

# BEST PRACTICES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION



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THE NEWARK TEACHERS UNION (NTU) & THE NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS WORKED HARD TO ENSURE THE "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT" LEFT NO TEACHER AIDE BEHIND. IN THIS BULLETIN, WE JOIN WITH THE STATEWIDE PARENT ADVOCACY NETWORK TO PROVIDE BEST PRACTICES FOR UTILIZING TEACHER AIDES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

# TEACHER AIDES - AN INTEGRAL PART OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

## INTRODUCTION

The Newark Teachers Union (NTU) & the Newark Public Schools worked hard to ensure the "No Child Left Behind Act" left no teacher aide behind. In this bulletin, we join with the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) to provide best practices for utilizing teacher aides to improve special education programs.



COLLABORATIVE PLANNING BETWEEN THE NPS (MARION BOLDEN, ANZELLA NELMS & HELENE FELDMAN), SPAN (DIANA AUTIN), & NTU (MITCHEL GERRY)

This document focuses on "best practices" in integrating teacher aides into special education programs, while ensuring compliance with special education's and No Child Left Behind's legal mandates. We demonstrate how to write lesson plans and IEP's, utilizing research-based techniques, which improve student performance academically and behaviorally. We also delineate specific responsibilities, which teachers, aides, administrators, and IEP teams must assume. To exemplify this process, we will provide samples of IEPs and lesson plans, which address reading skills, learning, classroom management, and parent involvement. However, these are only examples that demonstrate the use of aides in ways that are consistent with IEP requirements, Title I allowable activities, contractual limitations, and effective practices. The concepts can be applied to all subjects and activities to improve student performance.

## LEGAL-MANDATES FOR TEACHER AIDES

Teacher aides are an integral part of special education programs and services throughout the country. In New Jersey's Special Education Administrative Code, (N.J.A.C. 6A), teacher aides are mandated:

1. In certain special education programs (e.g., programs for children with autism, preschool disabilities, etc.),
2. To increase special education class size limits, and
3. To provide an array of mandated services for special education students, when delineated in students' IEPs.

## KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF TEACHER AIDES

The No Child Left Behind Act's new mandates for highly qualified paraprofessionals should increase the knowledge and skills of the vast majority of all teacher aides. For example, by January 2006, NCLB mandates that teacher aides have an Associate Degree or 48 college credits, or pass a rigorous local assessment, which demonstrates the teacher aide's knowledge of and ability to assist in reading, writing, and math instruction.

Under IDEA, teacher aides who assist in the provision of special education and related services must be appropriately trained and supervised.

Clearly, the ability of teacher aides to assist special education students to learn reading, writing and math skills will improve as teacher aides acquire NCLB's mandated skills. However, principals, teachers, and child study teams need a good deal of guidance to ensure that best practices are utilized with teacher aides to provide the maximum educational benefit for special

education students, while ensuring compliance with special education regulations and No Child Left Behind's mandates.

## WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES MAY BE ASSIGNED TO TEACHER AIDES?

The No Child Left Behind Act delineates the following allowable activities for teacher aides:

1. One-to-one tutoring for eligible students, at times when students would not otherwise be taught by a teacher;
2. Assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials;
3. Provide assistance in a computer laboratory;
4. Conduct parental involvement activities;
5. Provide support in library/media center;
6. Act as a translator;
7. Provide instructional services to students under the direct supervision of teacher.

## WHAT DOES THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT MEAN WHEN IT STATES TEACHER AIDES MUST WORK UNDER THE "DIRECT SUPERVISION OF A TEACHER"?

1. The teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working; and
2. The paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher.

