

Assessing Program Quality with the Autism Program Environment Rating Scale



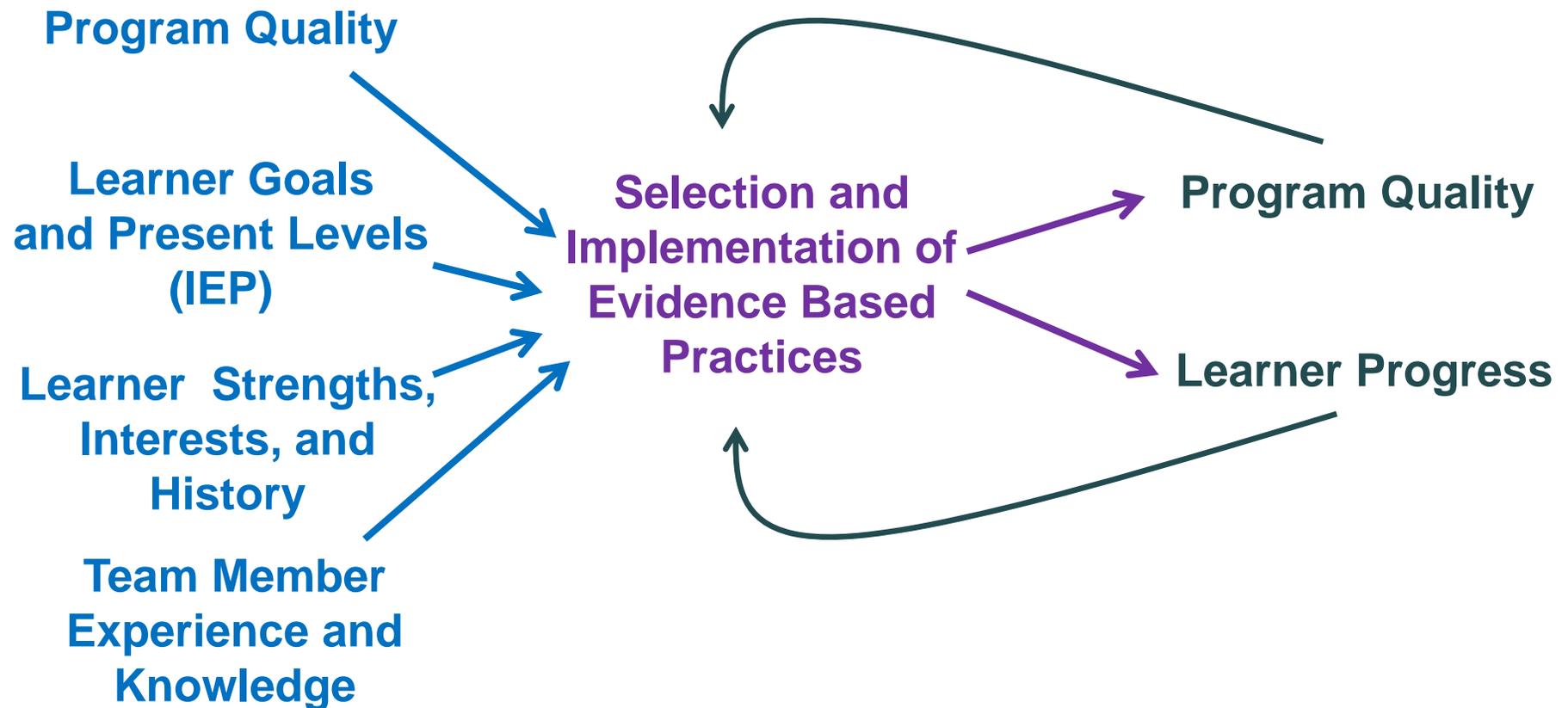
National Professional Development Center on Autism
Spectrum Disorders, FPG Child Development Institute,
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



