AN UPDATE OF LEGAL ISSUES FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM: ELIGIBILITY AND METHODOLOGY*

by

PERRY A. ZIRKEL, Ph.D., J.D., LL.M.**

An update of earlier versions,¹ this article is an annotated outline of statutory legal materials concerning education of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), with particular attention to the ASD-specific issues of eligibility and methodology.² More specifically, the first section provides a sampling of secondary sources that have systematically compiled the pertinent case law outcomes. The second section contains relevant IDEA regulations and policy letters. The third section summarizes the § 504 definition of disability. The fourth and largest section provides a trends overview and blurb-type listing of recent court decisions concerning free appropriate public education (FAPE)-related issues for children with ASD.³ The fifth section presents a checklist for districts derived from the case law, with parent lessons being the obverse side of the same checklist. The final section provides a sampling of state laws focused on ASD interventions.

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² Dr. Zirkel is University Professor Emeritus of Education and Law, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA. He is a Past President of the Education Law Association.

³ The compilation is limited to cases concerning eligibility and FAPE, because autism is not particularly linked to the other categories of the case law, which tend to be generic across the various classifications of disability under the IDEA. For a limited exception, see P.V. v. Sch. Dist. of Philadelphia, 60 IDELR ¶ 185 (E.D. Pa. 2013) (ruling that system-wide transfer of schools for students with autism qualifies as a change in placement because it is likely to significantly affect the child’s learning experience).
Overall Case Outcomes:


- 290 published hearing/review officer and court decisions from 1980 to 2000
- completely incidental role of autism in approximately 40% of the cases
- approximately 30% at the preschool level
- sharply rising frequency of cases in recent years but relatively stable outcomes, averaging approximately 4.4 on 1 (parent) to 7 (school) scale
- decisions in the Tenth and Fourth circuits have been the most favorable to school districts, and those in the Third and Eighth circuits have been most favorable to parents.
- primary issues: 1) FAPE: substantive, including placement, and 2) FAPE: procedural


- more favorable rulings for districts in court than at the hearing/review officer level but various confounding variables

Eligibility:


- relatively few cases (n=13 from 1980 to 2002) specific to autism eligibility under the IDEA, almost all at the hearing officer level
- emphasis on legal requirements and standards, not professional best practices
- importance of expert witnesses, including school professional staff
- recognition that DSM–IV is not controlling

Frequency:


- for FAPE litigation nationally from 1993 to 2006, the published case law has increased steadily

4. This section is limited to empirical analyses. Thus, it does not extend to more traditional narrative syntheses of the case law specific to students with autism. E.g., Myrna R. Mandlawitz, The Impact of the Legal System on Educational Programming for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, 32 J. Autism & Dev. Disorders 495 (2002). Similarly, it does not extend to specialized issues within state laws. E.g., Kerry Schutte, Kate Piselli, Ara Schmitt, Maura Miglio-Retti, Lauren Lorenzi-Quigley, Amy Tiberi & Noah Krohner, Identification of ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder, 46 Communiqué 4 (Sept. 2017) (identifying the minority of states that either require medical verification or medical information in determining IDEA eligibility for ASD).

5. More recently, a study reported that there had been 354 IDELR-published hearing/review officer and court decisions from 1990 through 2002, but it did not provide enough information to explain the disparity with this total. Mitchell Yell et al., Developing Legally Correct and Educationally Appropriate Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, 18 Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities 182 (2003).
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- the proportion attributable to the autism classification has remained approximately 8–9 times the proportion of children in the special education population

Methods–Outcomes:
- 45 IDELR-published hearing officer and court decisions concerning Lovaas treatment programs from 1993 to 1998
- 76% of the decisions were reportedly in favor of the parents, but limitations in data collection and outcomes analysis

- 68 cases from 1997 through 2002, with 60% being hearing/review officer decisions
- outcomes favored districts—57% as compared to parents—43%
- key factors: goals consistent with evaluation, qualified IEP team members, and methodology tailored to goals

Catherine Nelson & Dixie Snow Huefner, Young Children with Autism: Judicial Responses to the Lovaas and Discrete Trial Training Debates, 26 J. Early Intervention 1 (2003):
- limited to Lovaas/DTT court decisions (n=19) from 1997 to 2002
- only 3 Part C cases, all decided in favor of the defendant districts
- parents obtained substantial relief in only 4 of the 19 cases
- districts lost where they provided no support (rationale and evidence) for their proposed program

- relatively frequent cases (n=68) from 1980 to 2001, with 65% being hearing/review officer decisions
- two categories of cases: 63%—program selection (e.g., instructional approach) and 37% program implementation (e.g., location, duration, or frequency)
- 50–50 outcomes (4.0 on a 1–7 scale) in both categories
- key factors in both categories: testimony of witnesses, documentation of progress, and IEP elements

- 99 court cases in 2007 and 2008
- outcomes based on 3–category scale: district prevailed—54%, tied—19%, parent prevailed—27%

parents did relatively well for claims regarding parental participation and unqualified personnel


- 62 court cases in 2009
- outcomes based on 3-category scale: district prevailed—63%, tied—8%, parent prevailed—29%
- parents did relatively well for unqualified personnel


- limited to ABA published court decisions (n=39) from 1975 to 2009
- districts won 24 (62%), with 5 (13%) inconclusive and with 10 (26%) for parents
- parents did better in recent cases, but pro-district deference remained prevalent


- 68 court cases in 2010
- outcomes based on 3-category scale: district prevailed—60%, tied—4%, parent prevailed—35%
- parents did relatively well for unqualified personnel


- 85 court cases in 2013
- outcomes based on 3-category scale: district prevailed—65%, tied—9%, parent prevailed—26%
- parents did relatively well for ABA services (46% prevailed)


- 27 court cases from December 2004 to August 2016 purportedly specific to ABA
- outcomes based on a 2-category scale, with a few cases in both groups, were: in favor of district—67%; in favor of parents—33%

II. IDEA Regulations and Policy Letters

IDEA Definition of Autism

(a) *Child with a disability* means a child evaluated in accordance with [the applicable IDEA requirements for eligibility] as having . . . autism . . . and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

7. 34 C.F.R. § 300.8. The IDEA legislation, as of the 1990 Amendments, specifies autism as one of the 13 recognized classifications but does not specifically define it.
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(c)(1)(i) Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, 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. The term does not apply if a child’s educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in this section.

(ii) A child who manifests the characteristics of “autism” after age 3 could be diagnosed as having “autism” if the criteria in paragraph (c)(1)(i) of this section are satisfied.

IDEA Standard for Procedural FAPE

In matters alleging a procedural violation, a hearing officer may find that a child did not receive a FAPE only if the procedural inadequacies—

(i) Impeded the child’s right to a FAPE;

(ii) Significantly impeded the parent’s opportunity to participate in the decision-making process regarding the provision of a FAPE to the parent’s child; or

(iii) Caused a deprivation of educational benefit.

Rather, the definition appears in the IDEA regulations, which also define two other separate, but related classifications:

(b) Children aged 3 through 9 experiencing developmental delays. The term child with a disability for children aged 3 through 9 may, at the discretion of the State and [school district] and in accordance with [the FAPE regulation], include a child—(1) Who is experiencing developmental delays as defined by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and (2) Who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

(c)(9) Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that (i) Is due to chronic or acute health problems . . . and (ii) Adversely affects a child’s educational performance.


OSEP Policy Letters regarding Autism Spectrum Disorders

Letter to Coe, 32 IDELR ¶ 204 (OSEP 1999)
- children with pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) and its subcategory autism in DSM–IV are eligible under the IDEA only if they meet the definition of “child with disability” for “autism” or other specified category, such as “other health impairment” (OHI)
- states may have criteria for eligibility of children under the disability categories so long as those criteria do not conflict with the federal definition
- children with PDD aged 3 through 9 may qualify as developmentally delayed if the state and district utilize that classification and the child meets the state’s diagnostic criteria
- IDEA–97 clarifies that “[n]othing in the Act requires that a child be classified by their disability so long as each child who has a disability listed in § 300.7 and who, by reason of that disability, needs special education and related services, is regarded as a child with a disability under Part B of the [IDEA].”

Letter to Williams, 33 IDELR ¶ 249 (OSEP 2000):
- same eligibility clarification for child diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome, except at least partially ducks its role under OHI:
  “Regardless of whether Asperger’s Syndrome is identified as a condition that could render a child “other health impaired,” we do not believe it would be inconsistent with Part B [of the IDEA] for a State to permit school districts to evaluate children with Asperger’s Syndrome to consider whether they could be other health impaired.”
- addresses FAPE questions by clarifying that whether the child, once determined eligible, is entitled to speech pathology, occupational therapy, social skills training, or any other such service depends on whether the IEP team determines that it is required to assist the child to benefit from special education, not on whether the parent requests such service
- also addresses placement, discipline, and discrimination questions by generally reciting applicable provisions of IDEA (and § 504)

Letter to Autin, 58 IDELR ¶ 51 (OSEP 2011):
- addresses question as to permissibility of state or local education agencies establishing separate schools for students with autism, OSEP

10. “OSEP” refers to the Office of Special Education Programs, which is the agency within the U.S. Department of Education that administers the IDEA. Courts accord deference to the policy letters of such agencies within prescribed limits. Perry Zirkel, Do OSEP Policy Letters Have Legal Weight? 171 Ed. Law Rep. 391 (2003).

11. The other rarely published pertinent OSEP interpretations do not provide sufficiently specific and significant information to warrant republication here. E.g., Letter to Anonymous, 60 IDELR ¶ 47 (OSEP 2012); Letter to Anonymous, 55 IDELR ¶ 72 (OSEP 2010); Letter to Anonymous, 30 IDELR 705 (OSEP 1998); Letter to Wart, 20 IDELR 1217 (OSEP 1993). The scope of pertinence here does not extend to issue related but not particular to autism, such as when must the IEP include methodology. E.g., Letter to Anonymous, 49 IDELR 258 (OSEP 2007); Letter to Wilson, 37 IDELR ¶ 96 (OSEP 2002).

12. The recently issued DSM–V collapses the separate diagnoses of autistic disorder, Asperger’s disorder, childhood integrative disorder, pervasive developmental disorder NOS into one umbrella classification of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and requires showing of symptoms in early childhood even if not recognized until later.
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opined that placement must be on an individual basis in accordance with the applicable procedures and criteria for LRE.