**\*NOTE - TEACHERS DO NOT EVALUATE TEACHER AIDES, NOR DO THEY FORMALLY OBSERVE TEACHER AIDES AS PART OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS!**

# TEACHER AIDES - AN INTEGRAL PART OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

## WHAT DO THE ABOVE MANDATES & BEST PRACTICES MEAN FOR TEACHERS?

To ensure that teacher aides are utilized to improve special education programs and services the following must occur:

1. The teacher is the classroom leader. Therefore, ultimate responsibility for determining the teacher aide's daily responsibilities rests with the teacher. These responsibilities should be specified in the teacher's lesson plans. Lesson plans serve as a road map or guide, specifying who will perform each daily responsibility, thereby ensuring the teacher aide works under the direct supervision of the teacher.
2. By delineating teacher aide responsibilities on the lessons plans for all daily subjects and activities, possible conflicts between teacher & teacher aide will be minimized.
3. Teachers must fully integrate assigned aides into all lesson plans, for all subjects and time periods, during which the aide is assigned. The aide's assigned responsibilities must be aligned with students' IEPs, Title I's allowable activities, best practices that improve student performance, and the district's grade level curriculum, which is aligned with the State's Core Curriculum Content Standards.
4. If a teacher aide is assigned to a class, or a particular student(s) in the class, they still work under the "direct supervision" of the teacher. Consequently, the teacher must include each of these teacher aides in their lesson plan for all subjects and activities, throughout the day.
5. The lesson plans must however allow for teacher aide's contractual rights (e.g., duty-free lunch + one ten minute break each day). If the student's IEP or Code's mandates require teacher aide(s) during this time period, the building administrator must ensure that other teacher aides are

assigned to the class &/or specific students.

6. If the teacher aide is assigned to certain students to ensure that specific assistance is provided, the teacher must also integrate those responsibilities in their lesson plans. However, if a student's IEP indicates that the aide is not required to work individually with that student, or with a specified group of students in the class, the teacher can then group students and have this IEP aide assist other students. In addition, if the IEP specifies that the aide is assigned to the particular student only for certain periods or times of the day, that aide can then be assigned to other classroom responsibilities for the remaining periods or times, as per Title I's allowable activities and as per other students' IEPs.

## WHAT DOES BEST PRACTICES MEAN FOR THE TEACHER AND AIDE TEAM?

For teachers and aides to implement best practices in the classroom, they must meet regularly to plan for these activities. The teacher/aide team needs to decide on how responsibilities will be shared, with the clear caveat that the principal is the educational leader in the school and the teacher is the educational leader in the class.



Brown Academy special education teacher aide Sameerah Coleman is pictured on the top left, next to special education teacher Janice Holmes, and their students.

Having 2 adults (teacher and teacher aide) sharing the same space requires specific attention and responsibilities and duties to avoid conflicts.

Therefore, to maximize team effectiveness, the team must decide:

1. How to address each other;
2. Who does what, when, where and how;
3. How the workload will be shared;
4. What strategies for classroom management/discipline issues and positive behavioral supports will be employed;
5. What to do when students need to be acknowledged;
6. Who is responsible for monitoring student movement within and outside the classroom;
7. What classroom routines and procedures will be used for homework class work, school supplies and materials, and tests;
8. How and when is it appropriate for teacher and/or aide to gain the other's attention respectfully and without undermining their respective positions;
9. How to share ideas;
10. How to provide accommodations for students who require it;
11. When will planning time for teacher/aide teams be scheduled to meet and collaborate on the delivery of educational services to their assigned and shared students;
12. How to address other issues that arise.

Teacher/aide teams also need to work on and be provided with staff development on the social aspects of team building. For example, teachers need strong communications and task delegation skills.

## WHAT DO TITLE I'S MANDATES MEAN FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS?

Principals must ensure:

1. Responsibilities assigned to teacher aides should be limited to those delineated in the law and/or the IEP;
2. Teacher aides are working under the "direct supervision of a teacher," as delineated in Title I and IEP;
3. Teacher aides are carrying out

# TEACHER AIDES - AN INTEGRAL PART OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

assigned responsibilities delineated in the lesson plan.

#### 4. Teacher's lesson plans:

- Reflect teacher aides assignments throughout the school day;
- Are aligned with IEPs, Title I's allowable activities, utilize instructional techniques that improve student performance, specifically designate responsibilities for teacher aide for all subjects and time periods during which the aide is assigned;

5. Teachers and aides have time to plan & engage in staff development activities together; and

6. Teacher aides assigned to special education classes & or students because of code &/or IEP mandates **MUST NOT** be administratively reassigned to other responsibilities in the school.

