Instructional Assistant's Guide
Handbook of Best Practices

Independence

Engagement

Socialization

Tecumseh Public Schools

Mission

Uncompromisingly Learner Centered

Vision

We are a dynamic learning community taking **BOLD** steps to ensure all learners are inspired and empowered for life.

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Introduction: The Role of the Instructional Assistant

Welcome!

Instructional Assistants (IAs) have a rewarding position within education and Tecumseh Public Schools. IAs influence positive changes in academic, social and behavioral achievement of the students they work with. Instructional Assistant's interest and work with students and their assistance to teachers is invaluable.

Instructional Assistants work in collaboration with general education teachers, special education teachers and other team members to ensure that each student they work with will have the best and most positive educational experience possible.

Philosophy/Beliefs

> *Every child learns and achieves to high standards*
>
> *Learning includes academic, behavior and social competencies*
>
> *Every member of the learning community continues to grow, learn and reflect*
>
> *Every leader at all levels is responsible for every child's growth*
>
> *Presume Competence*
>
> *Care for the student and respect the disability*
>
> *Always put the child before the disability-student first language*
>
> *The goal is not to change the student but accommodate differences with respect, tolerance and focus on strengths.*

Tecumseh Public Schools believe that it is imperative to ensure all students succeed. We are consistent, efficient and data-focused in order to utilize best practices for learners. We support the needs of every learner.

Research supports that students with disabilities benefit from inclusive instruction within the general education classroom environment. For children with moderate to severe disabilities, inclusion can increase social interaction between disabled and non-disabled children. Inclusion can increase social acceptance by peers and provide students with disabilities appropriate behavior models.

"Almost 30 years of research and experience had demonstrated that the education of students with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible" *The Universally Designed Classroom (2005)*

It is important to note that often students with disabilities in a general education setting need direct intervention and support in order to be successful. Instructional assistants can play an important role in providing that intervention and support as part of the team.

Definition of an Instructional Assistant

Also known as:

Paraprofessional

Paraeducator

Independence Facilitator

Instructional Assistant - *teaching related position within a school generally responsible for specialized or concentrated assistance for students*

Paraprofessional - *one who works alongside of an individual student*

Four Primary goals for utilizing an Instructional Assistant:

1. Support the student in successfully following the expectations or following through on instructional demands:

    Assist in material/desk organization

    Implement academic accommodations/modifications

    Support/Facilitate socialization/communication opportunities

2. Provide additional learning opportunities necessary for skill acquisition:

    Prompt appropriate behavior/work completion, etc.

    Implement behavioral plans

3. Assist the student in learning systems or strategies that allow for optimal independent participation in the school environment:

    Visual schedules and prompts

    Self-management systems

4. Safety – safety to the student and safety for others

Individualized Programming

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a yearly written plan developed through a team process designed to meet the needs of the child with disabilities. It is a legal binding <u>confidential</u> document and should not be discussed outside of the school setting. The IEP's intent is to ensure that each child with a disability is able to participate in the same settings as other children of the same age. This means that the learning should occur in the "least restrictive environment" (LRE) which is generally considered the community setting or general education classroom in which students of the same age are placed.

The IEP summarizes a student's present level of performance and identifies the student's specific needs in each area. The IEP team identifies goals and specific objectives and meets on an annual basis. The plan describes any accommodations, modifications, programs and services that the student receives in the school setting. This plan also describes how a student will be educated with their peers. Instructional Assistants are often involved in the observation and documentation of progress on the student's goals/objectives and accommodations/modifications. Any parent questions or concerns about the services provided by the plan should be directed to the teacher and/or building administrator.

When it has been decided by the IEP team that an Instructional Assistant is needed, the team needs to place emphasis on two primary goals for the student: **independence and socialization.** The team should meet on a monthly basis to determine what supports are needed throughout the day and what supports can fade away in order to promote the student's independence and social skills.

Current research indicates that, in addition to lack of evidence for the use of one-to-one adult support, an over reliance on paraprofessionals is associated with unintended detrimental effects. (Giancreco, 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.

The team needs to keep the following information in mind whenever an Instructional Assistant is being considered for a student.

Guidelines for Determining When a Student Requires Adult Support

Adult assistance is required for some students in order for them to succeed in school. Frequently, IEP teams are requested to consider the need for this type of support. The following process can be used by IEP teams as guidance in making decisions regarding paraprofessional support.

When dealing with the addition of adults, the team needs to determine what the educational benefits are for the students. Recent research and current practice indicate that misuse of paraprofessionals can produce, among other results, students becoming over-dependent upon adult support and segregation and isolation of the student from their peer group. (Marks et al., 1999; Giangreco et al., 1997: Mueller, 1997).

This planning process applies to any student who requires adult assistance and support for a portion of their school day. The student's IEP team should use the process annually, as part of his/her annual review.

Assumptions Regarding Adult Support:

- They are a valuable and necessary resource for students
- They are not surrogate teachers
- Support services are to promote independence
- Adult assistance assignments should be based on the needs of the student as specified by the IEP team or behavior intervention plan.

Alternatives to Adding Adult Support

Supplementary aids and services "are the tools or help that is needed to enable students with disabilities to gain benefit from their environment with the general curriculum" (Lipsky & Gartner, 2008). There are a full range of supports that should be considered by the student's IEP team (Etscheidt, 2005). These supports may include changes in the educational environment, adaptations or modifications of the curriculum, assistive technology, behavior support plans, and the utilization of supplementary personnel to assist the student (Lipsky & Gartner, 2008). If adult support is requested, Freschi (1999) encourages team members to first consider alternative supports. Teams should identify what goals they hope to accomplish by assigning a paraprofessional and then determine if these goals can be met in another

fashion (Freschi, 1999; Giangreco et al., 1999). Giangreco (2010) lists a combination of alternative options that may provide the necessary supports students need to be successful. Teams should identify when and where supports are needed, and then consider how to provide those supports. Some possible alternatives include:

- SETT Framework-Assistive Technology
- Teacher training (e.g. Peer to Peer Supports; Behavior Management)
- Universal Design for Learning
- Use of existing school-wide supports
- The use of adult support assigned to a class rather than an individual student
- Different models of delivery
- Positive behavior supports
- Peer supports (see Appendix p.35)

The IEP team is encouraged to complete the Supplementary Aids and Services (see Appenidx p.36) checklist and schedule matrix/paraprofessional planning tool (see Appenidx p.42, 47) PRIOR to considering an Instructional Assistant. These two tools will help the team determine if and when additional adult assistance is needed.

Schedule Matrix

Completing a schedule matrix is one way to determine roles and responsibilities of all team members; promoting long term planning for student skill acquisition.

This tool is intended to be used by IEP and behavioral planning teams to assist in goal development and identification of necessary supports and strategies.

This schedule matrix is to be completed prior to the determination by the IEP team on whether or not an Instructional Assistant is needed for the student.

Please refer to the START (Statewide Autism Resources and Training) Paraprofessional Planning Tool (see Appendix p.42) for further information.

Role of the Instructional Assistant

Understanding the Role of the Instructional Assistant:

Various factors influence the specific responsibilities assigned to IAs. Some of these include characteristics and personalities of teachers, IAs and students, interpersonal skills of both teachers and IAs, the skill level of the IA, and the physical environment of the classroom. The following list includes some examples of duties that could be assigned to IAs:

- Assist individual students in performing activities initiated by the teachers
- Supervise children in the hallway, lunchroom, and playground
- Assist in monitoring supplementary work and independent study
- Reinforce learning in small groups or with individual students while the teacher works with other learners
- Provide assistance with individualized programmed materials
- Assist the teacher in observing, recording and charting behavior on the student(s) the IA is working with
- Assist the teacher with crisis problems and behavior management
- Assist in preparation/production of instructional materials to be used with assigned student(s)
- Carry out instructional programs designed and monitored by the teacher
- Work with the teacher to develop classroom schedules
- Carry out tutoring activities designated and designed by the teacher
- Operate and maintain classroom equipment when needed to benefit assigned student(s)

Basic Duties/Responsibilities of the IA:

- Follow directions
- Ask questions
- Be flexible
- Understand the various layers of supervision that you may have
- Identify who your immediate supervisor is for each of your assigned roles/responsibilities

- Interact appropriately with school staff
- Present yourself in a professional manner
- Treat everyone in the school with dignity and respect
- Be aware of some basic school-based legal issues (student's IEP services/aids, District policies and procedures)
- Be cautious of what you share with parents
- Demonstrate a positive attitude
- Try to see the humor in different situations
- Use effective communication strategies and be an active listener when interacting with students and adults
- Respect confidentiality (see section on confidentiality)
- Keep your focus on what is best for students
- Follow through on any decisions made
- Arrive on time with all necessary materials
- Follow through by implementing decisions made or new skills learned

Instructional Duties the IA May Not Perform:

- Be solely responsible for a classroom or a professional service
- Be responsible for diagnostics that require a teacher to perform
- Be responsible for preparing lesson plans and initiating instruction
- Be responsible for assigning grades to students
- Be used as a substitute for certified teacher unless he or she possess the appropriate substitute teacher certificate
- Assume full responsibility for supervising assemblies or field trips

The Instructional Assistant and the Supervising Teacher

Teachers and Instructional Assistants are partners in education; working together to provide the best educational experiences possible for each and every learner. When a teacher has an Instructional Assistant in their classroom the teacher must function in a leadership role. It is the teacher's responsibility to assure that the student(s) is moving toward achievement of their individualized goals and objectives per the student's IEP. Instructional Assistants will be under the direction and supervision of the teacher in order to assist in carrying out what is outlined in the student's IEP. In order for the Instructional Assistants to provide direct instruction to the student, teachers must plan and prescribe the learning environment and instruction for the student. Teachers must train the IA in the specifics of the instruction, evaluate student progress and monitor the effectiveness of the IA's implementation of the instructional strategies. The actual delivery of instruction to the student may be carried out by the IA under the supervision of the teacher.

The teacher's responsibilities to the learner include:
- Assessing the student's performance
- Planning instruction for individual students
- Implementing the goals and objectives of the IEP
- Supervising and coordinating work of the IA and other support staff
- Monitoring, evaluating, and reporting student progress
- Involving parents in their child's education
- Coordinating and managing information provided by other professionals

The teacher also has a number of roles to fulfill in the proper utilization of the IA in the classroom:
- Set an example of professionalism in execution of teacher responsibilities
- Provide consistent feedback to assist the IA in refining skills
- Communicate the needs of each student to the IA
- Establish and communicate the IA's role in behavior management
- Assign the IA responsibilities which facilitate the teacher's ability to provide more direct student instruction
- Assist the IA in defining his/her position as an authority figure

	TEACHER ROLE	INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT
Classroom Organization	Plans weekly schedule, lesson, room arrangements, learning centers, and activities for individuals and the entire class	Implements plan as specified by the teacher
Assessment	Administers and scores formal and informal tests	Administers informal tests
Setting Objectives	Determines appropriate objectives for groups and individual children	Carries out activities to meet objectives
Teaching	Teaches lessons for the entire class, small groups, and individual children	Reinforces and supervises practice of skills with individual and small groups
Behavior Managment	Observes behavior, plans and implements behavior management strategies for entire class and for individual children	Observes behavior, carries out behavior management activities
Working with Parents	Meets with parents and initiates conferences concerning student's progress	Participates if requested by teacher
Building a Classroom Partnership	Arranges schedule for conferences, shares goals and philosophy with Instructional Assistant, organized job duties for the Instructional Assistant	Shares ideas and concerns during conferences and carries out duties as directed by a teacher.

