PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

For DETERMINING the

NEED for

ADULT SUPPORT

On an IEP

Ionia County
ISD
Ionia County Intermediate School District
Partners in building full potential.

**PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES
FOR DETERMINING THE NEED FOR ADULT SUPPORT
ON AN *IEP**

Contents

*These guidelines could be used as guidance for local school districts determining adult support for students with or without an IEP.

COMMITTEE
Trisha Hassett, School Psychologist
Tracey Jordan, SSW
Lori McElveny, SLP
Jim Lóser, Assistant Superintendent Special Education
Abbey Mix, Behavior & ASD Consultant
Lisa Riffle, Elementary Principal
Christine Rockey, High School Principal
Shannon Shy, Behavior & ASD Consultant

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES
FOR DETERMINING THE NEED FOR ADULT SUPPORT
ON AN IEP

Intent

The goal for all students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is to develop and maintain independence in the curricular and extracurricular activities in the least restrictive school setting. (20 U.S.C. § 1400(C) (1); 34 CFR. §300.1. For all students, additional adult support may only be included in the IEP within the context of this goal. Thus, when Adult Support is assigned to assist the student in fulfilling an IEP goal or other goals (e.g. behavioral, self-help, academic, communication, etc.) the annual IEP goal(s) for which an adult will provide support should reflect as much independence as is appropriate for the student; and short-term objectives or benchmarks should be written to reflect increased independence, as appropriate for the student, until the annual goal is reached. Some areas, such as health/personal care needs may not be appropriate for goals. These supports should be noted on the "Supplemental Aids/Services Need List" page of the IEP.

> *In addition to the lack of evidence for the use of one-to-one adult support, current research indicates that an overreliance on paraprofessionals is associated with unintended detrimental effects. (Giangreco, et.al., 2010; Giangreco, 2010). These effects include the student feeling stigmatized, interference with peer interactions, interference with teacher engagement and competent instruction, decrease in independence skills, and an increase in behavioral challenges. As such, assigning one-to-one adult support must be approached cautiously and occur only when other interventions such as visual supports, peer to peer support, positive behavioral supports or current supports in the classroom alone cannot meet the student's academic, social or behavioral needs (START: Paraprofessional Planning Tool, 2015).*

Law

State and federal special education laws require that all students with disabilities, *to the maximum extent appropriate*, be educated with their general education peers, and participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities. Removal from the general education environment <u>may only occur</u> if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in the general class with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. In making program and placement decisions, the IEP team must consider a continuum of program options, and select the option that is the least restrictive environment (LRE), in which the goals and objectives of the student can be met. If supports, services or modifications are needed in order for the child to benefit

from his/her educational program, including supports for the teacher, these must be provided.

> [The IDEA's] LRE is intended to ensure that a child with a disability is served in a setting where the child can be educated successfully. Even though *IDEA does not mandate [general] class placement for every student with a disability,* IDEA presumes that the first placement option considered. . is the school the child would attend if not disabled . . .Thus, before a [student with a disability] can be placed outside of the [general] classroom setting LRE *must be considered.* (Federal Register, March 12, 1999 [Vol. 634, No. 48] p.12471).

The consideration of supports and services must be made for each of the placements along the continuum. "Consider" does not mean that an IEP team must actually try the student in all placements along the continuum. It does mean, however, that the IEP team must use its best judgment, based upon knowledge of the student, to select the appropriate learning environment for the student.

Use of Adult Support

The use of adult support is only one support or service that may permit a student to achieve satisfactory progress and participate in a less restrictive environment. Unless this additional assistance is assigned with the goal of fostering independence, such a support can actually restrict the student's access to the general curriculum, social opportunities and other benefits of being assigned to a general education classroom. An IEPT may include additional adult support only within the context of IEP goal(s) and objectives(s) that are written to reflect attaining as much independence in the performance of the of the goal(s) and objective(s) as is appropriate for the student. The IEP must also include a schedule for evaluating the student's performance on meeting the goal(s) and objective(s) and for withdrawing or fading the support, as appropriate.

> **NOTE:** When transiting a student from a more restrictive setting/program and/or a significant change to a new environmental setting (e.g., elementary to middle school) to a less restrictive setting/program and/or environmental setting, consideration should be made to continue with the same level of adult support that was provided in the previous placement. It is recommended that the team reassess the need 30-60 days after the change in placement.

In every case, critical steps to take before assigning Adult Support to an IEP are to carefully define the student's needs and then review all existing staff, programs and resources at the school site. This must include a review of general, as well as special education, resources, and should consider such alternatives as peer support for the student, the use of existing paraprofessionals at the school site, and mentoring and other collaborative models for teacher support. A decision to assign adult

support must **never** be made outside of the IEP process. In all instances, the final decision **must** involve the appropriate program administration. A training plan for the teacher and the person providing the adult support as well as a plan for fading the support shall be developed. The training plan must be documented; recommend using the "Adult Support Documentation for Training" form.