### WHAT DO THE ABOVE MANDATES & BEST PRACTICES MEAN FOR IEP TEAMS?

IEP teams must ensure that if a student needs the additional assistance of an aide, all appropriate parts of the IEP must be filled out clearly to best ensure implementation. Answering the following questions may assist in these considerations:

1. Is an IEP aide necessary to support the implementation of the IEP for the student to receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE)?
2. Is an IEP aide necessary to support the implementation of the IEP for the student to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE)?
3. Where on the IEP would we document the student's need for an IEP aide?

#### **a. Present Level of Educational Performance**, such as

- Language considerations - Student's dominant language is Spanish and therefore needs a Spanish speaking aide to assist with translating lessons and student's responses, if a bilingual class is not available or appropriate;
- Transition needs - Student will

need a teacher aide to serve as a job coach, when working at assigned work site;

- Behavioral considerations - student's behavior requires the assistance of a teacher aide to monitor and provide positive behavior supports and feedback

**b. Goals and objectives**; such as how teacher aide will assist student to achieve a particular goal/objective;

**c. Supplementary aids and services**, such as summarizing teacher's lessons, ensuring that homework is written down and completed, ensuring the correct use of assistive technology, such as "books on tape";

**d. Related services**, such as assisting with activities of daily living (ADL), helping students to travel to and from locations where related services are provided, and working with students to apply or practice what they have learned in related services sessions throughout the school day.

**e. Test Accommodations**, such as reading all test questions to the student

**f. Behavioral Intervention Plan** - See Pages 8 and 10

**g. Supports for school personnel** - Title I's allowable activities are a good starting point to determine the kinds of supports for school personnel an IEP aide will provide. Also, the type of training the IEP aide needs in order to perform IEP responsibilities - e.g., Assistive Technology training, positive behavior supports training, restraint training, behavioral observations and charting; contacts with parents.

**h. Statement of Special Education and Related Services** - If the student requires the assistance of a teacher aide, the IEP team must ensure that their assigned schedule is delineated in this

section, including the dates the aide begins and ends services, as well as the frequency, duration and location of these services.

### TEACHER AIDES & LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

Bilingual teacher aides are assigned to help LEP special education students understand classroom instructions/directions and to help school personnel understand the student. Therefore, the IEPs and teacher's lesson plans may specify that bilingual teacher aide perform the following activities:

1. Translate and expand classroom instruction for the student(s);
2. Link teacher-selected words to pictures or real objects for student(s);
3. Read aloud teacher-selected stories and informational texts to student(s) in English, while explaining text to student(s) and having student(s) explain the text to the teacher aide;
4. Participate with student(s) in native English-speaking clubs &/or discussion groups, translating as necessary;
5. Utilize teacher-selected digitized books, which allows the student(s) to request pronunciations and translations;
6. Encourage student(s) to share their cultures in the classroom;
7. Utilize teacher-selected music (vocal and dance) to assist student(s) in learning English words and concepts;
8. Preview and discuss new words and concepts to be covered in upcoming lesson with the student(s);

### TEACHER AIDES & PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Teacher aides can play a significant role in increasing parental involvement. Conducting parental involvement activities are allowable activities under Title I/No Child Left Behind. About 90% of Newark's teacher aides live in Newark; many are parents of

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children in Newark public schools. Because they and their families are members of the Newark community, they often have strong connections with students and parents and knowledge of and access to community resources. For example, "under the direct supervision of the teacher," individual teacher aides can:

- a. Assist in providing information to families about their child's progress,
- b. Share strategies that have proven successful in the classroom and gather information from families about strategies that have worked at home;
- c. Help families identify their concerns to share with the classroom teacher;
- d. Assist a parent with limited English proficiency to communicate with the teacher, and
- e. Help the family identify and locate resources to assist them.

Teacher aides who are not assigned to an individual student can:

- a. Assist teachers to develop periodic classroom newsletters for parents that contain tips for helping children learn in the home, fun activities to do as a family, and other useful ideas;
- b. Contact parents periodically by phone or postcard, focusing on students' successes and upcoming activities for students and families;
- c. Establish a routine method for parents to review their children's work on a regular basis (for example, using manila envelopes or folders to send student work home each week with a place for parents' comments on the front cover); and
- d. Implement additional feedback opportunities for parents and family members such as surveys on current program issues.