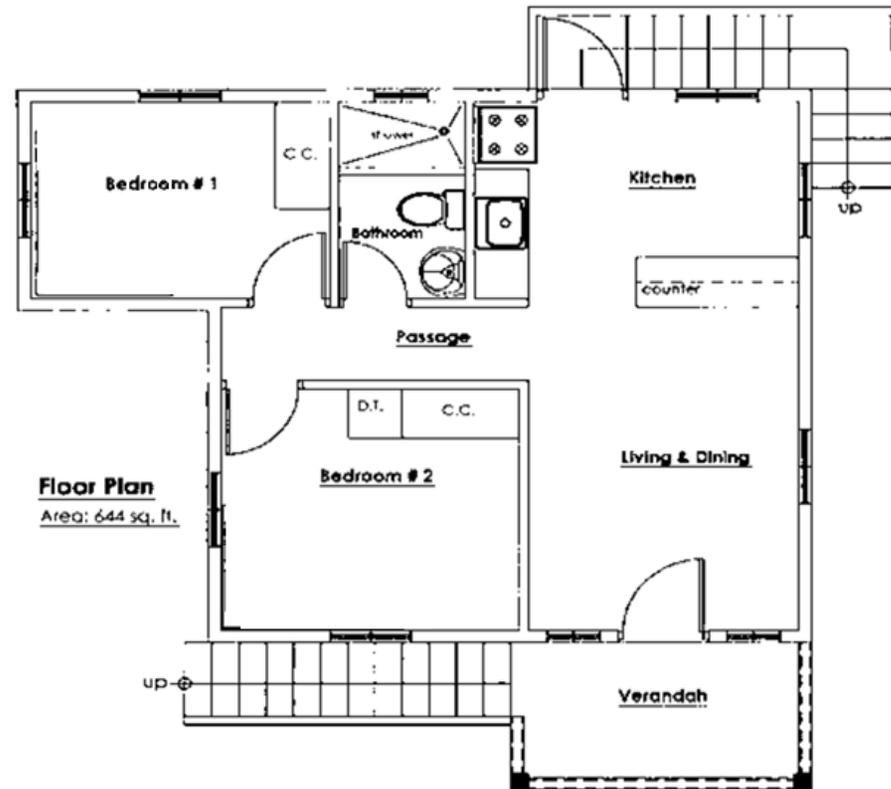
Assessment → Implementation → Outcomes



Program Quality Indicators and Evidence-Based Practices (EBP)

Program Quality

- Contextual features of the program that represent best practices
- Program quality as the house in which practices are employed



Program Quality Indicators and Evidence-Based Practices (EBP)

EBP

- Evidence-based practices as specific tools for specific skills
- EBP as the furniture or appliances designed for specific functions



Autism Program Environment Rating Scale (APERS)

- Designed to assess *quality indicators of programs* for children and youth with ASD
- Purposes of the APERS
 - Coaching & Consultation
 - Professional development
 - Program evaluation



Coaching & Consultation

- Purpose: to provide focused, direct feedback
- Process example:
 - Collaboratively develop goals from report
 - Define plan for change/coaching
 - Define timeline for change/coaching



Professional Development

- Purpose: to expand understanding of quality programs for students who have ASD
- Process example:
 - Share APERS content
 - Broad self-evaluation
 - Incorporate peer/mentor coaching



