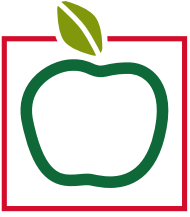


EL DORADO COUNTY



**SELPA**

# *Paraeducators*

Tools and Resources for Schools and IEP Teams

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# Definition of a Paraeducator

The word “para” means “alongside.” Paraeducator refers to an individual who works alongside a licensed or certificated educator to assist in providing instructional and other services to students. These services might be class-wide or a paraeducator might be assigned to an individual child to support their needs in various school settings. Through their assistive role and daily interventions in supporting students, paraeducators have a valuable opportunity to make a lasting positive impact on students.

The goal of this resource document is to assist IEP teams in determining:

- Whether a paraeducator is appropriate to meet a student’s needs.
- Develop and document appropriate levels of paraeducator support.
- Provide tools and resources for IEP teams.
- Provide the benefits and risks of having a paraeducator assigned to a student.
- Provide guidance on how to fade or reduce the amount of time a paraeducator needs to offer support to a student.

Paraeducators have many professional titles. Below are *some* of the job titles that may be used:

- Educational Assistant (EA)
- Educational Paraprofessional
- Instructional Aide (IA)
- LAP Assistant
- Special Circumstances Aide
- Para-professional or Para
- Special Education Assistant
- Teacher Assistant (TA)
- Learning Specialist Support or Learning Coach
- Teacher Aide (TA) or Aide
- Independence Facilitator
- Classroom Assistant

The job of a paraeducator requires an exceptional skill set. While individuals may possess traits that enhance their effectiveness as a paraeducator, it is necessary to provide training related to the specific role(s) of a paraeducator in order to facilitate consistent support of all students. This training should consist of specific instructional strategies, as well as opportunities for meaningful observations, modeling and feedback.

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[Click here to visit our website to access additional opportunities on paraeducator training web modules.](#)

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When an IEP Team is considering paraeducator support for a student, all aspects of the student’s IEP must be examined with the focus always being on maximizing student independence in order to avoid unintentionally fostering dependence on the paraeducator. The goal is to carefully examine the student’s total educational program in order to determine the need for additional assistance and to ensure the student maximizes independence. Prior to an IEP Team Meeting, when considering the inclusion of a paraeducator on the IEP, a paraeducator assessment must be conducted. EDCOE SELPA provides the guidelines enclosed in this document as guidance for districts/Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to consider when adopting their own policies.

Each school is required to provide a full continuum of placement options for students with identified disabilities who are receiving special education services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), California laws and regulations describe a continuum of placements such as instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions (CFR 300.511 (b) (1)).

IDEA also includes services of paraeducators and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate. A student may need additional support in order to be successful in their educational placement. The following graphic is an example of the continuum of placement options:

Consider moving a student through the continuum of alternative placements only one setting at a time and only as far as is necessary for student to gain educational benefit.

**General education classroom without Special Education support.**

Through each step, the goal should be to return the student to a less restrictive environment.

General education with supplementary aids and services, including equipment and/or specialized personnel that may be provided by the district or county.

Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) includes instruction designed to improve the student's ability to benefit from the education provided.

Pull out programs are made for those students who need individual and small group instruction for part of their school day in order to benefit from general education classroom instruction.

Other placement options to consider are more restrictive special day class placements in which a student would receive most of their academic instruction in a special education setting.

Non-public School (NPS) placements are provided for those students whose needs exceed services provided within the Local Education Agency (LEA) and are deemed necessary by the IEP team.

Home-hospital instruction and Independent Study are also considered to be very restrictive placements.

One-on-one paraeducator support.

## Ethics and Confidentiality

The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) mandates that confidentiality of student information be maintained. This law mandates that school personnel are informed of and follow this ethical code of conduct. As is the case with all educators and school personnel, paraeducators are expected to respect the legal and human rights of children and their families,

therefore maintaining confidentiality is essential to the role of a paraeducator. If a paraeducator is ever in doubt of sharing student information with someone requesting the information, it is recommended that he or she discuss the situation with the supervising teacher in order to determine if the individual has an educational interest in the information.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of a paraeducator can vary widely within each district/LEA due to the needs of the student population at each school site.

A paraeducator may be asked to provide some or all of the following responsibilities under the direction of the supervising teacher.