Communication and Collaborative Partnerships

Teaming/Collaborations

Effective teaming is critical to the success and delivery of services by both teachers and Instructional Assistants. Effective teaming requires that team members share a common vision for achieving their mutual goal-delivering educational services to meet the needs of all children. The beliefs they have about curriculum and instructional practice support this vision.

Please refer to our problem solving process located in the appendix (p.49).

Communication serves as the foundation for teaming. It involves the exchange of information between parties, and should help both parties assist the child in learning. Effective communicators reach out beyond themselves to the people with whom they are working. Good communication is "other-focused" not "self-centered". Much of the failure to communicate can be blamed on the failure to understand and respect people's feelings, an unwillingness to cooperate or a needless show of authority.

Occasionally, conflicts can arise when working with other adults and team members. Below are a few suggestions to help to deal with any disagreements in a productive fashion:

- Keep your focus on what is best for students
- Be positive, calm and respectful during any disagreements
- Proceed cautiously when disagreeing with someone in a higher position of authority and parents
- Follow through on any decisions made
- Proceed effectively when disagreeing with a student
- Remember whatever the nature of a disagreement once it has been resolved let it go

Professional and Ethical Responsibilities for All Instructional Assistants:

- Respect the human and legal rights of students, and their families
- Respect the individuality of all children and youth
- Follow district policies for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of students
- Maintain confidentiality about all personal information, daily happenings, and educational records concerning students and their families
- Demonstrate an understanding of the distinctions in the roles of various educational personnel
- Follow the directions of teachers and other supervisors
- Maintain a record of regular attendance, arrive and depart at specified times and notify appropriate personnel when they must be absent
- Demonstrate dependability, integrity, and other standards of ethical conduct
- Follow the chain of command for various administrative procedures
- Demonstrate a willingness to participate in opportunities for continuing education provided by the district

Accepting Responsibilities:

- Engage only in instructional and other activities for which you are qualified or trained
- Do not communicate progress or concerns about students to parents, community members or other teachers; this is reserved only for communication with your supervising teacher
- Refer concerns expressed by parents, students or others to your supervising teacher
- Recognize the supervisor has the ultimate responsibility for instruction and management and follow the prescribed directions
- Help to see the best intersts of individual students are met

Relationships with Students and Parents:

- Discuss a child's progress, limitations and/or educational program ONLY with the supervising teacher in an appropriate setting
- Express differences of opinion with your supervising teacher ONLY when students are absent from the room

- Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel
- Do not engage in discriminatory practices based on a student's race, sex, cultural background, religion, or disability
- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents, and staff members
- Be a positive role model

Relationship with the Teacher:

- Recognize the teacher as your supervisor
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher
- Discuss concerns directly with the teacher or building administrator

Relationship with the School:

- Engage in behavior management strategies that are consistent with standards of the district
- Accept responsibility for improving your skills
- Know and follow school policies and procedures
- Represent the school in a positive manner

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the most critical and important aspect of the Instructional Assistant's job. It is a legal responsibility to observe both the rights of students with disabilities and parents in regard to privacy. Like teachers and administrators, Instructional Assistants have access to personal information about children and their families which can include: results of formal and informal tests; behavior in classrooms and other educational settings; academic progress; family circumstances and family relationships.

Both the students and the families have the absolute right to expect that all information will be kept confidential, and made available only to personnel in school or another agency who require it to ensure that the rights, health, safety and physical well being of the students are safe guarded. Confidentiality must be maintained and protected, and the rights of students to due process, dignity, privacy and respect must be promoted.

Always Ask Yourself:

- What information would you want discussed with others regarding your child?
- What would you like said about yourself as a parent?
- What would you like said about your family, your values, your lifestyle?

Always Remember:

- Avoid using names if you are asked about your job
- Suggest that questions about a student are best directed to the special education teacher or administrator
- Do not share other student's names or information regarding their programs with parents during IEP meetings, conferences or informal conversations
- Information regarding specific students and programs should not be shared in the lunchroom, staff room, office areas, out in the community or any other setting

- When conferencing or writing information regarding a student or family that contains confidential information, be aware of those around you who may be within hearing distance. Look for private places within the school building to hold these conversations or to complete these tasks

- No matter who asks a question about a student, if you are unsure whether you should answer. DON'T. You can say this gently and politely. Remember only staff that has a need to know should be given information about a student

- For consistency of program as well as confidentiality, Instructional Assistants must support teacher techniques, materials and methods; especially in the presence of students, parents and other staff. Questions should be directed to the specific teacher privately

Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment

Classroom Management

Instructional Assistants are not required to maintain a classroom independently but there are times when the Instructional Assistant must conduct a well-managed classroom or educational session in order to accomplish the tasks prescribed by the supervising teacher.

Classroom management involves the following factors which, when put into practice by educators, are most influential in maintaining discipline and motivation for students. Classrooms will emphasize effective classroom management and may practice the following[1]:

- Establishment of rules and procedures of the classroom early in the year and teaching them explicitly

- Continually monitor compliance and positive behavior reward systems

- Using detailed and consistent accountability systems, keeping track of student assignments, and describing the system clearly

- Communicating information, directions and objectives clearly

- Organizing instruction efficiently, wasting little time getting prepared or making transitions, keeping the momentum in lessons and maximize student engagement

- Seeming to "have eyes in the back of your head"

- Understanding classroom context and events and use this information to develop activities that maintain the instructional flow with minimal interruptions.

It is suggested that Instructional Assistants become familiar with some basic concepts related to behavior:

- Behavior is learned

- Any behavior that occurs repeatedly is serving some function for the student/individual exhibiting the behavior

- Behavior can be changed

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1 McCollum, H. (1990). A Review of Research on Effective Instructional Strategies and Classroom Management Approaches. In Knapp & Schields, Better Schooling for the Children of Poverty: Alternatives to Conventional Wisdom. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

- Focus more energy on encouraging responsible and desired behavior than on trying to reduce inappropriate behavior

- Changing behavior may require implementing a comprehensive plan

- Be professional when responding to student misbehavior; don't take it personally, give yourself time to think before you respond and remember to view misbehavior as an opportunity to teach

- Be patient and persistent when responding to student misbehavior

- Decisions about student's instructional placement, materials, curriculum for instruction, or components in a Behavior Improvement Plan (BIP) are based on objective information or data rather than "gut instinct"

- Be somewhat familiar with the concept of "baseline" information and major types of data that you may be asked to collect

- Avoid ineffective responses to non-compliance. Do not engage in arguing with the student, do not let a student get away with defiance and do not try to physically force the student to comply

Instructional Assistants may be involved in observing students' emotional, social and behavior skills in order to assist in developing their peer and adult relationships, to reinforce a positive self-concept in the student, to encourage understanding of the student's own and other's feelings and perspectives, to demonstrate and reinforce on task behavior, to encourage problem solving and planning for appropriate social behaviors and to watch for things that promote or interfere with the students learning.

Students are most likely to succeed if they feel good about themselves and their abilities. How a person feels on the inside can assist in how he/she will act on the outside. Instructional Assistants will often work directly with students who have low self-esteem. Learners with and without disabilities struggle with these issues of self-esteem; however, students with disabilities face greater frustration and failure when compared to peers. By building a trusting relationship in a positive and caring environment the IA can assist the student in feeling secure and confident. Promoting and facilitating group acceptance will increase the student's skill at making friends and being socially acceptable. When the IA enhances the learner's ability to make decisions, seek alternatives and identify consequences, they increase the child's academic and behavioral performance. When the IA

supports the student's ability to make decisions, seek alternatives and identify consequences, they increase the learner's academic and behavioral performance.

Students with disabilities will be working to develop skills in all of the personal, social and functional areas. Instructional Assistants are key in assisting students to develop independent functioning skills. It is important that teachers and Instructional Assistants allow students to practice these skills daily. These are the skills that will help children function independently in school, at home and in the community - our ultimate goal for them! IAs and teachers need to allow enough time for children to complete these activities with minimal assistance. Often adults assist too quickly. After giving a student a direction to complete a task, it is important to leave enough wait time to discover what the student already knows how to do. Only with practice can the child learn to complete these activities efficiently.

The IA may need to assist a student in such personal care activities such as eating, maintaining a proper diet, table manners, proper social skills, dressing/undressing, toileting, grooming and hygiene, reminding them to take medication etc., but the goal is still for the student to do as much for themselves as possible.

A large number of students are included in the general education classroom for socialization purposes. Just as the typical developing child learns from observing and participating in activities with other typical developing students; so do students with special needs. Reasearch has shown that children with disabilities, who only generally interact with other students with disabilities, do not develop the appropriate social skills which will allow them to become a contributing part of the community as adults. In addition to the benefits to the child with a disability, the typical child in the classroom learns lessons in acceptance of human differences, becomes more aware of other's needs and is more comfortable with people who have special needs.

The goal of the IA is to provide support to the child with a disability with the least amount of intrusion. IA's and general education teachers should treat a student with a disability like a child who does not have special needs. A learner will feel connected to peers and the classroom teacher if the IA attempts

to be discreet in delivering assistance. Continually sitting beside or hovering over the child when support is not needed only serves to reinforce that the student is different. This behavior tends to discourage interaction with the student and his/her peers. On the other hand, some students need more assistance and guidance with activities. With the teacher's approval, the IA should be able to move about the room and help students that may need assistance.

Behavior Management

Behavior management is complex and unique to each individual. In each classroom environment, staff will manage behavior in a variety of ways. In order to reinforce consistency the IA needs to model the classroom management systems defined by each classroom teacher. When further intervention is necessary, the general education teacher and special education teacher will plan appropriate interventions for the IA to implement. It will be important for IA to define their role with the teacher in each classroom setting.There are a number of general management strategies that the IA will want to be familiar with no matter what setting they may be working in. The most effective procedures/strategies to use revolve around positive reinforcement:

- Feedback is a positive interpretation of factual data. Praise needs to be immediate, specific, deserved and related to behavior. The IA should praise appropriate behaviors by describing the appropriate behaviors they see students perform. Feedback needs to be accurate, specific and descriptive, age appropriate. For example: "Thank you for helping me pick up the papers." "You applied the formula, performed a series of computations and came up with the correct answer." Stay away from the "good job" syndrome (fantastic, excellent, nice work, and good job).

- Positive reinforcement can involve the presentation of a "reward" (smiles, stickers, points, etc.) following a student performing a particular target behavior. The reward is designated to increase the frequency of the desired response and works particularly well with elementary students. If the reinforcement is to be effective, the student must get the reinforcement only after performing the target behavior. A reinforcer should be delivered immediately after the target behavior is performed. If you use a reward system

implement it as effectively as possible. Keep your energy and enthusiasm for the system high, and keep your focus on the student's behavior rather than the rewards they earn.

- Modeling can be used by a teacher/IA to increase appropriate behaviors. Modeling is a process in which appropriate behavior of a peer is reinforced in the proximity of the student that is receiving support.

- If a student seems to be seeking attention with the misbehavior, respond with planned ignoring if possible. Extinction can be used to decrease behavior and is defined as removal of all reinforcement.

- Instructional Assistant, under the guidance of the teacher, will recite the rules for doing the behavior the "right way" (i.e. walking in the hallway). This provides positive practice of desired appropriate behavior.

