

Preparation and Collaboration: Supporting Students In and Out of School

Presentation for the Imagine Conference

Ashley Collins, MA, BCBA
Low Incidence Educational Administration Specialist
Office of Special Education (at NM PED)

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Who is in the room?

Presenter: Ashley Collins

- Educator and BCBA in schools for 14 years
- Supports/Uses a Trauma Assumed Approach
- Currently the Low Incidence Specialist at the Office of Special Education
- Parent of individuals with disabilities

Attendees:

- Parents/Family/Caregivers
- School Staff
- Other Community Members

Agenda

- Medical Diagnosis vs Educational Eligibility of Autism
- For Students who Receive Special Education Services Due to an Autism Eligibility
- Considerations for Supporting Yourself or Another Individual with Autism
- Caretakers, take care
- Resources



Medical Diagnosis Versus Educational Eligibility

What's the Difference?

Medical Diagnosis

Provided by a medical provider (including evaluators within ABA clinics)

Caregivers usually make an appointment specifically for this

Results in a diagnostic report- KEEP!

Educational Eligibility

Federally mandated process for determining educational eligibility which requires parent consent for formal evaluations

Educational eligibility must be reviewed every 3 years, but that may not include additional evaluations

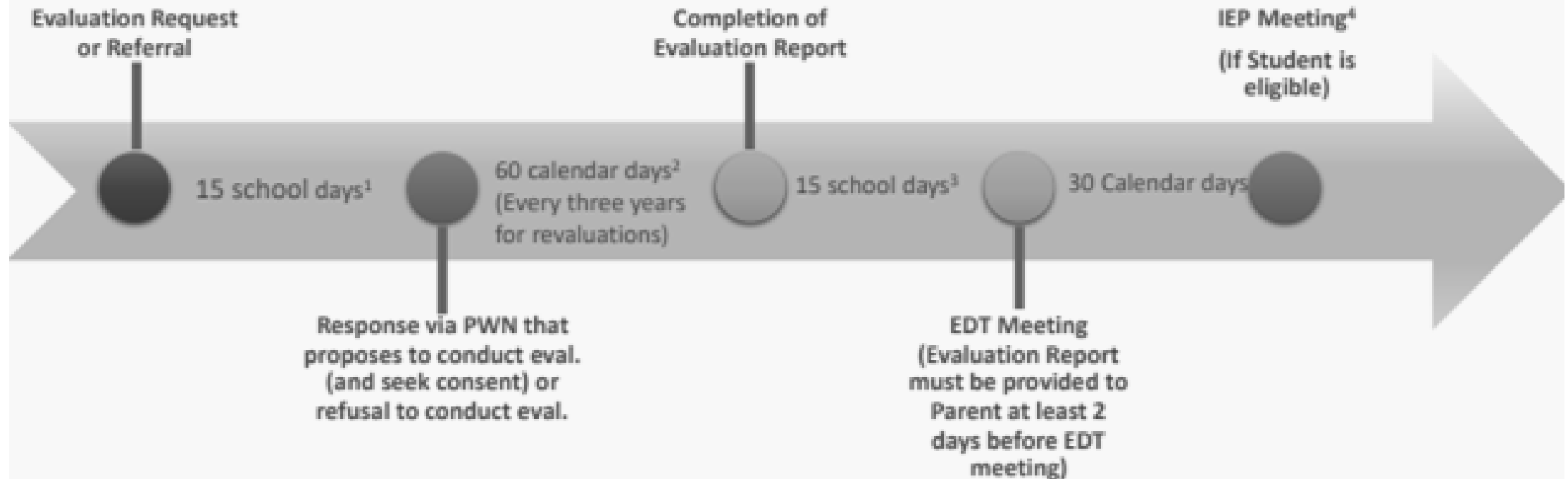
Results in the development of an IEP if the student is determined to be eligible and the parent provides consent for services at the initial IEP meeting.