## Paraeducator Responsibilities

- Provide pre-teaching instruction.
- Assist during teacher-directed lessons.
- Monitor student during independent work or group activities.
- Prepare curriculum materials as directed by a certificated staff member.
- Monitor safety in a variety of settings such as the cafeteria, bus loading area, playground, hallway or auditorium.
- Implement and reinforce classroom programs.
- Implement behavioral management strategies.
- Collect behavioral data.
- Support students with personal care/health needs such as toileting/feeding.
- Support inclusion with non-disabled peers.
- Provide re-teaching to individuals or small groups of students after teacher-directed instruction.
- Monitor student progress in instruction programs and relate findings to supervising teacher.

## Considerations for Paraeducator Relationships with Supervising Teacher and School

- Recognize the supervising teacher as the team leader.
- Establish a regular routine for communication and planning with the supervising teacher.
- Assist the certificated teachers and not function as the primary instructor for a student.
- Know and understand school policies and procedures, including the district/LEA procedure for grievances.
- Discuss disagreements between paraeducator and a supervising teacher directly with the teacher, or appropriate personnel.
- Represent the school in a positive manner.

## Considerations for Paraeducator Relationships with Students and Parents

- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents and staff members.
- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a student's disability, race, sex, cultural background or religion.
- Keep confidentiality by being aware of where discussions of confidential matters take place. Public places, such as classrooms, staff lunch room, and playgrounds are not appropriate locations.
- Discuss confidential matters only with appropriate school personnel.
- Act as a positive adult role model for all students on campus.
- Communicate student information to supervising teacher who communicates to parents.

## Additional Paraeducator Considerations

- Provide paraeducator with training and check for understanding for all assigned tasks and duties.
- Communicate any concerns that come to the attention of a paraeducator from parents, students or others to the supervising teacher.
- Ask for clarification from supervising teacher if at any time the paraeducator is unclear about the roles and responsibilities for which they are accountable.
- A paraeducator shall be hired at the discretion of the district/LEA and follow the human resource policies of that district/LEA.
- A paraeducator should also follow all education code/laws:

Education Code section 45344(a) authorizes an instructional aide to perform duties that in the judgment of the teacher, may be performed by a person not licensed as a classroom teacher. Furthermore, an instructional aide need not perform such duties in the physical presence of the teacher. However, the teacher retains the ultimate responsibility for instruction and supervision of the student, and assigns grades.

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# Assessment of Paraeducator Support

As is the case with the provision of all special education and related services, determination of paraeducator support is made based on an individual student's identified area of need which is determined through assessment and data collection. When new observational data is needed assessment may be initiated upon the receipt of a signed assessment plan which provides written consent for the district/LEA to proceed with the assessment process. A sample assessment plan may be found in the [Directions for Utilizing Paraeducator Resources](#) section of this document. An IEP team should complete comprehensive assessments, including classroom observation, in order to obtain data related to the need for paraeducator support. Assessment results or data collection will provide the IEP team with a clearer understanding of the child's current independent skills and needs in order to make an appropriate and informed recommendation regarding paraeducator support service. Please consider using the resources located in the [Directions for Utilizing Paraeducator Resources](#) section of this document to assist with assessment.

A variety of tools exist that can be used to guide an IEP team to make a decision regarding adding paraeducator support including: Paraeducator Support Rubric, Checklist for Environmental Support and School Day Analysis included in the [Directions for Utilizing Paraeducator Resources](#) section. The use of these tools will help identify the specific activities or times during the school day when additional support is warranted. In many cases, decisions can be made using ex-

isting data; however, if new observational data is needed an assessment plan will need to be developed in order to gather parent consent.

It is suggested that observational data be obtained by a staff member who is trained to conduct classroom behavioral observations. Observational data will focus on the area(s) of need (health/personal care, behavior, instruction and inclusion). When an area of need is observed, additional data gathered on the frequency, duration, intensity, and time of day the behavior occurs will help the IEP team tailor the paraeducator support to meet student needs.

It is important that the team consider which type of assistance is required to examine student supports closely. Determining the area(s) of need will provide the IEP Team with information on whether the student needs additional support from a paraeducator with a particular activity, during a certain time of the day, or if ongoing support is merited.

If an IEP team determines, through assessment data, that paraeducator support is necessary for a student to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), the team will consider the full continuum of service options to ensure that the student is educated within Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Assessment data will inform the IEP team regarding the time of day, activity or transition(s) during which additional adult support is required. In addition to being useful information for the determination of paraeducator support, this information may also be useful to include in a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

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## Determination of Paraeducator Support

After existing data has been reviewed and current observational data has been gathered the IEP Team should identify student areas of need in the following categories (see the Paraeducator Support Rubric in the [Directions for Utilizing Paraeducator Resources](#) section of this document):

1. Health/Personal Care
  - a. Self-help and bathroom needs: If a student needs assistance with toileting or other self-help skills, the team should note the times and duration for this activity. This should only be for brief periods during the day.
  - b. Assistance during snack or lunch: If the student requires assistance with feeding,

etc., note the type of assistance needed, the times and duration required. Encourage reliance on peer helpers (with supervision) or other natural supports as much as possible for getting out food, opening containers, etc.