- Redirection is a very effective behavioral strategy. Redirecting behavior works to help the learner avoid the undesirable behavior. Replacing the behavior with another behavior is also a strategy that works to distract the student from the undesirable behavior. IAs can give behavior an appropriate time and place (i.e. a student may not talk loudly in the classroom, but once outside can talk loudly). The IA should underreact to the student's inappropriate behaviors as to not reinforce the behavior. A sense of humor comes in handy when dealing with a difficult situation.

- The IA can lessen the probability of student non-compliance by giving effective directions. Use proximity management techniques such as standing close to the student, getting the student's attention and using clear and simple language. Compliance increases when students are provided specific directions that result in observable actions. Giving one or two directions at a time supports compliance. Give a direction, and do not ask a question. State a direction positively and provide visual prompts whenever possible. Allow students a reasonable amount of response time.

- Offer the student a choice and let the student know the result of not following the direction.

The key to making these behavior management strategies successful is to build good relationships with students. Good relationships are developed through consistency, caring, cooperation and trust.

Students need to feel they can trust the Instructional Assistant. Trust is built by consistent behavior by the adults. A student needs to see the IA doing what he/she says in a consistent fashion.

Observing and Collecting Data:

Acquiring and using objective skills of observation and keeping data are an important part of the work of the Instructional Assistant. Much of the information needed by the team to determine whether or not children are gaining new skills is captured by careful observation and good record keeping. In addition, observation notes will keep the team updated on whether or not the individual or groups of individuals are learning and using the functional skills necessary to let them achieve their objectives and long term goals outlined in the IEP, as well as the overall goal of becoming as independent as possible.

Data, in this instance, is defined as written information as to what has been observed. It serves as a more permanent record of what is seen or heard and, when done well, is an objective account of the individual or small group activities. It is important to keep written data on all observation activities.

Carrying out observations and keeping data must be done with an objective point of view. Sometimes we may be tempted to let our biases, opinions or prejudices get in the way. We may like one student better than another and tend to look more favorably on his/her activities. It is very important to guard against these situations and to put down precisely what is seen or heard and avoid anything that is stigmatized by personal perceptions of a child or a specific behavior.

Observation is:

Systematically watching what a person does and says and recording the behaviors in order to make instructional decisions. Observation should:

- Be done for a specific reason;
- Provide samples of a student's behavior over a period of time, in a variety of settings;
- Be objective

Objective Observation Means:

- Watching events without being affected by personal biases/prejudices;
- Watching what is happening without guessing at the reason that caused the action;

- Watching the activity without judging whether it is good or bad;
- Producing an objective record that states exactly what an observer sees and hears

Through observation, we can learn what the child can do, what the child likes or dislikes, how the child behaves under various circumstances and how the student interacts with people. This information is helpful when determining needed supports and services for the student.

Observing Objectively

There are two points to remember when making observations:

1. A behavior must be observable
2. A behavior must be measurable

In other words we must be able to see or hear a behavior and we must be able to count the number of occurences or time how often a behavior occurs.

Keeping Data:

There are several ways to keep data. They include:

Checklists - These may be in the form of standardized checklists that include specific skills and behaviors based on developmental levels, or a list of behaviors compiled by the teacher. When Instructional Assistants work with a checklist, they simply watch the student and record whether or not the behavior described was observed.

Anecdotal Records - These usually consist of a sentence or two written in a notebook describing what the child is doing at a specific moment. When making an anecdotal record, only behaviors that are seen or heard and behaviors that can be counted should be recorded.

Interviewing - This is a specific kind of record keeping; one in which the team is trying to determine what the student likes or dislikes, what the child's interests are, or his/her feelings or beliefs that cannot be observed. When interviewing, it is extremely important to record precisely what the student says. There is no room for editorializing in this kind of recording.

Frequency or Duration Notes - Sometimes the information that is to be collected refers to how often or how long a behavior is occurring. For example, the team may want to know how many times a child talked or communicated with

friends or how often a child initiated a conversation with peers. For this kind of record keeping, Instructional Assistants will count the frequency of the behavior occurring, to observe how long or frequent the behaviors are.

Working with an Individual Student

1. It is important to understand your role as part of the team. Be clear about who you go to for instructions and information regarding this assignment (refer to IEP). Find out from your supervisor what your responsibilities are in terms of attending IEP meetings, team meetings and any other types of meetings. Find out from your primary supervisor what your responsibilities are in terms of communicating with the student's family.

2. Get relevant background information about the student. Find out about the goals, objectives, plans and any record keeping systems that have already been established for the student. Also, find out whether there are any difficult behavioral, social or medical issues you should be aware of. Find out about any toileting responsibilities.

3. Be clear about what is expected of the student and what is expected of you in all situations. Refer to behavior information for guidance.

4. Interact productively with the student. Help the student succeed with academic goals, to behave responsibly and build a productive relationship with the student.

5. Interact appropriately with the student's family. Find out from your supervisor the details of how you are to communicate with the student's family. Recognize the difference between communicating and advocating, make sure all your interactions with the family demonstrate that you have respect and high expectations for the student. Be understanding and tolerant of the student's family. Be a good listener and before having any contact with the student outside of school be sure to get approval from your supervisor and full permission from the student's family.

Working with Small Groups

• Know the procedures, materials required and your expectations. Find out the time schedule for the small group and your responsibilities for getting students to and from the group. Find out what instructional materials you will be using and what kind of training is available. Review the instructional program to get a sense of the daily lessons and the consistentency from day to day.

Find out your responsibilities in terms of daily assignments or the homework students are expected to complete. Find out what responsibilities you have in preparing for a substitute in the event you are absent. Make sure you know what procedures you are to use to prompt and reinforce responsible student behavior.

• Know the behavioral expectations for students. Refer to behavior information for guidance.

• Teach the behavioral expectations to students as needed. Set up a schedule for teaching expectations and use a variety of teaching strategies to maintain student attention. Refer to district wide PBIS process for guidance.

• Use effective instructional techniques. Be aware of the components of an effective lesson and maintain student attention on the lesson. Follow the 20 minute rule to avoid having students (especially young students) engage in any single type of activity for too long. Anything longer than 20 minutes is likely to result in a loss of student attention/engagement. Make sure not to talk too much, incorporate variety, promote engagement, increase your enthusiasm when a task is difficult or undesirable and provide brief breaks to students.

• Reinforce students for correct responses and for making progress. Correct incorrect student responses in a way that helps students learn the material. Avoid corrections that take too long to drag the information out of the student. Examples of what not to say include, "You did this yesterday," "Just think," "I know you can do this," "You've been taught this before." Examples of what to say or do include, "This is a really tough problem but you'll get it." Praise their efforts and provide guided practice.

• Manage student behavior effectively. Refer to behavior section for guidance.

Supervising Independent Work Periods

1. Be clear about the expectations for your work with students you work with:

   • Find out what the expectations are for students

   • Find out exactly how you are expected to monitor the students

   • Find out what your responsibilities are in terms of providing help and academic assistance to students

- What reinforcement procedures you should use?

- How are you to respond to various kinds of student misbehavior?

- Are expected to provide the teacher with information about their behavior and academic performance?

2. Manage independent work periods effectively

- Communicate the expectations to students

- Circulate among the students as much as possible

- Visually scan the students working independently

- Provide assistance to students who appear to need help

- Reinforce responsible student behavior

- Respond effectively to student misbehavior

Engaging/Motivating Students

Students who are motivated and engaged in their learning cause fewer discipline problems because they care about what they are learning. Engagement is defined as a student's persistence at a task and includes cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement. When students are actively learning content that has personal meaning for them, they have neither the time nor the energy to create discipline problems. Conversely, when students feel that they are not actively involved, they become bored, turned off and may act out. Student engagement is a robust predictor of student achievement and behavior in school. Research firmly links higher levels of engagement in the teaching-learning process with improved performance.

Characteristics of a classroom with a motivational environment include the following:

- Trust is established and fear is minimized

- Students understand the benefits of learning and understand that changing behavior is part of learning

- Students are aware of different learning options and are able to make choices that are real, meaningful, and significant

- Students are actively engaged in learning

- Learning is relevant and meaningful and is related to real-life

- Feelings and thoughts are incorporated for learning to have personal lasting and usefulness

Researchers have examined motivation and engagement from the perspective of a student's self-concept, a students' motivation to achieve and a student's perceived ability to control his/her learning. Strategies for increasing motivation based on these three aspects include the following:

- Increase student responses by asking more-open ended questions

- Ensure that all students are called on equally as often regardless of perceived capability

- Always wait 3-5 seconds after asking a question before calling on a student

- Provide explicit feedback

- Encourage students to persist with difficult problems and to finish projects

- Foster excitement about new ideas

- Offer more in-depth projects, activities, or independent studies

- Incorporate student self-assessment in the grading system

- Involve students in directing their own learning

- Exhibit high expectations for all students

- Increase student readiness to learn

- Increase involvement and interest

- Give students opportunities to work cooperatively with others

- Stress accomplishments rather than winning

How students feel about themselves often gives them the determination and strength to pursue learning and pursue challenging tasks. Teachers and Instructional Assistants can help instill the will to want to learn with just a few words of encouragement. There will be some students who appear unmotivated and not engaged and, in these cases, perseverance in motivation tactics can greatly improve the chances of success with each student.

Accommodations/Modifications and Special Responsibilities

Students with disabilities assigned to general education classroom should have every opportunity to participate in all activities that are appropriate. A goal of adaptation is to provide all students with the opportunity to participate to the maximum extent possible in the typical activities of the classroom.

To ensure continuity, it is ideal for students with special needs to receive instruction in the general education classroom whenever possible rather than experiencing the disruption of leaving the classroom for another location. The special education teacher needs to consider what students can do independently, what they can do with adapted or modified curriculum, what they could do with peer assistance, and what they can do with an Instructional Assistant's help inside the general education classroom. At times, due to a variety of reasons, students may need to have special services delivered outside of the general education classroom.

An Instructional Assistant may be involved with the modification or accommodations of the general education curriculum to assure success for students with special needs. This is a way of providing instruction in a least restrictive environment. Instructional Assistants may be responsible for insuring that these accomodations take place in the general education setting by utilizing an accomodation tracker form. Modifying or accommodating curriculum in order to help students can be challenging but the rewards are exciting. Ideas for curriculum modification can come from the classroom teacher, special education teacher and other team members. Adaptations are most effective when they are simple, easy to develop and implement and are based on typical assignments and activities. Accommodations do not affect the student's grade in any way.

Definition of an accommodation: *Supports or services provided to help a student access the general education curriculum and validly demonstrate learning*

Accommodations Examples:

1. Time - adapt the time allocated and allowed for learning, task completion or testing (extended time for testing)

2. Size - Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or complete (completing half the addition and subtraction problems, passing the unit tests without completing daily assignments, completing 2-3 questions from handouts instead of all 8)

3. Level of Support - Increase the amount of personal assistance with a specific learner (assign peer buddies, Instructional Assistant, peer tutors, etc.)

4. Input - Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner (use different visual aids, plan more concrete examples, provide hands on activities, place students in cooperative groups, reading test to a student)

5. Difficulty - Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work (allow the use of a calculator, multiplication charts to figure out math problems, simplify task directions, change rules to accommodate learner's needs)

6. Output - Adapt how the student can respond to instruction (instead of answering questions when writing allow a verbal response, use a communication book, allow students to show knowledge with hands on materials)

7. Participation - Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task (in geography class have the student hold the globe while others point out locations)

8. Alternate Goals - Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same material (In social studies expect a student to be able to locate just the states whil others learn to locate capitals as well)

Definition of a Modification: *Individual changes made to the content and performance expectations for students in the general education setting for a modification to occur.*

Modification Examples:

1. Providing different instruction and materials to meet a student's individual goals.

2. Completing certain sections of the curriculum

3. Making a short answer question into a multiple choice

Questions about Adapting Curriculum and Instruction- taken from "Adapting Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms"

Q: Are adaptations just for students with identified disabilities?

