriculum-based assessment (CBA). An assessment of student performance in the local curriculum that is used to make instructional decisions.

Data collection. Any method of recording behavioral data for subsequent analysis.

Diagnostic sensitivity. The degree to which persons who have a given disorder are identified as having that disorder.

Diagnostic specificity. The degree to which persons who do not have a given disability are not identified with that disability.

Divergent validity. Indicates that the results obtained by an instrument do not correlate too strongly with measurements of a similar but distinct trait. The complementary concept is convergent validity.

Echolalia. The repetition of words or phrases used by another person.

Emotion recognition. The ability to recognize emotional states in another person or in oneself.

Emotional regulation. Control of emotions.

Empathy. The ability to understand how another person feels or what he/she may be thinking. Sometimes referred to as “putting yourself in another person’s shoes.”

Executive functions. Higher-order cognitive skills that include organization, planning, problem solving, self-regulation, and inhibitory control.

Factor analysis. A means of reducing related data to a smaller number of dimensions or factors.

Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). An umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. FAS is characterized by abnormal facial features, growth deficiencies, and central nervous system (CNS) problems.

Fluency. A stage of learning, during which a person can perform an activity with little to no thought.

Generalization. Using a skill/behavior learned in one environment and/or with one person in other environments and with other persons.

Individualized education program (IEP). A written plan specifying the services and accommodations the school will provide to a child with a disability, as well as related goals.

Internal consistency. The extent to which all items in a scale or test measure the same concept.

Interrater reliability. The extent to which two people obtain the same result when using the same instrument.

Joint attention. Consciously focusing one's attention on the same event or object as another person.

Linguistic. Related to language.

Motivation. Wanting to partake of an object or activity.

Natural reinforcers. Reinforcers that are logically related to the task at hand. For example, if the student points at a book and says "book," handing him the book is the natural reinforcer.

Neurotypical. A term to indicate that an individual does not have autism (i.e., the brain works in the "typical" way).

Nonverbal behaviors. Deliberate behaviors other than speech/vocalizing.

Nonverbal learning disabilities. A neurological disorder that results in problems with visual-spatial, intuitive, organizational, evaluative, and holistic processing functions.

Norm referenced. Yields an estimate of the position of the tested individual in comparison to a predefined population.

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). A chronic anxiety disorder most commonly characterized by obsessive, distressing, repetitive thoughts and related compulsions.

Operational definition. Defines a behavior in observable and measurable terms such that any person may identify the behavior when it occurs.

Orienting. Watching peers and activities.

Overt behaviors. Behaviors that can be observed.

Peer network. A group of peers that includes an individual with ASD and is structured around a specific purpose such as tutoring or play.

Personal digital assistant (PDA). A handheld electronic device that includes tools such as a calendar, daily schedule, task list, and even computer programs for word processing and data entry.

Perspective taking. Looking at something from another person's point of view and, if necessary, changing one's behavior accordingly.

Pragmatics. The social aspects of language.

Punishment. Events that follow a behavior and decrease the likelihood of the behavior reoccurring.

Quality of life. Subjective well-being, including safety, health, happiness, autonomy, etc.

Reactive attachment disorder (RAD). A severe and relatively uncommon attachment disorder that is characterized by markedly disturbed and developmentally inappropriate ways of relating socially in most contexts.

Reciprocity. Give-and-take.

Reciprocal interactions. Social situations that involve give-and-take or back-and-forth exchanges.

Rehearsal. Acting out a situation in order to practice skills in a structured, positive environment.

Regression. A child appears to develop typically but then begins to lose speech and social skills, typically between the ages of 15 and 30 months, and is subsequently diagnosed with autism.

Role-playing. Acting out a situation in order to practice skills in a structured, positive environment.

Scaffolding. Adjusting the level of support provided based on the child's level of comfort and competence. This can include supports in the form of modeling, prompts, direct explanations, and targeted questions.

Schizophrenia. A complex mental disorder that makes it difficult to differentiate real from unreal experiences, to think logically, to have normal emotional responses, and to react in a typical manner in social situations.

Self-advocacy. Speaking up for oneself; asking for what one needs.

Self-awareness. The ability to monitor, assess, and modify one's own behavior.

Self-determination. Deciding one’s own fate/future.

Self-monitoring. Recording data about one’s own behavior.

Self-regulation. In sensory processing, an individual’s method of responding to sensory input.

Self-stimulatory behaviors. Repetitive, apparently non-functional behaviors that provide some sensory input (e.g., finger flicking or rocking). Also know as “stereotypies.”

Semantic map. A strategy for graphically representing concepts and providing links among concepts. Instructionally, semantic maps can be used as a prereading activity for charting what is known about a concept, theme, or individual word. They can also be used during reading as a way to integrate information learned from text.

Sensory integration. The ability to organize information received through the senses.

Sensory processing. The brain’s perception of and response to sensory input.

Social cognition. Social thinking. How a person processes and interprets information about other people and their interactions.

Social communication. Communication that has a deliberate effect on another person’s concentration, thought processes, or emotions.

Social interaction. Individuals modifying their behavior in response to one another.

Social learning. Learning to understand others’ perspectives and to behave in ways that others will consider socially appropriate.

Social skills. Socially acceptable learned behaviors that enable a person to experience positive interactions with others.

Social validity. The extent to which the people directly involved with social skills programming believe it is valuable for the child or adolescent with ASD and, therefore, are likely to be enthusiastic about supporting and implementing it.

Spearman’s Rho. A statistic that measures correlation or relationship.

Standard scores. Used to compare one student’s performance on a test to the performance of other students her age.

Standardized. Created in a manner such that instructions, procedures for administering, questions/items, scoring, and interpretation are executed in a uniform manner.

Symbol. An abstract representation that communicates an idea. Symbols can range from pointing to pictures to written and spoken language.

Symbolic communication. Use of symbols of any sort to communicate meaning.

Systemizing. Creating and utilizing systems of rules to understand and predict events.

Test-retest reliability. The stability and consistency of an assessment tool across time.

Theory of mind. The ability to think about what someone else may be thinking or feeling.

Token. An item that may be earned for displaying an appropriate behavior and redeemed later for a reinforcer (examples include stickers, points, fake coins).

Transition. 1. Any environmental change, such as a change of location, activity, or support personnel. Transitions can be minor, such as changing activities within the classroom, or major, such as moving from elementary school to middle school. 2. The change from school to post-school life.

Validity. The extent to which an assessment tool measures what it is intended to measure.

Virtual environments. Computer-based 3D environments that allow for social simulations.

Visual impairment. An impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Ziggurat. A terraced or step pyramid of successively receding stories or levels.