Dear Colleague Letter, 66 IDELR ¶ 21 (OSEP 2015):

- issues reminder that IEP and IFSP teams, in identifying and addressing individual needs, should avoid using “ABA therapists exclusively without including, or considering input from, speech language pathologists and other professionals who provide different types of specific therapies that may be appropriate for children with ASD”

III. ALTERNATE SOURCE OF COVERAGE: § 504 AND THE ADA

§ 504 AND ADA DEFINITION OF “INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY”

Any person who

(i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities,
(ii) has a record of such an impairment, or
(iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Thus, the relevant, essential elements for FAPE eligibility are:

- physical or mental impairment
  +
- major life activity
  +
- substantial

IV. COURT DECISIONS RE: ELIGIBILITY AND METHODOLOGY


13. 20 U.S.C. § 706(8)(B); 34 C.F.R. § 104.3(i). For a two-volume comprehensive reference, see PERRY ZIRKEL, SECTION 504, THE ADA AND THE SCHOOLS (2004) (available from LRP Publications). The ADA Amendments, which are effective January 1, 2009, effectively reverse a decade of court decisions that have taken a “demanding” and, thus, narrowing interpretation of this definition, particularly the second two elements. E.g., Perry A. Zirkel, New Section 504 Student Eligibility Standards, 41 TEACHING EXCEPTIONAL CHILD. 68 (2009). Of additional significance for high-functioning students with Asperger disorder, a recent unpublished Third Circuit decision recognized social interaction as a major life activity. Although the student in this case did not meet the rigorous interpretation of substantial, the ADAAA would seem to suggest the possibility of the opposite outcome. Weidow v. Scranton Sch. Dist., 460 F. App’x 181, 278 Ed.Law Re. 879 (3d Cir. 2012).

14. The second and third “prongs” (i.e., subsections “ii” and “iii”) of this definition cannot be the basis for FAPE. See Senior Staff Memorandum, 19 IDELR 894 (OCR 1992).

15. Coverage starts in 1998 with the exception of any Part C (formerly Part H) cases, which are cited in italics. Court decisions from the federal appeals courts are cited in bold typeface. The judicial outcomes are coded to the left of each case citation as follows: P = parent won; S = school district won; and ( ) = inconclusive victory. Those concerning eligibility and methodology are respectively designated after the cita-
ruled under Part C in favor of parents’ IFSP for ABA therapy for
three-year-old with autism, including reimbursement—only issue was
whether privately obtained services by personnel who did not meet state
qualification standards were reimbursable [M]

upheld “cottage” placement of 17–year old student with autism with
limited mainstreaming opportunities in nearby high school, also rejecting
parent claims regarding teacher qualifications and lack of BIP in IEP
(but mixed results regarding emergency removals and music therapy)
[~M]

(N.D. Ill. 1999)
rejected district’s cross-categorical early childhood placement, w/o
aide, upholding instead appropriateness of parents’ home-based Lovaas
placement for autistic five-year-old (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

Cir. 1999)
upheld the appropriateness of the district’s IEP for an autistic child
even though it did not have the extent of Lovaas-type discrete trial
training sought by the parents [M]

1999)

tion with “[E]” and “[M].” Those cases that
only partially or marginally concern method-
ology are marked with a “[~M].” The acro-
nyms in the case blurbs include: ABA = ap-
lyed behavior analysis; ADA = Ameri-
cans with Disabilities Act; ASD = autism
spectrum disorder; AT = assistive technolo-
gy; BIP = behavior intervention plan; DIR
 developmental, individual differences, rel-
ationship (model); ESY = extended school
year; FAPE = free appropriate public edu-
cation; FBA = functional behavioral analy-
sis; IFSP = individual family services plan;
IHO = impartial hearing officer; LRE =
least restrictive environment; OT = occupa-
tional therapy; OCD = obsessive compulsive
disorder; PDD = pervasive develop-
mental disorder; PECS = picture exchange
communication system; PRR = peer-re-
viewed research; SEA = state education
agency; SLD = specific learning disabilities;
SLT = speech/language therapy; and TBI
= traumatic brain injury.

For a more comprehensive listing, including
other issues, earlier cases, and hearing/re-
view officer decisions, methodology case
law, see ELENA GALLEGOS & JILL SCHALLEN-
GER. AUTISM METHODOLOGIES TO LIVE BY: LE-
GAL GUIDANCE FOR PRACTICAL PROGRAM
STRATEGIES (2011). For significant court de-
cisions concerning children with autism but
not specific to this disability category, see,
for example, Winkelman v. Parma Cty. Sch.
Dist., 550 U.S. 516, 167 Ed.Law Rep. 904
(2007) (ruling that parents have enforceable
rights under the IDEA for proceeding pro
se); L.G. v. Fair Lawn Sch. Dist., 486 F.
App’rs 967, 287 Ed.Law Rep. 691 (3d Cir.
2012) (procedural violation and LRE); Vives
247 (1st Cir. 2007) (rejecting parent’s
§ 504/ADA retaliation claim for lack of req-
uisite proof); Pachl v. Seagren, 453 F.3d
1064, 210 Ed.Law Rep. 940 (8th Cir. 2006)
(upheld 70% segregated placement rather
than parents’ proposed fully inclusionary
placement). Conversely, for a significant Su-
preme Court decision that did not involve a
child with autism but affects the litigation
on behalf of children with autism, see Fry v.
(requiring exhaustion of the IDEA’s due
process hearing mechanism for non-IDEA
claims when their underlying crux is FAPE).
Finally, for a free download of a much more
comprehensive compilation, including but
not limited to various other decisions con-
cerning students with autism, see A National
Update of Case Law under the IDEA and
§ 504/ADA Since 1998, available in the
“Publications” section of perryzirkel.com.
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- upheld appropriateness of IFSP proposed for autistic child, despite parents’ preference for a particular ABA program [M]

   - upheld district’s IFSP for child with autism, rather than intensive Lovaas-type program parent preferred, but rejected district’s revised IFSP that reduced weekly service hours, because it “was not linked to [the child’s] unique developmental needs” (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

   - upheld school-based TEACCH program, rather than parents’ home-based Lovaas-type program for autistic child (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

   - upheld reverse mainstreaming classroom placement of TBI/autistic child rather than parent’s unilateral home-based early childhood program, concluding that procedural deficiencies were waived and, in any event, nonprejudicial (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

   - upheld tuition reimbursement for private placement for student with autism, declining to hear additional evidence and pointing out deficiencies in the proposed IEP, including lack of BIP, OT, and ESY [~M]

    - upheld the substantive and procedural appropriateness of district’s mainstreamed IEP for elementary school student with autism, thereby rejecting reimbursement for “standard” 40-hour in-home program and parents’ claim about specialized IEP team and staffing expertise [M]

    - ruled that district did not meet its burden to prove that its program, rather than the parents’ in-home Lovaas program, was appropriate (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

    - upheld the substantive appropriateness of the district’s proposed self-contained placement, with 1:1 aide and reverse mainstreaming, for

16. For subsequent separate litigation involving the same child under Part B, see *infra* the Fourth Circuit’s 2003 decision and the federal district court’s 2004 decision (case nos. 28 and 37).

kindergarten child with autism, rather than parents’ in-home 40-hour Lovaas program (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

   ● held that, based on IEP-team voting process and applicable standards, parents were entitled to reimbursement for costs of home-based ABA program to supplement reduced in-school program for preschool student with autism [~M]

   ● upheld district’s proposed preschool program for child with autism rather than parents’ in-home ABA program (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

15. P Sanford Sch. Comm. v. Mr. & Mrs. L., 34 IDELR ¶ 262 (D. Me. 2001)
   ● upheld hearing officer’s stay-put order and compensatory education relief when district’s change for kindergarten child with autism from half-inclusion, half-ABA program to self-contained program was based on administrative convenience, not appropriate evaluation [~M]

   ● upheld district’s proposed placement of 17-year-old student with autism in self-contained class rather than residential placement, but added parent training to manage the child’s behavior to the extent it linked to education progress [~M]

   ● upheld tuition reimbursement for Lovaas program where the district failed to notify the parents of their right to challenge the proposed IEP (via a due process hearing) and the child evidenced progress as a result of the Lovaas therapy [~M]

   ● upheld appropriateness of a series of IEPs for a child with autism, including TEACCH rather than Lovaas, but found that lack of district (or other child-knowledgeable) member of IEP team for one year was a prejudicial error (ordering mediation as the first-resort remedy) [M]

   ● upheld appropriateness of inclusion-based ABA program and rejected appropriateness of home-based Lovaas program (based on restrictive ness and lack of generalization) for kindergarten child with autism [~M]

   ● upheld appropriateness of school-based TEACCH program rather than parents’ unilateral home-based Lovaas program for child with autism [M]
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   - rejected tuition reimbursement for in-home Lovaas program where the parents made only technical, unsupported challenges to the district’s proposed TEACCH program and they admitted that they would not have accepted the offer in any event—but dismissed on appeal based on lack of jurisdiction [~M]

   - upheld appropriateness of district’s ESY program for high functioning autistic child, with focus on improving social communication rather than 1:1 services and with goal of reasonable progress rather than mastery of skills [~M]

   - upheld procedural and substantive appropriateness of proposed IEP for autistic preschool child, which included 6 hours of Lovaas in-home training rather than the 25 hours the parents insisted was necessary [M]

   - upheld appropriateness of district’s eclectic TEACCH/PECS-based program, which included ABA/DTT, for high school student with autism rather than parents’ full-time Lovaas-type program—rejection of parents’ cookie-cutter, cost-related arguments [M]

   - held that the IEP’s failure to include a proper BIP amounted, in this case, to a denial of FAPE in light of the obvious need of the child with autism-Asperger’s and SLD for a BIP and unpersuasive evidence of academic progress [~M]

   - brief ruling that despite turnover district provided qualified speech therapist for child with autism thus supporting proposition that parents do not have the right to select service deliverer [~M]

   - upheld substantive appropriateness of proposed IEP for student with autism (Asperger’s Syndrome), rather than private placement, based on Cypress-Fairbanks 4–factor test and upheld procedural appropriateness

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18. The appellate court dismissed the case without prejudice because the hearing officer had not issued a final decision.