- c. Specialized Physical Health Care: Some intensive health supports may necessitate the support of a paraeducator for an indefinite length of time.
- d. Assistance with medical needs: Some students need additional assistance for medical reasons. If so, the team should consider the doctor's orders and the time of day and duration expected. Some medically related supports might be necessary only for brief periods per day/week.
- e. A health plan should be attached to the IEP if this is an area of need.

## 2. Behavior

- a. Due to behavior challenges, some students may need intensive support from a paraeducator in order to assist classroom staff in implementing a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).
- b. A paraeducator may be needed for a brief period to collect data while other classroom staff are implementing a BIP.
- c. The BIP should be part of the IEP document.

## 3. Instruction

- a. Curriculum adaptations: Adaptations of the curriculum (highlighting, copying, enlarging, adding icons, cutting and pasting, etc.) should be done under the direction of the teacher. Most students will require no more than 1-1½ hours daily for curriculum adaptation. Curriculum adaptations do not

need to be done in the classroom or in the physical presence of the teacher. Adult volunteers and parents may perform some of these activities.

- b. Instructional support: Sometimes classroom staff need assistance in supporting a student in staying on-task or providing follow-up instruction. This should be implemented per the behavior plan and faded as soon as schedules and/or behavior supports are put into place.
- c. Adaptations being implemented should match the adaptations written into the IEP.

## 4. Inclusion

- a. Recess or other activities: Assistance may be necessary if there are safety concerns with the student. It may also be needed when staff is attempting to facilitate social interactions with peers. Care should be taken that the development of natural peer supports and/or use of existing resources are the goals of the extra assistant, otherwise the adult may become the student's sole recess companion.
- b. Assistance with transitions: If a student has difficulty transitioning from classroom to playground, playground to classroom, or between activities, extra support may need to be available to help. When needed, the team should indicate type(s) of transition(s) as well as time of day and duration, as well as any supports that may be required such as visual schedules.
- c. Assistance with classroom centers or other activities: If there is a particular activity or time of day which is difficult for the student, extra help may be needed. The team should specify activity, time of day and duration of support.

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# Documentation

In the event that the IEP team determines that paraeducator support is needed, the IEP team should consider documenting the following in the IEP and developing a Responsibility and Monitoring Plan (which should be attached to the IEP).

## Responsibility and Monitoring Plan

The following are areas to consider including in the Responsibility and Monitoring Plan:

1. Time: How long will the paraeducator be

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needed and at what time of day?

2. **Responsibilities:** Define the specific responsibilities of:
  - a. The paraeducator
  - b. The general education teacher
  - c. The special education teacher
  - d. Any other adults interacting with the student in the educational setting (yard duty, office staff, etc.)
3. **Goals and Objectives:** Develop goals and objectives that address the skill(s) that need to be taught in order for the student to gain independence and allow the paraeducator to fade the level of support currently required.
4. **Fade Plan:** Create a fade plan which clearly designates the skills the student must acquire in order to increase independence and decrease paraeducator support. For further information about developing a fade plan refer to the chapter on fading in this document and see the appendix for examples.
5. **Progress Monitoring:** Create a schedule of review dates to determine progress criteria and monitor student progress and include the documentation within the IEP.

One to one paraeducator support should be captured as a direct service to which a goal aligns. Refer to the comprehensive service codes located in SEIS under the Help Center Tab/User Manuals/ CASEMIS TAG for the most accurate

service code(s).

- Service codes that may be considered are:
  - 340 Intensive Individual Services
  - 436 Health and Nursing: Other Services
  - 535 Behavior Intervention Services

Upon the addition of a paraeducator to the student's signed and consented to IEP or revision of existing services (with parent consent) a Prior Written Notice (PWN) must be sent to the parents indicating a change of services along with a copy of Procedural Safeguards.

Once paraeducator support is identified in a student's IEP, ongoing monitoring of IEP goal progress and re-evaluation are required at each annual IEP. In addition, as with all IEPs, comprehensive re-evaluation should be completed at each triennial IEP.

