

**Answer Key: “Autism Spectrum Disorder (Part 1): An Overview for Educators”**

1. Identify the two major characteristics of ASD. For each characteristic, provide at least two examples of how a child with ASD might display them.

- **Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across contexts (e.g., does not initiate or respond to social interactions, lack of facial expressions, lack of interest in peers)**
- **Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities (e.g., flapping of hands, inability to handle changes in routine, very focused interest, atypical responses to sensory input)**

2. There are two ways that children can be identified as having ASD.

- a. Compare and contrast the two methods of identification.

**The two ways that children can be identified as having ASD are through a medical diagnosis and through an educational determination.**

- **The medical diagnosis is autism spectrum disorder (ASD), is done by a physician or psychologist, is based on the criteria in the DSM-5, and is required to access ASD-related medical services.**
- **The educational determination is “autism,” is made by a multi-disciplinary school team, is based on the IDEA '04 regulations, and is required to access special education services.**

- b. Explain why having both diagnoses is important for a child and their family.

**Both the medical diagnosis and the educational determination are important for a child/family because each makes the child and family eligible for different types of services.**

3. Review Jaquese’s Scenario and answer the questions.

- a. Would this child or student have an IFSP team or an IEP team? Explain.

**IEP team, because he is elementary school age.**

- b. Who are the required members for this team?

**Required members of the IEP team: general education teacher, special education teacher, parent(s)/caregiver(s), representative of the school district, and a school psychologist or other assessment professional.**

- c. Identify at least two additional team members that might be on this team and explain why?

**Any two of the following:**

- **Board Certified Behavior Analyst – to help Jaquese learn more adaptive ways of interacting with peers**
- **Social worker/psychologist – to help Jaquese improve his social skills**
- **Paraprofessional – to provide needed one-to-one support**

4. Cherith is a single parent of six-year-old twins who have ASD. Both have cognitive impairments, language deficits, and behavior issues. Additionally, one child requires almost total assistance for daily living skills in areas such as feeding, dressing, and toileting and the mom reports that the other child does not sleep. Both children receive services and supports in school and in clinic settings.

Identify and explain four struggles or difficulties this mom might face.

**Include four of the following struggles or difficulties outlined below as well as reasonable justification:**

- **High stress levels – Cherith might be facing high levels of stress related to her children's:**
  - **Cognitive impairment**
  - **Challenging behaviors**
  - **Language delays**
  - **Lack of self-care abilities**
- **Lack of time – It is extremely likely that Cherith's time with the twins reduces the amount of time she has for work and leisure activities. As a single parent, Cherith has more responsibility with her children than she would if she were married and had a spouse or partner with whom to share day-to-day responsibilities.**
- **High levels of fatigue – The high levels of care and supervision her children require might result in Cherith feeling fatigued. Additionally, she might be losing sleep if one of the children is not sleeping.**
- **Financial burdens – Cherith's twins receive multiple services and supports outside the home and school (e.g., medical, therapies). These services and supports are expensive and not covered in full by insurance or other programs. The cost of gas getting to and from therapies can add up as well.**
- **New roles – It is likely that Cherith has had to assume additional parenting roles such as child's advocate, case manager, inclusion specialist, transition specialist, or medical expert.**

5. Recall Jaquese from the Challenge. Jaquese is a ten-year-old student in an inclusive fourth-grade classroom. Jaquese loves mathematics and science and is above grade level in both subjects. Because of this, his teachers have a hard time keeping him engaged during mathematics and science instruction. On the other hand, Jaquese has difficulty with reading and writing. He also struggles with reading comprehension, both when a story is read to him and when he reads it independently. He's obsessed with superheroes and will often quote and act out scenes from their comic books or films. This is often frustrating for the teacher, because no matter how she tries to distract him from his imaginary superheroes, he always comes back to them. In fact, he often cannot begin his work until he has finished acting out an entire scene. Further, most students do not understand his obsession; they find Jaquese annoying and do their best to avoid him.

Imagine you are Jaquese's general education teacher. Using what you know about Jaquese, select three strategies discussed in this module that you could implement to increase his success in the classroom. Explain why you chose each and how it will benefit him.

**Answers might vary, but those that contain ideas similar to three of the following are acceptable:**

- **Get to know the student – Use Jaquese's interest in superheroes to teach reading and writing.**
- **Provide instruction in ASD-specific skills or areas – For example, Jaquese might receive instruction in social interaction and flexibility to help him expand his attempts at social engagement with his peers and to help him interrupt a scene so that he can begin his work.**
- **Provide individualized supports to help Jaquese with reading and writing.**
- **Provide individualized supports to keep Jaquese engaged during math and science instruction.**
- **Create social opportunities – Because Jaquese wants to interact with peers, create situations that make it easier for him to do so appropriately.**