

Autism Assessment Clinic
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Dear Colleagues,

In an effort to provide more practical information regarding the VCCYF's Autism Assessment Clinic, please refer to the outline below. This clinic will specialize in the evaluation of children, adolescents, and young adults. We continue to focus exclusively on the assessment of autism spectrum disorders in families supported by Medicaid and unfortunately we do not have the capacity at this time to act as a treatment clinic. Certainly our comprehensive evaluation process will help to determine each child's unique array of struggles and strengths, allowing us to formulate a comprehensive list of recommendations for services if needed. In addition, we have partnered with State of Vermont Child Development Clinic, who will provide their knowledge of state and local resources to assist in connecting families with appropriate follow-up care.

In brief, to provide a comprehensive autism evaluation, we will involve an interdisciplinary team of professionals who will offer a multi-day assessment using state-of-the-art tools that will help ensure an accurate diagnosis. We realize that this assessment involves an enormous time commitment from families and that some of the forms may be challenging and somewhat redundant. In order to provide a thorough, thoughtful, well-researched, and family-informed evaluation, we appreciate everyone's cooperation in this process. The information we obtain is crucial in helping us to provide the most inclusive and complete we can for your patient and his/her family.

Typically, the evaluation process will be broken down into three appointments:

- After we receive the referral, the **pre-appointment assessment** packet will be sent to families. *This paperwork can be completed with the assistance of members from our team* and will allow us to gather collateral information from current and past providers prior to the initial visit. Components of this packet can be completed on-line. This packet of information will likely include:
 - The Vermont Health Behavior Questionnaire
 - ASEBA Checklists (Child Behavior Checklist, Youth Self-Report, Adult Self-Report, Adult Behavior Checklist, and Teacher Report Forms)
 - Social Communication Questionnaires
 - Social Responsiveness Scales
- In addition, it is very helpful for our team to have access to Individualized Education Plans, past psychological evaluations, and other pertinent developmental assessments prior to the first scheduled appointment.

- When we receive this paperwork from the family, we will schedule an **initial appointment** (Monday mornings) during which we will interview the family, other caregivers, and the child (if appropriate). We will be completing a full psychiatric and behavioral interview, an Autism Diagnostic Interview, and the child will participate in cognitive testing. Based on the child's age, either the Mullen Scales of Early Learning or the Differential Abilities Scales - II will be used. This session will be approximately 2-3 hours in length.
- At the **second appointment** (Tuesday mornings), the child will participate in more focused speech/language and play-oriented interactive activities. This session will be approximately 3-4 hours in length and include an Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule along with a variety of speech and language assessments as determined by the team. We will also be evaluating the child's adaptive functioning, play, executive functioning, theory of mind, and social cognition.
- A **third appointment** (the child does not need to attend) will be scheduled approximately two weeks after the second visit to meet with the child's family and other caregivers to discuss the results of the evaluation. This appointment will be an hour in length and generally be scheduled for Tuesday afternoons.

I hope this information is helpful in determining appropriate referrals. I welcome other inquiries or questions.

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