Examples

Adaptive behaviors may include:

- Toileting
- Grooming
- Dressing
- Feeding
- Developing friendships
- Engaging in appropriate social interactions
- Understanding personal responsibility in the classroom

Many of these deficits will be addressed through the child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP), whether through adaptive behavior goals and objectives or additional services provided for the child. The level of adaptive behavior skills varies with the symptom severity of children with ASD.

Relation to IQ

The child’s IQ can also be a predictor of the level of adaptive skills (Kanne et al., 2011). Research supports that children with ASD display a gap between their development of adaptive skills and chronological age. Studies have shown that the younger the child, the smaller the gap between these two areas. The gap tends to widen as the child gets older, since chronological age typically increases faster than the development of adaptive skills (Kanne et al., 2011).

Evaluation

In order to plan for diagnosis, instructional program and treatment planning, and family support, an evaluation of adaptive functioning is recommended and sometimes necessary. This evaluation is necessary to determine the child’s functioning ability in the area of adaptive skills,
and is especially important for preschool to kindergarten-aged students, for it is a “crucial component of a developmental and diagnostic assessment for children with autism” (Perry, Flanagan, Geier, & Freeman, 2009).

Adaptive behavior skills can be evaluated through a variety of the following ways:

- Observation
- Parent/Caregiver interview
- Parent/Caregiver report
- Adaptive behavior measures
  - Vineland Adaptive Behaviors Scales, 2nd Edition

Results of these individual evaluations are necessary due to the individualized symptoms and skill levels of all children with ASD. Once the child’s current levels of adaptive skills are determined, specially designed instruction (often through task analyses) is to be determined by the child’s educators and family.

References