19. The appellate court vacated and remanded the decision due to lack of findings as to whether the level of services provided in the child’s IEP for the summer was adequate to prevent the gains the child made during the previous school year from being significantly jeopardized.
based on no loss of educational opportunity (or infringement on parental-participation opportunity) [~M]


- held that upon the unavailability of the then-current placement (here due to the only state-approved Lovaas provider ceasing the in-home services under the IEP w/o notice) “stay put” does not require the district to provide a comparable, alternative placement; the parents’ only remedies are either to agree with the district to a new placement or seek a preliminary injunction from the trial court changing the child’s placement [~M]


- remanded to determine whether the district’s proposed IEP for four-year-old with autism, which contained Lovaas elements but not a Lovaas-certified consultant, met the Rowley substantive standard and whether the district denied the child FAPE during the previous three years (rejecting parental-objection standard for triggering compensatory education) [M]


- granted preliminary injunction to maintain the hearing officer’s decision that ordered the district to change the kindergarten child’s classification from OHI to autism (based on IEE), reimburse the parents for home therapies, and provide various additional hours of 1:1 therapy at home or school—as the stay-put pending the judicial appeal [~E, ~M]


- upheld district’s proposed placement of autistic kindergarten student in a specialized class that used the TEACCH approach rather than private school that relied on DTT–nonprejudicial procedural violations and deferential Rowley standard (tuition reimbursement case) [M]


- upheld district’s proposed IEP for an autistic sixth grader in a life skills class that used ABA and redirection techniques rather than home placement–procedural violations (e.g., IEP team composition) were non-prejudicial and methodology (here, redirection > planned ignoring) is within district’s discretion [M]


- upheld requested compensatory education relief of four years of 40–hour per week ABA program (including training, consultation, and

20. **infra** the district court’s 2004 Wagner decision (case no. 37).
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monitoring) for student with autism whom the district “repeatedly mis-
diagnosed and mishandled” [~E, ~M]

   - tuition reimbursement award, at least under IDEA Part C, may include time expended by parent serving as Lovaas instructor [~M]

   - rejected, based on LRE, district’s proposed placement of preschool child with autism in “hybrid” (approximately 50% nondisabled children) plus 8–15 hours/week of ABA as compared with parents’ unilateral placement of the child in a mainstream private preschool with phasing-out aide plus 40 hours/week of ABA, awarding parents equitable reimbursement of ABA program and aide (tuition not requested) [M]

   - after hearing officer and review officer both rejected parents claims, including that child needed increased home-based Lovaas component upon moving from Part C to Part B, court allowed appeal based on § 1983 (IDEA) and § 504/ADA, thus opening possibility of money damages [~M]

   - upheld appropriateness of proposed IEP, despite cut-and-pasted goals/objectives from previous IEP, and placement, which was change from Lovaas to non-Lovaas school, including rejection of procedural violations as nonprejudicial [~M]

   - held that parents were entitled to tuition reimbursement based on two independent prejudicial procedural violations (fixed predetermination for TEACCH, not Lovaas, and repeated absence of regular ed teacher on IEP team where integration was at issue) and possible substantive violation of FAPE (remanding for careful determination, with limits on deference re methodology) [M]


\(^{22}\) For the remanded decision, which was in the district’s favor, see Deal v. Hamilton Cnty. Dep’t of Educ., 46 IDELR ¶ 45 (E.D. Tenn. 2006). However, the appellate court subsequently ruled that, based on the overall outcome of the case, the parents were entitled to 50% reimbursement. Deal v. Hamilton Cnty. Dep’t of Educ., 258 F. App’x 863 (6th Cir. 2008).
• upheld substantive appropriateness, including lack of ABA services, and rejected procedural violations as nonprejudicial, for preschool child with autism [M]

   • remanded appropriateness issue to trial court to reconsider with due deference to the hearing officer’s findings that the parent’s ABA placement for preschool student with autism was appropriate and the district’s proposed TEACCH placement was not (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

   • ruled that procedural inadequacies in autistic student’s IEPs, which related to mastery dates of benchmarks and adequacy of annual goals, but not lack of FBA-BIP, resulted in denial of FAPE to student [~M]

42. (S) Brown v. Bartholomew, 43 IDELR ¶ 60 (S.D. Ind. 2005), vacated as moot, 442 F.3d 588, 207 Ed.Law Rep. 601(7th Cir. 2006)
   • upheld district’s proposed program for kindergarten student with autism rather than parents’ preferred at-home ABA instruction [M]

   • rejected tuition reimbursement for 1:1 CARD program based on 1) substantive appropriateness of district’s program for preschool child with autism, 2) nonprejudicial procedural violation of not providing written notice of denial of parents’ unilateral placement, and 3) lack of FAPE in the LRE for said placement (e.g., lack of individualization and related services) [~M]

44. S Chisago Lakes Sch. Dist. v. J.D., 43 IDELR ¶ 164 (Minn. Ct. App. 2005)
   • upheld district’s determination upon reevaluation that the student no longer met the all the required criteria in the state regulations for eligibility under the classification of ASD, which is less strict than the classification of autism under the IDEA [E]

   • ruled that reduced number and changed location of parent and in-home training sessions did not deny child with autism FAPE, thus reversing hearing officer’s award of compensatory education—deferred to district on methodological considerations and construed causation issues as parents’ unproven burden [~M]

   • remanded to determine whether the consideration of post-hearing evidence, which the review officer and district court used to rule that the district must provide at least 10 hours of in-home ABA therapy in

addition to its self-contained special education program (with OT, PT, SLT, and parent counseling), was an error of law.  

   • rejected tuition reimbursement for 15-year-old with Asperger Syndrome, concluding that district’s program was appropriate despite parents’ challenge to the choice of the teacher and skills trainer plus various procedural errors that were not prejudicial.  

   • upheld procedural and substantive appropriateness of IEP and district’s proposed placement for 11-year-old with severe autism in autistic support class, which was based on ABA principles, rather than the parents’ successive in-home ABA and private school ABA programs.  

   • upheld substantive appropriateness of successive IEPs for high school student with autism.  

   • parents requested full-day and obtained half-day preschool program based on ABA–DTT, due to experts’ agreement that child with severe autism needed ABA–DTT and school district did not have trained personnel to do so, thus entitling parents to attorneys’ fees of $47k.  

   • upheld ABA at-home program as FAPE in the LRE for four-year-old with autism rather than district’s TEACCH program (tuition reimbursement case).  

   • rejected parents’ claim of lack of opportunity for meaningful participation in developing IEP for preschool child with autism and concluded that the IEP met the substantive standard when parents withdrew the child (prematurely) for ABA therapy.  

   • upheld appropriateness of proposed 50/50 placement of kindergartner with autism in regular school, concluding that FBA was appropriate and district’s failure to send out notices to private schools did not constitute pre-determination (tuition reimbursement case).  

   • upheld appropriateness of program/placement of pre-kindergarten child with autism where district refused to grant parents’ medically-based  

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request for homebound instruction (based on diagnosis of PTSD after district stopped parent from accompanying child to class) [~M]

   • lack of specific diagnosis of autism and lack of precise goals did not
deny this eligible preschool child FAPE [~E/~M]

56.  P Mr. I. v. Maine Sch. Admin. Dist. No. 55, 480 F.3d 1, 217 Ed.Law Rep. 60 (1st Cir. 2007)
   • ruled that student’s Asperger Disorder adversely affected educational
performance as broadly defined by state law, establishing that student
was eligible here, since “need” was not a contested issue [E]

   • rejected claim of parents of preschooler with PDD that the district
denied them a meaningful opportunity to participate in the IDEA
process when it denied their request for in-home ABA therapy [~M]

   • upheld district’s proposed placement of 13–year-old with autism in
private day school rather than parents’ requested residential placement,
rejecting parents’ claim that substantive standard for FAPE extended to
generalization of behavioral effects to the home environment [~M]

(9th Cir. 2007)
   • rejected FAPE-implementation claim for student with severe autism,
concluding that the standard is whether district’s implementation fell
significantly short of the services required by the child’s IEP (with liberal
credit for the district’s “corrective actions” in compliance with hearing
officer’s prospective order, which did not provide compensatory edu-
cation) [~M]

60.  S Hjortness v. Neenah Joint Sch. Dist., 507 F.3d 1060, 227 Ed.Law Rep. 100 (7th Cir. 2007)
   • procedural errors, including alleged predetermination in LRE, were
not prejudicial and despite lack of current PELs, the proposed IEP for
gifted student with autism, ADHD, and OCD was substantively appro-
priate in these particular circumstances [~M]

aff’d mem., 375 F. App’x 333 (4th Cir. 2009)
   • district’s choice not to include parent-proposed 1:1 ABA services did
not constitute predetermination [~M]

1090, 261 Ed.Law Rep. 48 (9th Cir. 2010) 25

25. On remand, the district court denied the
plaintiff-parents’ motion for summary judg-
ment, preserving for further proceedings
whether the district engaged in deliberate
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held that § 504 provides a money damages remedy for failure of a district to provide FAPE to special education students (here two children with autism, for which the district spends approximately $250k per year as a result of losing the due process hearing) if they prove: 1) failure to provide “meaningful access” (i.e., reasonable accommodation/commensurate opportunity); and 2) deliberate indifference on the part of the school authorities [~M]


remanded for reconsideration of hearing officer’s opinion that district’s IEP for child with autism was appropriate because although not meeting the aspirational standard for detailed credibility determinations and legal analysis, it merited deference (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


upheld appropriateness of district’s IEP for kindergarten child with autism, including reduction of OT and ABA, and the district’s proposed ESY placement [M]


ruled that district did not deny FAPE to student with autism who made progress under three successive IEPs even though it did not generalize to other settings (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


upheld appropriateness of district’s eclectic program for preschool student with autism even though it lacked an in-home component and concluded that failure to provide finalized IEP was nonprejudicial procedural violation [~M]


upheld tuition reimbursement for IEP where district did not evaluate the child with speech impairment in all the areas of suspected disability, i.e., autism (treating it as prejudicial procedural violation), but rejected parents’ claim that the child was eligible for ESY, thus ducking question of FAPE substantive standard for ESY [~E]


upheld hearing officer’s PRR-based decision against district’s behavioral methodology but folded into the Rowley substantive standard for FAPE [M]


upheld district’s proposed self-contained placement for 3-year-old child with autism as FAPE in the LRE and rejected appropriateness of

parents’ unilateral placement in mainstream private school plus ABA as not appropriate, thereby denying tuition reimbursement [~M]