A: Adaptations are necessary and appropriate for any student who is not experiencing success, regardless of whether that student has a disability. Research and educational values tell us that all children can learn what is important to them to learn and that the teacher's role is to assist all students to succeed.

Q: What areas of the curriculum or aspects of instruction can be adapted?

A: The three areas that teachers typically adapt are curriculum materials (textbook assignments, workbook or worksheet pages and tests), instruction (grouping strategies, learning centers, audio visuals and cooperative learning), and classroom organization and behavior management (daily schedules and routines, classroom rules, seating arrangements, and individualized behavior plans). When planning adaptations, make sure to consider all possible areas and if necessary, adapt in more than one area at a time.

Q: Won't adapting curriculum and instruction create lowered expectations and watered down curriculum for all?

A: There is no evidence that students in classrooms where adaptations regularly occur score differently than their peers on achievement or other benchmark tests. In contrast, many teachers observe higher levels of mastery for nondisabled students when adaptations are common practice. Since adaptations are made for students at the high end of the achievement continuum as well as the lower end there is no need to make significant adjustments in the typical pace of instruction for the majority of students. As teachers make adaptations, they evaluate each student's abilities and determine the minimal amount of adaptation needed in order for that student to succeed. In many cases this means increased rather than lowered expectations.

Q: Is it fair and equitable to adapt for individual students? Won't students resent their classmates who have adaptations made for them?

A: Though a common concern for many teachers, the problem of fairness appears to be more of an issue for adults than for learners. Students in general believe that it is fair for classmates to receive adapted assignments and tests because everyone is different and they are getting the help they need. Making adaptations available to any student who needs them and creating a classroom climate of acceptance often minimizes the problem.

Q: How intrusive should adaptations be?

A: As adaptations are generated a continuum of intrusiveness will become apparent. Some adaptations will closely resemble the activities of classmates, while others will be less similar and require alternate materials, supports, or types of instruction. To create "least intrusive curriculum and instruction" it is often beneficial to begin with less intrusive adaptations and work up as necessary (refer to the Differentiated Output Hierarchy). In addition, when adaptations are necessary, it is important to minimize rather than highlight student differences. For example, a communication notebook that hangs around a student's neck will be stigmatizing. By contrast, a small wallet sized notebook will meet the same goal without calling unnecessary attention to the differences between students. Progress monitoring is also important so that adaptations can be made less intrusive as students gain skills and competencies.

Differentiated Output Hierarchy – (START)

The differentiated output hierarchy is a systematic, organized approach to support student's active engagement in the general education curriculum. The differentiated output hierarchy supports the concepts contained in differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction is defined as the planning of curriculum and instruction using strategies that address student strengths, interests, skills, and readiness in flexible learning environments "At its Core ... Differentiation is simply high-quality, thoughtful teaching that builds on our best understanding of how students learn and what teachers can do to maximize each student's learning" (The Common Sense of Differentiation, 2005).

Tomlinson (2000) suggests that differentiated instruction is a way of thinking about teaching and learning. Differentiated instruction has three primary components; multiple options for taking in information (content), multiple options for making sense of the ideas (process), multiple options for expressing what they know (product). "Each section...the Content, Process, and Product must be varied in anticipation of and response to student differences in readiness, interest, and learning needs" (Common Sense of Differentiation, 2005). The differentiated output hierarchy provides a framework for addressing the multiple options for expressing what they know.

Many students who receive special education supports and services struggle with reading comprehension, written language, organization skills, etc. The hierarchy provides a framework to allow students to show what they know even with these deficits.

There are five levels in the differentiated output hierarchy:

- **Open Ended** - Open-ended questions may be the most difficult for students receiving special education services. Many students who have trouble with written language skills or have trouble processing spoken language will not be able to answer open-ended questions as presented in the curriculum. If the student is having trouble with open-ended questions, it is the time to move through the differentiated output hierarchy.
- **Visual Organizational Strategies** - Visual strategies should provide the student with a

kick-start; assisting the student in organizing the answer. For example, showing the student how many words or sentences are required to answer a question or complete a paragraph.

- **Closed Strategies** - Closed strategies organize the student's output within the curriculum. Closed strategies also narrow the depth of the curriculum and allow the student to utilize recognition skills versus recall skills to output the information.
- **Choice Strategies** - Choice strategies provide the student with a visual method to recall the information. Choice strategies should be utilized in combination with other hierarchy strategies.
- **Yes/No Strategies** - Yes/No strategies change the format of an open-ended, multiple choice, type question into a Yes/No format. The Yes/No format require the overlay of other hierarchy strategies. A Yes/No strategy may have to be taught to a student.

Examples provided by START of the differentiated output hierarchy can be found in the Appendix (p.51).

Other Responsibilities

Home-to-school notebooks provide needed information to parents and teachers. Notebooks are generally kept for students who are younger. This is a way for parents to know what activities their child participated in at school and for teachers to know what kinds of activities occur at home.

Notes can be used to record milestones and medical information, as well as provide communication among itinerants. Instructional Assistants can assist in recording a student's daily activities in the notebook. Entries should be factual and based on a student's strengths. Care should be given to assure that the information written is not only positive or only negative, but a sensitive accounting of the key information necessary to share. Remember, both parents and school staff can easily misinterpret the written word. If miscommunication occurs, it is often difficult to regain the trusted relationship that is so important when working with students with special needs and their families. If a miscommunication occurs, always check with your supervising teacher and/or administrator. In some situations, a phone call by the supervising teacher or administrator will be more appropriate than a note or other communication home.

Data Tracking Sheets- provide the accurate collection and reporting of data crucial for determining what supports and services students need in order to become more independent. One way to keep track of any accommodations that are being utilized with a student based on their IEP is an accommodation tracker form. An example of this form can be located in the Appendix. Specific directions on how to fill out this form will be given to Instructional Assistants by the special education or general education teacher.

Learner Characteristics

Instructional Assistants will need to understand the cognitive, physical, emotional and social characteristics that are generally associated with students identified as needing special education services. The following are the disability categories in the state of Michigan. Students may exhibit one or more characteristics to varying degrees.

- Speech and Language Impairment (SLI)
- Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
- Cognitive Impairment (CI)
- Emotional Impairment (EI)
- Otherwise Health Impaired (OHI)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Physical Impairment (PI)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Visual Impairment (VI)
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Deaf-Blind (DB)
- Severe Multiple Impaired (SXI)
- Early Childhood Developmental Delay (ECDD)

A brief description of each area of disability and some possible strategies are included below:

Speech and Language Impaired (SLI)

Students who have difficulty understanding or using language may have a speech or language impairment. This may interfere with learning and/or social adjustment in school and elsewhere. Typical symptoms may include:

- Poor listening skills
- Unclear speech
- Slow vocabulary development
- Immature grammar
- Difficulties with conversation
- Unusual loudness or quality of voice
- Stuttering (fluency issues)

Some students you work with may have a speech and language impairment in addition to their primary disability.

Strategies for Supporting Students with SLI eligibility:

- Allow student time to process information and then respond
- Provide follow-up to verbal instruction
- Provide visual supports
- Break down larger tasks into small steps
- Provide an example of what is expected for the task
- Rephrase or repeat student using correct articulation, rate, tone, etc.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

Students with specific learning disabilities exhibit a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement or both, relative to the student's age, state approved grade level standards or intellectual development. These students often experience difficulty with

- Language- Oral expression and listening comprehension
- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Combination of above mentioned areas

Social and behavioral problems may be present, but major problems are with learning in school.

Strategies for supporting students with SLD:

- Provide information in various ways, i.e. visual, verbal, concrete examples
- Provided guided notes
- Reduce distractions
- Accommodate for disability
- Assistive technology supports
- Use students' strengths to assist with weaknesses

Cognitive Impairment (CI)

Students eligible as cognitively impaired have an intellectual impairment which affects their ability to understand cognitive concepts and skills. The level of impairment may vary from mild to severely impaired. Instructional activities typically focus on academic and vocational skills, daily living skills, health, and

communication. Students have significant deficits with their cognitive functioning, academics, and adaptive behavior.

Strategies for supporting students with CI

- Visual supports
- Break large tasks into smaller steps
- Provide step by step directions
- Use clear, concise, simple language
- Provide extra time for processing
- Provide extra time for task completion
- Social stories

Emotional Impairment (EI)

Students with an emotional impairment demonstrate behavioral problems related to withdrawal, depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, physical complaints, etc., over an extended period of time that negatively affect their ability to learn.

Strategies for supporting students with EI

- Positive reinforcement
- Provide immediate feedback
- Break down tasks so they are less overwhelming
- Use minimal language
- Breaks as necessary
- Respond with a calm voice
- Follow behavior plan (if there is one)

Otherwise Health Impaired (OHI)

Students with chronic health conditions (e.g., asthma, attention deficit disorder, epilepsy, or rheumatic fever) that adversely affect educational performance qualify in this category. They may require special materials or conditions to be successful in school. Must have a medical diagnosis to qualify for special education services at school

Strategies for supporting students with OHI

- Know and understand how their health condition impacts them educationally
- Repeat/rephrase directions
- Use assistive technology
- Provide breaks if needed
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Utilize visual supports

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Students with autism spectrum disorder have a lifelong, developmental disability that may include disturbances in thinking, socializing, body movement and speech and language development. Students with autism spectrum disorder may have:

- Difficulty relating to others in typical ways
- Insist on routine
- Be slow to develop communication patterns
- Have unusual responses to sensory stimuli (hearing, seeing, touch, etc.), and/or exhibit stereotyped play patterns and repetitive movements.

Strategies for supporting students with ASD

- Universal Supports:
  1. Functional communication systems
  2. Visual strategies, including visual schedule, visual choices, social stories, visual timers
  3. Access to typical peers
  4. Consistent behavioral program: positive behavior supports
- Prepare students for transitions and changes in schedules
- Use less language - Too much talking can overwhelm them
- Know and understand their sensitivities to smells, sounds, lights, etc.
- Understand that lack of eye contact is part of their disability

Physical Impairment (PI)

Students with severe orthopedic impairments have physical challenges which affect the ability to learn and may require adapted and/or special materials or equipment.

Strategies for supporting students with PI

- Allow for extended time as needed
- Understand the child needs physical assistance but likely does not want the assistance
- Provide breaks as needed
- Assist with stretching programs as needed
- Assistive technology
- Assist with mobility if needed

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Students who have an acquired injury to the brain (closed head injuries) are certified as having a traumatic brain injury impairment.

Strategies for supporting students with TBI:
- Allow for extended time as needed
- Breaks as needed
- Repeat directions
- Allow time for students to process and respond
- Visual supports

Visual Impairment (VI)

Students who have severe problems with vision, whether partially sighted or blind, which interfere with development and learning. Characteristics may include visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after correction, or a peripheral field restricted to not more than 20 degrees.

Strategies for supporting students with VI:
- Allow for extended time as needed
- Assistive technology: braille equipment, book share, magnification devices
- Print may be enlarged
- Repeat directions
- Describe visuals
- Assist with mobility if needed

Hearing Impairment (HI)

Students with any type or degree of hearing loss that interferes with development or adversely affects educational performance qualify in this category. These persons may have mild or moderate hearing loss or be totally deaf.