Support to Teacher

The majority of special education students do not require "extra" adult support. When the IEP team determines that adult support is needed to assist a student for special circumstances, the person providing the adult support is assigned to the teacher, **NOT** to the student. The primary role of the person providing the adult support is to support the staff working with a special education student.

Oral directions in a typical classroom are often given quickly and may need to be repeated or rephrased for the student. It is important for the person providing the adult support to allow the teacher to give the initial instructions to the student and wait for the student to respond independently (or with help from a peer). If the student does not respond, the person providing the adult support may need to check for understanding, and if necessary, repeat, rephrase or clarify the directions. The person providing the adult support should step in to assist only when needed. S/He may pre-teach or re-teach concepts as needed, and as directed by the teacher.

A student's over-reliance upon a specific staff member will not give the student the opportunity to learn to respond to other staff. It is important for the person providing the adult support to assist other students as well as the student with an IEP. This reduces the pressure on the student with an IEP and has a greater positive impact on the whole class. When the person providing the adult support works directly with the student, the goal is to assist the student and then fade back, rather than "hover" over the student (Ingham ISD, Oct. 2013).

Adult support must never be provided on a one-to-one basis without first considering less intrusive alternatives that do not compromise the student's safety or ability to fully participate, and without a written plan to ensure that the student is permitted to do as much for himself/herself as is possible. In addition, it should never be assumed that these students will need such supports permanently, without medical evidence to the contrary; and the goal should always be to foster as much independence as is possible and appropriate for the student.

Inappropriate Use of Adult Support

1. Student groupings: If the grouping in a classroom is such that the teacher cannot meet the needs of the students without additional support, the grouping may be

inappropriate and the classroom composition may need to be reconsidered. However, the first step should always be to consider existing school staff and resources that might be put together in a collaborative way to assist the teacher; e.g., review of existing paraprofessional/adult schedules in the school, peer support from general education, etc.

2. Disability/Placement stereotyping: Every student's needs must be addressed individually, and determinations must be based upon the student's needs, not labels or programs. A student with a cognitive impairment or a student included with his/her nondisabled peers does not compel the conclusion in every case that s/he requires additional assistance or any given program that is based upon such a model.

3. Class or program change: The need for the assistance from adult support must first be carefully defined and all alternatives to meet the need considered before determining that this is the only answer. It should not be assumed that a student moving from one program option to another (e.g. preschool to kindergarten or one grade level to another) will continue to require the assistance of adult support. However, as stated previously under the section "Use of Adult Support," when transitioning a student from a more restrictive setting/program to a less restrictive setting/program, consideration should be made to continue with the same level of adult support that was provided in the more restrictive placement.

4. Supplemental instructional time/tutoring: Direct instruction is the responsibility of the classroom teacher. Adult support is provided to assist a student with accessing the teacher's direct instruction, but does not supplant that instruction. Further, adult support is provided under the supervision and direction of the classroom teacher and the IEP case manager.

Process of Determination for the Need for Adult Support
Decisions in determining the need for adult support needs to go through the IEP process, in many cases through the facilitated process. During this process, the IEP team can determine when, where, and to what level of adult support is necessary for a student to access the general education curriculum.

There are typically two pathways to determining the need for adult support:
1. Initial need: Student currently does not have adult support on his/her IEP. However, a member of the team (parent, teacher, therapist, etc.) has inquired about the need for adult support.
2. Continued need: Student currently has adult support on his/her IEP.

Initial Need:
1. When a member of the team is inquiring about the need for adult support, the case manager for the student needs to be notified.

2. Upon notification, the case manager will schedule a team meeting to review the concerns. Recommend using the "Adult Support Consideration Worksheet" during the meeting to assist in the collection of data and to help the IEP team make a determination at the IEP meeting.
3. Depending on the outcome of the team meeting, if concerns are warranted, the case manager will schedule a facilitated IEP meeting to develop and revise as appropriate the IEP.
4. During the facilitated IEP Meeting, the team will need to determine the following regarding Adult Support:
   a. Strengths: determine how these may or may not impact the need for adult support;
   b. Needs/Barriers:
      i. What is the area(s) of need for adult support?
      ii. When is adult support needed?
   c. Supplementary Aids: are there any that would provide support in which adult support would not be needed?
   d. Goals: If the IEP team is going to add adult support, what goal(s) will be included to facilitate:
      i. Growth in the area of independence for the student?
      ii. The plan for fading Adult Support?
   e. Programs/Services: What areas of the day could be supported by a program and/or service in place of adult support?
5. If Adult Support is added to an IEP, the following documentation must be completed and uploaded to the IEP in Illuminate:
   a. *Student Support Action Plan*
   b. *Adult Support Documentation Sheet for Training*
   c. *Fading Plan for Reduction of Adult Support*
   (Examples of each of these documents can be found on the ICISD wiki site.)