Program Evaluation

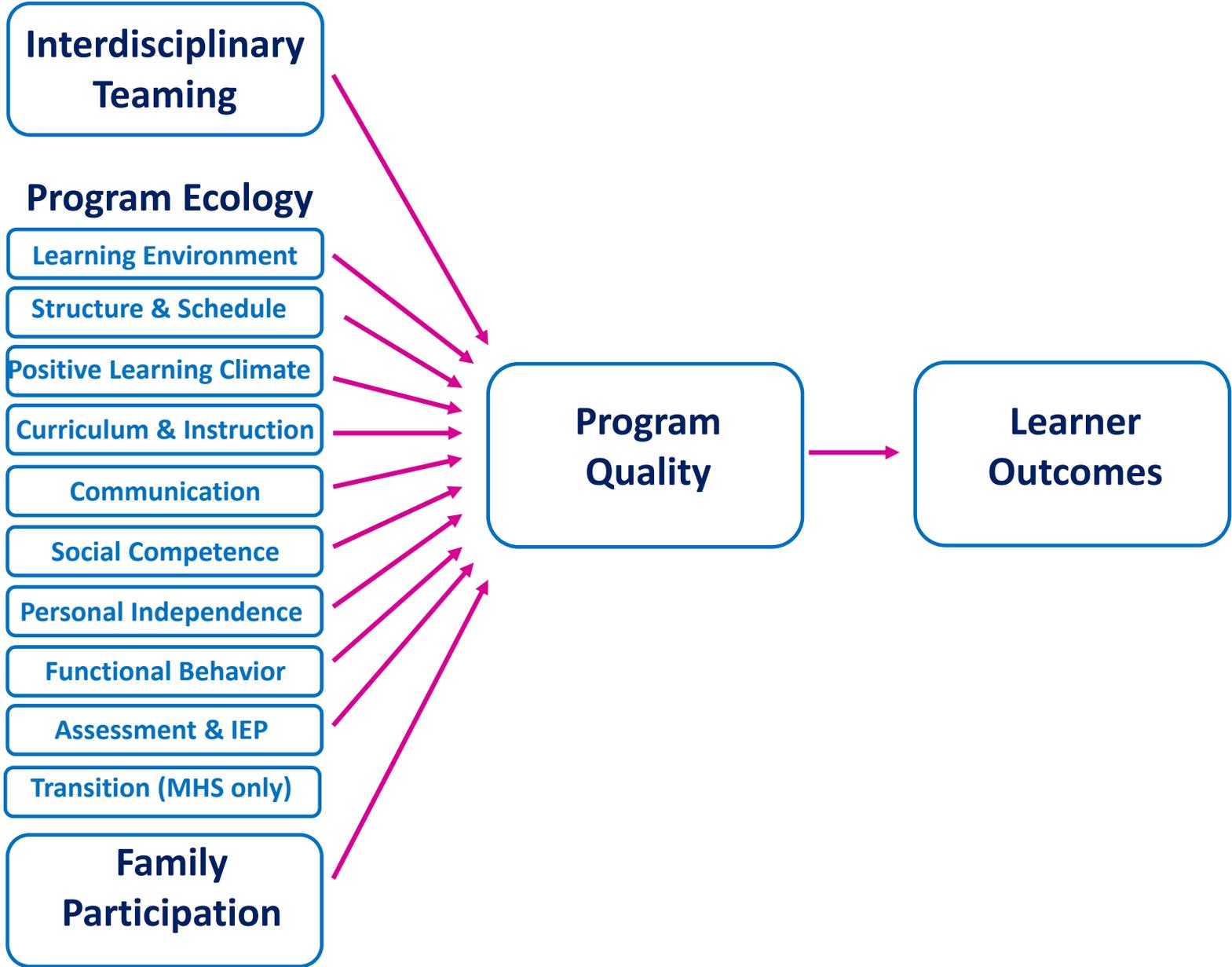
- Purpose: to evaluate the quality of a program for purposes other than professional development
- Not an aspect of the NPDC's use of the instrument
 - Not for comparison between programs
 - Psychometric properties not yet established