- rejected parents’ claim of denial of FAPE based on delayed OT goals, lack of music therapy, and lack of 1:1 aide (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- ruled that district’s completion of an evaluation of preschool twins with autism within 38 days was reasonable, which was the 1999 IDEA regulatory standard applicable in this case and which controls rather than the state’s 45-day deadline, because the district did not have reason to suspect autism upon the parents’ request [~E]


- upheld hearing and review officer’s reduction of after-school ABA services from 25 to 10 hours per week (with 5 rather than 12 monthly hours of supervisory support) for gifted kindergarten child with autism based on appropriateness (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- held that IEP for child with autism developed, in violation of state regulation requiring FBA, was neither procedurally nor substantively deficient—IDEA’s IEP “special consideration” provision, in effect, trumped state reg (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- held that consultant chart’s “School Response” that showed district did not intend to offer more than 10 hours of school-based ABA did not constitute pre-determination of IEP for kindergarten child with autism (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- upheld procedural and substantive appropriateness of IEP for eight-year-old with autism, which included TEACCH method and which did not necessitate an autism consultant on the IEP team, also concluding that the district had provided the parents—in response to their due process hearing complaint—with all that they had requested, including the consultant and 1:1 ABA aide, thus leaving no basis for compensatory education [M]


In a subsequent decision, the district awarded the defendant-district $141k in attorneys’ fees and court costs, jointly payable by the parents and their attorney, but the Ninth Circuit reversed this award. Parenteau v. Prescott Unified Sch. Dist., 53 IDELR ¶ 333 (D. Ariz. 2009), rev’d sub nom R.P. v. Prescott Unified Sch. Dist., 631 F.3d 1117 (9th Cir. 2011).
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• upheld substantive appropriateness and LRE of successive two IEPs (with second providing for sp. ed. for language arts block) for child with autism (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

• held that district’s program for child with autism did not meet the heightened standard under “meaningful benefit” standard under Hellgate (supra), showing difficulty of measuring progress and resulting in award of tuition reimbursement for part of 2007 ($62k) as compensatory education for violation in 2005–06 [~M]

• upheld procedural (e.g., parental participation) and substantive appropriateness (e.g., ABA staff training) of IEP that district offered for nine-year-old with autism [~M]

• upheld appropriateness of district’s subsequently revised IEP for preschool child with autism at public ABA program [~M]

• held that preschool program for a child with autism was substantively appropriate and that the 20-minute limit on outside evaluators’ classroom observations was a procedural flaw that did not deprive the parents of meaningful opportunity for participation (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

• upheld appropriateness of IEP for student with autism concluding that its eclectic program met substantive standard and that failure to provide services based on PRR automatically means a denial of FAPE [M]

82. S A.G. v. Frieden, 52 IDELR ¶ 65 (S.D.N.Y. 2009)
• held that IFSP that proposed 20 hours of ABA therapy per week was appropriate, rejecting parents’ request for at least 30 hours of this service and their pre-determination claim [M]

• upheld appropriateness of IEP for five-year-old child with pervasive developmental disorder, rejecting claims that 1) classification under OHI rather than autism was substantive flaw, 2) IEP should have included 10 more hours per week of 1:1 behavior therapy, and 3) district should have done an FBA, as required by state law (tuition reimbursement case) [~E, ~M]

• rejected parents’ pre-determination claim and ruled that the district’s proposed IEP, which included 10 hours of at-home behavior therapy and
5 half days of regular education was FAPE in the LRE (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

- ruled that district’s IEP was not substantively appropriate due to child’s pattern of regression and IEP’s insufficient services but remanded to apply this test for private residential placement: 1) whether it is essential in order for the disabled child to receive a meaningful educational benefit, and, if so, 2) whether it is primarily oriented toward enabling the child to obtain an education (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

- upheld, as not a denial of FAPE, district’s determination that district properly classified child, who had previous diagnoses of ADHD, “absence seizures” and—most recently—Asperger Disorder, as ED rather than parent’s proposed classifications of autism or OHI [E]

- upheld substantive appropriateness of IEP, despite deficiencies regarding parent counseling and speech/language services and with 1:1 aide rather than FBA–BIP, and rejected procedural claim that the IEP did not specify a school site for the educational placement27 (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

- rejected parent’s claims that IEP was deficient for lack of parental participation, class size of 12:1 rather than 6:1, and failure to include BIP [~M]

- rejected parent’s various procedural challenges, including lack of autism-specific testing and personnel, and substantive challenges, including applicable standard (in the Tenth Circuit) and scientifically-based methodology [M]

- rejected parent’s claim that children with autism needed 30–40 hours of ABA services each week, ruling that district’s offer of 30 hours subject to further evaluation information, was appropriate [M]

91. S J.L. v. Mercer Island Sch. Dist., 592 F.3d 938, 252 Ed.Law Rep. 591 (9th Cir. 2009)  
- upheld appropriateness of IEP for child with autism, rejecting lower court’s ruling that IDEA ’97 raised the Rowley substantive standard and concluding that various asserted procedural violations, such as failure to

27. For another case concerning a student with ASD in which a federal appeals court ruled the opposite on this issue, see A.K. v. Alexandria City Sch. Bd., 484 F.3d 672 (4th Cir. 2007), on remand, 544 F. Supp. 2d 487 (E.D. Va. 2008).
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include methodology in the IEP, were a denial of FAPE (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

   ● upheld appropriateness of successive, similar IEPs with which the child made slow progress—expected rate based on the severity of the disability, and parent did not sustain burden to show that the child needed 30 hours of ABA per week to receive FAPE [M]

   ● ruled that child with Asperger Disorder who was performing at average to above average levels in the classroom and was progressing academically did not meet the criterion on adversely affecting educational performance—no qualifier on adversely affecting but educational performance in Second Circuit means academic performance [E]

   ● ruled that child with various diagnoses, including Asperger Disorder, ADHD, and dysgraphia, was not eligible as OHI or ED based on narrow, academic view of adverse effect on “educational performance” (tuition reimbursement case) [E]

   ● ruled that three consecutive IEPs failed to provide FAPE to child with autism based on prejudicial procedural violations, including lack of accurate and timely evaluation—upholding tuition reimbursement for ABA home program despite lack of special education certification but reversing hearing officer’s order to replace IEP team with private company that implements the program [M]

   ● ruled that district’s offer of homebound placement, while finding and arranging for residential placement, was not denial of FAPE to child with autism who private school, which offered ABA programming, expelled for life-threatening behavior [M]

   ● held that procedural violations (e.g., lack of FBA) did not deny FAPE and that the IEP for five-year-old at public charter school for children with autism (per ABA model) met the substantive standard w/o the parents’ additionally sought itinerant services (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

   ● ruled that 1) failure to have IEP in place at start of school year for child with autism could be attributed to parent (deference to hearing officer’s finding); 2) parent’s approval of previous IEPs did not waive
FAPE implementation claim; 3) parent did not meet their burden of proving district did not implement expired IEP; and 4) the new IEP met the substantive standard for FAPE (including PRR) (tuition reimbursement case) [M]


- upheld $80,000 tuition reimbursement for kindergarten child with autism based on finding that child needed extensive 1:1 discrete-trial ABA services, which district’s proposed 6:1 placement did not provide and which conformed to LRE consideration for the parent’s unilateral private placement [M]


- ruled that lack of baseline data, behavioral goal, and full parental notice did not amount to denial of FAPE where district made good faith effort and reasonably met individual needs of student with autism [M]


- upheld substantive appropriateness of IEP for child with autism, including transition provision to return the child from private school and use of shorthand descriptors in BIP (tuition reimbursement case) [M]


- ruled that child with autism was no longer entitled to after-school 1:1 ABA program (and parent training) where the private placement’s program met the substantive standard for FAPE based on the child’s progress [M]


- omission of parent training and counseling in IEP for child with autism, contrary to state law requirement, did not constitute denial of FAPE where the district provided such services as needed—same for lack of transition plan under IDEA where court found that the school would have offered services to meet the child’s transition needs [M]


- ruled that parent was entitled to reimbursement for the home ABA program where the district’s proposed eclectic program for child with autism was not reasonably calculated for meaningful benefit [M]


- held that the child’s gains and district’s rectifying measures were insufficient to avoid the denial of FAPE from the district’s failure to implement a material portion of the IEP of a child with autism, which
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was 15 hours/week of ABA therapy, and that the parent’s unilateral home placement was appropriate (with LRE not applying) [~M]


• ruling that IEP for student with autism did not have to specify the qualifications of the service provider or the methodology and that the subsequent changes, including adding a transition plan and autism consultant teacher services, did not render the original version defective because they promptly resulted from information that the parent disclosed only belatedly (tuition reimbursement case) [M]


• upheld appropriateness of SCERTS methodology for preschool child with autism rather than his previous ABA/DTT methodology—relaxed view of PRR (tuition reimbursement case) [M]


• ruled in favor of tuition reimbursement for student with autism, where district’s program was deficient in several substantive respects, including lack of FBA–BIP and more intensive ABA services (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


• ruled that district’s failure to diagnose the child’s autism did not amount to a denial of FAPE where the district’s IEP met the substantive standard for FAPE, including addressing his unique needs, and the parents failed to prove their pre-determination claim (tuition reimbursement case) [E/~M]


• upheld ruling that district’s private school program for child with autism did not provide for a meaningful benefit, because he additionally required an after-school ABA program (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

111. P N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ. v. V.S., 57 IDELR ¶ 77 (E.D.N.Y. 2011)

• based in part on evidence that TEACCH method would not be effective for this child with autism, upheld tuition reimbursement at private school that provided relationship-based methodology [M]


• upheld direct retroactive payment of tuition after finding that the proposed IEP for preschool child with autism lacked sufficient specially designed instruction (1:1 ABA) and related services (speech therapy and parent training per state regulation) and that the parent’s unilateral placement was appropriate [~M]
- upheld the appropriateness of the ABA/DTT services in the IEP of preschool child with autism based on Rowley reasonableness standard and ruled that lack of sufficient evaluation did not result in substantive loss, although remanding the case for other issues\(^{28}\) (tuition reimbursement case) [E/M]

