



CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES – PARAPROFESSIONAL SUPPORT – IEP and Section 504 Plan

PURPOSE

In addition to the classroom teacher or Related Service Providers (RSPs), paraprofessionals may be needed to provide a student with support for his/her need for personal care, or for medical, academic, behavior, social, communication or other issues at school, and/or at school-sponsored activities or events. Any member of the IEP/Section 504 team, including the parents/guardians, may initiate a request for paraprofessional support to be discussed at the IEP/Section 504 meeting and for qualitative and quantitative data to be gathered to support this discussion. When an IEP team determines that paraprofessional support is required, the team will also determine if it is appropriate to include in the student's IEP a relevant measurable goal designed for the student to achieve greater independence within the targeted area(s) of need and decrease reliance on paraprofessional support.

CONTENTS

This packet includes the following documentation:

- Procedures - Step-by-step detail of how paraprofessional support are committed throughout the district
- Roles and Responsibilities - Breakdown of roles and responsibilities for staff involved in the process of committing paraprofessional support
- Guidelines - Guiding principles to consider when determining whether a student needs paraprofessional support



PROCEDURES

PRIOR TO IEP/SECTION 504 MEETING

1. Initiate a request for paraprofessional support using the *Paraprofessional Justification Form*.
2. If a parent requests paraprofessional support for a student be discussed at the IEP/Section 504 meeting, initiate request using the *Paraprofessional Justification Form*.
3. Collect qualitative and quantitative data¹ to support the IEP/Section 504 team's discussion of the student's need is provided by school members of the IEP/Section 504 team.

AT IEP/SECTION 504 MEETING

4. The IEP/Section 504 team determines the student's need for paraprofessional support using the Guidelines to facilitate the discussion.
5. The Paraprofessional Support section of the IEP begins with the following question: Does the IEP Team contemplate the student will require paraprofessional support to access the general education curriculum or to meet his/her social, communication, behavioral or adaptive needs?
 - a. If the IEP team answers "No" based on the qualitative and quantitative data, other relevant information and IEP/Section 504 team discussion, the IEP will indicate the student does not require paraprofessional support.
 - b. If the IEP team answers "Yes," the following question will be asked: Does the IEP Team have the qualitative and quantitative data to determine whether the student requires paraprofessional support?
 - i. If the IEP team answers "No," the IEP will read: "The decision regarding paraprofessional support cannot be determined until qualitative and quantitative data has been collected. Such data should be collected, and the IEP team must reconvene to discuss paraprofessional support within fifteen school days."
 - ii. If the IEP team answers "Yes," proceed to step 6.
6. If the qualitative and quantitative data,, and IEP/Section 504 team discussion support a need for paraprofessional support, the team must then specify on the IEP/Section 504: (i) when, where, and for what tasks or activities paraprofessional support is needed; (ii) if the paraprofessional will be shared or dedicated per task/activity; and (iii) any training or other supports that the paraprofessional should be provided.

NOTE: If the student is in a cluster program and only needs the support of the programmatic paraprofessionals, the IEP should describe the specific shared support these programmatic paraprofessionals will provide the student.

Qualitative and quantitative data needed to determine whether a student requires paraprofessional support will vary, depending on the need(s) for which the IEP team is contemplating paraprofessional support. For support with personal care, the team may consider, reports from OTs, PTs, doctors, etc., or staff or parent/guardian input as to why the student needs assistance. For support related to behavior, the data should describe the target behavior(s) (e.g., elopement) along with frequency and /or duration of the target behavior(s). For support related to academics, the data should describe how the area of concern is currently being addressed, the frequency and duration of needed support(s) (e.g., student requests directions be repeated every 5 minutes), and why the needed support(s) exceeds what a teacher alone can provide in a classroom setting. Data should include, for both behavior and academic, current and past intervention(s) and their effectiveness or lack thereof.



7. The IEP/Section 504 team must also develop a *Student Independence Paraprofessional Plan* in which the team identifies strategies to promote independence as well as to fade the student's need for paraprofessional support across all relevant settings.

POST-IEP/SECTION 504 MEETING

8. If the IEP/Section 504 team determines paraprofessional training is needed, the local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator (also known as "Case Manager") must reach out to the Office of Diverse Learner Supports + Services (ODLSS) District Representative within five school days to arrange any training required for the paraprofessional.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SCHOOL MEMBERS OF THE IEP/504 TEAM

General education teacher(s), special education teacher(s), Related Service Provider(s), local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator

- Collect qualitative and quantitative data on the student's potential need for paraprofessional support.
- Participate in the IEP team's determination of the student's need for paraprofessional support using the Guidelines to facilitate the discussion.
- Document the IEP/Section 504 team's discussion on the IEP/Section 504 Plan.

