



SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

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BENEFIT CONSIDERATIONS

Before using this guideline, please check the member’s specific benefit plan requirements and any federal or state mandates, if applicable.

COVERAGE RATIONALE

Tuition for or payment for mental health services that are school-based for children and adolescents under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or, otherwise covered under an Individualized Education Plan is excluded.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a Federal law governing how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. IDEA ensures that students with disabilities are provided with special education and related services that enable them to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (US Department of Education (IDEA), 2004).

Public supervision and direction of special education and related services for a child/adolescent is documented in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) (IDEA, 2004).

Eligibility for special education and related services under IDEA is established when it has been determined that the child/adolescent is disabled and who, by reason of the disability requires special education and related services. Types of conditions that may be considered disabling include (IDEA, 2004):

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Hearing impairments (including deafness)
- Intellectual Disability
- Orthopedic impairments
- Serious emotional disturbance
- Speech or language impairments
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairments (including blindness)
- Other health impairments or specific learning disabilities

The disabling conditions listed above may co-occur with other behavioral health conditions that are covered under the benefit plan, such as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), mood, and anxiety disorders. Coverage is indicated when:

- The co-occurring behavioral health condition does not qualify for special education and related services under IDEA;
- The co-occurring behavioral health condition is the primary focus of treatment;
- The form(s) of treatment used to treat the co-occurring condition are also covered; and
- There are no terms, limitations, or exclusions of the member’s coverage.

If behavioral health services are being provided for a covered condition and there is a need to initiate a referral for school-based services, the treating behavioral health clinician should be familiar with IDEA and the referral process. The clinician may be pivotal in helping the child and family access any necessary school-based services when a disabling or suspected disabling condition that may be covered under IDEA is present (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 2007).

All services must be provided by or under the direction of a properly qualified behavioral health provider.

LEVEL OF CARE GUIDELINES

Optum / OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California Level of Care Guidelines are available at:
<https://www.providerexpress.com/content/ope-provexpr/us/en/clinical-resources/guidelines-policies/locg.html>

The Level of Care Guidelines are a set of objective and evidence-based behavioral health guidelines used to standardize coverage determinations, promote evidence-based practices, and support members' recovery, resiliency, and wellbeing.

UNITEDHEALTHCARE BENEFIT PLAN DEFINITIONS

For plans using 2001 and 2004 generic UnitedHealthcare COC/SPD, unless otherwise specified

Covered Health Service(s)

Those health services provided for the purpose of preventing, diagnosing or treating a sickness, injury, mental illness, substance abuse, or their symptoms.

A Covered Health Service is a health care service or supply described in *Section 1: What's Covered--Benefits as a Covered Health Service*, which is not excluded under *Section 2: What's Not Covered--Exclusions*.

For plans using 2007 and 2009 generic UnitedHealthcare COC/SPD, unless otherwise specified

Covered Health Service(s)

Those health services, including services, supplies, or Pharmaceutical Products, which we determine to be all of the following:

- Provided for the purpose of preventing, diagnosing or treating a sickness, injury, mental illness, substance abuse, or their symptoms.
- Consistent with nationally recognized scientific evidence as available, and prevailing medical standards and clinical guidelines as described below.
- Not provided for the convenience of the Covered Person, Physician, facility or any other person.
- Described in the *Certificate of Coverage* under *Section 1: Covered Health Services* and in the *Schedule of Benefits*.
- Not otherwise excluded in the *Certificate of Coverage* under *Section 2: Exclusions and Limitations*.

In applying the above definition, "scientific evidence" and "prevailing medical standards" shall have the following meanings:

- "Scientific evidence" means the results of controlled clinical trials or other studies published in peer-reviewed, medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical specialty community.
- "Prevailing medical standards and clinical guidelines" means nationally recognized professional standards of care including, but not limited to, national consensus statements, nationally recognized clinical guidelines, and national specialty society guidelines.

For plans using 2011 and more recent generic UnitedHealthcare COC/SPD, unless otherwise specified

Covered Health Care Service(s) - health care services, including supplies or Pharmaceutical Products, which we determine to be all of the following:

- Medically Necessary.
- Described as a Covered Health Care Service in the *Certificate* under *Section 1: Covered Health Care Services* and in the *Schedule of Benefits*.
- Not excluded in the *Certificate* under *Section 2: Exclusions and Limitations*.

Medically Necessary - health care services provided for the purpose of preventing, evaluating, diagnosing or treating a Sickness, Injury, Mental Illness, substance-related and addictive disorders, condition, disease or its symptoms, that are all of the following as determined by us or our designee.

- In accordance with Generally Accepted Standards of Medical Practice.
- Clinically appropriate, in terms of type, frequency, extent, site and duration, and considered effective for your Sickness, Injury, Mental Illness, substance-related and addictive disorders, disease or its symptoms.

- Not mainly for your convenience or that of your doctor or other health care provider.
- Not more costly than an alternative drug, service(s) or supply that is at least as likely to produce equivalent therapeutic or diagnostic results as to the diagnosis or treatment of your Sickness, Injury, disease or symptoms.

Generally Accepted Standards of Medical Practice are standards that are based on credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community, relying primarily on controlled clinical trials, or, if not available, observational studies from more than one institution that suggest a causal relationship between the service or treatment and health outcomes.

If no credible scientific evidence is available, then standards that are based on Doctor specialty society recommendations or professional standards of care may be considered. We have the right to consult expert opinion in determining whether health care services are Medically Necessary. The decision to apply Doctor specialty society recommendations, the choice of expert and the determination of when to use any such expert opinion, shall be determined by us.

We develop and maintain clinical policies that describe the Generally Accepted Standards of Medical Practice scientific evidence, prevailing medical standards and clinical guidelines supporting our determinations regarding specific services.

REFERENCES

American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.) 2013; Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.

Public Law 108–446. Retrieved from: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-108publ446/content-detail.html>

U.S. Department of Education, Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004. Retrieved from: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

DEFINITIONS

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) Special education and related services that:

- Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge
- Meet the standards of the State educational agency
- Include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and
- Are provided in conformity with an individualized education program.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) A written statement that documents the special education and related services that are to be provided to a child with a disability.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) According to the U.S. Department of Education, IDEA is a Federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. Part B of IDEA pertains to children and adolescents from ages 3-21. Part C of IDEA pertains to children up to the age of 3. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is also known as Public Law 108-446.

Related Services Services including transportation, and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services (including speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, social work services, school nurse services designed to enable a child with a disability to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education as described in the individualized education program of the child, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services, except that such medical services shall be for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in children.

School-Based Services Special education and related services which enable a child/adolescent to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education.

Serious Emotional Disturbance A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

HISTORY/REVISION INFORMATION

Date	Action/Description
03/14/2017	• Version 1 (Approved by UMC)
3/14/2018	• Annual Update: Updates to formatting and references