Strategies for supporting students with HI:
- Use of an interpreter if needed
- Use body language to supplement spoken words
- Face the student when talking to them
- Visual supports
- Assistive technology: FM systems

Deaf-Blind (DB)

Students eligible as deaf-blind have both a hearing impairment and visual impairment, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental/educational needs. Students who are DB will likely require more direct programming in a different environment

Severe Multiple Impairment (SXI)

Students with severe multiple impairments have more than one disability in intellectual, physical and/or functional abilities. They typically require intensive intervention and supports for the activities of daily living. Students with SXI will likely require more direct programming in a different environment

Early Childhood Developmental Delay (ECDD)

Students with early childhood developmental delay are young children up to age 7 years old whose development is significantly delayed in one or more areas, and who do not qualify under any other special education eligibility.

Strategies for supporting students with ECDD:
- Know and understand areas of disability
- Visual supports
- Break large tasks into smaller steps
- Repeat/rephrase directions as needed

Exit Plan/Decreasing Instructional Support

Monitoring the Use of Paraprofessionals and Instructional Assistants: Increasing Independence for Students

Freschi (1999) encourages teams to set a timeline and establish criteria for when supports will be faded. Paraprofessional and Instructional Assistants supports should always be considered temporary (Giangreco, 2010). All team members, including parents, school staff and the student, should have input into the creation of a fading plan (Giangreco, 2010). Techniques to promote independence and fading support is available to assist with fading strategies.

How to Monitor Paraprofessional and Instructional Assistant Support

It has become common practice in the area of special education that a student is assigned an adult for support for consecutive years without reconsideration for the need for service. Seldom is there a re-evaluation of the allocation of time that the adult is assigned to a student. From one year to the next, a student may make considerable progress academically and emotionally. Natural development may promote maturity in areas of self-control, attention and concentration, social skills, and common-sense judgment. Since the inception of the adult support as a helpful assistant, there may have been some form of medical intervention, e.g., medication. Such factors may mitigate the original reasons for the one-on-one adult support recommendation. Certainly, chronological age, development, and transition to the next level of education are reasons to reconsider an evaluation for adult support. This re-evaluation is especially critical for transition years to middle and high school programs if the student continues to have a one-on-one adult with him/her.

Paraprofessional and Instructional Assistant Monitoring

The increasing student independence plan is implemented when a student already has adult support listed as part of the IEP plan. On a quarterly or monthly basis, this plan should be monitored by a group of professionals.

Possible Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes at the conclusion of monitoring:

1. The student may continue to require adult assistance for the entire school day

2. The student may need the adult assistance on a reduced basis based on increasing support strategies

3. The student may not require adult assistance at all

The Increasing Student Independence Plan:

Step 1. On a quarterly or monthly basis, the case manager will collect data on the student's independence skills and complete a summary of observations (*See Initial Data Collection on Independence Skills form in appendix*). This summary contains a description of the results from the data that was collected across settings. This summary is a brief overview of the results.

Step 2. Results of the observations and data are shared with the parents and the student's school team. If there are no changes to the adult support during the student's day, the process is completed with this step. If the data shows that a decrease in adult support is necessary to promote student independence, the team proceeds to the next step.

Step 3. If the data has shown the need for a decrease in paraprofessional or adult support time, the team collaborates to develop a 6-8 week plan/schedule that will teach the student the skills to become more independent (*See Plan for Increasing Student Independence Skills and Techniques to Promote Independence in appendix*). The plan/schedule will spell out durations of time during the day over the course of 6-8 weeks that the student will develop independence strategies in the school setting. During this 6-8 week time period, the case manager is taking data on student independence.

Step 4. The team will meet after the 6-8 week time period to make a data-based decision on the effectiveness of the plan designed to increase student independence.

Step 5. Depending on the results of the data, the team determines if the process is complete or if there is a need to revisit and/or gather more data.

Things to Consider When Promoting Independence and Fading Support:

a) Observe before assisting. Can the student ask for help from teacher or peer?

b) Can the student problem solve on his/her own?

c) Have high expectations for what the student understands or can do independently.

d) Provide consistent classroom schedule (posted, visual, at desk if needed, with reinforcement periods included). Teach student how to use it.

e) Start with the least intrusive prompts to get student to respond:

f) Prompt, then back away to allow independent time.

g) Use strengths and weaknesses, and/or likes and dislikes

h) Model, guide (watch and assist), check (leave and check back).

i) Teach independence skills (raising hand, asking for help, modeling other students).

j) Encourage age appropriate work habits. Refer to what other students are doing.

k) Be aware of proximity. Sit with the student only when necessary.

l) Encourage peer assistance and partnering. Teach peers how to help, but not enable.

m) Utilize self-monitoring checklists for students.

n) Color code materials to assist with organization.

o) Use transition objects to help student anticipate/complete transition (i.e., head phones for listening center).

p) Break big tasks into steps.

q) Use backward chaining (i.e., leave the last portion of a cutting task for the student, then gradually lengthen the task).

r) Assist in encouraging a means for independent communication.

s) Provide positive feedback that is specific to the situation.

t) Ask facilitative questions ("What comes next?" "What are other students doing?" "What does the schedule say?" "What did the teacher say?").

u) Give choices.

Resources

Statewide Autism Resources and Training Center. (n.d.). Grand Valley State University. Retrieved from http://www.gvsu.edu/autism

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals " A core curriculum and training Program to prepare Para educators to work in Transitional services and supported Employment Programs Editors Anna Lou Pickett, Karen Falson, John Formanek, James Woods

Area Special Education Cooperative (AESC): 1505 Central Avenue NW, East Grand Forks, MN 56721 Phone 218-773-0315 or 1-866-687-2732 Special Education Paraprofessional Handbook

Direct Interactive Instruction 2014 by Action Learning Systems

Midland County Education Service Agency "Midland County Strategic Use of Paraprofessional Support" Prepared by MCESA CAST Team 2015

References

Sprick, R. S., Garrison, M., & Howard, L. (2000). *Para pro: Supporting the instructional process : instructional assistants (IA), teacher aides (TA), classroom support staff, duty supervisors, paraprofessionals, educational assistants (EA), paraeducators.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Peer to Peer Support Program

Tecumseh Public Schools participates in the peer to peer support program. This program provides many opportunities for general education students as well as the students with special needs. Students learn to relate to people with different needs and develop an increased understanding of individual differences. A student who participates in this program is a volunteer who supports a student with a disability under adult supervision. They are friend as well as a social role model as the peer continues on his/her academic and social journey.

Peer to Peer supports are not there to tell the students with special needs what to do, paid staff or aides. Peer to peer supports are participants that are kids and are there to act and be a kid.

There are multiple benefits to students participating in this program. Here are a list of a few of them.

The student with special needs benefits by:
- Receiving peer support to improve socialization skills
- exposed to age appropriate expectations and experiences
- independence
- Friendship.

Benefits to the peer are :
- improved organizational skills,
- understanding of differences/diversity,
- problem solving skills,
- collaboration,
- Connection to School
- Self Esteem

Benefits to All students:
- Opportunities for learning
- Growth) social, behavioral, and educational)
- Compassion
- Real life experiences
- Acceptance

Taken From Start:

Peer to peer support programs increase opportunities for students with ASD to access general education settings and curriculum. Peers model typical academic and social behavior in educational environments throughout the school day and provide support for students with ASD to promote independence and socialization. Peer to peer support programs and inclusion of students with ASD not only affects outcomes for the students with ASD, but can also impact a number of outcomes for peers. "Peer mediated instruction and intervention has been shown to have positive effects on academic; interpersonal and personal-social development and may be the largest and most empirically supported type of social intervention for learners with ASD" (Bass & Mulick, 2007: Maheady, Harper and Mailette, 2001: McConnell, 2002)

Supplementary Aids and Services Universal Support Worksheet

Student: _____   Date: _____

Universal Support	Needs (from PLAAFP) addressed by this SA & S	Implementation Fidelity (Check all that Apply)
Visual/ Organizational Supports		1. _____The daily schedule is consistent, clear and predictable and changes in the schedule are highlighted with as much advanced notice as possible to prepare the student for change.
		2. _____The classroom environment is clutter-free and organized visually (e.g. use of color-coding, labeling, pictures, etc.) to cue expected behavior, decrease distractions, and clarify expectations.
		3. _____The student has an individual visual schedule that accurately reflects his/her skills and abilities.
		4. _____ Visual schedule is used or the student is prompted to it at each transition.
		5. _____Students physically interact with their schedule (e.g. cross out, move to "done," move to check in area in the room).
		6. _____Sub / mini schedules are used when needed (e.g. when skills break down, when the student presents with behavior).
		7. _____Transition supports (e.g. picture cards, check schedule cards) are used when needed (e.g. when skills break down, when the student presents with behavior, etc.).
		8. _____ Work systems and routine / task lists are used regularly to increase task independence.
		9. _____Social stories / facts / scripts are developed and used.
		10. _____Break Cards are used to teach students to exit appropriately when necessary.
		11. _____Appropriate instructional strategies are used to teach the visual systems.
		12. _____Visual supports are used when making requests, giving directions, providing instruction, encouraging participation.

NOTES:

Universal Support	Needs (from PLAAFP) addressed by this SA & S	Implementation Fidelity (Check all that Apply)
Functional Communication System		1. ____Assessment of the student's communication involves observation of all forms of communication (verbalizations, gestures, pictures, behavior) currently used by the student across environments, as well as the functions of problem behaviors (e.g., whether student problem behaviors communicate protests or requests).
		2. ____Families and relevant team members actively participate in the selection and teaching of the appropriate communication system for student which may include verbal, sign-based, picture-based (e.g., PECS), augmentative devices, or a combined approach.
		3. ____The communication system chosen matches student skills, needs, and environments, is functional, portable, and available in all environments.
		4. ____Staff in the child's environment consistently responds to and validates both conventional communication attempts (use of verbalizations, gestures, and functional communication systems) and unconventional communication attempts (nonverbal behaviors or problem behaviors).
		5. ____Unconventional communication attempts such as yelling and using adults as "tools," are consistently used as opportunities to teach the functional communication system.
		6. ____Staff initiates communication with students with ASD in all environments and activities by prompting, questioning, offering choices and starting conversations.
		7. ____Staff consistently encourage responding through gesture, sign, icons and spoken language.
		8. ____Students are specifically taught communication systems.
		9. ____Appropriate instructional strategies are used to teach the communication systems.
		10. ____Communication data are regularly collected to ensure that students are consistently using functional communication systems across environments and activities, and with multiple partners (teachers, families and peers).

NOTES:

Universal Support	Needs (from PLAAFP) addressed by this SA & S	Implementation Fidelity (Check all that Apply)
Peer to Peer Support		1. ____Information about ASD and the student with ASD is provided to the typical peers in the classroom/ building in a way that respects parent and student preferences. 2. ____Staff maximizes opportunities and creates activities / situations that encourage interactions with typical peers throughout the day. 3. ____Typical peers are actively recruited as peer to peer supports. 4. ____Peer supports are trained to interact appropriately and effectively with the student. 5. ____Staff prompts typical peers to initiate and sustain interactions with students with ASD. 6. ____Peer to peer support students attend regular meetings to support the student. 7. ____Mediums of Exchange are identified to promote effective interaction with typical peers. 8. ____A system exists to maintain typical peer involvement with the student (e.g., appreciation activities such as lunch gatherings).