- summarily affirmed unpublished trial court decision that rejected parents’ insistence on continuation of 1:1 Lindamood Bell services, finding that the new IEP met the substantive standard and that the district had not denied the parents the opportunity for meaningful participation [M]

- reduction of behavioral support services for six-year-old with autistic-like behaviors was not denial of FAPE where classroom observations revealed reduced need [~M]

- upheld district’s evaluation that student did not qualify under autism (though did qualify under SLI and OHI) [E]

- upheld, for a child with autism and cerebral palsy, the rulings that 1) the second-grade IEP amounted to a substantive denial of FAPE due to substantial lack of implementation plus lack of meaningful benefit in relation to child’s potential; 2) the third-grade IEP represented procedural denial of meaningful parental participation due to a) failure to provide access to test protocols to parents’ expert and b) development of goals/objectives outside of parents’ presence plus substantive denial of FAPE due to reduction of services resulting in lack of meaningful benefit  
- upheld 758–hour compensatory education award for two-year denial of FAPE for the child to “reasonably recover” in light of potentially closing window of opportunity, plus upheld requirement that the delivery be via a teacher with autism certification due to this provision in the IEP  
- mixed outcome for IHO’s conditioning of prospective relief on parents’ re-enrollment of the child (whom the parents had removed for private schooling): no for the ordered evaluations and amended IEP but yes for the implementation of the IEP (which was half mainstreamed and half 1:1 autism services)  
- upheld limiting award to pre-settlement hours amounting to $25k in attorneys’ fees. [~M]

\(^{28}\) The parent ultimately prevailed for the other issues. *Aaron P. v. Dep’t of Educ. of Haw.,* 897 F. Supp. 2d 1004 (D. Haw. 2012)
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- ruled that district denied FAPE to six-year-old who had IEP for speech/language impairment by not providing evaluation for autism upon reasonable suspicion, with the court clarifying that “the inquiry is not whether the student actually qualifies for special education services, but whether the student should be referred for an evaluation” (tuition reimbursement case) [~E]


- adopting the snapshot approach but not strict four-corners rule and differentiating between serious (FBA) and minor (parent counseling) procedural violations based on state standards for FAPE analysis, reached mixed outcomes in three consolidated cases concerning students with autism (two for district and one in favor of the parent, including tuition reimbursement) [~M]

120. *S* F.L. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 60 IDELR ¶ 17 (S.D.N.Y. 2012)

- upheld proposed placement for child with autism that used TEACCH rather than sole ABA method (tuition reimbursement case) [M]


- ruled that the hearing officer’s order for payment and reimbursement of “psychological therapy services,” which was ABA for a child with autism, was not enforceable as applied to a provider who did not meet the state standards, i.e., a licensed psychologist [M]

122. (*P*) Young v. Ohio, 60 IDELR ¶ 134 (S.D. Ohio 2013)

- granted preliminary injunction under Part C, concluding that parents of two-year-old with autism were likely to succeed on their claim that the state’s decision not to provide ABA therapy or approve ABA providers constituted predetermination [~M]


- upheld denial of tuition reimbursement for child with autism who received a “meager” educational benefit after a year in a private ABA-based program [M]


- upheld hearing officer’s decision in favor of district’s segregated school-based placement, rather than parents’ home-based ABA placement, for preschool child with autism who was highly distractible but with strong nonverbal skills and his need to develop language and interpersonal skills—“the testimony of district personnel, who had daily or regularly scheduled time with [the student], was more persuasive than that of [the parent’s] witnesses, whose opinions were largely based on file reviews” [M]

ruled that predetermination that child’s classification was primarily SLD and secondarily OHI and SLI rather than autism was harmless error where the IEP met the substantive standard for FAPE in relation to the child’s individual needs [E]


ruled that district’s proposed placement was not substantively appropriate where the evidence that it would provide a seafood-free environment to ten-year-old with autism and seafood allergy were R.E.-excluded statements of school officials after the parent’s unilateral placement decision; 2) the private placement was appropriate despite teacher’s lack of certification in the school’s methodology; and 3) the equities supported (tuition reimbursement case) [M]


ruled that district’s proposed program for three-year-old with autism was appropriate (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

128. (P) Y.S. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 62 IDELR ¶ (S.D.N.Y. 2013)

based on teacher’s testimony opening the door to the methodology issue, remanded to the IHO to determine whether TEACCH meets the individual needs of five-year-old child with PDD [M]

129. S M.W. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 725 F.3d 131, 296 Ed.Law Rep. 57 (2d Cir. 2013)

upheld procedural and substantive appropriateness of district’s proposed IEP for nine-year-old with autism, ADHD, and Tourette syndrome, including lack of FBA and parental counseling in violation of state law (tuition reimbursement case) [M]


ruled that IEP was substantively appropriate based on ED where additional classification of autism was not clear or necessary (tuition reimbursement case) [E]


rejected claims of procedural inappropriateness (e.g., lack of FBA per state law and failure to discuss nonpublic placements) and substantive inappropriateness (e.g., teacher-student ratio) of proposed IEP for student with autism (tuition reimbursement case) [M]


ruled that proposed IEP for child with autism and other disabilities was not reasonably calculated for benefit—insufficient attention to physician’s testimony that autism was the child’s primary area of need (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

133. P C.L. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 552 F. App’x 81 (2d Cir. 2014)

short opinion deferring to IHO’s—more well-reasoned than the review officer’s—conclusion that district did not meet its burden to prove that
the proposed 6:1:1 program would enable the child to learn new material (tuition reimbursement case—appropriateness of private placement not at issue) [~M]

134. _P C.F. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ._, 746 F.3d 68, 302 Ed.Law Rep. 901 (2d Cir. 2014)

- ruled that that the procedural violations in the proposed IEP, based on state law, of failing to provide for parent training and counseling and in producing an inappropriately vague BIP in the absence of an FBA combined with its substantive inadequacy of providing for a 6:1 student/teacher ratio, where child with autism clearly needed a 1:1 ratio, amounted to a denial of FAPE (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- ruled the IDEA’s LRE requirement applies to ESY placements just as it does to school-year placements but that the lack of an FBA–BIP and parent counseling training (both per state law) for child with autism were procedural violations that did not result in a substantive loss of education (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- ruled that the proposed IEP for eight-year old with autism was substantively appropriate and rejected the various procedural challenges as either unproven (e.g., predetermination and FBA/BIP) or nonprejudicial (lack of parent counseling/training (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- ruled that procedural violations (e.g., lack of vocational assessment, parent training/counseling, and measurable goals) were not a denial of FAPE in individual circumstances of this case and the 6:1:1 placement for this child with autism was substantively appropriate (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- ruled that district’s “bait and switch” regarding proposed site for IEP for student with autism was a denial of FAPE in terms of parental opportunity for meaningful participation (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

139. _S C.B. v. Garden Grove Unified Sch. Dist._, 575 F. App’x 796, 309 Ed.Law Rep. 194 (9th Cir. 2014)

- rejected procedural challenges to IEP (e.g., absence of certain goals and of accommodations section) and upheld substantive appropriateness of interim small-group placement of child with autism who previously received 1:1 services [~M]

29. This case concerns the IEP for the year after the one ultimately addressed in the Second Circuit appeal _infra_ (case no. 147).
   • ruled that IEP for student with autism that provided for occasional 
     sensory breaks in a glass enclosure within the general education class- 
     room constituted FAPE in the LRE [~M]

141. P C.U. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 23 F. Supp. 3d 210, 311 Ed.Law 
     Rep. 170 (S.D.N.Y. 2014)
   • ruled that district’s failure to provide parents of 15-year-old with 
     autism with meaningful opportunity for participation by not providing 
     parents with 1) copy of IEP in timely manner and 2) relevant informa- 
     tion (e.g., resources adequate to implement the IEP) about the school 
     placement (i.e., process, not necessarily site, of school selection), al- 
     though rejecting other procedural and substantive challenges (tuition 
     reimbursement case) [~M]

     2014)
   • ruled that district did not evaluate preschool special education child in 
     all areas of suspected disability when she showed clear signs of autism 
     and that the resulting IEPs, which placed her in an inclusion class, did 
     not meet her needs, whereas an ABA program did (tuition reimburse- 
     ment case) [E/M]

     Rep. 609 (11th Cir. 2014)
   • upheld ruling, in case of child with autism upon transitioning from 
     Part C (early intervention), that district offered “inadequate option[s] 
     and [attempted to] wash its hands of its obligations” by acquiescing to 
     the private placement (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

144. S A.S. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 573 F. App’x 63 (2d Cir. 2014)
   • upheld procedural and substantive appropriateness of proposed IEP, 
     including the TEACCH methodology, for child with autism despite 
     parents’ preference for ABA-based program (tuition reimbursement 
     case) [M]

     65 (3d Cir. 2014)
   • ruled that even if the district’s refusal to provide parents with copy of 
     consultant’s report evaluating the system’s ABA program and to allow 
     their expert to observe the child’s class were procedural violations, 
     neither refusal deprived them of their opportunity for meaningful partic- 
     ipation in the IEP and IHO process [~M]

146. P P.L. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 56 F. Supp. 3d 147, 316 Ed.Law 
     Rep. 180 (E.D.N.Y. 2014)
   • ruled that lack of transition assessment, FBA, and parent counsel- 
     ing/training per state law did not rise to the level of denial of FAPE for 
     child with autism, but the proposed 6:1:1 placement was not reasonably 

30. Although not at issue on the appeal, the 
    IHO also awarded compensatory education 
    for the period prior to the unilateral place- 
    ment. [28]
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calculated to provide benefit due to the child’s proven needs for 1:1 instruction (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

147. S R.B. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 589 F. App’x 572, 313 Ed.Law Rep. 28 (2d Cir. 2014)

• rejected procedural challenge (less than full reevaluation after one year, mixed procedural-substantive challenge (omission of parents' choice of methodology) challenges to the proposed IEP and upheld substantive appropriateness of 6:1:1 placement to return middle school child with autism from specialized private school (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


• ruled that district’s embedded implementation, including supervised SLT interns, rather than the one-on-one approach that was the preference of the resigned SL therapist and that was the parents’ interpretation, fulfilled IEP provision for four hours per week of SLT in the “total school environment” of eight-year-old with autism [~M]

