**AIDES**

**Determining the Need for Aide Support**

* To assist in the determination of the need for aide support for a student with a disability, the form **“Documentation of Need for Aide”** should be completed. (This form can also be used to assist in the scheduling of aides.)
* Identify the purpose behind the request for aide support. Common reasons include 1) protection/safety of the student, 2) instructional support, and 3) assistance with self-care and daily living skills.
* Discuss alternatives to aide prior to and during the IEP meeting. Exhaust additional supports including supplementary aids, accommodations, and modifications and behavior intervention plans.
* Review past and current IEPs and other available data to determine whether students are making educational (academic and behavioral) progress.
* Consider what support is required to enable the child to benefit from his or her education. Factors to consider include individual student need, teacher-to-student classroom ratios, class size, and need for student support. Frequency, duration, and intensity of concerns should also be considered.
* Develop student plan for independence before assigning aide support. Recognize that learned helplessness or the inability to generalize social skills across environments or staff members is a legitimate concern.
* Ensure the final decision on the appropriateness of the aide support is made by the IEP team.
* Requests for classroom aides should also be considered at IEP meetings following a review of available data. Common reasons for the request for classroom aides include: 1) class size and/or staff-to-student ratio, and 2) instructional support needed. The team must consider the individual student needs and whether the classroom aide is required for the individual student to receive educational benefit.
* Because a classroom aide is present in a classroom or is required for the mandated class size requirement, does not automatically mean that “classroom aide” must be listed on the IEP for each student enrolled in that classroom. The decision to include a classroom aide in the IEP would depend on the need for the classroom aide for each individual student.
* Decisions regarding personal/individual or classroom aides should be based on data and not be arbitrary or based on funding and/or administrative convenience.

**Documentation of Aides on IEPs**

The need for aides should be listed in the Supplementary Aids section. In addition, the aides should be listed on the Educational Services page.

If the aide is serving the student in a general education classroom, list the aide in box 2 for General Education with Supplementary Aids. Although minutes are optional, they are strongly recommended in order to clarify the extent the service will be provided. This will avoid confusion or misinterpretation.

 Examples:

 Classroom aide to provide instructional support in English class

 Individual aide to provide supervision in Math class

Individual aide to provide self-care support during bathroom breaks

If the aide is serving the student in a special education classroom, list the aide in box 5 for Related Services. Because minutes cannot be added in the right-hand box or they will duplicate the minutes of the special education teacher, it is strongly recommended that the minutes and/or description of the service be added after listing the aide.

Examples:

 Classroom aide during special education math course

Individual aide to provide self-care assistance and supervision in all courses due to safety needs

**Aide minutes are NOT included in the calculation of percentage of time the student receives special education (% Sp Ed).**

**Additional Documentation on IEPs**

* If an aide is provided, craft IEP goals that target student independence and account for fading out the use of the aide.
* Explain in the IEP the role of the aide for the student. There are very few situations where a child needs uninterrupted one-to-one aide services. By clarifying roles and responsibilities, it will be clear that the aide will be used with other students when services for the student at issue are not needed.
* Do not identify a specific individual by name in the IEP as the person to be assigned as the student’s aide.
* Do not state in the IEP a specific gender that the aide must be. This is a violation of employment law.
* Be prepared to discuss when the district must provide aide support for participation in extracurricular and non-academic activities. Do not state in the IEP that the parent must accompany the child to extracurricular or non-academic activities as a replacement for the district’s obligation to provide aide support to enable the child to participate.

**Employment & Assignment of Aides**

* Decisions regarding employment of classroom aides and personal/individual aides should consider the certification requirements for each position.
* The assignment of a classroom aide automatically provides the district flexibility to allow the classroom aide to serve other students. When personal/individual aides are being used to serve other students, it is best practice to indicate this flexibility in the IEP by specifying the specific roles of the aide.
* Decisions regarding employment of classroom aides and personal/individual aides should consider the certification requirements for each position.
* The assignment of a classroom aide automatically provides the district flexibility to allow the classroom aide to serve other students. When personal/individual aides are being used to serve other students, it is best practice to indicate this flexibility in the IEP by specifying the specific roles of the aide.
* The district is in charge of staffing. The IEP team makes the decision on the appropriateness of aide support, but the district makes the hiring decisions. Parents may not dictate the assignment of a specific aide. Districts should, however, ensure that the aide receives appropriate training to work with the student at issue to ensure the aide is deemed to be qualified to serve the student.
* When parents request a specific aide, help parents understand why training multiple aides to work with their child is preferred to specifically assigning one person to the child. Ease parents concerns by developing a list separate from the IEP of aides who receive training on the child’s needs and the dates of their trainings to gain parent confidence in their capabilities.
* Parents, other family members, or parent-selected private aides could serve as the one-to-one aide if this is agreed upon by the district and parent, however, this is not advisable.
* When parents request a private aide, be prepared to discuss the qualifications of your chosen aide.