NOTES:

Universal Support	Needs (from PLAAFP) addressed by this SA & S	Implementation Fidelity (Check all that Apply)
Paraprofessional Support		1. ____Paraprofessional support is assigned only when the student needs direct academic, behavioral or social support.
		2. ____Paraprofessionals in the student's environment actively promote independence by teaching systems (e.g. visual schedules) that allow the student to complete tasks with minimal assistance.
		3. ____Paraprofessional responsibilities are clearly communicated and available for review.
		4. ____A list of strategies the paraprofessional is required to implement with the student is provided (e.g. visual supports, prompting, reinforcement, crisis plan).
		5. ____Paraprofessionals implement strategies and complete responsibilities as outlined.
		6. ____Paraprofessionals demonstrate respect for student (e.g. talking to instead of in front of).
		7. ____Training, mentoring, and implementation support are offered regularly and required for the paraprofessional working with the student with ASD.
		8. ____Appropriate supervision, observation, and performance feedback is provided regularly to the paraprofessional(s).
		9. ____Fading of paraprofessional support occurs as soon as data shows the student is learning systems that allow him/her to complete tasks independently.

NOTES:

Universal Support	Needs (from PLAAFP) addressed by this SA & S	Implementation Fidelity (Check all that Apply)
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports		1. ____ Tier 1 (Universal) strategies that prevent challenging behavior are developed and implemented with fidelity for the student.
		2. ____If implemented Tier 1 strategies have not addressed challenging behaviors, a problem solving approach founded in functional behavior assessment is utilized to develop targeted (Tier 2) interventions and supports.
		3. ____Tier 2 interventions and supports are implemented with fidelity.
		4. ____If the student continues to have challenging behaviors despite implementation of Tier 1 strategies and Tier 2 interventions and supports, a full functional behavior assessment (Tier 3) is used to develop a positive behavior support plan.
		5. ____Functional behavior assessments employ multiple methods of data collection (e.g. direct observation, scatterplot, rating scales, interviews) to determine the function of challenging behaviors.
		6. ____The positive behavior support plan includes antecedent strategies (i.e., proactive strategies intended to prevent behaviors from occurring).
		7. ____The positive behavior support plan includes strategies for teaching and prompting new skills (e.g. communication, social interaction, independence, replacement behaviors).
		8. ____The positive behavior support plan includes appropriate, non-emotional, non-verbal, and non-punitive strategies for responding to behavior.
		9. ____If needed, a crisis plan is developed for responding to dangerous and emergency situations. The crisis plan complies with the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services policy "Supporting Student Behavior: Standards for the Emergency Use of Seclusion and Restraint."
		10. ____The positive behavior support plan and/or crisis plan is reviewed with all relevant staff and implementation training is provided as needed.
		11. ____Data on the fidelity of implementation of the positive behavior support plan are collected and reviewed regularly by the team.
		12. ____Behavioral data at all tiers are collected regularly and used as the basis for decision-making about strategies.
		13. ____The positive behavior support plan is implemented consistently in all environments
		14. ____There is a reporting system in place between school staff and family members to provide regular updates on behavioral interventions and their effectiveness.

NOTES:

Universal Support	Needs (from PLAAFP) addressed by this SA & S	Implementation Fidelity (Check all that Apply)
Accomodations/ Modifications		1. ____The student has sufficient opportunities in the general education environment to make progress in academic, independence, and social competency skills.
		2. ____The general education curriculum is used as the primary focus of instruction.
		3. ____Academic goals and objectives are developed based on the general education curriculum, plus augmentation of targeted skills (e.g. social skills, community skills).
		4. Effective instructional practices are used to build new skills (e.g., shaping, task analysis, etc.).
		5. ____Specific academic accommodations to the general education curriculum are selected and implemented based on individualized needs and reflected in the I.E.P. goals.
		6. ____Specific academic modifications to the general education curriculum are selected and implemented based on individualized needs and reflected in the I.E.P. goals.
		7. ____A system is developed to assure that the specific academic accommodations and modifications are implemented throughout the student's educational program.
		8. ____A system is used to determine appropriate grading based on the specific accommodations and modifications to the general education curriculum.
		9. ____Progress toward student goals are assessed at least weekly and necessary changes are made to programming to ensure improvement.
		10. ___The student takes the MEAP or participates in MI Access.

NOTES:

Other Necessary Supplementary Aids and Services	Needs (from PLAAFP) addressed by this SA & S	Implementation Fidelity

Paraprofessional Planning Tool

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 the 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.

This tool is designed to assist school teams in determining when 1:1 adult support is appropriate and necessary and in designing a plan that includes processes for fading the paraprofessional over time. It also aligns with research recommendations that decision-making processes and tools be developed and used for determining the need for adult support (Giangreco, 2010; Giangreco, et.al., 2011). It is important to note that the general use of one-to-one adult support in school should be considered a systems issue and addressed at a systems level (Giangreco, 2012).

STEP 1: Complete the following schedule matrix to determine where the student may need additional support.

Student Schedule	Expectations & Instructional Demands	Current Level of Skills (Compared to Peers)	Current Supports, Strategies and EBPs	Potential Goals & Strategies Needed
In this column, list the student's daily schedule including all primary activities, courses / classes and/ or transitions.	In this column, identify the expectations & instructional demands and outcomes during this part of the schedule. Expectations and instructional outcomes include: • Independence Skills • Social Interaction Skills • Communication Skills • Engagement Skills • Behavioral Skills • Academic Skills including task initiation & output For example, during "arrival," the expectations may include independently taking off outerwear, getting materials ready, taking a seat, and completing morning work. Include in this section any specific IEP goals targeted during a particular time in the schedule.	In this column, identify the student's performance, compared to peers, during each part of the schedule. Include the following: • Independent Skills • Social Interaction Skills • Communication Skills • Engagement Skills • Behavioral Skills • Academic skills including: Task Initiation Output Deficits in these areas may indicate the need for intervention including 1:1 adult support.	List in this column, all the supports, strategies, and/or supplementary aides and services currently in place to support the student. These include but are not limited to: • Visual / Organizational Supports / Strategies • Peer to Peer Supports • Functional Communication System • Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports • Evidence-Based Practices • Accommodations/ Modifications • Behavioral Response Plan/ Crisis Plan • Adult (Paraprofessional) Support	In this column, based on information in the previous columns, list potential goal areas (areas of need) and strategies needed for the student to independently make adequate progress in all areas. Before considering 1:1 adult support, all other supports to address the challenge should be considered FIRST. One-to-one adult support should be considered the most restrictive support option (Giangreco, 2010). Adult supports should ONLY be used as long as is necessary to teach the student to independently use a system or strategy (e.g. self-management) to address the challenge. If adult support is added, the IEP team should complete the Adult Support Responsibilities form included in this document.

Paraprofessional Planning Tool

Student Name (DOB): _____   **Grade:** _____   **School:** _____   **Date:** _____

Student Schedule	Expectations & Instructional Demands	Current Level of Skills (Compared to Peers)	Current Supports, Strategies and EBPs	Potential Goals & Strategies Needed

Paraprofessional Planning Tool
Role and Responsibility

STEP 2: If it is determined that the student needs one-to-one adult support to address academic, behavioral, or social needs, complete the following tool. Paraprofessionals in this role should be considered "independence facilitators" and focus on implementing supports or teaching strategies that reduce the need for adult support (e.g. visual supports, peer to peer support, functional communication system).

Primary roles for the paraprofessional may include:

1. Support the student in successfully following classroom expectations or following through on instructional demands (e.g. assist in material/ desk organization, implement academic accommodations/differentiation, support or facilitate socialization and communication opportunities).

2. Provide additional learning opportunities necessary for skill acquisition (e.g. prompt appropriate behavior or work completion, run the behavioral system, prompt use of the communication system, facilitate peer responses).

3. Assist the student in learning systems or strategies that allow for optimal independent participation in the school environment (e.g. visual schedules and supports, self-management systems, communication system).

Student Schedule	Student Skills Related to Expectations & Instructional Demands	What are the Goals/Outcomes for the Student	Adult Role(s), Responsibility & Strategies	Data Collection Plan to Reduce the Need for a One-to-One Adult Support
In this column, list the student's daily schedule including all primary activities, courses / classes and/ or transitions.	In this column, identify the expectations & instructional demands and outcomes during this part of the schedule. Expectations and instructional outcomes include: • Independence Skills • Social Interaction Skills • Communication Skills • Engagement Skills • Behavioral Skills • Academic Skills including task initiation & output	In this column, identify the goals/ outcomes during this part of the schedule including: • Independent Skills • Social Interaction Skills • Communication Skills • Behavioral Skills • Academic skills including: Task Initiation Engagement Output	In this column, describe the specific roles, responsibilities, strategies, etc. that the 1:1 adult /paraprofessional will use to assist the student in making progress on the goals/outcomes in the previous column.	In this column, identify the data collection system and schedule that will be used to measure progress on goals / outcomes. Also identify the plan and schedule for fading the amount of 1:1 adult support the student requires to be successful.
EXAMPLE Arrival	Student arrives agitated and stands in the classroom while his peers complete the arrival routine. Student needs verbal and physical prompting to complete the arrival routine.	Independently utilize visual schedule to complete all steps in the arrival routine.	Adult will give instruction to student to "check schedule" with a visual prompt and use prompt hierarchy to teach student to independently use the schedule (see teaching plan).	Prompt level data on independent use of the visual schedule. Review data each Friday and fade adult as independence increases.

Paraprofessional Role amd Responsibilities

Student Name (DOB): _____ **Grade:** _____ **School:** _____ **Date:** _____

Student Schedule	Expectations & Instructional Demands	What are the Goals/ Outcomes for the Student	Adult Role(s), Responsibility & Strategies	Data Collection Plan to Reduce the Need for a One-to-One Adult Support

References

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.

Schedule Matrix for Identifying Support Strategies

Student: _____   **Teacher:** _____   **Grade:** _____   **Date:** _____

Student Schedule	General Education Demand	Student's Present Skill Level	Location & Environmental Modifications/Adaptations	Curriculum & Material Modifications/Adaptations	Who/Support Staff
Before School					
Morning Routine					
Morning Work					
Student Schedule	General Education Demand	Student's Present Skill Level	Location & Environmental Modifications/Adaptations	Curriculum & Material Modifications/Adaptations	Who/Support Staff
Lunch (20 min)					
Recess (20 min)					

Student Schedule	General Education Demand	Student's Present Skill Level	Location & Environmental Modifications/Adaptations	Curriculum & Material Modifications/Adaptations	Who/Support Staff

Student Schedule	General Education Demand	Student's Present Skill Level	Location & Environmental Modifications/Adaptations	Curriculum & Material Modifications/Adaptations	Who/Support Staff
Prepare for home					
Dismissal					

Aditional Information:

Problem Solving Process (Meeting Mechanics™)

At Tecumseh Public Schools we believe that all students should be learning and challenged in order to achieve high standards both academically and behaviorally. To accomplish this we have a **Team Action Planning (TAP)** meeting available to help with academic, behavioral and emotional needs of our individual students. Students that need this process have typically been through the MTSS Tiered System of Support process. Students that need a TAP meeting are those who need the assistance of a team to dig deeper and intensify either intervention or instruction in order to ensure that the student reaches his potential.

The TAP meeting is an important problem-solving team that utilizes the Meeting Mechanics* process. The Meeting Mechanics process is a structured open-ended, democratic, problem-solving process. This team meeting will last 30-45 minutes and the result will be to develop a Team Action Plan that is individualized and incorporates strategies and interventions tailored to meet the needs of the student. The information shared at the TAP meeting is documented and readily available for ongoing review and support.