## TEACHER AIDES IN LESSON PLANS

Although the format of lesson plans

can vary from district to district, schools within the same district, and teachers within the same school, they generally include 4 sections and teacher aides can be integrated in these sections as follows:

**1. Objective** stated in terms of what students will learn or be able to do after the lesson - If teacher begins instructing one group of students, the teacher aide can be assigned activities to prepare subsequent groups of students for the lesson. These teacher-selected activities could tap students' prior knowledge (e.g. skills, motivation, relevance, etc.)

**2. Activities to accomplish objective:**

- a. **Materials** - Teacher aide will ensure that assigned student(s) have all required materials for lesson (e.g. pencil, eraser, homework, text book, notebook, eye glasses, etc.). If the student(s) doesn't have these necessary materials they will notify parent(s) and track this preparation of student(s) on teacher-selected form(s);
- b. **On task behavior(s)** - Teacher aide will ensure that student(s) are attending to lesson &/or assigned task(s) by touching student's shoulder, sitting by student(s), signaling student(s) with prearranged signal, restating directions, giving additional examples, etc. In addition, teacher aide(s) will assist in increasing student on-task behavior by ensuring that classroom routines

and rules are followed (e.g. requests for assistance, supplies, use the bathroom, etc.)

**3. Evaluation of whether lesson accomplished objective** - The teacher aide could work with and provide corrective feedback to selected students during seatwork, when skills/information are reinforced.

**4. Follow-up activities** - Teacher aide(s) can ensure that student(s) are aware of teacher-selected follow-up activities and that they assist student in recording in a consistent place (e.g., homework pad)

Clearly, the possible teacher aide responsibilities, which can be designated in each lesson plan are only limited by Title I, the IEP, the curriculum, the teacher aide's contract, and teacher's creativity. Since most of the teacher aide's assigned responsibilities will be frequently repeated in all lessons and activities, the teacher, aide and school-based administrator should decide on agreed upon abbreviations, or codes, for selected activities. For example, "TA routines, rules, on-task, etc." could mean that the teacher aide must ensure that assigned students adhere to classroom routines, rules, and remain on task. (However, the first time an abbreviation is used, it must be spelled out.)

### SHOULD TEACHER AIDES BE PROVIDED WITH THE TEACHER'S ENTIRE LESSON PLAN?

Clearly, in order for the teacher aide to know what their assigned responsibilities are for each subject during the day, he or she needs something to refer to. The teacher may decide that giving each assigned teacher aide his/her own written responsibilities, like the one below, may be easier for teacher and teacher aide.

<b>TEACHER AIDE'S (NAME) RESPONSIBILITIES FOR (DATE)</b>				
LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY <b>8:30 - 10:00</b>	MATHEMATICS <b>10:00- 10:45</b>	SOCIAL STUDIES <b>10:45 - 11:30</b>	SCIENCE <b>12:00 - 1:00</b>	ART <b>1:00 - 2:45</b>
List Assignments	List Assignments	List Assignments	List Assignments	List Assignments

# IEPS & LESSON PLANS - READING

## ACADEMIC SUBJECTS - READING

Scientifically based reading research has demonstrated that children must learn phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension in order to read well.

Therefore, teacher aides can reinforce these skills in the classroom, as parents can do at home. IEPs and teacher's lesson plans should reflect these activities, which the aides will perform to reinforce these skills in school.

The teacher can utilize a teacher aide to develop any or all of the above necessary reading skills, as indicated on the IEP. In the following example, we placed "with the assistance of the teacher aide" in parenthesis, because the goals would be valid even if the student doesn't require an IEP aide. Thus, if there is a program or capacity aide assigned to the class, the teacher's lesson plans should integrate the assigned aide(s) into all these instructional activities.

### 1. Goals

"By the end of the school year, (with the assistance of a teacher aide), the student will have mastered all phonemic awareness skills". In this endeavor, under short-term benchmarks, or objectives, we may specify the following:

- a. By (date), (with the assistance of a teacher aide), the student will be able to identify 100% of all phonemes in selected words. They will demonstrate this skill by recognizing individual sounds in all words &/or the same sound in different words;
- b. By (date), (with the assistance of a teacher aide), the student will be able to categorize 100% of all phonemes, by identifying which spoken words have the same/different phonemes;

- c. By (date), (with the assistance of a teacher aide), the student will be able to blend phonemes to form 200 words;
- d. By (date), (with the assistance of a teacher aide), the student will segment 200 words into phonemes;
- e. By (date), (with the assistance of a teacher aide), the student will delete &/or add phonemes to form 200 new words;
- f. By (date), (with the assistance of a teacher aide), the student will substitute phonemes to make 200 new words.