Why is There A Difference?

Medical Diagnosis		Educational Eligibility
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Provides Access to Federally Mandated Special Education Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	May qualify an individual to receive applied behavior analysis (availability, modality, and location may vary)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	May qualify an individual to receive Social Security Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Guarantees the Winning Numbers for the Next Lottery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	May provide the necessary documentation for the individual to receive ADA accommodations or other supports in a workplace environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	May provide the necessary documentation for the individual to receive educational supports in post-secondary educational environments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Evaluation & Eligibility Timeline



1 If request for evaluation is received within 15 school days before a school break lasting 14 calendar days, then the public agency shall respond no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the request.
2 Child is not produced for evaluation or child enrolls in another LEA and the other LEA is making sufficient progress towards completing evaluation.
3 If the evaluation report is completed during a break of at least 14 calendar days, then the public agency is required to hold an EDT and IEP meeting within 15 school days after the students return to school.
4 Special education and related services shall be made available as soon as possible after the initial IEP meeting



**For Students who Receive
Special Education Services Due
to an Autism Eligibility**

5 Legally Required IEP Team Members You Need to Know

At Least One General
Education Teacher



Parent or Guardian



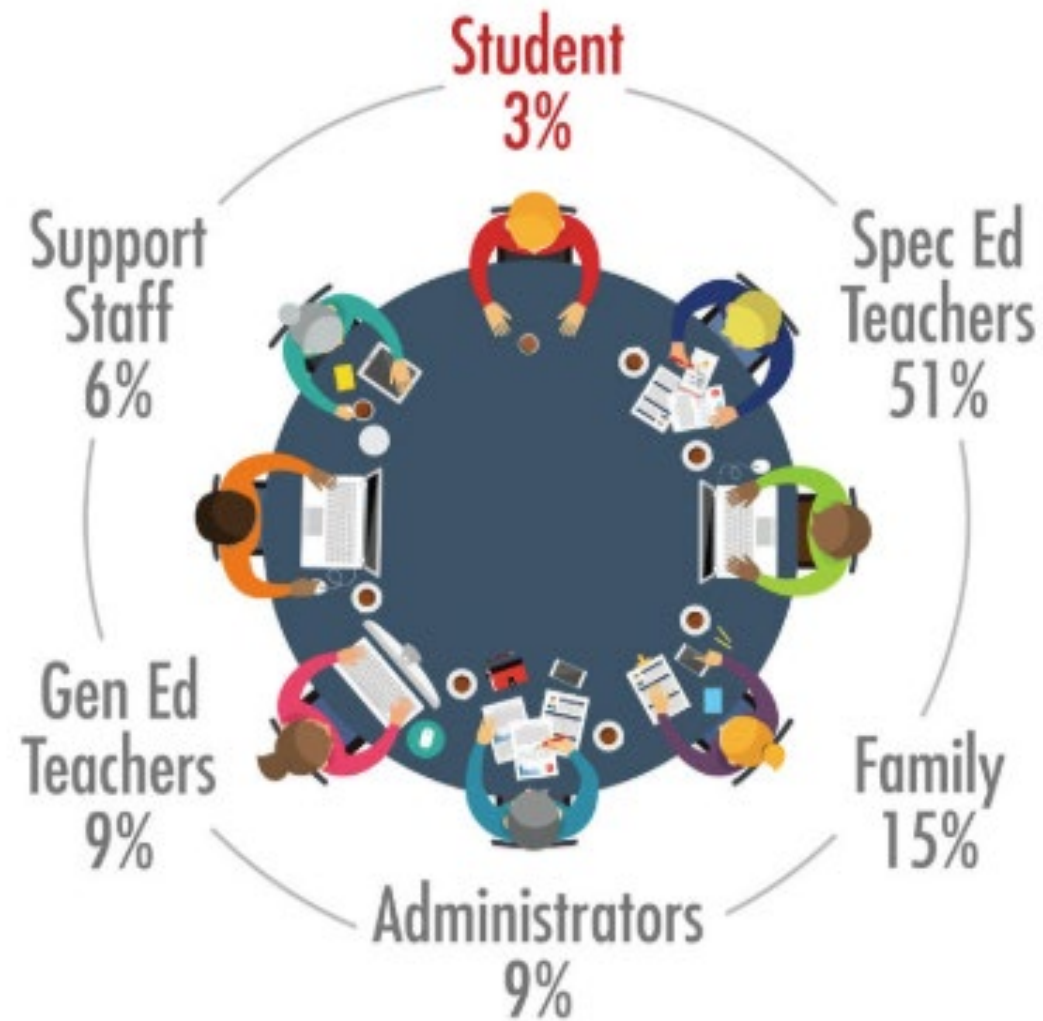
At Least One
Special Education
Teacher or Provider