Potential Team Members:
- Parent/Guardian of the student
- General Education Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- Reading Specialists
- Interventionists/Academic Support Coach
- Principal
- School Psychologist
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- School Social Worker
- Occupational/Physical Therapist
- Prior or Other General Education Teacher

Person requesting a TAP meeting needs to do the following prior to meeting being held:
- Meet with principal and review progress monitoring data of what interventions or accelerated learning opportunities have occurred
- Principal and referring person will discuss potential invitees
- Date for the TAP meeting will be established and principal or teacher will send out invitations to meeting. For Initial and Follow-up TAP Meeting letters see Appendix p. 38, 40. For optional survey see Appendix p. 39

Roles of TAP members

Meeting Coordinator- Schedule meeting/reserve meeting room, ensure all materials (white board, markers, etc.) are available for meeting, notify participants

*Facilitator- Runs the meeting, "runs the board" (use the white board to capture information), manage team member's behavior

Time Keeper- assists facilitator with team management

Data Specialist- Coordinate data collection procedure

*Implementation Coordinator- Coordinate observations and staff support to make sure strategies are implemented with integrity. Conduct action plan follow-through check-ups (the positive "nag")

*Assigned at or prior to meeting

   *Meeting Mechanics Process based on START (Statewide Autism Resources and training www.gvsu.edu)

Meeting Mechanics Procedure

A guiding principle of the meeting mechanics process is that all meetings start and end on time

Student Strengths
- List student strengths and interests

Problem Identification- Define and describe concerns
- Concerns are documented from check in meetings- check-in meeting notes and progress monitoring data will be used to identify the concern
- Prioritize concerns- Focus on one to three concerns that have the greatest impact on student success

Problem Specification- The goal is to expand on the prioritized areas of concern through data analysis
- Team members indicate any antecedents that happen immediately before the concern which may help predict the behavior Antecedents can be described by answering when, where, with whom, and under what conditions the concern occurs. Information in this column may include relevant history that contributes to the problem
- Consequences of the behavior are documented if needed

Brainstorming- The goal is to record ideas to address identified concerns
- All ideas are good ideas
- Ideas are not bound by professional roles or expertise- if you have an idea, state it
- Ideas are not explained, defended, or discussed at this time
- Focus on developing the best idea in the room

**Cluster and Prioritize- The goal is to group similar ideas**
- Clarify brainstormed ideas if needed
- Group ideas into clusters of similar thoughts; not all ideas will fit into a cluster but do not disregard them
- Prioritization occurs by the team's decision of what makes the most sense

Implementation Variables- The goal is to overcome barriers to implementation
- Brainstorm solutions

Assign Responsibilities
- Never leave a meeting without an action plan
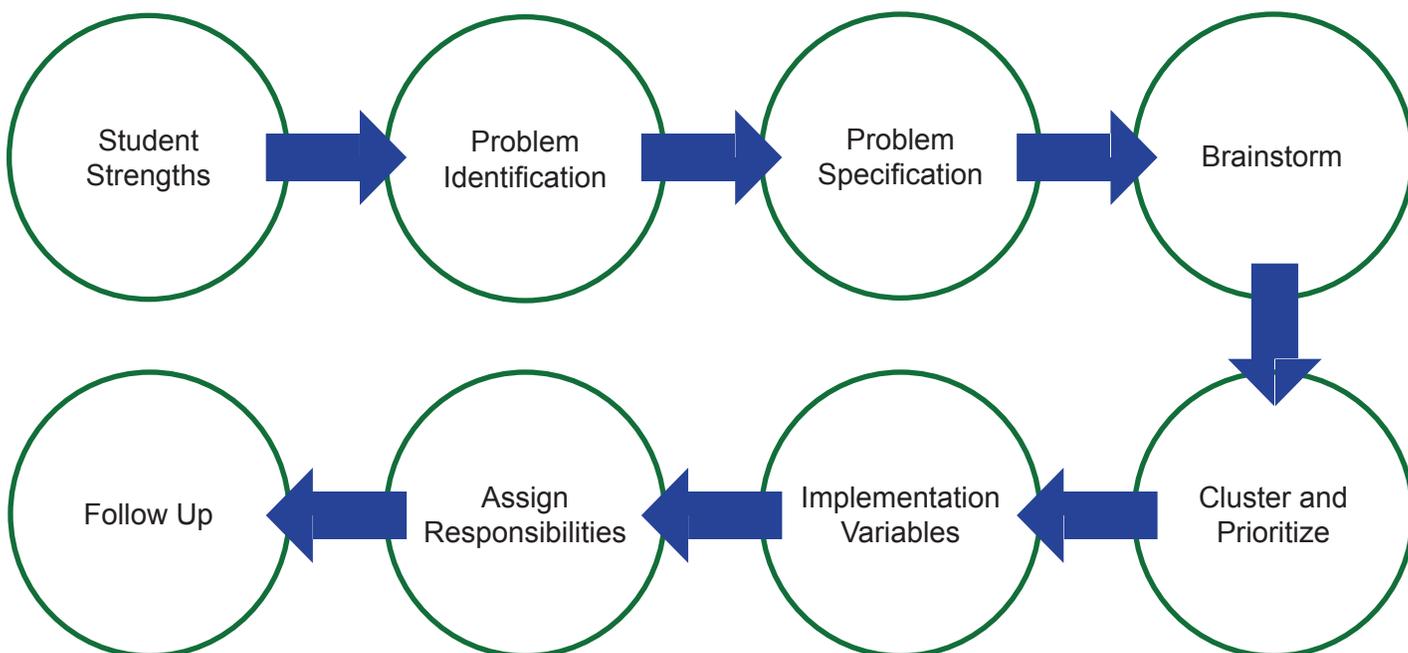
Team Action Plan Notes (TAP)

Student Name:	Teacher:
Grade:	Phone Number:
Parent(s) and Address:	Date of Meeting:

Individuals in attendance:

Strengths of Student: *(3 minutes)*

Problem Identification: *(5 minutes)*

Problem Specification: (Reason for Referral to TAP team) *(15 minutes)*

Brainstorm: *(6-8 minutes)*

Cluster/Prioritize Ideas: *(6 minutes)*

Identify Implementation Variables: *(6 minutes)*

Assign Responsibilities: *(5 minutes)*

Team Action Plan (TAP)

Who	Is Doing What	By When	Status

Follow up meeting date: _____

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (3RD GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. Choice Strategies
3. Closed Strategies
4. Visual Organization Strategies
5. **Open Ended Questions**

EXAMPLES OF OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Math
There are 5 blue birds in the cage. There are 5 times as many green birds in another cage. How many green birds are there?
Social Studies
How are a globe and a dollhouse alike?
Science
Describe at least two ways Mary can improve her experiment.
Language Arts
In a story, a character usually faces a problem. For example, a child named Connor wants a pet but is allergic to cat and dog hair. The ending of the story is important. Finish the story in a few sentences.

Explanation of Open Ended Questions

Open-ended questions may be the most difficult for students with ASD. Many students who have trouble with written language skills or have trouble processing spoken language will not be able to answer open-ended questions as presented in the curriculum.

If the student is having trouble with open-ended questions, it is the time to move through the differentiated output hierarchy.

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (3RD GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. Choice Strategies
3. Closed Strategies
4. **Visual Organization Strategies**

EXAMPLES OF VISUAL ORGANIZATION STRATEGIES

Math
There are ⟨5⟩ blue birds in the cage. There are ⟨5⟩ times as many green birds in another cage. How many green birds are there?
Social Studies
How are a globe and a dollhouse alike? A globe and dollhouse are alike because they both _____ .
Science
Mary could improve her experiment by

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Language Arts
Connor wants a pet but is allergic to cat and dog hair.

1. Connor should _____
2. This way he _____
3. In the end _____

Explanation of Visual Organization Strategies

This level should provide the student with a kick-start, which may assist the student in organizing the answer.

Show student how many words or sentences are required to answer a question or complete a paragraph

Examples of Visual Organization Strategies

Directions listed instead of paragraph form

Color coding important information

Utilizing Symbols to connect information needed to solve the problem or answer the question

Highlighting Important Passages

Expand Writing Output Area with Bold Pen

Highlighting Process + - x, etc

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (3RD GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. Choice Strategies
3. **Closed Strategies**

EXAMPLES OF CLOSED STRATEGIES

Math

There are ☐5 blue birds in the cage. There are △5 times as many green birds in another cage. How many green birds are there?

☐ X △ = green birds

Social Studies

A globe and dollhouse are alike because they are a _____ of the real thing.

Science

Mary needs to be sure all the pieces of the cloth are

_____

Language Arts

Connor is allergic to dog and cat hair. A pet he might not be allergic to is a _____

Explanation of Closed Strategies

Closed strategies organize the student's output within the curriculum.

Closed strategies narrow the depth of the curriculum.

Closed strategies allow the student to utilize recognition skills versus recall skills to output the information.

Some Examples of Closed Strategies:

Fill in the Blank	Word Bank
Page of number of reference	Highlighter Tape
Symbols - Box/box ... triangle/triangle	Context Clues
Highlighting Formula + - x, etc	Give formula with symbols

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (3RD GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. **Choice Strategies**

EXAMPLES OF CHOICE STRATEGIES

Math
5 X 5 =   20   25   30
Social Studies
A globe and a dollhouse are alike because they are both _____ of the real thing.

    models   newspapers   copies
Science
Circle one way Mary could improve her experiment

    Pieces of cloth need to be the same size

    Use more clothing made by Girbau
Language Arts
What might be a good pet for Connor?
    Bird   Puppy

Explanation of Choice Strategies

Choice strategies provide the student with a visual method to recall the information.

Closed strategies should be utilized in a combination of other hierarchy strategies

Examples of Choice Strategies

Color coding a word bank - two choices	Pick between two instead of four
Blocking out choices	Color matching multiple choice
Pictures of the two sides	Two choices in sentence form

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (3RD GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies

EXAMPLES OF YES/NO STRATEGIES

Math
5 x 5 = 20

Yes   No

Social Studies
Are a globe and dollhouse both models of the real thing?

Yes   No

Science
If Mary wanted to improve her experiment, she could make sure the pieces of cloth were the same size.

Yes   No

Language Arts
Is a bird possibly a good pet for Connor?

Yes   No

Explanation of Yes / No strategies

Change the format of the question into Yes/No

Overlay other hierarchy strategies

A Yes / No strategy may have to be taught to a student

The staff person must systematically provide the Yes / No strategy to the student.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Science – Reflective Questions Assessment
Student Sheet

1. Mary wanted to find out what kind of cloth dries out the fastest after it gets wet. She got a cotton scarf, a wool mitten, and a nylon shirt. She poured some water on all three and then put them out to dry. The next day she felt the three pieces of clothing and they felt dry. She concluded that all kinds of cloth dry at the same rate.

Leslie thought Mary's experiment did not prove that all kinds of material dry at the same rate. Describe at least two ways Mary could improve her experiment.

A. She needs to be sure all the pieces of cloth are the same size.

B. She needs to use the same amount of water to wet each cloth.

C. She needs to make observations more often to determine which dried first.

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (6th GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. Choice Strategies
3. Closed Strategies
4. Visual Organization Strategies
5. **Open Ended Questions**

EXAMPLES OF OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Math
Hector recorded the scores for 2 of his Marco Polo games. He scored 15,988 points on the first game and 13, 539 points on the second game. How many more points did Hector score in the first game than in the second?