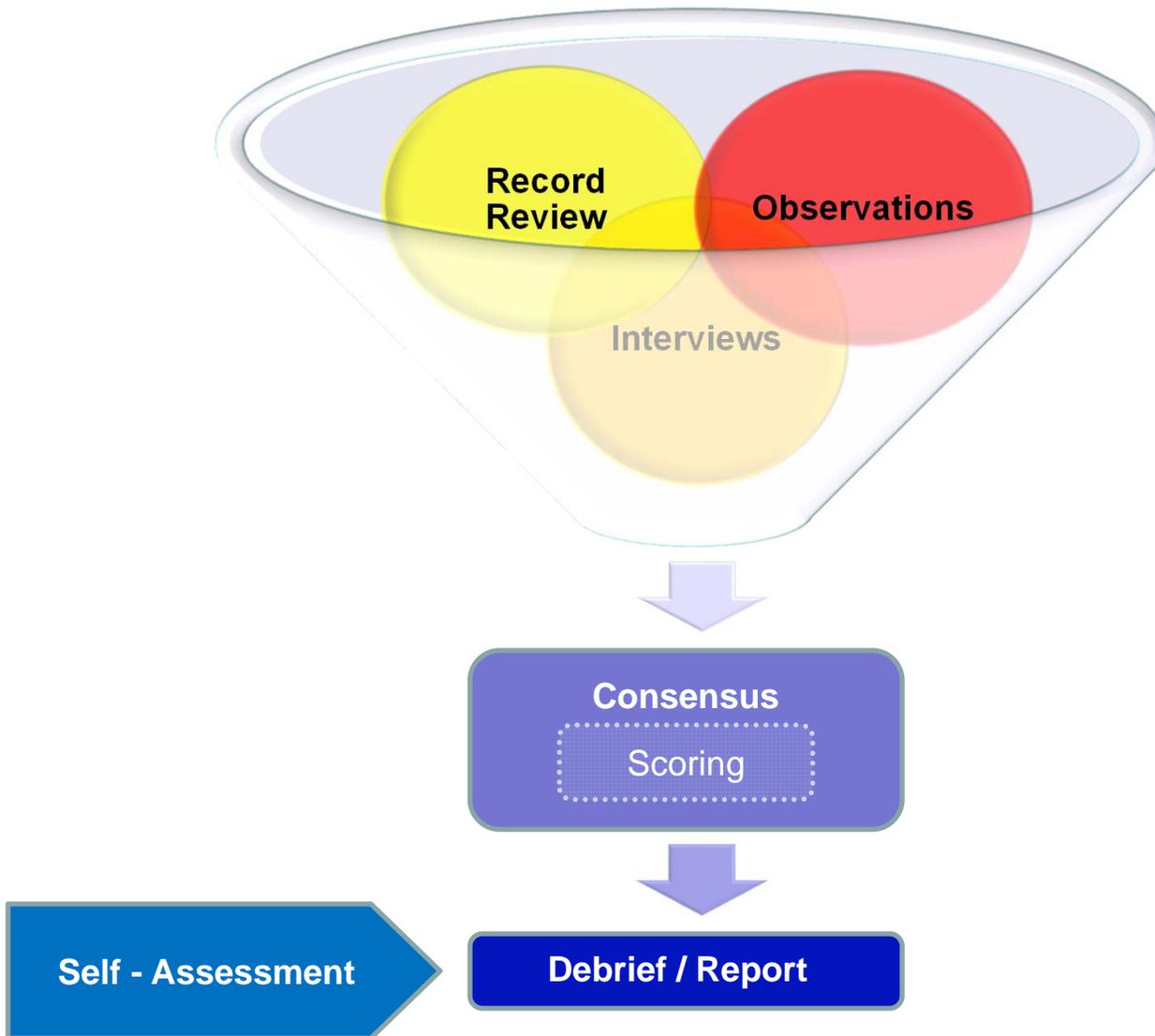
Features of APERS

- Two APERS formats: PE; MHS
- Organized by domains and subdomains
- Applicable in self-contained and inclusive programs
- Scored on a five-point scale with behavioral anchors at three points
- Results can be summarized by scores or graphs





APERS Process



APERS Components

APERS	Domains	Items	Type of Items
Preschool/ Elementary	11	64	Observation = 33 Interview = 31
Middle/High	12	66	Observation = 33 Interview = 33



How Do We Collect This Information?

- Observation in program across the school day
- Review IEP
- Interview teacher(s)
- Interview parent(s)
- Interview team member
- Self-Assessment



Observations

- For inclusive programs with more than one class, observe two students for three hours each
- For self-contained programs observe for three hours
- Focus on taking notes on all content areas but not scoring
- Negotiate where to position yourself
- Find unobtrusive opportunity to scan entire classroom
- Limit interaction with classroom staff and students



Interviews

- Interview:
 - A parent of a child with autism
 - Teacher (usually special education)
 - Team member (general education teacher, related service provider or other knowledgeable team member)
- Logistics:
 - Approximately 30-50 min/interview
 - Interview parties separately
 - Work within the interview protocol to ask open-ended questions—avoid leading or forcing yes/no answers



Interview Protocol

1. Review purpose of APERS
2. Discuss the importance of interviewee's perspective and information for developing a deeper understanding of program
3. Use broad questions first
 - Use follow-up probes to gather information that you do not get from the broad question
 - Use notes section to capture additional information that is useful but does not fit with a specific interview question.



Interview Intro

- Establish Rapport
- Purpose of Interview
- Structure of Interview

- *See Interview Protocol to specific points to cover*



Self-Assessment

- Completing the self-assessment
 - Ask the practitioner to complete the self-assessment before you complete the full APERS
 - Explain that the self-assessment provides valuable information for reflection and the professional development process
 - The self-assessment results will be looked at later alongside results from the full APERS
 - Takes 30 minutes to a few hours, depending on practitioner's level of reflection



Scoring Process

- Scores should be based on the entire observation – not isolated interactions and occurrences
- During scoring process make note of overall themes and suggestions for debrief/report



Scoring System

- Some items contain specific instructions or are not applicable to students who receive services *entirely* in an inclusive setting.
- Additional instructions are provided for some items and should be scored using the directions at the bottom of the page.
- Ratings are based on a scale of 1-5.



Score Sheet

- Can be used for both inclusive and self-contained classrooms.
- Score each observation-based item for all settings/classrooms observed.
- Score each interview item for teacher, team member, and parent.



General Scoring Guidelines

- Scores for individual items should always be 1-5.
- For inclusive middle/high school programs, interview items, or when multiple settings are observed for an individual item, use your best judgment to derive a score that best represents the overall program.
- To derive a final score with multiple observers or in multiple settings do not average individual item scores; instead, reach consensus with the other observer and complete a consensus score sheet.