149. S F.K. v. Dep’t of Educ., State of Haw., 585 F. App’x 710 (9th Cir. 2014)

• ruled that the district’s placement for middle-school student with autism met the substantive and implementation standards for appropriateness [~M]


• upheld changed placement of child with autism from private ABA school to less intensive ABA program within the district based on the child’s progress, ruling that the failure of the notice to specify the school did not deny the parents’ meaningful opportunity for participation in this case [~M]


• reversed the IHO’s ruling that the district had engaged in predetermination for IEP of child with autism and seizure disorder, concluding instead that—distinguishable from Doug C.—the continuation of the IEP meeting without the parent did not violate the opportunity for meaningful participation in the specific circumstances of this case, but upheld the IHO’s ruling that the district failed to implement the IEP at a material level for three-month period (compensatory education case) [~M]


• ruled that IEP for student with epilepsy, pervasive development disorder, and oppositional defiant disorder who may have had ASD was appropriate despite lack of “autistic support” because the IEP provided for the services addressing the individual needs of the student regardless of the label [~E/~M]

ruled that parents of child with autism sufficiently had raised methodology issue in their complaint but, even assuming arguendo that the ABA methodology was inconsistent with the success of the child’s IEP, they failed to prove that the proposed public school was incapable of implementing the IEP (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

ruled that district’s proposed IEP that provided a 12-month month placement with 6:1+1 student:staff ratio in a district special school with TEACCH methodology met standards of appropriateness—“The district was not required to consider any particular teaching methodology in the development of [the child’s] IEP, and [the] IEP does not specify one [citing F.L.]” (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

ruled that exclusion of parents from the IEP process and, separately, inability of the proposed district placement to meet the child’s sensory needs constituted a denial of FAPE (tuition reimbursement case) [∼M]

156. (P) E.H. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 611 F. App’x 728, 321 Ed.Law Rep. 113 (2d Cir. 2015)
rejected parent’s procedural and substantive challenges to the BIP for their child with autism and their claim regarding the proposed classroom capacity, but remanded for determination of whether the IEP’s adoption of the private school’s goals without its DIR/Floortime method resulted in a substantive denial of FAPE (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

rejected various other claims of parents of kindergartner with autism, including alleged inadequacy of FBA/BIP but upheld denial of FAPE and corresponding compensatory education for one-year delay in conducting an AT assessment upon learning of his success at home with iPod for communication [M]

upheld district’s determination of non-eligibility for high-functioning highschool student with ASD who excelled in his academic classes but not, due to his social and pragmatic difficulties, in his other classes, where he did as well as his nondisabled peers [E]

upheld IHO’s decision for limited reimbursement to parent of preschool child with autism for Lovaas services, ruling that the parents’ unreasonable conduct factored into the district’s incomplete implementation of the child’s IFSP and IEP [∼M]

ruled that identification of student, who undisputedly was also OHI (based on ADHD) and SLD (in written expression), as ED rather than primarily qualifying with autism, and the failure to address autism in his
IEP was a substantive denial of FAPE (tuition reimbursement case) [E/~M]

161. **S Z.R. v. Oak Park Unified Sch. Dist., 622 F. App’x 630 (9th Cir. 2015)**

   • summarily affirmed decision ruling that proposed IEP of student with autism was appropriate, rejecting procedural challenges based on the goals and the IEP team composition (specifically, assistant principal who taught one course qualified as regular education teacher member) (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


   • ruled that student who no longer exhibited notable academic, behavioral, or social difficulties in school was no longer eligible as student with autism despite his at-home problems [E]

163. **S D.A.B. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 630 F. App’x 73, 327 Ed.Law Rep. 623 (2d Cir. 2015)**

   • rejected claims of procedural inappropriateness (e.g., goals that were insufficiently measurable) and substantive inappropriateness (e.g., teacher-student ratio) of proposed IEP for student with autism (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


   • ruled that district’s failure to implement tablet provision in IEP for high school student with autism met the requisite “substantial or significant” implementation standard (compensatory education case) [~M]

165. **P M.S. v. Lake Elsinore Unified Sch. Dist., 66 IDELR ¶ 17 (C.D. Cal. 2015)**

   • ruled that the district failed to properly assess the behavior of a 13-year-old with autism by not using a variety of assessment tools/strategies and by using a behavior aide to conduct an FBA [~E/~M]


   • ruled that district denied FAPE for child with autism by failing to sufficiently address his medical needs in his IEP, although rejecting various FAPE procedural claims (e.g., predetermination) and “substantive” claims (e.g., present levels, goals, and sensory needs) (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


   • ruled that proposed placement in 6:1:1 district class with ABA therapy met substantive standard for FAPE for 7-year-old child with autism (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


   • ruled that district’s failure to have proposed IEPs for twins with autism completed on timely basis for start of kindergarten was procedural violation that significantly impeded the parents’ opportunity for participation in the IEP process (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]
- rejected claim of parents of child with autism that district denied them meaningful opportunity to participate in the IEP process (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

- ruled that district’s failure to implement IEP-specified log for toileting skills of 9-year-old with autism did not amount to denial of FAPE where student made progress in various other specified areas (compensatory education case) [~M]

171. *S B.P. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ.*, 634 F. App’x 845, 330 Ed.Law Rep. 23 (2d Cir. 2015)  
- ruled that district’s evidence was sufficient to prove that despite its social worker’s misstatement, the proposed placement was able to implement the IEP of the child with autism (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

- ruled that proposed partially mainstreamed placement for student with autism met substantive standard for FAPE (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

- upheld, in brief opinion, that proposed collaborative preschool classroom was FAPE in the LRE for preschool child with autism (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

- certified, for class action purposes, class of students with autism who sufficiently alleged district’s blanket policy of denying them 1:1 instruction, ABA services, and services outside of the regular school day

- ruled that district’s refusal to discuss bullying upon parents’ reasonable belief that it interfered with the student’s ability to receive meaningful educational benefits significantly impeded their right to participate in the development of the IEP, thus constituting a procedural denial of FAPE—“not only potentially impaired the substance of the IEP but also prevented them from assessing the adequacy of their child’s IEP” (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


LEGAL ISSUES FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM

- ruled that district’s priority on behavioral interventions for 19-year-old with autism who exhibited self-injurious and aggressive behaviors met substantive standard for FAPE despite negligible academic progress (compensatory education case) [~M]


- ruled that proposed IEP for student with autism met the substantive standard for FAPE based on reasonably calculated goals and services for emotional and social, as well as academic, support (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- upheld district’s determination that child with previous diagnosis of autism (Asperger disorder) and subsequent private diagnoses of ADHD, mood disorder, and ED did not qualify under the IDEA despite behavioral difficulties due to parents’ failure to prove he had resulting need for special education [E]


- upheld ruling that district’s second-grade IEP and, after unilateral placement, third-grade proposed IEP for student with autism were both not substantively appropriate due to lack of 1:1 aide (compensatory education and tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- ruled, in this “expanding, but still opaque, subject-matter area,” that parents of child with autism may prospectively challenge a proposed placement school’s capacity to implement an IEP w/o first enrolling their child in that school and that the district has, and in this case failed to fulfill, the burden to prove this capacity (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- ruled that proposed IEP’s inclusion of expired goals based on DLR/Floortime in private school for students with autism was not likely to produce progress in proposed placement in public school (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]


- rejected parents’ procedural claims of insufficient evaluative materials and lack of opportunity for meaningful participation and upheld substantive appropriateness of proposed placement for student, including lack of ABA methodology (because IEP only mentioned it as one of previous successful methods for the student) (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

183. S J.C. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 643 F. App’x 31 (2d Cir. 2016)

- ruled that procedural violations (lack of parent counseling and FBA–BIP) was not prejudicial and that the proposed IEP met the substantive
standard for the child with autism, also rejecting speculative inability of the school to implement the IEP (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

184.  P I.B. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 67 IDELR ¶ 113 (S.D.N.Y. 2016) • ruled that proposed IEP for student with autism was not substantively appropriate due to his need for individualized services and a twelve-month program (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

185.  S D.M. v. Seattle Sch. Dist., 170 F. Supp. 3d 1328, 335 Ed.Law Rep. 249 (W.D. Wash. 2016) • upheld procedural appropriateness, including lack of pre-teaching and BCBA; substantive appropriateness, under snapshot rule; and LRE, including potential harm to the child, of IEP for child with autism [~M]

186.  S J.M. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 171 F. Supp. 3d 236, 335 Ed.Law Rep. 273 (S.D.N.Y. 2016) • rejected procedural challenge (specifically, lack of complete transition plan) as not prejudicial and substantive challenge to capability of the proposed placement of student with autism (e.g., size and noise) as impermissibly speculative based on R.E. (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

187.  P S.B. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 174 F. Supp. 3d 798, 335 Ed.Law Rep. 998 (S.D.N.Y. 2016) • ruled that proposed 6:1:1 placement for student was substantively inappropriate due to his need for 1:1 instruction although the various alleged procedural violations were either not required (ABA instruction), not proven (parental participation) or not prejudicial (e.g., lack of FBA–BIP) (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

188.  P Oskowis v. Sedona–Oak Creek Unified Sch. Dist., 67 IDELR ¶ 150 (D. Ariz. 2016) • ruled that district’s delays in advancing student with autism on his goals entitled him to 212 hours of compensatory education [~M]

189.  S T.C. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 67 IDELR ¶ 183 (S.D.N.Y. 2016) • rejected various procedural and substantive challenges to district’s proposed IEP for child with autism, including ruling that failure to specify the parents’ chosen methodology did not amount to a denial of FAPE where the parents did not prove that it was necessary for the child to receive benefit (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

190.  S M.E. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 67 IDELR ¶ 173 (S.D.N.Y. 2016) • rejected parent’s “prospective” challenge to the proposed placement of her child with autism at either of two district schools was speculative, i.e., not reasonably apparent, and he made sufficient progress (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

191.  S Moradnejad v. District of Columbia, 177 F. Supp. 3d 260, 336 Ed.Law Rep. 262 (D.D.C. 2016) • ruled that IEPs for first grader with autism that moved from self-contained to partially mainstreamed placement met the substantive standard for FAPE, with due deference to the IHO and to the LRE presumption [~M]
LEGAL ISSUES FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM

       • upheld two successive IEPs for sixth grader with autism with regard to
         implementation and substantive appropriateness, respectively (tuition
         reimbursement case) [~M]

       (2d Cir. 2016)
       • ruled that combination of serious procedural violations—failure to
         consider recent evaluative data, lack of FBAs–BIPs (under state law),
         insufficient S/L services (under state law for students with autism)—
         along with more minor procedural violations (e.g., parent counsel-
         ing/training per same state autism law) amounted to denial of FAPE for
         three successive IEPs, remanding for compensatory education [~M]

194.  P Timothy O. v. Paso Robles Unified Sch. Dist., 822 F.3d 1105,
       331 Ed.Law Rep. 673 (9th Cir. 2016)
       • ruled that failure to evaluate preschool child with SLI for autism was
         procedural violation that deprived him of critical educational opportuni-
         ties and substantially impaired his parents’ ability to fully participate in
         the collaborative IEP process—district’s informal observation does not
         trump clear notice from IEE and student’s behavior [~E/~M]

       • upheld substantive appropriateness of proposed day class for student
         with autism, thus declining reimbursement for at-home ABA program
         [M]

       • ruled that proposed 6:1:1 placement for child with autism was not
         individualized in terms of the child’s needs and did not address her
         documented necessity for 1:1 ABA therapy (tuition reimbursement case)
         [M]

       • upheld, based on snapshot approach, substantive appropriateness of
         proposed IEP for student with autism (tuition reimbursement case)
         [~M]

198.  (P) F.L. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 67 IDELR ¶ 266 (S.D.N.Y. 2016)
       • remanded issue of whether high school student with autism needed 1:1
         instruction beyond that the paraprofessional provided (tuition reim-
         bursement case) [~M]

199.  S Baquerizo v. Garden Grove Unified Sch. Dist., 826 F.3d 1179,
       333 Ed.Law Rep. 556 (9th Cir. 2016)
       • upheld the substantive appropriateness of the proposed IEP of a high
         school student with autism in a self-contained class, also rejecting the
         “laundry list” of procedural violations and the LRE claim of a guardian
         who had challenged several consecutive prior IEPs (tuition reimburse-
         ment case) [~M]
- ruled that special education class for seven-year old with autism, which provided him with small-group (e.g., DTT social skills) and individual services, met the substantive standard for FAPE, contrary to the parents’ insistence on a 40–hour at-home ABA program [M]

- ruled that consultative, rather than direct, SLT services constituted a denial of FAPE based on its necessity in light of the severity of communication needs of this elementary school child with autism [M]

- ruled that denial of Part C funding for ABA therapy for IFSP of child with autism did not violate § 504 or the ADA due to failure to show that the reason was the child’s disability and that subsequent delay of six months after the parents qualified was not remediable under the IDEA for money damages [M]

- ruled that proposed school was not capable of providing FAPE to child with autism because it did not offer a sufficiently small teacher:aide:student ratio and needed interaction with verbal peers (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

204. *(P)* *T.C. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ.*, 68 IDELR ¶ 137 (S.D.N.Y. 2016)
- remanded issue of school’s capability to implement IEP of child with autism who had been in private school that uses DIR/Floortime to determine whether the goals required this particular methodology [M]

- ruled that, despite various procedural nonprejudicial challenges, the proposed IEP was not substantively appropriate child with autism, who was in private placement that successfully used DIR/Floortime, for failing to meet his need for such a relationship-based instructional program or to provide SLT), awarding tuition reimbursement [M]

206. *S NB v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ.*, 68 IDELR ¶ 228 (S.D.N.Y. 2016)
- ruled that proposed IEP for child with autism and allergies was appropriate in relation to various challenges, including school’s ability to implement DIR Floortime method, distinguishing “FB, where the assigned teacher specifically disclaimed any ability to implement DIR-specific goals” (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

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- upheld substantive appropriateness of proposed IEP and capability of proposed placement for student with autism (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

208. S Forest Grove Sch. Dist. v. Student, 665 F. App’x 612, 340 Ed.Law Rep. 74 (9th Cir. 2016)\(^{33}\)
- ruled that district did not deny FAPE to a high school student with autism and ADHD when its IEP team refused to require the parents’ preferred instructional method, which was based on English teacher’s instructional approach [M]

- rejected procedural FAPE challenges (e.g., FBA–BIP and transition services) but ruled in favor of parent of child with autism for substantive FAPE because the proposed IEP’s failure to provide 1:1 ABA therapy was contrary to “a clear consensus” of the evaluative info at the IEP meeting (tuition reimbursement case–remanded for remaining steps) [M]

- upheld district’s determination that child’s primary disability was ED–no harm and no clear expert support for autism as the key diagnosis (here, they agreed on anxiety) [E]

211. S M.M. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 69 IDELR ¶ 208 (S.D.N.Y. 2017)
- upheld limited compensatory award for ABA services upon parent’s appellate challenge, seeking a more extensive award and § 504 relief [~M]

212. (P) Endrew F. v. Douglas Cnty. Sch. Dist. RE–1, 137 S. Ct. 988 (2017)\(^{34}\)
- ruled that the general substantive standard under the IDEA is whether the IEP is “reasonably calculated to enable [the] child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances,” remanding for application to this student with autism in a self-contained class (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

- upheld IHO’s decision that district failed to provide FAPE based on delayed and faulty evaluation of child with autism upon transitioning with behavioral problems from IU program to district kindergarten, but that district met substantive standard for FAPE (under PRR and Endrew F.) without verbal method after the effects of the revised BIP (compensatory education case) [M]


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33. In a subsequent decision, the federal district court upheld the district’s communication protocol as not violating the parent’s rights under the IDEA in light of unreasonably excessive emails. Forest Grove Sch. Dist. v. Student, 73 IDELR ¶ 115 (D. Or. 2018).

34. For the decision on remand to the district court, see infra case no. 229.
upheld substantive appropriateness of IEP for student with autism under Endrew F. standard, concluding that goals need not be aligned 1:1 to needs if addressed overall (compensatory education case) [~M]


upheld substantive appropriateness of IEP for fourth grader with autism and ID, concluding that the evaluation, progress measurement, and ABA-basis met the Endrew F. standard even if not the “gold standard” and 20 hours of 1:1 strict ABA that the parent’s BCBA recommended [M]


rejected, due to lack of deliberate indifference, § 504 challenge to alleged wrongful denial of ABA services via alleged discriminatory eligibility criteria [M]


ruled that district did not have reason to suspect autism at the time of the reevaluation [~E]


ruled that district’s IEP, including provision for ABA services, met its FAPE obligation, concluding that that its various evaluative rejections of autism despite physician’s diagnosis did not violate child find or FAPE [~E/~M]


upheld substantive appropriateness of proposed placement for student with autism under Endrew F. standard, declining reimbursement for ABA therapy [M]


brief affirmation of ruling that parent’s unreasonable pre-condition of fully observing (i.e., seeing and hearing) the reevaluation amounted to a withdrawal of consent, thus defeating the FAPE claim based on the failure to complete the reevaluation [~E]


upheld denial of FAPE for first grader with autism based on LRE and parentally prejudicial procedural violations of automatically assuming autistic support rather than general ed alternative; hearing officer’s award of compensatory education; and denial of § 504 retaliation claims [~M]


ruled, in relevant part, that the written offer of 40 minutes of SLT per week for high school student with autism, without specification of
individual or group setting was prejudicial procedural violation in terms of parental participation that did not impede district’s methodological discretion [~M]

   • ruled, under Endrew F., that district’s IEP for child with autism, which included ABA, provided FAPE despite not being strict ABA program that his parents sought [M]

   • ruled that initial evaluation that child was not eligible under autism or developmental delay (DD) was appropriate, despite district’s subsequent determination after IEE that the child was eligible as DD, concluding that even if the alleged deficiencies (e.g., use of outdated testing data) constituted procedural violations, the parents failed to meet their burden of proof that the child, if the procedural violations were cured, would have been eligible at the time [~E]

   • upheld the substantive appropriateness under Endrew F. of the district’s proposed IEP for child with autism, concluding with deference to the review officer that the IEP’s failure to mandate DIR/Floortime method was not a denial of FAPE and that the parents did not prove that the school was not capable of implementing the IEP (tuition reimbursement case) [M]

   • denied dismissal of IDEA claims challenging SEA policies that did not require ABA methodology in IEPs (although dismissing the alternative § 504 claims for lack of gross misjudgment/bad faith) [M]

   • affirmed that the parents of triplets with autism lacked standing to challenge, as a procedural violation of predetermination, the alleged district policy of not including ABA services in IEPs because their children’s IEPs provided for PECS, an ABA-based intervention [M]

228. S M.E. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ., 71 IDELR ¶ 125 (S.D.N.Y. 2018)
   • rejected parents’ claim that proposed public school placement did not have the capability to meet the sensory needs of their five-year-old child with autism [~M]


35. Subsequent to this decision, the district filed an appeal with the Tenth Circuit and, a few months later (on 6/24/18) reportedly reached, with the parents, a settlement of $1.3 million.
rulled, on remand, from Supreme Court\textsuperscript{36} that proposed IEP did not meet the new substantive standard for FAPE, concluding that the fourth grader with autism made minimal progress largely attributable to “the District’s lack of success in providing a program that would address Petitioner’s maladaptive behaviors” [\textsuperscript{M}]


\begin{itemize}
  \item upheld IHO’s ruling that district did not provide comprehensive evaluation of gifted fifth grader with ASD and ADD, without determining whether the student was eligible under the IDEA [\textsuperscript{E}]
\end{itemize}


\begin{itemize}
  \item ruled that district proposed ABA therapy for nine-year-old with autism at private clinic was LRE compared to part-time placement in home instruction [\textsuperscript{M}]
\end{itemize}


\begin{itemize}
  \item denied dismissal of parent’s § 504/ADA claim that providing access to insurance-funded ABA therapist for nine-year-old with autism was reasonable accommodation analogous to service animal [\textsuperscript{M}]
\end{itemize}

