

To the Superintendent of Public Instruction:

The Governor's Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders is urging Nevada's Department of Education to develop a clear and consistent State policy, with guidance to school districts, for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) who require Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy.

In developing the policy, the Department should consider creating a work group that consists of ABA professionals and school district staff to establish a State policy that will allow the IEP to include ABA services regardless of funding source to remove barriers which impede access to care. The group will create policies that will not lessen the schools or the insurance's responsibility, but clearly identify the following:

- a. Require the school to support access to ABA by endorsing the following or similar language on the IEP. "The IEP recognizes the student's need to receive medical necessary treatment, which may impact full-time school attendance. An adjusted schedule is supported to allow student to receive treatment. Treatment, which may occur in and/or outside of the school environment without incurring truancy."
- b. The IEP should be required to specify the number of weekly ABA hours needed by the student, with a distinction between the hours to be provided in school and out of school.
- c. The IEP would specify therapy across all environments based on medical necessity in the least restrictive environment in a community-based setting;
- d. Specifying the credentials required of an ABA professional who assists in determining the total weekly ABA hours needed by the student. Credentials must be consistent with credentials outlined by the BACB;
- e. Require collaboration for ABA services to maximize their effectiveness to ensure continuity of services across environments;
- f. Requiring the school to encourage a parent, through written communication from the school, to invite the student's outside ABA professional(s) to participate in relevant IEP meetings;
- g. Allowing a student's out-of-school ABA Professional (i.e. BCBAs, Licensed Psychologists ) (who is funded privately, through private insurance, Medicaid, or ATAP and who passes appropriate background checks) to observe the student in the school environment quarterly and/or allowing such a provider to support the student during the school day if the student's behavior impedes learning or if the student's history includes elopement, suspension, or aggression.

Through these recommendations, our goal is to improve collaboration and access. Access, which will when combined with the student's Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and medically necessary levels of treatment, will ameliorate autism symptoms to create a better learning environment for the student and their peers.