Continued Need:
1. At the annual IEP meeting, the team needs to go through the same process for determining the initial need for Adult Support as in Step 4 above.
2. In addition, the team will need to:
   a. Review the current goal(s) and revise as needed;
   b. Review the current fading plan and revise as needed.
   c. Provide a rationale for the continuance for Adult Support on the IEP.

Fading Requirements

The IEP team must develop a Fading Plan that demonstrates the intentional manner in reducing the need for adult support to the level that the student is able to be independent within the educational setting. "Fading" refers to the progressive change from more intrusive prompts and supports to less intrusive and more natural prompts and supports, while maintaining and developing student performance and behavior. Fading is not only about pulling away, but changing "how" support is provided. During the acquisition of new skills and behavior, not all learning curves are smooth or straight-

line, but overall progress is expected. The task for instructional staff is to find a balance between attainable steps in learning, and what individualized staff support is needed to productively "get through the day."

The following is recommended when adding adult support to the IEP, coordinated by the case manager:
- Best practice would be to meet monthly to review the plan—OR—
- Recommend at a minimum, meeting quarterly.

Tips for Fading Adult Support – learning for independence.
In this context, practical instructional suggestions for fading are (and not limited to):
- Modeling, peer support
- Development of student response to prompting from already existing and routine sources, possibly with some change in normal building practices
- Backward-forward chain learning through a task-analyzed series of steps to achieve goals
- Developing student self-awareness, e.g., through daily charting marked by the student
- Provision of student choice of preferred activities for appropriate behavior
- Generalizing new learning to occur with support from different staff, in different locations and with different activities
- As learning occurs, fade physical proximity of extra staff
- Planning absence/redeployment of extra staff during specific activities, parts of the day, entire days.
- Watch before assisting. Can the student ask for help from teacher or peer?
- Can the student problem solve on his/her own?
- Have high expectations for what the student understands or can do independently.
- Provide consistent classroom schedule (posted, visual, at desk if needed, reinforcement periods included. Teach student how to use it.
- Start with the least intrusive prompts to get student to respond.
- Prompt, then back away to allow independent time.
- Use strengths and weaknesses, like and dislike.
- Model: guide (watch and assist); check (leave and check back)
- Teach independence skills (raising hand, asking for help, modeling other students)
- Encourage age appropriate work habits. See what other students are doing
- Be aware of proximity. Sit with the student only when necessary
- Encourage peer assistance and partnering. Teach peers how to help, but not enable
- Utilize self-monitoring checklists for students
- Color code materials to assist with organization

- Use transition objects to help student anticipate/complete transition (i.e., head phones for listening center)
- Break big tasks into steps
- Use backward chaining (i.e., leave the last portion of a cutting task for the student, then gradually lengthen the task)
- Assist in encouraging a means for independent communication (i.e., PECS)
- Provide positive feedback (be specific to the situation)
- Ask facilitative questions ("What comes next?" "What are other students doing?" "What does the schedule say?" "What did the teacher say?")
- Give choices

Resources found on ICISD Wiki Site:
(http://ioniaisd.pbworks.com/w/page/8483102/Policies%20%20Guidelines)

- Required Forms to be uploaded to the current IEP in Illuminate:
  - ✓ *Adult Support Documentation Sheet for Training*
  - ✓ *Student Support Action Plan*
  - ✓ *Fading Plan for Reduction of Adult Support*
- Optional Tools:
  - o *Adult Support Consideration Worksheet*

References

Contra Costa SELPA. (July 2007). Paraprofessional support forms.

Contra Costa SELPA. (July 2007). Procedural guidelines for determination of additional paraprofessional support needs through the individual education plan.

Giangreco, M.F. (2010). One-to-one paraprofessionals for students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms: Is conventional wisdom wrong? *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 48, 1-13.

Giangreco, M.F., Broer, S.M., Suter, J.C. (2011). Guidelines for selecting alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals: Field-testing in inclusion-oriented schools. *Remedial and Special Education*, 32(1), 22-38.

Giangreco, M.F., Doyle, M.B., & Suter, J.C. (2012). Constructively responding to requests for paraprofessionals: We keep asking the wrong questions. *Remedial and Special Education*, 33(6), 362-373.

Giangreco, M.F., Suter, J.C. & Doyle, M.B. (2010). Paraprofessionals in inclusive schools: A review of recent research. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 20, 41-57.

Ingham ISD. (Oct. 2013). Guidelines for determining need, training, supervision and fading of Paraprofessionals.

The Statewide Autism Resources and Training (START) Project