If the IEP team decides the support of a paraeducator is necessary, the team should also have a system for monitoring progress and data collection. This ensures that intensive supports may be faded or service times reduced as soon as possible. The education specialist is responsible for monitoring, supervising, developing and reviewing progress and data. Appropriate school personnel can assist with following the plan laid out by the case manager. Without careful monitoring and evaluation, additional paraeducator support may unintentionally foster student dependence on a paraeducator. Should the IEP team wish to modify or eliminate paraeducator support, an evaluation must be conducted to show services are no longer needed.

## Parent Request

If individual paraeducator support is requested by the parent (i.e. a one-on-one aide), it is important for the IEP team to document how the parent request has been addressed. Refusing to "adequately consider" the parent request may be considered a denial of Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE). Meaningful discussion and consideration should be given to the request prior to making final recommendations to either assess for need or refuse the request.

Upon receipt of a parent request the district/LEA

should consider the parent's request, review student's progress on goals and review additional data. The district/LEA should carefully consider each category in which a paraeducator may be needed for this student.

A goal for all students is to encourage, promote and maximize independence. Therefore, natural and existing environmental supports should be used whenever possible prior to assigning additional paraeducator support.



The following should be determined through the assessments and data collection. A Responsibility and Monitoring document should be drafted and presented to the IEP team for consideration and include:

- Environmental and existing staff supports are not adequate for the student to access the general education program; (consider utilizing the tools in the [Directions for Utilizing Paraeducator Resources](#) section of this document)
- Additional support is necessary to assist classroom staff to help the student to:
  - Advance adequately toward annual goals
  - Participate in the general education curriculum
  - Participate in extracurricular and other non-academic activities
  - Participate with typically developing peers
- When and how the support will be faded and develop a method for systematic evaluation toward independence using natural supports.

Additional Information an IEP team may consider to further examine each area of need:

- Self-care/health-care: If a student needs assistance in the restroom, with medication, feeding or with other skills, added support should be utilized briefly and only during times in which support is needed. This may also include lunch or snack time if a student requires assistance with feeding, opening packages, etc. Facilitate peer support at meal times when possible or appropriate. Some intensive physical health supports may require paraeducator support and should be included in a health plan. Some students may need additional support for medical assistance. If so, the team should consider the doctor's

orders and the time and duration of needed support. It may be necessary to utilize a school nurse to create the student's health plan.

- Behavior: Significant behavior challenges may require intensive paraeducator support for a student. A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) and behavior goals should be developed and monitored closely by the paraeducator and credentialed staff to ensure the student progresses appropriately. Data will assist the team in monitoring progress.
- Instruction: Under the direct supervision of the special education teacher, a paraeducator may need to implement adaptations to the curriculum for a student, based on needs identified in the IEP. The time of day and duration may vary and will be determined by assessment data, including observation. There may be times when additional paraeducator support is needed during classroom instruction to assist a student to stay on task or provide follow-up instruction.
- Inclusive settings: The team should examine times when the student is participating with general education peers and determine whether behaviors related to safety or social interactions need to be facilitated.

If a district/LEA opts to assess for paraeducator support parents must be provided with a copy of their procedural safeguards and an assessment plan (see appendix for example of an assessment plan). Assessment may begin once the district/LEA has received the signed assessment plan.

If the district/LEA opts to decline to assess for paraeducator support they must provide parents a Prior Written Notice (PWN) explaining and documenting the decision to refuse the request. Parents should also receive a copy of their procedural safeguards.

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## *Fading of Supports and Services*

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) includes a statute that focuses on the goal of promoting a student's independence. This statute indicates that a fade plan is an essential

component of the planning and implementation of paraeducator support. (20 U.S.C. § 1400)

In addition to providing legal compliance with

IDEA, a fade plan also fosters student's independence and self-esteem. As a paraeducator's support fades and the student's skills increase the student is able to recognize what they are capable of doing on their own. As the student gains independence they also gain access to peer relationships.

A paraeducator who is providing one-on-one support to a student affects how the general education teacher views the student. Typically, the general education teacher struggles to view the student as being a part of the class as a whole. A one-on-one can also impact the frequency and types of peer interactions that take place throughout the day.

Providing a paraeducator during a time when a student may successfully function independently may have negative impacts on the student, such as impeding generalizations of skills, or creating increased dependence on a paraeducator which can foster "learned helplessness." Over-serving a student can be just as detrimental as under-serving. Paraeducators who maintain close proximity to a student (when support at this level is not merited) can be detrimental to the student because a student learns to rely on the adult support.