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE/SECTION 504 COORDINATOR

- Ensure that at the IEP/Section 504 meeting, the team utilizes the collected qualitative and quantitative data and other relevant information when determining the student's need for paraprofessional support.
- Ensure that the IEP/Section 504 Plan documents the team's decision, and if the team determines paraprofessional support is needed, specifies on the IEP/Section 504 Plan (i) when, where, or for what tasks paraprofessional support is needed; (ii) if the paraprofessional will be shared or dedicated per task/activity; (iii) and any training or other supports the paraprofessional should be provided.
- Contact ODLSS District Representative within 10 school days to schedule any training required for the paraprofessional.

ODLSS DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

- Collaborate with the school administrator, ODLSS, and/or relevant school-based personnel to arrange any necessary training for paraprofessionals.

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)

- Contact the student's teacher or local school district representative/Section 504 Coordinator to initiate a request for paraprofessional support to be discussed at the IEP/Section 504 meeting.
- Participate in the IEP team's determination of the student's need for paraprofessional support at the IEP/Section 504 meeting.



GUIDELINES

If a student with disabilities is in a cluster program, the IEP team should determine whether the student's needs can be met in the separate cluster classroom with a teacher and the programmatic paraprofessional(s) already assigned to the classroom. If so, indicate this on the IEP. If the student needs no other adult assistance, none of the below guidelines apply. If the student also requires personal care (including medical) assistance, the IEP team should also follow Guideline 1 below. If the student needs support with academic and behavioral issues beyond the teacher and the programmatic paraprofessional(s) assigned to the classroom, the IEP team should follow Guidelines 2 and 3 below.

For all other students with disabilities, an IEP/Section 504 team may decide that the student needs paraprofessional support only if qualitative and quantitative data shows that **ONE OR MORE** of the following Guidelines have been discussed, based on data and other relevant information, and support the team's decision:

GUIDELINE 1: PERSONAL CARE OR MEDICAL CONDITION

The student's teacher and Related Service Provider provide documentation of the student's potential or continuing need for assistance, extending beyond that which is expected for same age peers, in **ONE OR MORE** of the following specific area(s) of support:

A. Toileting/Hygiene

The student requires direct services from an adult for moving, transferring, positioning, initiating or completing toileting/diapering/hygiene activities, such as:

- Cueing and supervising the completion of toileting
- Diapering or toileting when, for example, the student is:
 - Not toilet trained;
 - trained, but requires lifting onto toilet; and/or
- Not independent with tasks related to personal hygiene.

B. Mobility

The student requires direct services from an adult to be mobile or maintain mobility in activities, such as:

- Moving from sitting to a standing position and/or standing position to sitting;
- Walking;
- Range of motion; and/or
- Mobility and/or mobility training as needed when, for example, the student:
 - Is in a wheelchair and unable to navigate independently;
 - Uses a walker or wears orthotics but is unable to navigate independently; and/or
 - Is blind or visually impaired and unable to navigate independently.

C. Lifting/Positioning

The student requires direct services from an adult for lifting/positioning in activities, such as:

- Cueing the student to adjust his/her positioning to prevent stiff muscles/sores;
- Assisting the student to adjust his/her positioning to prevent stiff muscles/sores; and/or
- Moving the student from one position to another.



D. Feeding

The student requires direct services from an adult for feeding activities, such as:

- Cueing and supervision of eating; or
- Feeding when, for example, the student:
 - Is unable to feed self;
 - Requires prompting to feed self; and/or
 - Requires assistance with food preparation.

E. Monitoring and Documenting Medical Conditions

The student requires direct services from an adult for monitoring or documenting medical or health conditions, such as:

- Asthma;
- Diabetes;
- Seizure disorder; or
- Other medical conditions.

F. Dressing

The student requires direct services from an adult for dressing activities, such as:

- Dressing when, for example, the student is unable to:
 - Put on or take off own clothing, coat, shoes or boots, etc.;
 - Put on or take off orthotics; and/or
 - Button or secure buttons, snaps, or zippers.

G. Other Daily Living Skills

The student requires direct services from an adult for other activities of daily living not listed above.

GUIDELINE 2: ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Prior to considering a student's need for paraprofessional support based on Guideline 2, , the student's teacher and/or Related Service Provider should collect qualitative and quantitative data for:

- Each subject area (e.g., English/Language Arts, Math, Science, etc.) in which a paraprofessional may be required **and** in each setting (i.e., general education class, separate class, and community, where applicable) for each subject area; and/or
- Exploratory classes, regardless of setting.

The student's teacher or RSP, including bilingual endorsed personnel for an English learner, should provide qualitative and quantitative data of the student's potential or continuing need for assistance in **ONE OR MORE** of the following specific area(s) of support:

A. Reinforce instruction that teacher has already provided

The student requires direct support during instruction, such as:

- Frequent additional explanations concerning assigned work;
- Hand-over-hand, organizational assistance, or other assistance during school activities; and/or
- Practice and repetition of skills



B. Review of directions

The student requires direct assistance in understanding or following directions, such as:

- Repeating directions using his own words;
- Breaking directions down into manageable pieces; and/or
- Providing directions in more than one format (verbal, visual, written, gestures).