Assigning Ratings

- A rating of 1 – *any* indicator is observed and checked
- A rating of 2 – *none* of the indicators under 1 are checked and *at least one* indicator of 3 is checked
- A rating of 3 – *none* of the indicators under 1 are checked and *all* of the indicators under 3 are checked
- A rating of 4 – *all* indicators under 3 are checked and *at least one* indicator under 5 is checked.
- A rating of 5 – *all* indicators under 3 and 5 are checked.



Example: Score of 1

27*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently over-prompt students during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently under-prompt or use no prompts during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> When team members use prompts only one form is used with students (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts followed by increased support as needed).<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a variety of prompts during instruction to meet individual student needs (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> When needed team members use a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts, graduated guidance, simultaneous instruction).<input type="checkbox"/> When needed, team members use a variety of prompts to meet individual student needs.
-----	---	--	--



Example: Score of 2

27*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently over-prompt students during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently under-prompt or use no prompts during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> When team members use prompts only one form is used with students (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts followed by increased support as needed).<input type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a variety of prompts during instruction to meet individual student needs (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> When needed team members use a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts, graduated guidance, simultaneous instruction).<input type="checkbox"/> When needed, team members use a variety of prompts to meet individual student needs.
-----	--	--	--



Example: Score of 3

27*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently over-prompt students during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently under-prompt or use no prompts during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> When team members use prompts only one form is used with students (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts followed by increased support as needed).<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a variety of prompts during instruction to meet individual student needs (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> When needed team members use a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts, graduated guidance, simultaneous instruction).<input type="checkbox"/> When needed, team members use a variety of prompts to meet individual student needs.
-----	--	---	--



Example: Score of 4

27*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently over-prompt students during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently under-prompt or use no prompts during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> When team members use prompts only one form is used with students (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts followed by increased support as needed).<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a variety of prompts during instruction to meet individual student needs (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> When needed team members use a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts, graduated guidance, simultaneous instruction).<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, team members use a variety of prompts to meet individual student needs.
-----	--	---	---



Example: Score of 5

27*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently over-prompt students during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> Team members consistently under-prompt or use no prompts during instruction.<input type="checkbox"/> When team members use prompts only one form is used with students (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts followed by increased support as needed).<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a variety of prompts during instruction to meet individual student needs (e.g., physical, verbal, gestural).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed team members use a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts, graduated guidance, simultaneous instruction).<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When needed, team members use a variety of prompts to meet individual student needs.
-----	--	---	--



Assigning Ratings: Inclusive Classrooms

- The Score Sheet is designed to help you organize this information by giving you separate spaces to score each setting observed.
- To obtain a score for each item, use your best judgment and/or reach consensus with another observer.



Debrief / Report

- Prior to meeting prioritize areas of focus for strengths of program and areas for growth
- Areas of focus become content for report
- Ensure that you have specific examples from the observation for each item to be discussed
- Use visual graphs to support discussion
 - APERS graph
 - Self-assessment graph



Components of Debrief / Report

- “What is the APERS and how does it work?”
 - Not for comparison between programs
 - Psychometric properties not yet established
 - Effective as a tool for professional development and technical assistance
- Program Strengths
 - General strengths and specific examples
- Areas for Growth
 - Priorities areas to focus change
 - Only choose areas that you have a constructive suggestion for change and growth



Debrief Intro

- Describe what the APERS is and isn't
 - Is a professional development tool to help make decisions for program improvement
 - Is based on a snapshot of the program from what was learned during the day's observation, interviews and records
 - One program's APERS cannot be compared to another program's APERS
 - Most important are the relative strengths and areas for growth of your program



Debrief Intro

- Describe Structure of the Debrief
 - To compare self-assessment to APERS assessment
 - To describe and discuss specific program strengths
 - To describe and discuss specific program areas for growth and make recommendations for program improvement
- Explain that a written report will be sent shortly after the debrief
 - Captures same information discussed in debrief



Debrief / Report

- Report is a record of the debriefing conversation; do not add content that was not covered during the debrief
 - not necessary to have a complete report at the debrief
 - A debrief shortly after the observation is most important with a report to follow
- See examples



Key Terms

- ***Team Members***: two or more professionals directly involved in planning and implementing a student's educational program
- ***All Team Members***: all professionals directly involved in planning and implementing a student's educational program
- ***Key Team Member***: one team member who is expected to take key responsibility for the implementation of a student's educational program or a particular aspect of that program



Key Terms

- ***School Staff:*** individuals who come into contact with a student during the course of the observation period
- ***Peer:*** any other similarly-aged student with or without disabilities. (A more specific descriptor (e.g., typically developing) will be used if an anchor describes a specific type of peers.)
- Other terms (e.g., few, some, multiple, sufficient, regularly) are defined in the protocol under ‘Key Terms’.