Taking into consideration that the ultimate goal for each student should be to reach the maximum independence level possible, the student's fade plan should support the student in reaching that desired independence level.

It is never advised that an IEP team assign one-on-one paraeducator support to a student for the entire school day unless data indicates that a student requires this level of support in order to access their education.

A fade plan is critical to student success and growth. The case manager, teachers, parent(s) and other personnel involved with the student should develop a Responsibility and Monitoring Plan. This plan should set dates for the IEP Team to meet regularly to review data and evaluate the student's progress and examine the continued need for the additional paraeducator support. It should also provide strategies for promoting the student's independence and reducing the need for added support. The purpose of regular scheduled review is to ensure that a team is

not over-serving a student and that the fade plan is being implemented.

The fade plan, which is a component of the Responsibility and Monitoring Plan, can be written by stating the desired level of independence that the team would like the student to reach then delineate the steps that the student needs to meet for the support to be reduced. For example, once the student is able to do [blank] the paraeducator will reduce the support to look like [blank]. The final fade plan would have multiple steps as to how often/duration a student would have to demonstrate a particular behavior or task before the support would be reduced.

The actual fade plan is a critical component of the Responsibility and Monitoring Plan and can be written as a word document and attached to an IEP (for examples of fade plans, please refer to the appendix at the end of this document).

The following may be considered when developing the fade plan component of the Responsibility and Monitoring Plan as well as documenting in the IEP:

- Type of support the student needs based on the evaluated area of need (health/personal care, behavior, instruction and inclusion).
- Who will provide the support.
- Time of the day/week will the student needs the support.
- A schedule for increasing student's independence and decreasing paraeducator support with projected dates and defined roles.
- Supports will be tied to IEP goals and objectives that focus on student independence.
- If the student has Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) the support may be tied to this plan.
- Accommodations and/or modifications to be provided as needed or when requested by the student.
- Criteria of data collection and fading measures to be used, along with who will review and when.

An example of a fade plan can be found in the [Directions for Utilizing Paraeducator Resources](#) section of this document.

# Techniques to Promote Student Independence

Below is a list of techniques to promote independence and fading of support:

1. Watch before assisting. Can the student ask for help from teacher or peer? Can the student problem solve on his/her own?
2. Give the student extra time to process and respond before assisting.
3. Have high expectations as to what the student understands or can do independently.
4. Provide consistent classroom schedule (posted, visual, at desk if needed, reinforcement periods included). Teach student how to use the tools.
5. Start with the least intrusive prompts to get student to respond:
  - a. gestural, hand or facial signals
  - b. timer
  - c. verbal
  - d. light physical
  - e. hand over hand
6. Use strengths and weakness, likes and dislikes to motivate student participation and interest.
7. Model; guide (watch and assist); check (leave and check back).
8. Teach independence skills (raising hand, asking for help, modeling other students).
9. Praise for independent attempts.
10. Direct the student to speak directly to the classroom teacher. The paraeducator should not voice the student's answer or questions.
11. Prompt the student to listen to the teacher's instructions. Repeat only when necessary.
12. Encourage age appropriate work habits. See what other students are doing.
13. Be aware of proximity. Sit with the student only when necessary.
14. Encourage peer assistance and partnering. Teach peers how to help, not enable.
15. Utilize self-monitoring checklists for student.
16. Color code materials to assist with organization.
17. Use transition objects to help student anticipate/complete transition
18. Break big tasks into steps. Have the student assist as appropriate.
19. Use backward chaining (i.e., leave the last portion of a cutting task for the student, then gradually lengthen the task).
20. Assist in encouraging a means for independent communication (i.e., PECS).
21. Provide positive feedback to student (be specific to the situation).
22. Prompt, then back away to allow independent time.
23. Ask facilitative questions ("What comes next?" "What are other students doing?" "What does the schedule say?" "What did the teacher say?").
24. Give choices.

# Appendix

## Sample Fade Plan #1

Current Supports: [Student] is an eighth grade student who has paraeducator support him in all of his academic classes (self-contained and collaborative) and in his PE and elective classes. The paraeducator has provided services to [Student] by scribing his assignments, reading test/quizzes/daily assignments, providing support and overseeing OT/PT exercises, providing documented accommodations/modifications that are outlined in his IEP, and assisting the teacher with various task that involve [Student].

