

The Use of One-to-One (1:1) Aides

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The use of 1:1 aides has grown steadily since the 70s and 80s. With the push towards inclusion, more and more children are attending school in the general education setting. Also known as paraprofessionals, 1:1 aides are expected to perform a host of duties. As a result, parents of children with special needs depend on the 1:1 aide for a multitude of reasons. But is a 1:1 always appropriate, necessary or in the best interest of the child? The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has taken an in-depth look at the use of the 1:1 aides and has established guidelines for the determination of the need for a 1:1 aide based on the student's needs.



This bulletin will attempt to provide you with information and understanding when making the determination for a 1:1 aide. It will further explore the pros and cons of using a 1:1 aide. Additionally, it will discuss how to best identify the appropriateness of using 1:1 aides based on the instructional needs, behavior management and the health and safety concerns of a child. Sometimes we forget that all children share similarities. The goal for all children should be independence.

New York State Education Department

...what is the position of NYSED on the use of 1:1 aides

To best help families, CPSE Chairpersons, and providers, NYSED distributed a memo in January 2012 (DeLorenzo, 2012) to offer clarification on the use of 1:1 aides. Within this section you will find an overview of this memo.

A recommendation for an individual aide is a significant programmatic decision and one that should only be made after a comprehensive discussion of other options considered and clear documentation as to why those options are not appropriate. While some students may temporarily need the support of a 1:1 aide to receive a free appropriate education, for other students, the assignment of a 1:1 aide may be unnecessarily and inappropriately restrictive.

A goal for all students is to promote and maximize independence. Chairpersons are responsible for promoting such independence in the process of developing a child's IEP. When CPSE or CSE determines a student needs a 1:1 aide, it should only be a time-limited recommendation and goals should be established to fade the use of the 1:1 aide.

As such, 1:1 aides may not be used as a substitute for certified, qualified teachers for an individual student or substitute for an appropriately developed and implemented behavioral intervention plan or the primary member responsible for implementing the behavior plan.

Each decision to recommend a 1:1 aide must weigh the factors of both (1) the student's individual needs and (2) the available supports in the setting where the student's IEP will be implemented. There are a number of important considerations that must be made by the committee with regard to each of these factors.

Thoughts to Ponder

Requests for 1:1 aides form in three ways.

1. Some parents understandably request a 1:1 aide for their child with disabilities due to their concerns or fears about how their child will be accepted, supported and instructed. Yet parents seeking inclusive education through the assignment of a 1:1 aide may be working against themselves. Having an adult by a student's side for all or most of the school day can interfere with a student's inclusion as a participating member of the classroom.
2. Teachers, both general and special education, cite a lack of understanding or training in dealing with children with more significant behavioral or educational needs.
3. Teams who have been asked to provide an FBA/BIP (Functional Behavioral Assessment or Behavioral Intervention Plan) seek an aide as a way to provide the intervention.

NYSED has developed a model which is not mandated by regulation but is being suggested as a model of best practice with regard to preschool special education program ratios to assist in addressing the need for additional staffing for specific children. This change is referred to as Enhanced Programming. Enhanced Programming provides for three aides in addition to the lead teacher to support the needs of all children within a given classroom. There is evidence that well-structured, enhanced programs using systemic academic and behavior supports can support student growth and learning in a classroom setting.

Questions to Consider

- ✕ *What are the needs of the student to necessitate the 1:1 aide?*
- ✕ *What are the potential benefits for the assignment of a 1:1 aide and how will this be measured to determine continuation or recommendation?*
- ✕ *What are the skills and goals the student is expected to achieve that will reduce or eliminate the need for the 1:1 aide?*
- ✕ *What is the potential negative impact of assigning a 1:1 aide for the student (e.g., self-image, isolation and or impeding the development of independence)?*
- ✕ *What other natural supports, accommodations and/or services that could support the student to meet these needs are available (BIP, environmental changes, assistive technology devices)?*
- ✕ *What role will a 1:1 aide fulfill (instructional, behavior support, safety etc.)?*
- ✕ *What considerations have been given to the class size or special class size?*
- ✕ *Are the qualifications of the 1:1 aide appropriate based on the child's needs?*
- ✕ *What specific activities and/or times of day is the aide needed?*
- ✕ *What plan is in place for substitutes to serve as the student's 1:1 aide, if the child is assigned an aide?*
- ✕ *What is the plan to monitor the student's progress toward the goals to be addressed by assignment of the 1:1 aide and to assess the student's continuing need for the 1:1 aide?*
- ✕ *What is the plan for reducing the support provided to the student and his/her dependence on an aide over time?*
- ✕ *If the student's 1:1 aide is absent, who will cover in order for the student to receive his/her IEP services?*
- ✕ *What if any professional development and supervision will the aide need to carry out the responsibilities?*
- ✕ *How will the aide have access to the students IEP and informed of her/his duties?*