\textbf{233. S J.M. v. Matayoshi}, 729 F. App’x 585 (9th Cir. 2018)

\begin{itemize}
  \item ruled that proposed IEP for student with autism met the \textit{Endrew F.} standard with regard to bullying although not entirely complying with the U.S. Department of Education’s Dear Colleague Letter (2014) [\textsuperscript{M}]
\end{itemize}


\begin{itemize}
  \item upheld substantive appropriateness of proposed IEP for student with autism and SLD under \textit{Endrew F.} standard (and rejected predetermination claim) (tuition reimbursement case) [\textsuperscript{M}]
\end{itemize}


\begin{itemize}
  \item upheld substantive appropriateness of IEPs for two elementary school students with autism, with deferential “good faith” standard under the IDEA and § 504 for the IEP’s behavior strategies, including restraints [\textsuperscript{M}]
\end{itemize}

\textbf{236. S E.E. v. N.Y.C. Dep’t of Educ.}, 73 IDELR ¶ 9 (S.D.N.Y. 2018)

\begin{itemize}
  \item rejected claim that proposed in-district placement of child with autism in private school was not capable of implementing FAPE because the sensory equipment was not specified in the student’s IEP and, in any event, could have feasibly been in place at the start of the school year [\textsuperscript{M}]
\end{itemize}


\begin{itemize}
  \item ruled that mainstreamed placement was FAPE in the LRE for a child with autism who was obtaining passing grades, rejecting the parents’ claim that a 1:1 aide was necessary [\textsuperscript{M}]
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{36} See \textit{supra} case no. 212.
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• upheld district’s proposed placement in specialized in-district class for student with autism rather than continuing the student’s out-of-district placement, finding that the 1:1 aide sufficiently mitigated the safety risk of elopement—affirmance, with deference to IHO’s credibility determination, that the IEP provided “significant learning and meaningful educational benefits in light of [the child with autism’s] individual needs and potential” standard [~M]


• ruled that IDEA requires proposing FAPE (via a contingent IEP) for student with disabilities (here autism) enrolled in a residential treatment facility in another district [~M?]


• ruled that transition plan for student with autism from private to public placement met Endrew F. standard for FAPE [~M]


• ruled that dramatic progress of student with autism after SEA provided guidance to LEA under state seclusion/restraint law mooted FAPE claim against SEA and disproved the claim against LEA [~M]


• upheld appropriateness of IEP for high school student with autism, ID, and ADD, including transition plan and school refusal/bullying, and rejected predetermination claim regarding ABA [M]


• ruled that district’s four-month delay in assessing kindergartner with ED and OHI for autism, after being put on notice, was a procedural violation that resulted in denial of FAPE [~E]

244. S Bentonville Sch. Dist. v. Smith, 73 IDELR ¶ 203 (E.D. Ark. 2019)

• ruled that reevaluation, IEP contents, and BIP implementation upon changing fifth grader’s primary classification from autism to ED did not amount to denial of FAPE [~E/~/M]


• upheld substantive appropriateness, per Endrew F., of proposed IEP for middle-school student with autism as well as proposed placement’s capacity to implement IEP’s ABA provisions (tuition reimbursement case) [~M]

246. S E.M. v. Lewisville Indep Sch. Dist., 763 F. App’x 361 (5th Cir. 2019)
brief affirmance of district court decision that upheld the appropriateness of an IEP for a third grader with autism and other disabilities under Michael F. four-factor test, with no mention of Endrew F. and relaxed, similarly subsumed treatment of PRR \[\sim\]

• ruled that parents of students attending private ABA schools lacked standing to sue SEA under IDEA and dismissed parents’ IDEA and § 504/ADA claims as speculative at this point with regard to new state policy requiring ABA schools to offer related services, not just ABA, to students who need them \[\sim\]

• ruled that parents of student with autism were entitled to $155k for tuition reimbursement for private school because the district’s BIP for the student was not part of the IEP and, thus, deprived the parents of their participatory role \[\sim\]

• ruled that IEP for preschool child in autism classroom was appropriate and subsequent exiting was justifiable based on lack of continued need for special education, but remanded for possible compensatory education for violation of LRE \[E\sim\]

• ruled that district after-school program’s failure to continue providing trained aide supervised by special ed teacher for elementary school student with autism was a violation of § 504/ADA (meaningful access–reasonableness and necessity criteria), reserving issue of remedies for subsequent decision \[\sim\]

• ruled that district 1) sufficiently addressed the transition of the student with autism from private school although not specified in the IEP, 2) sufficiently specified the student’s LRE; 3) was not required to specify the qualifications of the aide in the IEP; and 4) also was not required to specify the ABA methodology in the IEP \[\sim\]

• upheld substantive appropriateness of IEP, including its use of sensory integration, for child with multiple disabilities, including autism, in accordance with PRR and Endrew F., and rejected parental participation challenge in a case of “a profoundly toxic lack of trust” \[\sim\]

• adopted the Van Duyn materiality standard for failure-to-implement claims and applied it in favor of the district for the stay-put IEP of child
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with autism, distinguishing Endrew F. as applying to “content” FAPE claims. [~M]

254. S J.G. v. Dep’t of Educ., State of Haw., 772 F. App’x 567 (9th Cir. 2019)
• ruled, in brief decision, that district’s proposed change in placement of middle schooler with autism from private school to its autism center, including use of LRE checklist, was not predetermination and met Endrew F. standard [~M]

• rejected appropriateness of private school for grade 7 student with autism and anxiety disorder due to its failure to offer services designed to meet his unique needs despite limited evidence of social, emotional, and attendance improvement [~M]

• ruled that IEP for 6-year-old with autism and epilepsy met the Endrew F. substantive standard for FAPE, and that its provision for a 1:1 aide was not for ABA therapy under the circumstances, which included ABA services in the lab and constant needs for safety and supervision of the child [~M]

• upheld appropriateness of district’s IEP for student with autism that provided ABA therapy, concluding that an ABA residential placement was not necessary [~M]

• ruled that IEP for fourth grader with ED that reduced his sensory therapies in contradiction of his repeated, cogent concurrent medical diagnosis of autism and provided for placement in school for correction of purely voluntarily behaviors failed to meet the Endrew F. standard for FAPE (tuition reimbursement case) [~E/M]

• reversed IEP team’s exiting student with autism as no longer eligible, ruling that “[a] student does not become ineligible because he or she is performing at a satisfactory level with the aid of special education services” [E]

V. A CHECKLIST OF WINNING-LOSING FACTORS
IN AUTISM METHODOLOGY CASES

A. Your procedures:
• A.1 Has your district committed procedural violations, especially those that are prejudicial (i.e., amount to a denial of FAPE)?

B. Your program:
B.1 Is your IEP sufficiently specific to autistic students in general and this student specifically?

B.2 Does your program/placement include any ABA or Lovaas component?

B.3 Are the specially designed instruction and related services in the IEP based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable?

B.4 Do the following have sufficient specialized expertise:
   a) evaluator(s)
   b) IEP team
   c) teacher(s) and related service providers

C. Your witnesses:

C.1 Are your expert witnesses credible and convincing:
   a) child’s teacher(s)?
   b) other district personnel?
   c) outside specialists?

C.2 Do they have specific data concerning the child’s progress?

D. Other factors:

D.1 Is your attorney sufficiently specialized in terms of the world of special education?

   What about the parents’ advocate or attorney?

D.2. If the case is at the judicial stage, did you win at the due process and/or review officer levels, particularly at the highest level in two-tier states?

VI. State Laws

Some states have added requirements, via legislation or regulations (or guidelines, which do not have the force of law) that effectively add to the FAPE foundations established by the IDEA.37 Here are a few examples:38

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- **Connecticut:** School districts must provide ABA services to any child with ASD if the student’s IEP or 504 plan requires these services. The service provider must be either (A) licensed by the Department of Public Health or certified by the State Department of Education, with such services are within the scope of practice of such license or certificate, or (B) certified by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board as a behavior analyst or, if working under the supervision of a certified behavior analyst, an assistant behavior analyst, the child’s teacher, or the child’s paraprofessional.

- **New York:** For students with autism, the various additional specifications for IEP appropriateness include: (a) a maximum age range of 36 months for instructional groups of students under age 16; (b) a special education teacher “with a background in teaching students with autism” when the child is in a placement with students with other disabilities or with regular education students; (c) parent counseling and training for follow-up intervention activities at home; and (d) transitional support services upon a regular education placement or one containing students with other disabilities.

- **Michigan:** For students with autism, FAPE must include either (a) an IU-approved autism-specific program approved, or (b) a class size limit of 5, with an aide if 3–5 students.

- **New Mexico** and Texas: For each child eligible under the classification of autism, the IEP team must “consider, based on peer-reviewed, research-based educational programming practices to the extent practicable and, when needed” the following 11 IEP components (with examples not summarized here):

38. In contrast, the following part of the Pennsylvania regulations’ definition of “autistic support” does not seem to add substantive requirements: “The IEP for [students with autism] must address needs as identified by the team which may include, as appropriate, the verbal and nonverbal communication needs of the child; social interaction skills and proficiencies; the child’s response to sensory experiences and changes in the environment, daily routine and schedules; and, the need for positive behavior supports or behavioral interventions.” 22 PA. CODE § 14.131(a)(1)(1) (emphasis supplied).

39. **Conn. Gen. Stat.** § 10–76ii. This legislation defines ABA as “the design, implementation and evaluation of environmental modifications, using behavioral stimuli and consequences, including the use of direct observation, measurement and functional analysis of the relationship between the environment and behavior, to produce socially significant improvement in human behavior.” Id.


42. **N.M. Admin. Code** § 6.31.2.11(B)(5).

43. **19 Tex. Admin. Code** § 89.1055(e).
(1) extended day or ESY programming

(2) daily schedules reflecting minimal unstructured time and active engagement in learning activities

(3) in-home and community-based training or viable alternatives that assist the student with acquisition of social/behavioral skills

(4) positive behavior support strategies based on relevant information (e.g., a BIP based on a FBA)

(5) futures planning (at any age) for integrated living, work, community, and educational environments that considers skills necessary to function in current and post-secondary environments

(6) parent/family training and support, provided by qualified personnel with experience in ASD

(7) suitable staff-to-student ratio appropriate to identified activities and as needed to achieve social/behavioral progress based on the child’s developmental and learning level (acquisition, fluency, maintenance, generalization) that encourages work towards individual independence

(8) communication interventions, including language forms and functions that enhance effective communication across settings

(9) social skills supports and strategies based on social skills assessment/curriculum and across settings

(10) professional educator/staff support

(11) teaching strategies based on peer reviewed, research-based practices for students with ASD