APERS Practice Videos

Preview Item 25 (PE)



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



TCR 13:25:00:18
PLAY LOCK



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

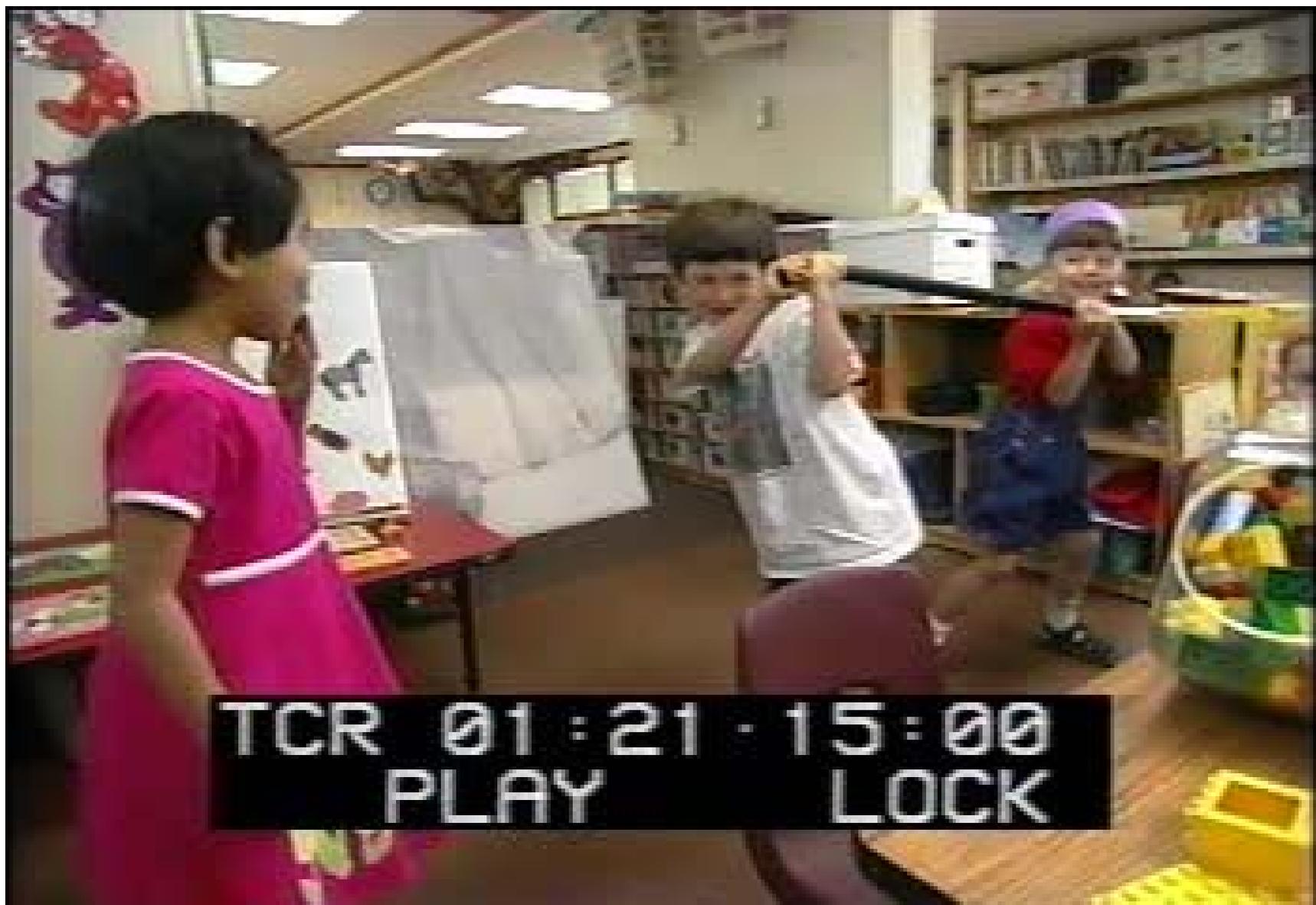
APERS Practice Videos

Score Item 25 (PE)