Pros & Cons of a 1:1 Aide

PROS

- Can assist a student to engage with his/her peers by redirecting conversation to the student with a disability.
- Can help students transition to new learning environments.
- Can provide additional support to the whole class (Enhanced Programming ratios).
- Can be trained in the collection of data to support FBA and BIP planning.
- Can model appropriate responses to the student and draw attention to missed social cues.
- Can promote and guide the use of peer supports through cooperative learning and peer tutoring.
- Can teach peers how to communicate with the student with a disability (communication systems).
- Can also help peers interpret the behavior of the student and how to address it consistently.
- Can promote independence and formulate a fading plan.
- Can support and provide opportunity for children with health care needs to participate in the classroom with his/her peers.

CONS

- ◆ May make decisions about student instruction without consent or feedback from teachers.
- ◆ Presence lends itself to separation of students from their peers during class and activities.
- ◆ Creates dependence on adults.
- ◆ Insufficient training of aides.
- ◆ Less classroom time for student.
- ◆ Peers do not have opportunities to interact with the student with disabilities because of the 1:1 aide's constant presence, support, and help.
- ◆ Students participate in activities planned by the aide and not the teacher.
- ◆ Have been observed making choices and decisions for the students that they should be making for themselves.
- ◆ Interference by the 1:1 aide which distracts students when they begin doing activities independently.
- ◆ Interference with teacher engagement.
- ◆ Increase in inappropriate behavior.

Below is a sample form available from NYSED to assist in the determination of the need for a 1:1 aide.

CHECKLIST TO DETERMINE THE STUDENT'S NEEDS AS THEY MAY RELATE TO THE NEED FOR A ONE-TO-ONE AIDE(1)

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/att2-checklist-jan2012.htm#ftn1>

Health/Personal Care

- ◇ Student requires non-medical specialized health care support (e.g., feeding, assistance with braces or prosthesis) (2)
- ◇ Student requires positioning or bracing multiple times daily.
- ◇ Student requires health-related interventions multiple times daily.
- ◇ Student requires direct assistance with most personal care.

Behavior

- ◇ Student presents with serious behavior problems with ongoing (daily) incidents of injurious behaviors to self and/or others or student runs away and student has a functional behavioral assessment and a behavioral intervention plan that is implemented with fidelity.

Instruction

- ◇ Student cannot participate in a group without constant verbal and/or physical prompting to stay on task and follow directions.

Inclusion in General Education Classes

- ◇ Student needs an adult in constant close proximity for direct instruction.
- ◇ Student requires individualized assistance to transition to and from class more than 80 percent of the time.
- ◇ Student needs an adult in close proximity to supervise social interactions with peers at all times.

(1) This checklist does not present an exhaustive list nor is it intended to mean that every student with these needs would require individualized assistance by a one-to-one aide.

(2) Use of one-to-one aides for health related care must be provided consistent with Department guidance (http://www.schoolhealthservicesny.com/uploads/nursing_tasks.pdf; <http://www.schoolhealthservicesny.com/uploads/March.pdf>)



SOURCES

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Mid-State Early Childhood Direction Center

Syracuse University
805 S. Crouse Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13244-2280

Phone:

315-443-4444

1-800-962-5488

Fax:

315-443-4338

E-mail: ecdc@syr.edu

<http://ecdc.syr.edu>

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THEY TEACH US.**



30 Years
Caring for All Children

Workshops of Interest

The ECDC can provide information and workshops on a variety of topics tailored to the interests and needs of parents and early childhood professionals. Resources are available on such topics as general child development, developmental issues for children with special needs, coping strategies, and specific disabilities.

Workshops include:

- Including All Kids
- Making Parent Partnerships
- Early Childhood Development: The Meaning of Red Flags
- Positive Guidance and Behavior Strategies
- Moving On: Children and Families Facing Transition
- What Are Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education?
- What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?
- Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Who We Are

The Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) is a regional technical assistance center for the State Education Department providing information, referral and support to families, professionals, and community agencies concerned with young children birth to five. We are located at Syracuse University's Center on Human Policy.

**ECDC services to families are
free and confidential.**

ECDC Staff

Tracey Menapace, Director
Maria Gill, Education Coordinator
Glenda Criss, Community Outreach Educator
Cyndy Colavita, Office Coordinator
Rachael Zubal-Ruggieri, Coordinator of Computer and Technical Applications