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# The ASD Nest Consultant

The administrators, educators, and therapists of the ASD Nest program are supported by the ASD Nest Support Project consulting staff based at NYU. Consultants include special educators, positive behavior support specialists, and speech and language pathologists, each with a focus on autism. The consultants support the school administration, work with the program's educators and therapists, offer workshops, and help to maintain the fidelity of implementation of the ASD Nest Model.

## On-site consultation at the schools:

- Administrative meetings: Consultants meet with members of the administration to discuss program issues, teacher supports, and school needs.
- Classroom/therapy visits: Consultants visit Nest classrooms to support the implementation of the ASD Nest Model, and may work to support teachers and/or individual students who are struggling.
- Meetings with educators/therapists: Consultants meet with Nest professionals to discuss classroom visits, plan interventions and supports, and address child-specific challenges.
- Participation in team meetings: At team meetings, consultants may provide staff development, participate in case conference discussions, and/or help guide staff in developing student support plans.

## Leading workshops for educators and/or therapists:

- Specific topics for a school: Consultants may provide on-site staff workshops on new material to increase the knowledge-base of the program staff, with the goal of increasing internal capacity.
- Supporting new staff: Schools benefit from having their experienced staff at established Nest programs sharing their expertise with new staff of their school. Consultants may provide additional workshops or training for new staff.

## Parent workshops:

- Consultants may provide on-site new parent workshops for Nest parents on positive behavior support and Social Development Intervention. These workshops are coordinated through the school's social worker or guidance counselor. At these workshops, consultants share their expertise; however, they do not make specific recommendations regarding individual students at the school.

## On-site support of ASD Nest coach cluster teachers:

- The goal of the ASD Nest coach cluster program is to build capacity within each school and develop an on-site Nest program resource. Consultants meet regularly with the ASD Nest coach cluster at each school throughout the year to provide direct support.

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## **Additional Questions & Considerations:**

### **How often do Nest consultants go to the schools?**

Every school is assigned a primary ASD Nest consultant who acts as the point person for constant support at that school. New Nest schools receive extensive support from consultants such as special educators, behaviorists, and SDI consultants. Experienced Nest schools have a Nest consulting team that visits the school at least twice per year. Schools with ASD Nest coach clusters receive additional consultation visits. Schools can always purchase additional consultation hours, as needed.

### **Can Nest consultants work directly with students during their visit?**

ASD Nest consultants do not provide direct services to students during consultation at the schools. They work directly with the staff who support students, often modeling techniques and strategies in a professional development/training capacity.

### **Do the staff at a school communicate directly with the consultants?**

Nest professionals should first go to their Nest teams and administrators with any questions or concerns. They are free to reach out via email directly to any of their Nest consultants. Consultants can offer resources, help staff address classroom challenges, and offer guidance on planning activities and interventions. Consultants will respond to Nest staff emails and will make every effort to do so in a timely manner. However, because they support multiple schools, they may not be able to reply immediately. If staff feel that more on-site consultation support at their school is necessary, they should bring their concerns to their administration.

### **Do parents at the school communicate with the consultants directly?**

ASD Nest consultants work to support schools' Nest program staff. Consultants can provide answers to parent questions regarding the basics of the ASD Nest program itself. However, as they are not the professionals working with the students in the school, ASD Nest consultants do not communicate with parents regarding individual students.

#### **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.