A Representative of
the School District
(LEA Representative)



An Individual Who
Can Interpret the
Results of Evaluations

Percentage of Speaking Time by Role



Adapted from Van Dycke, Martin, & Lovett, 2006.

Individualized Education Program

§300.320 IEP means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting that must include:

- A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including the impact of the child's disability, a statement of measurable annual (academic and functional) goals
- A description of benchmarks or short-term objectives for students taking alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, how progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured; and frequency of goal progress reports
- A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, program modifications or support
- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class

Individualized Education Program

- Accommodations necessary to measure academic and functional performance on state and district wide assessments
- Alternate Assessments (for qualifying students)- a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment, and why the alternate assessment is appropriate for the child.
- The beginning date, frequency, location, and duration of services and modifications
- Transition Pages required for students 14 years old and above
- Transfer of rights at age of majority (18 years old)

****For Students with an Autism Eligibility- the 11 Autism Consideration Page is Required****

11 Autism Considerations

1. Extended Educational Programming
2. Daily Schedules
3. In Home and Community Based Training
4. Positive Behavior Support Strategies
5. Futures Planning (beginning at any age)
6. Parent/Family Training and Support

11 Autism Considerations

7. Staff to Student Ratio
8. Communication Interventions
9. Social Skills
10. Professional Educator/Support
11. Teaching Strategies based on peer-reviewed and/or researched based practices

-NMAC 6.31.2.11.B(5)

Evidence-Based Practices for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Antecedent-Based Interventions
- Cognitive Behavioral/Instructional Strategies
- Direct Instruction
- Differential Reinforcement
- Discrete Trial Training
- Exercise & Movement
- Extinction

Evidence-Based Practices for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Functional Behavioral Assessment
- Functional Communication Training
- Modeling
- Naturalistic Intervention
- Peer-Mediated Instruction & Intervention
- Parent-Implemented Intervention
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

Evidence-Based Practices for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Pivotal Response Training
- Prompting
- Reinforcement
- Response Interruption & Redirection
- Scripting
- Self-Management
- Social Narratives

Evidence-Based Practices for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Social Skills Training
- Structured Play Group
- Task Analysis
- Technology-Aided Instruction & Intervention
- Time Delay
- Video Modeling
- Visual Supports

If a Student Doesn't Receive Special Education Services for Autism...

- If the student already receives special education services under a different eligibility, they can still receive services directed to support all of their educational challenges, including those that may be related to autism
- Request evaluation at a later date, especially if you or school staff notice a greater impact of the medically documented disability
- 504 plan

Evidence-Based Practices for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- **Antecedent-Based Interventions**
 - Cognitive Behavioral/Instructional Strategies
 - Direct Instruction
 - Differential Reinforcement
 - Discrete Trial Training
 - Exercise & Movement
 - Extinction



Considerations for Supporting Yourself or Another Individual with Autism

Picture Your Person...



Think about a short-term goal you have for this person.

Another way of thinking about this is what is something that you want him/her to do that they are not doing, struggling to do, or can't do yet?

