

Team Meetings

Team Meetings are a core feature of the ASD Nest program. The transdisciplinary team meets weekly for 90 minutes to discuss program business, participate in professional development, and conduct case conferences of individual students. ASD Nest program professionals are paid per session for their participation in team meetings. Team meetings begin the first week of school and continue throughout the school year. The team meeting drives the ASD Nest program's collaborative approach in working with students on the spectrum.

General expectations:

- Team members collaboratively discuss, brainstorm, and plan with their colleagues to better meet the needs of their students in the ASD Nest program.
- As ASD Nest programs in a school grow larger, school teams may break up into smaller groups for the case conferencing part of team meetings. Teams meet all together for Nest program business and then divide up into groups of 3-4 classes, usually by grade. Agendas are coordinated so that all related service providers can attend the conferences for the students on their caseload. Additionally, related service providers' schedules may need to be aligned with the division of team meetings (e.g., SLP 1 works with 6th and attends that meeting; SLP 2 works with 7th & 8th and attends those meetings).

Team meetings, Part I: Program Business

- Program business: The ASD Nest team discusses general program business, and an administrator is present to address issues relevant to the program. Records are maintained on all topics discussed.
- SDI Unit overview and planning: Every other month, the SLP in the program reviews the upcoming SDI unit with the Nest professionals, discussing goals, relevant activities, and SDI vocabulary. Grade, subject, or co-teaching teams work with SLPs and other providers to complete SDI Team Planning Maps.
- Professional development: Members of the ASD Nest team share information from workshops they attended and their own professional expertise to expand the core knowledge of other professionals.

Team meetings, Part II: Case Conferencing

During case conferences, ASD Nest teams meet to discuss the needs of and plan the supports for individual Nest students. All Nest students are regularly discussed following a pre-determined schedule for a set amount of time. No student is overlooked for any reason except for those rare occasions where there is a crisis during a given week, in which case a student may be rescheduled for the following week.

- Roles and responsibilities: Each case conferencing team has a facilitator, time keeper, agenda keeper, and notetaker to facilitate planning and productivity. These roles are rotated regularly through Nest professionals over the course of the year.
- Confidentiality: Discussions at team meetings are confidential and intended only for the members of the ASD Nest team. Notes are kept on all meetings and only the initials of other students mentioned during discussions are included. These notes are legal documents, and their language is professional and objective.

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Additional Questions & Considerations:

Who attends team meetings?

Team meetings are attended by all Nest related service providers and administration, and should ideally include all teachers—special and general education—who are working with the Nest students being case conferenced in a given week. Team meetings should not regularly be attended solely by the special education team. In order to actively involve as many Nest professionals as possible, some combination of the following options is implemented:

- Have a point person or facilitator review agenda and invite relevant general education teachers to specific case conferences
- Create a rotating “mandated” schedule (by content, grade, by student, class)
- Send notes or minutes outlining strategies and implementation plans to general education teachers after each meeting, were they not able to attend
- Include in grade meetings a structure to highlight strategies to use with Nest students
- Explore flexible scheduling to allow general education teachers to attend meetings

How are team meetings conducted?

Those attending arrive on-time and are actively engaged throughout the meeting. Personal work such as lesson planning does not take place during this time. A facilitator is identified to lead the team meetings. The facilitator starts the meeting, directs discussion of program business, and keeps the meetings running smoothly. For many schools, the facilitator is the ASD Nest Coach.

What does case conferencing sound like?

All ASD Nest team members present participate actively in all case conferences, whether their particular student is being discussed or not. All case conference discussions: 1) follow up on previous plans to monitor implementation; 2) discuss recent progress and successes; 3) discuss social, sensory, academic, and behavioral concerns; 4) plan supports/strategies/ interventions; and 5) determine how to implement supports, including which staff members are responsible for implementation and how to ensure consistency of implementation. Discussion is balanced to minimize “storytelling” and maximize brainstorming and planning.

What is the role of the parent in case conferencing?

Although parents are not present at case conferences, Nest parents are members of the student’s team. Parent thoughts, concerns, and questions are shared and discussed at the meetings. Parents should be advised when their child is being conferenced and asked about any concerns they may have. Parents have the right to request copies of their child’s case conference notes.

What is the role of the Nest consultant at team meetings?

ASD Nest consultants may attend team meetings to provide professional development, address specific concerns about students, or participate in the case conference discussions. Consultants may also support team collaboration, communication, and development.

A note on the ASD Nest Model:

This paper outlines an element of the ASD Nest Model. Fidelity of implementation to the model is essential for program consistency. While a degree of flexibility is necessary given individual school needs, the program benefits from schools’ commitment to a cohesive model.