Social Studies
What are the principles stated in the preamble to the U.S. Constitution?

Science
Name the different stages of the Water Cycle.

Language Arts
I love bats. They are such wonderful animals. There are many different kinds of bats. One kind of bat is the fruit bat. Fruit bats have cute faces.

They sleep in trees. Most bats are nocturnal. That means they sleep during the day. They hunt for insects at night. Farmers like bats. Bats eat thousands of insects every night. That means that there aren't as many insects to destroy crops.

Explain what this story was about in your own words.

Explanation of Open Ended Questions

Open-ended questions may be the most difficult for students with ASD. Many students who have trouble with written language skills or have trouble processing spoken language will not be able to answer open-ended questions as presented in the curriculum.

If the student is having trouble with open-ended questions, that is the time to move through the differentiated output hierarchy.

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (6th GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. Choice Strategies
3. Closed Strategies
4. **Visual Organization Strategies**

EXAMPLES OF VISUAL ORGANIZATION STRATEGIES

Math
Hector recorded the scores for 2 of his Marco Polo games. He scored 15,988 points on the first game and 13,539 points on the second game.
How many **MORE** points did Hector score in the first game than in the second?
Subtract score two from score one

Social Studies
What are the **SIX** principles stated in the preamble to the U.S. Constitution?

Science
Name the **FOUR** different stages of the Water Cycle.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Language Arts
There are many different kinds of bats. Bats sleep in the day and hunt for insects at night. Bats help farmers by eating the insects that destroy crops.
What do bat do at night?
Why do farmers like bats?

Explanation of Visual Organization Strategies

This level should provide the student with a kick-start, which may assist the student in organizing the answer.

Show student how many words or sentences are required to answer a question or complete a paragraph

Examples of Visual Organization Strategies

Directions listed instead of paragraph form

Color coding important information

Utilizing Symbols to connect information needed to solve the problem or answer the question

Highlighting Important Passages

Expand Writing Output Area with Bold Pen

Highlighting Process + - x, etc

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (6th GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. Choice Strategies
3. **Closed Strategies**

EXAMPLES OF CLOSED STRATEGIES

Math
Hector recorded the scores for 2 of his Marco Polo games. He scored `15,988` points on the first game and `13,539` points on the second game.
How many more (-) points did Hector score in the `first` game than in the `second` game?
`Green` - `Yellow` = _____

Social Studies
Pick 6 of the 8 Statements

1. to form a more perfect union
2. establish justice
3. ensure domestic tranquility
4. guarantee the peoples' rights
5. provide for the common defense
6. promote the general welfare
7. secure the blessings of liberty
8. have freedom of speech

Science
Name the four (4) stages of the Water Cycle.

Word Bank

Evaporation	Oxygenation	Transpiration
Precipitation	Condensation	Hydrogenation

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Language Arts
Bats sleep in the day and hunt for insects at _____.
Bats help farmers by eating _____ that destroy crops.

Night	Insects	Day	Leaves

Explanation of Closed Strategies

Closed strategies organize the student's output within the curriculum.
Closed strategies narrow the depth of the curriculum.
Closed strategies allow the student to use recognition skills versus recall skills to output the information.

Some Examples of Closed Strategies:

Fill in the Blank	Word Bank
Page of number of refernce	Highlighter Tape
Symbols - Box/box ... triangle/triangle	Context Clues
Highlighting formula + - x, etc	Give formuls with symbols

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (6th GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. **Choice Strategies**

EXAMPLES OF CHOICE STRATEGIES

Math
Hector scored how many more points in the first game than in the second game?

Circle the correct answer

15,968 - 13,539 =

2,429   1,267

Social Studies
Please circle a principle stated in the preamble to the U.S. Constitution?

ensure domestic tranquility

provide for the common defense

Science
Name the four (4) stages of the Water Cycle.

The process by which liquid water changes to water vapor is:

compassion   evaporation

The process by which water vapor changes to liquid water is called:

oxygenation   condensation

The process by which water is released through leaves is called:

transpiration   transportation

The process by which water returns to the earth is called:

hydrogenation   precipitation

Language Arts
Bats sleep in the day and hunt for insects at night. Bats help farmers by eating the insects that destroy crops.

What do bats do at night?

Hunt insects   Sleep   Eat crops

Explanation of Choice Strategies

Choice strategies provide the student with a visual method to recall the information.

Closed strategies should be utilized in a combination of other hierarchy strategies

Examples of Choice Strategies

Color coding a word bank - two choices	Pick between two instead of four
Blocking out choices	Color matching multiple choice
Pictures of the two choices	2 choices in sentence format

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (6 th GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies

EXAMPLES OF YES/NO STRATEGIES

Math

15,986 - 13,539 = 2,429

`YES`   `NO`

Social Studies
Are there four principles stated in the preamble to the United States Constitution?

YES   NO

Science
Name the four (4) stages of the Water Cycle.

The process by which liquid water changes to water vapor is evaporation.

YES   NO

The process by which water vapor changes to liquid water is called oxygenation.

YES   NO

The process by which water is released through leaves is called transportation.

YES   NO

The process by which water returns to the earth is called precipitation.

YES   NO

Language Arts
Bats sleep at night.

YES   NO

Bats help farmers by eating insects.

YES   NO

Explanation of Yes / No strategies

Change the format of the question into Yes/No

Overlay other hierarchy strategies

A Yes / No strategy may have to be taught to a student

The staff person must systematically provide the Yes / No strategy to the student.

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (11th GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. Choice Strategies
3. Closed Strategies
4. Visual Organization Strategies
5. Open Ended Questions

EXAMPLES OF OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Math
Write the ratio 11:88 as a percent.
Social Studies
Explain the evidence that supports the continental drift theory.
Science
Define estivation and give three examples of animals that estivate.
Language Arts
Choose a person whom you admire. Select an incident in the person's life that portrays the qualities you most associate with that person. The incident may be one in which the person overcame an obstacle.

Explanation of Open Ended Questions

The open-ended questions may be the most difficult for students with ASD. Many students who have trouble with written language skills or have trouble processing spoken language will not be able to answer open-ended questions as presented in the curriculum.

If the student is having trouble with open-ended questions, it is the time to move through the differentiated output hierarchy.

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (11th GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. Choice Strategies
3. Closed Strategies
4. **Visual Organization Strategies**

EXAMPLES OF VISUAL ORGANIZATION STRATEGIES

Math
11:88 ratio is =_____%

Social Studies
Name 2 pieces of information that support the continental drift theory.

_____

_____

Science
List three animals that estivate in the summer

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Language Arts

• Persons you admire

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

• Qualities You most admire in a person

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

• Obstacles the person has run into

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Explanation of Visual Organization Strategies

The Visual Organization level should provide the student with a kick-start, which may assist the student in organizing the answer.

Show student how many words or sentences are required to answer a question or complete a paragraph

Examples of Visual Organization Strategies

Directions listed instead of paragraph form

Color coding important information

Utilizing Symbols to connect information needed to solve the problem or answer the question

Highlighting Important Passages

Expand Writing Output Area with Bold Pen

Highlighting Process + - x, etc

DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (11th GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. Choice Strategies
3. **Closed Strategies**

EXAMPLES OF CLOSED STRATEGIES

Math

$$\frac{11}{88} = \frac{n}{100}$$

88n = 11 x 100

88n = _____

$$n = \frac{\underline{\hspace{1cm}}}{88}$$

n = _____

Social Studies

2 pieces of evidence that support the continental drift theory are _____ and _____ in _____ and _____.

Science

The dormant condition of animals in the summer is _____

Language Arts

- Person you admire

  1. A person I admire who is a rock star is

     _____

  2. A person I admire who is a teacher is

     _____

  3. A person I admire who is a T.V. star is

     _____

     (Choose one person by circling)

- Qualities you most admire in a person

  1. Tim Allen is _____
  2. Tim Allen is _____
  3. Tim Allen is _____

- Obstacles that Tim Allen has run into

  1. Tim Allen overcame _____
  2. Tim Allen overcame _____
  3. Tim Allen overcame _____

Explanation of Closed Strategies

Closed strategies organize the student's output within the curriculum.

Closed strategies narrow the depth of the curriculum

Closed strategies allow the student to use recognition skills versus recall skills to output the information.

Some Examples of Closed Strategies:

Fill in the Blank	Word Bank
Page of number of refernce	Highlighter Tape
Symbols - Box/box ... triangle/triangle	Context Clues
Highlighting formula + - x, etc	Give formuls with symbols

DIFFERENTITATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY (11th GRADE)

1. Yes / No Strategies
2. **Choice Strategies**

EXAMPLES OF CHOICE STRATEGIES

Math

$$88n = 11 \times 100$$

$$88n = 1,100$$

$$n = 1,100 / 88$$

$$n = \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \%$$

$$n = 20\% \qquad n = 12.5\% \qquad n = 8\%$$

Social Studies

Circle 2 pieces of evidence to support the continental drift theory.

Fossils in North America   Rocks in South America

Fossils in South America   Rocks in North America

Science

The dormant condition of certain animals in the summer

Estivation   Hibernation

Language Arts

- Person you admire

  Tim Allen   Ellen Dengeneres

- Qualities you most admire in a person

  1. A quality I admire in Tim Allen is:

  He makes me laugh

  He is too serious

  2. Another quality I look up to is:

  Tim Allen has acted in many different roles

  He has only acted on a T.V. series

  3. A quality I really like about Tim Allen is:

  He has spent his money wisely

  Tim has earned a great deal of money

- Obstacles that Tim Allen has run into

  1. Tim Allen had trouble in his life prior to becoming really popular:

  He dropped out of school

  He went to jail

  2. A hurdle that Tim Allen has had to overcome is:

  His involvement with drugs

  His family problems

- Another obstacle that he has been able to work through has been:

  Starting off his career as a comedian and transitioning into other roles

  Working as a movie star before becoming a TV celebrity

Explanation of Choice Strategies

Choice strategies provide the student with a visual method to recall the information.

Closed strategies should be utilized in a combination of other hierarchy strategies

Examples of Choice Strategies

Color coding a word bank - two choices	Pick between two instead of four
Blocking out choices	Color matching multiple choice
Pictures of the two choices	2 choices in sentence format

**DIFFERENTIATED OUTPUT HIERARCHY
(11th GRADE)**

   1. Yes / No Strategies

EXAMPLES OF YES/NO STRATEGIES

Math

     n = 1,100 / 88

     n = 12.5%

    Yes   No

Social Studies

Are rocks and fossils found in South America and Africa evidence that supports the continental theory?

    Yes   No

Science

Is the dormant condition of certain animals in the summer called estivation?

    Yes   No

Language Arts

- Persons you admire

   1. Do you admire Tim Allen?

   Yes   No

- Qualities you most admire in a person is

   1. Tim Allen a comedian?

   Yes   No

   2. Has he been able to perform a variety of roles?

   Yes   No

   3. Has Tim Allen had personal problems that he has coped with?

   Yes   No

   4. Does he make a lot of money?

   Yes   No

- Obstacles the person has run into

   1. Did Tim Allen go to jail?

   Yes   No

   2. Did he start his career as a comedian?

   Yes   No

   3. Is he currently on the sitcom "Ellen"

   Yes   No

Explanation of Yes / No strategies

Change the format of the question into Yes/No

Overlay other hierarchy strategies

A Yes/No strategy may have to be taught to a student

The staff person must systematically provide the Yes/No strategy to the student.