Goal Driven Decisions

Consider the following:

- Where else might this person need to know how to do this skill?
- Who else can help this person learn to do this?
- What resources might be helpful for this person to learn this?
- Is that something that is developmentally appropriate for individuals in that life stage or of a similar age to do?
- What is the long term consequence of never learning to do that?

Choose Your Battles



Prepare for Changes

Sometimes, things don't go as planned...

- Plan for flexibility
- Practice “unexpected” events
- When “different” events happen try to prepare in advance
- Plan for a “practice run”

Prepare for Hard Things to Make Them Less Hard

- Plan for the “hard thing”
- Use Visual Supports including visual schedules, task analyses, video modeling, etc.
- Discuss expectations ahead of time (both what is expected and what to expect)
- Talk about alternatives
- Talk about what supports might be needed
- Practice the “hard thing”

New and Exciting can Seem Big and Scary

Preparation is Key!

Find photos or videos online of newer places. Many organizations have 3d tours or individuals who do video walk throughs.

Go to similar places to prepare for big events (ie if interested in going to the balloon fiesta, try going to the Hot Air Balloon Museum beforehand)

Go to the target location in advance without time constraints and with less expectation (ie don't expect to get through the entire thing)

Have items that are familiar and comforting on hand

Think Back to Something You Tried

If something you tried to do to support an individual with autism and it didn't go as planned...

- Think about the supports that were provided
- Think about what you may do differently
- Think about who you might ask for support
- Think about what resources you might need





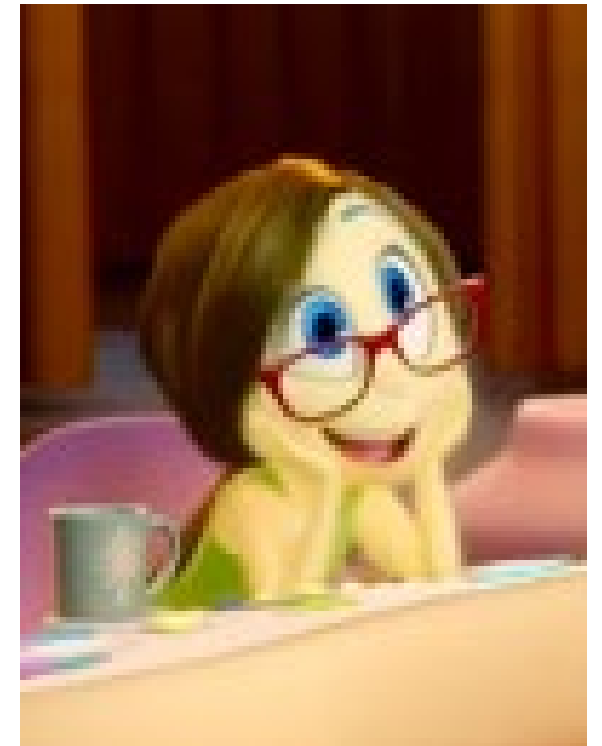
**Remember, Taking
Care of Yourself Does
Support Your Child
with Autism...**

Most Important Predictor of Family Stability and a Child's Ability to Thrive in Adulthood

Harvard Study of Adult Development: This longitudinal study shows that a mother's warmth and happiness is a significant predictor of a child's emotional and social skill development. Happier mothers typically create more stable and nurturing familial environments, which combined leads to better outcomes for children.

Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development): This study shows that there is a direct relationship between a mother's self-identified well-being and her child's outcomes. Children of happier mothers tend to do better academically and have less behavior problems in school.

Parental Psychological Distress, Family Functioning, and Subsequent Child Development: The results of this study show the impact of maternal happiness and mental health on child outcomes. Mothers who rated their happiness higher were associated with children with better mental health, better academic achievement, and greater overall life satisfaction.



Don't Worry Dads- Your *Active* Involvement is **IMPORTANT!**

“ACADEMIC IMPACT

- Children who feel greater closeness to their father are twice as likely to enter college or find stable employment after high school.
- More frequent father engagement in their child's home literacy and education results in higher achievement levels in reading and math for the children.
- Fathers who become involved in school settings early in their children's lives are more likely to stay engaged later, which increases student achievement.

BEHAVIORAL IMPACT

- The more frequently young children are spanked, the higher the odds of increased aggressive behavior two years later.
- Father engagement reduces the frequency of behavioral problems in boys while also decreasing delinquency and economic disadvantage in low-income families.
- For both boys and girls, positive father engagement is associated with lower levels of impulsivity and higher ratings of self-control.
- A positive father-daughter relationship delays initial sexual activity for adolescent girls.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL IMPACT

- Father involvement leads to: better problem-solving competence, stress tolerance, greater empathy, and moral sensitivity.
- Children who grow up without an emotionally present father tend to place responsibility for their problems on others and the world.
- Father engagement reduces psychological problems and rates of depression in young women.
- High levels of dad involvement are correlated with sociability and confidence in children.”

- The Fatherhood Project





Resources

Resources/Tips for Those Who May be Flying for the First Time

Sunflower Lanyard Program: ABQ participates in the global Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program. You can request a free Sunflower lanyard at the airport information booth. Wearing this discreetly alerts Sunport staff that you may need extra time, patience, or assistance.

TSA Cares: For pre-flight assistance, travelers can call the TSA Cares helpline at (855) 787-2227 at least 72 hours before their flight to arrange a customized security screening.

ASAP Volunteers: The Sunport has an Airport Service Ambassador Program (ASAP), where volunteers and trained therapy animals roam the terminal to provide emotional support and navigation assistance to weary travelers.

Resources for Parents (for School Related Topics)

EPICS: <https://www.epicsnm.org/about>

We are a Community Parent Resource Center serving families who have Native American children with disabilities or developmental delays in NM, including those with special healthcare needs, and the professionals that work with them.

Exceptional Children's Assistance Center: <https://www.ecac-parentcenter.org/calendar/>

Webinar: Self Advocacy training for students 11-22 years old- offered at least monthly (currently)

Webinar: 504 Plans May 27th 5-6pm

Webinar: Preparing for and Participating in IEP Team Meetings- offered at least monthly (currently)

Center for Parent Information and Resources: <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/iep-overview/>

Many resources to help parents prepare for IEP and 504 Plan Meetings as well as other advocacy supports

Parents Helping Parents: <https://www.php.com/elearning/preparing-for-an-iep-team-meeting/>

Many resources for parents and caregivers for a students with a variety of disabilities

Some Online and Community Resources and Activities for Individuals with Autism

Explora: Sensory Friendly Times- Next scheduled is 8.14.2026 5:30-7:30pm (see website for full schedule)

Proud to be Me- <https://sites.google.com/view/ptbmdance-and-movement-therapy/home>- free dance therapy classes for elementary and middle schoolers

We Rock the Spectrum Kids Gym- Autism-focused, indoor playground and kids gym that provides children fun activities and a sensory-safe environment

Urban Air Adventure Park- Sensory Friendly Jump Sundays (1st Sunday each month from 10am-12pm)

Disability Arts Collaborative-Ongoing Events- <http://adacnm.org>

Albuquerque BioPark: The ABQ BioPark is proud to be a Certified Autism Center™ (CAC). Our staff has completed training and certification in best practices when assisting autistic and sensory-sensitive guests. Sensory Guide available here: <https://www.cabq.gov/arts/culture/biopark/about-the-biopark/tickets/accessibility/sensory-resources-guides>

2026 Sensory- friendly Mornings:

Zoo	June 2	July 7	Aug. 4	Sept. 1	Oct. 6	Nov. 3	Dec. 1
Aquarium & Botanic Garden	June 16	July 21	Aug. 18	Sept. 15	Oct. 20	Nov. 17	Dec. 15

Local Resources/Support for Parents of Individuals With Autism

UNM CDD's Autism Programs Parent Home Training (PHT): "PHT is a three-to-four month-long educational program funded by the NM Department of Health and offered within families' homes. PHT is available for children under age six."

<https://unmhealth.org/services/development-disabilities/programs/autism-programs/autism-parent-training.html>

UNM CDD's Information Network Portal: "This portal provides free disability-related information and resources to families throughout New Mexico." - <https://cdd.health.unm.edu/infonet/>

UNM CDD's Autism Portal for Parents: "This series is designed in collaboration with the New Mexico Public Education Department to help parents and caregivers learn to support positive behavior and teach functional skills within the home and to bridge these lessons between the home and school environments." - <https://cdd.health.unm.edu/autismportal/online-training/for-parents/>

NMSTART: "An evidence-based, community crisis prevention and intervention service model for individuals aged 6 and older with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Intellectual Disability and other mental health needs. The START model is person-centered and solutions-focused, based in positive psychology approaches." <https://files.captivate.fm/library/13187ef1-2d05-49bf-8fb2-f36f800b112d/NMSTART-Referral-Flyer.pdf>

Child and Adolescent CareLink NM Program: "CareLink is a community program that helps you or your loved one access behavioral health and medical services in Albuquerque." - <https://unmhealth.org/services/behavioral-health/carelink.html>

For "Teens and children 17 and younger and diagnosed with a severe emotional disturbance..."

Phone: 505-272-2573 or Email: CareLink@salud.unm.edu



Behavior Support Resources for Children and Parents in New Mexico (Not Autism Specific):

CYFD's Behavioral Health Division: phone (505) 827-8808 or text to: (505) 591-9444

[https://www.cyfd.nm.gov/behavioral-health/#:~:text=For%20more%20information%20on%20CYFD's,\(505\)%20827%2D8008](https://www.cyfd.nm.gov/behavioral-health/#:~:text=For%20more%20information%20on%20CYFD's,(505)%20827%2D8008).

CYFD's Behavioral Health Services (BHS) division is the lead on children's behavioral health policy in collaboration with other State Agencies

Statewide Crisis and Access Line: (855) NMCRISIS or 1-855-662-7474

<http://www.nmcrisisline.com/> "Whatever you're facing, you don't have to go through it alone—support is available, right here in New Mexico... Our trained professionals are ready to listen—24/7, free, and completely confidential. Created by New Mexicans for New Mexicans, we understand this community because we're part of it."

NM Health Care Authority- Behavioral Health Services Division: (505) 476-9266

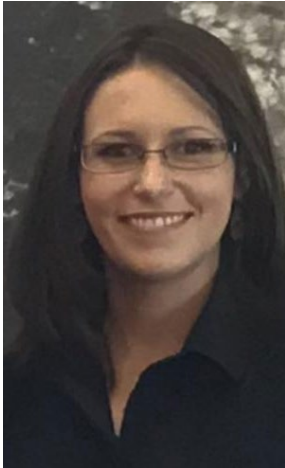
The Behavioral Health Services Division, along with our partners, is committed to improving New Mexico's Behavioral Health System, driven by health equity, quality, and access to service for all New Mexicans.

CYFD Warmline: 1-8554NM-7100 (Available by phone 7am-11:30pm or via text from 6:00-11:00pm)

The Warmline is a free, confidential parenting resource for families across New Mexico. You'll receive guidance, emotional support, and practical solutions to everyday parenting issues—without judgment or fear.

UNM CDD's Behavioral Health Clinics for Children and Adolescents: 505-272-2190 or 505-272-2890

For More Information



Ashley Collins, MA, BCBA

Low Incidence Educational Administration
Specialist

Office of Special Education
ashley.collins@ped.nm.gov
(505) 629-7836