Preview Items 39, 40 (PE)



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

APERS Practice Videos

Score Items 39, 40 (PE)

Preview Items 24, 27, 28, 29 (MHS)



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



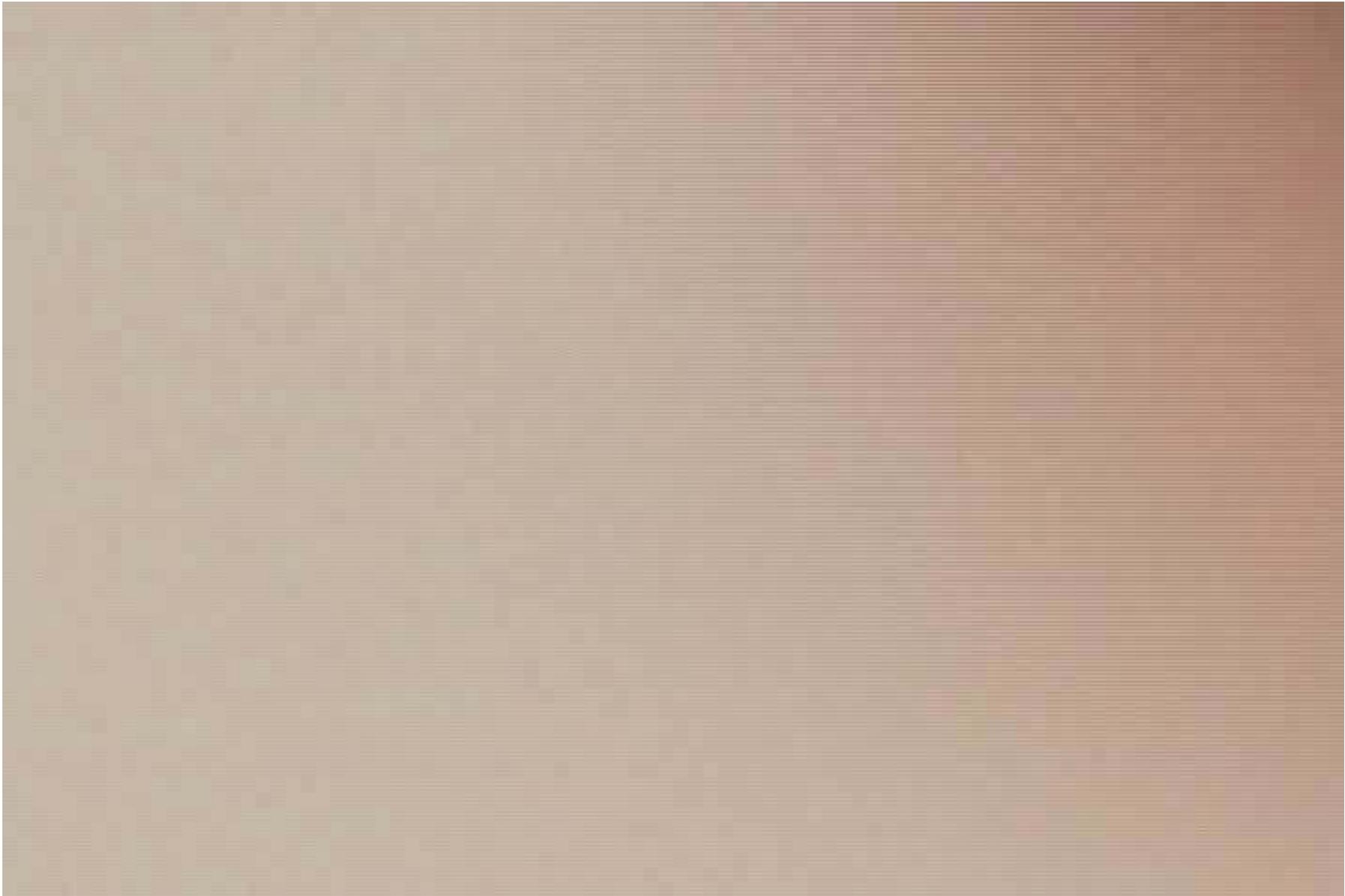
THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

APERS Practice Videos

Score Items 24, 27, 28, 29 (MHS)

Preview Item 39-I and 43-I (PE)





THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

APERS Practice Videos

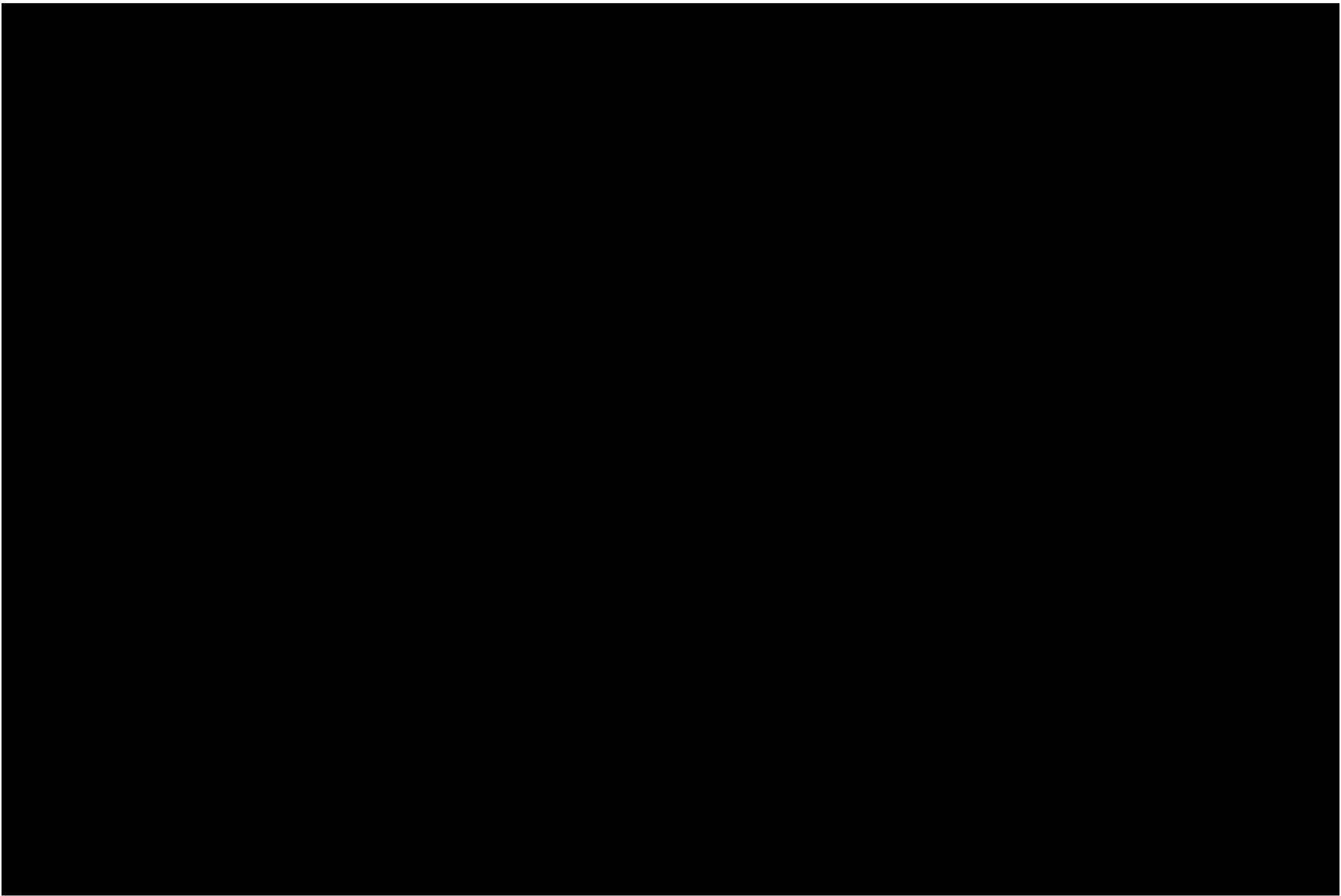
Score Item 39-1 and 43-1 (PE)

***Preview Items 48, 49, 50, 52,
53, 54, 55, 56 (MHS)***





THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

APERS Practice Videos

***Score Items 48, 49, 50, 52, 53,
54, 55, 56 (MHS)***



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Components of Debrief / Report

- “What is the APERS and how does it work?”
 - Not for comparison between programs
 - Psychometric properties not yet established
 - Effective as a tool for professional development and technical assistance
- Program Strengths
 - General strengths and specific examples
- Areas for Growth
 - Priorities areas to focus change
 - Only choose areas that you have a constructive suggestion for change and growth



Contact Us



THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ON
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS