SPED 760 Assignment 3

**Overview of Student**

Bobby is a middle school student receiving special education support at his school. Bobby has been diagnosed with autism which has affected his home and school life. His parents say Bobby is a great kid who wants to do his best and fit in with everyone else at school. His mother says that he tries his best to be “the good kid”. She also reports that he takes medication to help him concentrate. She reports tantrums at home and says he comes home from school exhausted each day. His dad says that when he was younger Bobby avoided eye contact or didn’t respond to his parents. His dad also shared that Bobby engaged in repetitive play with his toys such as moving just the arm of an action figure or spinning the wheels on toy cars rather than using his imagination to play. Both parents seem to think that the school could be doing more to support Bobby. His teachers report that he is a pleasure to work with. Social Studies is his favorite subject. He struggles in Math especially with Algebra, but his mom says he would do great in Geometry. One teacher reported that when it comes to writing he struggles with coming up with the words to write but does not have any trouble coming up with ideas or concepts for his writing. His speech therapist reports that Bobby does not interact during group activities and chooses to talk to himself instead of engaging in the group. Bobby likes music and has a favorite band. He likes to play video games and says he prefers to spend time alone. He knows all about mobile technology and plays games on his phone during class. He says that he feels stressed after school and hates the cafeteria because people are too close to him and act crazy.

**Application of DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria: Autism Spectrum Disorder**

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| Does the featured student meet the definition of autism under the DSM-5 (2013)? Yes, Bobby meets the definition of autism under the DSM-5 (2013). He shows impairments in social-emotional reciprocity, nonverbal communicative behaviors, and developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships. He displays restrictive patterns of behavior including stereotyped movement in the use of objects during play and fixated interests on video games, music, and mobile technology. His parents describe these symptoms as beginning in early childhood before age 3. |
| **(1) Impairments in Social Communication and Social Interaction (currently or in past) [All three required]** |
| (a) Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity Bobby ignored peers who greet him as observed during his social skills class; Bobby also blurts out answers in Social Studies, which frustrated some peers |
| (b) Deficits in nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction Dad reports lack of eye contact at an early age; observations from PE state Bobby would wander a short way while instructions were given. |
| (c) Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships Observations of Bobby during class state that he does not initiate conversations with peers; His dad reported that he never engaged in imaginative play. His summary of evaluation states he holds on to arguments for months or years after they are over. |
| **(2) Restrictive Patterns of Behavior, Interests or Activities (currently or in the past) [Two required]** |
| (a) Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, speech, or use of objects Bobby fidgets in class including rocking in his seat and tapping his pencil. His dad reported playing with cars by spinning the wheels rather than imagining a race. He repeats no when asked to complete work. |
| (b) Insistence on sameness, ritualized patterns of verbal or nonverbal behavior, or inflexible adherence to routines His teacher reports he struggles to work with new teachers or new adults. |
| (c) Highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in focus or intensity Bobby has focused interests in video games and mobile technology. He’s very interested in one specific band. His social studies teacher also reported that even after they finished their unit on Greek mythology he continued to ask questions and talk to her about it. |
| (d) Hypo‐ or hyper‐ reactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment. Bobby reports disliking the cafeteria due to “people moving all over and acting crazy”. He also says he does not like when people get close or bump into him. |
| (3) Symptoms must be present in early childhood. |
| (a) Symptoms must be present during early development.  Bobby’s parents say that they noticed he wasn’t meeting developmental milestones. His dad said he didn’t use words until age 3 and did not make eye contact or acknowledge when his name was called. Showed stereotyped play as a young child. |
| (b) Symptoms must cause clinically significant impairment in occupational, social, or other important areas of current functioning. He’s having difficulty in school engaging with peers in group activities, sometimes has difficulty completing work. He has an aide for assistance throughout his school day. At home he has tantrums and his parents have a hard time helping him with homework. |
| (c) Symptoms are not better explained by intellectual disability (although intellectual disability may be a  comorbid diagnosis.) Bobby is in the general education setting and scores well on standardized tests. Bobby’s mom also reports he shows understanding that he wants to do better and “be the good kid” so he has some awareness of his actions. ID does not explain his symptoms. |
| (d) Specify if there is:  i. Accompanying intellectual impairment – Bobby shows that he is capable of completing grade level work through standardized testing and class assignments. There is no accompanying intellectual impairment.  ii. Accompanying language impairment – Bobby’s speech therapist has goals for social communication and is not addressing language production. He is also capable of formulating ideas for written assignments his only problem is turning those words into writing. There is no accompanying language impairment.  iii. Association with a known genetic condition, medical condition, or environmental factor – There are no reports of associated genetic conditions, medical conditions, or environmental factors.  iv. Association with another neurodevelopmental, behavioral , or mental disorder – There is association with ADHD. Bobby’s mom says he has ADHD and takes medication for it. |
| **DSM-5 Autism Spectrum Disorder: Severity Levels** |
| (a) Social Communication: Level 2 – “Requiring substantial support”: Despite having an aide working with him Bobby still has social impairments including difficulties on group assignments, not acknowledging greetings from students, only discussing narrow interests (video games), and not initiating conversations. |
| (b) Restricted, Repetitive Behaviors: Level 2 – “Requiring substantial support”: Bobby has difficulty working with new adults or teachers. He has been observed rocking in his seat during class and tapping his pencil. Bobby has difficulty with attention and moving on from a topic to a new topic. |

**Application of IDEA (2004) Diagnostic Criteria for Autism**

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| Does the featured student meet the definition of autism under the IDEA (2004)? Yes, Bobby meets the definition of autism under the IDEA (2004). His deficits in the below areas lead to difficulties in his educational performance. He has trouble in class with group activities, he has trouble socializing with peers, he is uncomfortable in the cafeteria due to his sensory challenges, and he has difficulty adjusting to changes in the classroom including new topics and new teachers. |
| (a) Verbal communication: Yes, Bobby shows deficits in verbal communication that adversely affect his education. He has trouble participating in group activities with peers which directly impacts his academic performance. He also has trouble communicating with peers outside of the classroom. |
| (b) Non-verbal communication: Bobby shows deficits in non-verbal communication including not making eye contact, not looking up when he is spoken to, and he wanders off during instructions. |
| (c) Social interaction: Bobby has difficulty interacting with his peers. He does not reciprocate greetings. He does not show interest in talking to others. He is excited to talk about his specific interests but does not show interest in listening to others. |
| (d) Sensory challenges: Bobby describes sensory issues in the cafeteria due to noise and the proximity of others. It greatly bothers him when people get close to him and bump into him. |
| (e) Resistance to environment changes or changes in routines: Bobby has difficulty working with new adults or new teachers. He also shows difficulty changing to new units. In Social Studies he continued to discuss Greek mythology with the teacher despite the class moving on from this topic. |

**Reflection**

I think that this assignment was useful because it shows the difference between a child receiving a clinical diagnosis and a diagnosis through the school. Since the criteria are different it is possible for a child to receive the diagnosis in one setting and not the other, which is interesting to me. I think this is important in terms of deciding what type of support a student really needs. It is important to consider what area of their lives there are issues in and not just providing the same services for every student that meets certain criteria. They may differ in what their needs actually are. I will be careful to always consider this in my professional setting since students may need different things or may not meet criteria for something, but still need additional support.