### Classroom Fading:

[Student] will learn to be more independent through the use of the technology equipment that has been provided for him. [Student] has access to a laptop (with Co-writer), touch screen monitor & desktop, label maker, name stamp, printer, and an Alpha smart Fusion (with Co-writer) to increase his ability to complete his assignments independently. [Student] will use one or more of the tools listed above to complete his class work and homework independently. This will be done by the implementing the following methods:

- Teacher will provide an electronic version of the assignment so [Student] can access it by using his computer.
- [Student] will highlight or circle the answers to a multiple choice assessment that has been enlarged by the paraeducator (prior to class).
- [Student] will use the Fusion or word processor to type written essays, answers to short answer questions, etc.
- [Student] will put his name on his assignments by handwriting it or using his name stamp.
- [Student] will remain in the general education classroom unless he needs to access other technology equipment or to have accommodations provided (i.e.: read aloud).

### Paraeducator Fading:

By December 1st the paraeducator will be faded from [Student's] self-contained classes and will

continue in all of his general education classes.

### The paraeducator will:

- Report to the general education teacher prior to his class block to get a copy of the assignment(s) that will be given in class.
- Modify/adapt the assignment so that [Student] is able to complete the assignment as independently as possible.
- Obtain approval from the special education teacher on the modified version or seek help from the teacher for modification ideas.
- Collect data, oversee exercise program (once trained), scan or create worksheets modified to [Student]'s needs, enlarge assignments, and/or provide accommodations within his IEP as instructed by the special education teacher.

### The student will:

- Highlight or circle the answers to a multiple choice assessment that has been enlarged.
- Use the Fusion or word processor to type written essays, answers to short answer questions, etc.
- Put his name on his assignments by handwriting it or using his name stamp.
- Remain in the general education classroom unless he needs to access other technology equipment or to have accommodations provided (i.e.: read aloud)

By March 1 the paraeducator will be faded from [Student's] self-contained classes and will continue in only two of his general education classes based on the data presented to the IEP team.

### The paraeducator will:

- Assist [Student] in talking with the general education teacher at the end of each period to get a copy of the assignment(s) that will be given in class the next day.
- Modify/adapt the assignment so that [Stu-

dent] is able to complete it as independently as possible prior to the class meeting time.

- Obtain approval from the special education teacher on the modified version or seek help from the teacher for modification ideas.
- Collect data, oversee exercise program (once trained), scan or create worksheets modified to [Student's] needs, enlarge assignments, and/or provide accommodations within his IEP as instructed by the special education teacher. [Student] will be asked to complete self-rating scales to allow him an opportunity to participate in the process and be more mindful of his independent growth.

The student will:

- Highlight or circle the answers to a multiple choice assessment that has been enlarged.
- Use the Fusion or word processor to type written essays, answers to short answer questions, etc.
- Put his name on his assignments by handwriting it or using his name stamp.
- Remain in the general education classroom unless he needs to access other technology equipment or to have accommodations provided (i.e.: read aloud)

By April 1 the paraeducator will be faded from [Student's] self-contained classes and will continue in only one of his general education classes based on the data presented to the IEP team.

The paraeducator will:

- Modify/adapt the assignment so that [Student] is able to complete it as independently as possible prior to the class meeting time.
- Obtain approval from the special education teacher on the modified version or seek help from the teacher for modification ideas.
- Collect data, oversee exercise program (once trained), scan or create worksheets modified to [Student's] needs, enlarge assignments, and/or provide accommodations within his IEP as instructed by the special education teacher. [Student] will be asked to complete self-rating scales to allow him an opportunity to participate in the process and be more

mindful of his independent growth.

The student will:

- Independently talk with the general education teacher at the end of each period to get a copy of the assignment(s) that will be given in class the next day.
- Highlight or circle the answers to a multiple choice assessment that has been enlarged.
- Use the Fusion or word processor to type written essays, answers to short answer questions, etc.
- Put his name on his assignments by handwriting it or using his name stamp.
- Remain in the general education classroom unless he needs to access other technology equipment or to have accommodations provided (i.e.: read aloud)

### **Sample Fade Plan #2**

The following plan was developed for an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student with a diagnosis of autism. The student had very limited social skills, elementary level academic skills, and extreme behavioral health needs. He was referred to the district's behavior intervention team to address severe aggressive behaviors, including pushing staff and peers, and tipping furniture. The suspected function of aggression was escape from task demands. Therefore a demand-fading treatment plan was recommended. Following 6 weeks of BIP implementation, the student was attending school on a regular schedule with no further incidents for the remainder of the school year.

[Student] Behavior Intervention Plan/Schedule Effective 9/24/12

Effective Thursday, September 27, 2012, [Student] will attend school from 8:45 (a.m. arrival) until 12:00 (early dismissal).