C. Completion of Tasks

The student requires direct support to complete tasks, such as:

- Identifying assignments or tasks to be completed with due date/time due identified;
- Breaking down each task/assignment into smaller tasks;
- Developing a rubric or simple checklist; and/or
- Setting up and/or using assistive technology.

D. Remaining engaged/on task

The student requires direct delivery of prompts, which increases the likelihood that the student will emit a correct response and reduces the possibility of errors being made, in forms such as:

- **Proximity prompting**, which involves positioning self or item in a particular location near the student to encourage desired behavior;
- **Gestural prompting**, which involves using a direct or indirect physical gesture to encourage desired behavior, such as, pointing, nodding, or motioning;
- **Verbal prompting**, which is a direct or indirect cue or instruction that is given orally before or during the student's action or response. This can include full verbal prompts and partial verbal prompts (e.g., verbally models only part of the desired behavior);
- **Visual prompting**, which is the use of direct or indirect visuals such as pictures, symbols and text that can assist a student to respond correctly; and/or
- **Physical prompting**, which may include full physical assistance (e.g., hand over hand when teaching the child to pick up a cup, the teacher takes the child's hand and guides him to pick it up) partial physical assistance (e.g., when teaching the child to pick up the cup, the teacher guides the child's hand to the cup by tapping his elbow).

E. Communication

The student requires direct communication support, such as:

- Visual support, which involves the provision of picture supports for students to answer questions, provide information, and engage in social interactions;
- Total communication support for students to use various modes of communication, (e.g., sign language, oral, auditory, written and visual aids, etc.); and/or
- Augmentative communication device support, which is the support of students as they use a device or communication system. This would be done in conjunction with supervising personnel such as or occupational therapist (OT), speech-language pathologist (SLP) and/or teacher.



GUIDELINE 3: BEHAVIOR (INCLUDING SAFETY AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS)

If paraprofessional support may be required for **both** academic and behavior reasons within the classroom setting, the qualitative and quantitative data described in Guideline 2 should also include behavior data.

If paraprofessional support is only being considered for behavior reasons, and not for academic reasons, the student's teacher and/or Related Service Provider should collect qualitative and quantitative documenting the student's potential or continuing need for assistance in **ONE OR MORE** of the following specific area(s) of support:

A. Physical aggression

The student, as outlined in the student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP):

- Is a safety threat to self;
- Is a safety threat to others; and/or
- Is a threat to school property or personal property in the school?

B. Safety/supervision

The student, as outlined in the student's BIP, requires direct supervision to address the student's potential harm to self or others during activities such as:

- Offsite travel, in unstructured settings, etc.;
- Transition within the classroom;
- Transition across school environments; and/or
- The student:
 - Leaves assigned area without permission;
 - Leaves school building without permission (elopement); and/or
 - Attempts to ingest inedible objects.

C. Social support to model and/or facilitate appropriate social interactions

The student requires direct support to engage in social interactions appropriately, such as:

- Reinforce behavioral, interpersonal, and social communication skills;
- Modeling skills necessary to appropriately join, leave, comment and participate appropriately in a social conversation and encouraging imitation of that behavior; or
- Reinforcing use of new skills (e.g., self-awareness, conflict resolution, social interactions, etc.).



Paraprofessional Frequently Asked Questions

1. How does the IEP/Section 504 team determine if the data supports a shared or dedicated paraprofessional?

On a case-by-case basis, the IEP/Section 504 team determines if the qualitative and quantitative data support the need for shared or dedicated paraprofessional support through analysis and discussion at the meeting. A key factor in this decision is whether the support being provided is a support that can be provided to multiple students at the same time or during the same class period.

2. Who determines the need for paraprofessional support?

The IEP/504 team, including the parents, determines the need for paraprofessional support after analyzing and discussing the qualitative and quantitative data.

3. What if the IEP/Section 504 team cannot reach consensus regarding a student's need for paraprofessional support?

The IEP team should work toward a general agreement but the District is ultimately responsible that the IEP includes the services necessary to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). It is not appropriate to make IEP decisions based on a majority "vote." At an IEP meeting when the team cannot reach consensus, the District Representative, who is either the local school distractive representative or the ODLSS District Representative, will make the final recommendation regarding paraprofessional support on behalf of the District when the team cannot reach consensus.

At a Section 504 meeting when the team cannot reach consensus, the Section 504 Coordinator or the ODLSS District Representative will make the final recommendation regarding paraprofessional support on behalf of the District when the team cannot reach consensus.