Phase 1

[Student] will only be asked to transition from one preferred activity to another preferred activity. Preferred activities include computer, sensory room, PE/walking in gymnasium, etc. Each activity should last at least 10 minutes but no more than 30 minutes. The schedule of activities should remain constant day to day.

When [Student] has successfully transitioned between preferred activities with NO aggression towards people or property for 2 consecutive school days, proceed to Phase 2.

### Phase 2

Before instructing [Student] to transition from one preferred activity to another preferred activity, instruct him to complete one work task. Prompt him through completion of the task as needed, then instruct him to transition to the next preferred activity.

When [Student] is able to successfully complete one work task per preferred activity, and transition between preferred activities with NO aggression towards people or property for 2 consecutive school days proceed to Phase 3.

### Phase 3

Before instructing [Student] to transition from one preferred activity to another preferred activity, instruct him to complete two work tasks. Prompt him through completion of the task as needed, then instruct him to transition to the next preferred activity.

When [Student] is able to successfully complete two work tasks per preferred activity, and transition between preferred activities with NO aggression towards people or property for 2 consecutive school days, proceed to Phase 4.

### Phase 4

Gradually increase the length of his school day and duration of work tasks necessary for access to preferred activities (determined based on results of prior phases).

Note 1: Recommendations for support through ERMHS were also suggested, and the therapist was part of the team. Medication changes were discussed.

Note 2: The BIP is designed in phases. This approach is recommended to ensure proper fading in (increase) of demands and thinning (decrease) of reinforcement.

Note 3: The student was moved to a classroom with structure, environmental supports, and a very engaging teacher during Phase 3.

Note 4: Criteria for aggression was modified to

a scale of 1-2-3 levels of aggression, and only levels 2 and 3 were considered for remaining in a given phase. Brief mild occurrences such as swatting a paper or book were considered level 1 and not considered for remaining in a given phase.

Sample Language to Support a Responsibility and Monitoring Plan:

Sample Goals and Objectives/Benchmarks

Goal 1: By (date), [Student] will increase independence skills by demonstrating hand-raising at least three times each day to ask the classroom teacher a question with indirect prompting from support staff.

- Obj. 1: By (date), when verbally prompted, [Student] will ask support staff a question when he needs help.
- Obj. 2: By (date), [Student] will demonstrate raising of his hand to ask support staff a question when verbally prompted by support staff, at least three times per day.
- Obj. 3: By (date), [Student], will raise his hand to ask a question of the classroom teacher at least one time per day with verbal prompting from support staff.

Goal 2: By (date), [Student] will demonstrate appropriate playground behavior by lining up within one minute after the bell rings, at least one time per day.

- Obj. 1: By (date), when given a verbal prompt, (student) will seek out support staff when she hears the bell ring.
- Obj. 2: By (date), [Student] will independently stand next to support staff who is in the children's line, within one minute after the bell rings.

Goal 3: By (date), [Student] will demonstrate on-task behavior for 10-minute time segments independently 90% of the time as measured by staff data.

- Benchmark 1: By (date), the above goal will be at 50%.
- Benchmark 2: By (date), the above goal will be at 70%.

## Writing Responsibility and Monitoring on the IEP Team Meeting Notes

A Responsibility and Monitoring plan for promoting student independence should be specifically attached to the IEP and documented discussion should be captured on the IEP Team Meeting Notes. The plan must be clearly understood by the entire team and be very exact. It is important that everyone, especially the parent(s), understand the fading schedule. The use of the tools attached to this document should be utilized and the data and work samples should be reviewed at the next IEP meeting (typically within 3-6 months) to determine the effectiveness of the paraeducator support.

Example 1: In order to promote and maximize student independence, additional support staff will be discontinued when (list the level of independence achieved, skills acquired, or certain conditions met that would indicate additional aide support no longer needed).

Example 2: Short-term additional adult assistance not to exceed XX weeks. (Use this statement when aide support is needed for a specific period of time, such as for a special project, or for a temporary medical condition, etc.).

Example 3: By (date), support staff will decrease direct proximity (standing next to the student) by 40% as documented on a daily log, and by (2 months later) direct support will be faded by 60%. When not in direct proximity to the student, the additional support staff will be in the same classroom working with other students or other tasks in order to be available if necessary for (student). An IEP meeting will be scheduled for (within 3-6 months) to review the effectiveness of the additional assistance. (Name/Title of staff member) will complete the "Review to Determine Continued Need for Aide Support" form and this information will be reviewed at the next IEP meeting.

Example 4: (Student) will receive additional adult assistance for six periods beginning in September, and decreasing one period per month, for a three month period.

## Suggested IEP Language When Additional Aide Support is Not Recommended

Indicate in the IEP Team Meeting Notes what is working in the current program. Address natural supports that are in place and effective. Specify accommodations and/or modifications that are already meeting the student's needs. Indicate in the IEP Team Meeting Notes any additional supports to be provided such as accommodations and or modifications, a Behavior Support Plan or Behavior Intervention Plan, and/or natural supports that are available in the environment. Consider adding IEP goals to address student independence.

Example 1 (for a student with academic concerns only): [Student] is receiving the following services and supports: reading intervention instruction twice weekly for 30 minutes each session, classroom aide assigned to the regular education class during reading instruction, RSP collaboration daily for 55 minutes, cross-age tutoring once weekly for 30 minutes, homework club four times a week for 60 minutes, appropriate reading goals on IEP, and access to computerized reading software. In considering current evaluation results and the services and supports that are being provided, the IEP team agrees (or the IEP team agrees, with the exception of the parent) that (student) is receiving adequate support at the present time to make satisfactory progress toward all goals.

Example 2 (for a student with behavioral and/or social issues): [Student] is receiving the following services and supports: visual schedule, sensory integration services (DIS OT), DIS Speech and Language services, school-based counseling, assigned peer buddy during transitions and in social situations, high staff/student ratio in all school settings including lunch and recess, consultation with Autism Specialist bi-weekly/60 minutes per session, behavior support plan (or BIP) which has decreased targeted maladaptive behavior by 50% in the last two months. In considering current evaluation results and the services and supports that are being provided, the IEP team agrees (or the IEP team agrees, with the exception of the parents) that (student) is receiving adequate support at the present time to make satisfactory progress toward all goals.

# Directions for Utilizing Paraeducator Resources

Below is a guideline for the order in which our SELPA recommends an LEA/District complete assessments to determine the level of appropriate paraeducator support for a student:

1. **Existing Data:** Review appropriate student information. This may include the current IEP, Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), grades, attendance records, discipline records, nurse log, etc.
2. **[Checklist of Existing Environmental Supports:](#)** This document should be filled out by a member of the school staff to determine if there are additional supports that need to be added to the student's environment prior to adding paraeducator support.
3. **[Assessment Plan:](#)** If new observational data is needed complete an Assessment Plan. Once the signed AP is received then the assessment components can take place. Observations of a student in various school settings should look at frequency, duration and intensity of need.
4. **[Paraeducator Support Rubric:](#)** Completed by members of the school staff.
5. **[School Day Analysis:](#)** Completed by a member of the school staff to determine what a student can do without assistance and what supports are already in place.
6. **Responsibility and Monitoring Plan:** In the event the IEP Team determined paraeducator support is needed the assessor and education specialist will collaborate to develop a draft Responsibility and Monitoring Plan with the embedded Fade Plan which will be presented at the IEP meeting for consideration by all IEP Team members. The suggested outline for the Responsibility and Monitoring Plan is as follows:
  - a. **Time:** How long will the paraeducator be needed and at what time of day?
  - b. **Responsibilities:** Define the specific responsibilities of:
    - The paraeducator
    - The general education teacher
    - The special education teacher
    - Any other adults interacting with the student in the educational setting (yard duty, office staff, etc.)
  - c. **Goals and Objectives:** Develop goals and objectives that address the skill(s) that need to be taught in order for the student to gain independence and allow the paraeducator to fade the level of support currently required.
  - d. **Fade Plan:** Create a fade plan which clearly designates the skills the student must acquire in order to increase independence and decrease paraeducator support. For further information about developing a fade plan refer to the chapter on fading in this document and see the appendix for examples.
  - e. **Progress Monitoring:** Create a schedule of review dates to determine progress criteria and monitor student progress.
7. **Documentation:** It is important for all assessments and results to be documented in the IEP. Responsibility and Monitoring Plan which includes the Fade Plan should be attached to the IEP. For additional guidance, please refer to the Documentation section on page 5.
8. **Progress Monitoring:** Included within the Responsibility and Monitoring Plan is the schedule of review dates to determine progress criteria and monitoring of student progress.

## Online Resources

Click the following links for additional resources:

[Council for Exceptional Children](#) | [National Resource Center for Paraeducators](#)  
[National Association of Special Education Teachers](#)  
[Center for Parent Information and Resources](#) | [Helen Keller National Center](#)  
[Special Education Guide](#) | [CAST](#) | [EDCOE SELPA Website](#)