### 2. "Modifications and Supplementary Aids and Services" in the Regular Education Classroom, or Special Education Classroom -

Under this IEP section, we can say;

- a. "Using teacher-selected materials and activities, a teacher aide will work with student in small groups to reinforce phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension, after being instructed in these skills by the teacher."
- b. "Using teacher-selected materials and activities, a teacher aide will work closely with parent to help reinforce student's phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension skills". Examples of these materials and activities can be found in the USDOE's "Helping Your Child Become a Reader," <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reader/index.html> or their shorter fact sheet (<http://www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov/parents/reading/>)

### 3. Related Service

If the teacher aide's services are required for the student to benefit from the educational program, it can be considered a related service. If it is

a related service, the teacher aide's services must:

- a. Be noted in the student's IEP as a related service including the goals/objectives, frequency and duration of service, professional providing the service, where the services are provided and whether services are provided individually or in groups.
- b. Be oriented towards goals and objectives on the IEP;

Example - With the assistance of a teacher aide, during daily seatwork when students practice and review, reading skills, the student will increase phonics skills. Each week, the student will learn 10 new carefully selected letter-sound relationships.

The teacher will carefully select 10 new letter-sound relationships, organized into a logical sequence with precise directions and techniques to reinforce these relationships and connect them to the reading of words, sentences and stories.

### 4. Support for Staff

This section of the IEP may specify that the teacher aides must receive training on teaching these reading skills.



COLLABORATION BETWEEN THIRTEENTH AVENUE'S CHILD STUDY TEAM MEMBER (MAL MILLER-SCOTT), SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER DAWN RUSSOMANNO, AND TEACHER AIDE DEANNA HATCHER

# IEP'S & LESSON PLANS - READING

For example, "The teacher aide working with the student shall receive instruction by (classroom teacher, resource teacher coordinator, Vice Principal, etc.) in assisting in teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension." In addition, we could also say, "The teacher aide will help reinforce reading skills taught by the teacher and reach out to the parent to assist the parent in reinforcing these reading skills."

## LESSON PLANS TO TEACH READING SKILLS

As previously noted, the district's grade-level curriculum, the IEPs, as well as research-proven strategies that increase selected reading skills, should help guide the the teacher in developing these lesson plans.

### 1. PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Utilizing teacher-selected words and their corresponding sounds, teacher aide will work with student(s) to reinforce the following phonemic awareness skills:

1. Phoneme isolation, or the individual sounds in selected words. For example, "What is the first sound in van?" - /v/.
2. Phoneme identity, or recognizing the same sounds in different words. For example, "What sound is the same in fix, fall, and fun?" - the first sound /f/, is the same.
3. Phoneme categorization, recognizing the word in a set of three or four words that has the "odd" sound. For example, "Which word, "bus, bun, or rug doesn't belong? - Rug does not belong. It doesn't begin with /b/.
4. Phoneme blending, or combining separately spoken phonemes to form a word, which they can write and read. For example, "What word is /b/ /i/

/g/? - /b/ /i/ /g/ is big, which the student(s) would say, write and read.

5. Phoneme segmentation, or breaking a word into its separate sounds. For example, "How many sounds are in grab?" - /g/ /r/ /a/ /b/. Four sounds. Next the teacher aide would ask the students to write each sound and say them aloud.



Teacher, Claudette Massop and teacher aide, Yvonne Jones, and their students at McKinley School

6. Phoneme deletion, or recognizing the word that remains when a phoneme is removed from another word. For example, "What is smile without the /s/?" - Smile without the /s/ is mile.

7. Phoneme addition, or making a new word by adding a phoneme to an existing word. For example, "What word do you have if you add /s/ to the beginning of park?" - "Spark"

8. Phoneme substitution, or substituting one phoneme for another to make a new word. For example, "If you change the /g/ in the word "bug" to /n/. What's the new word?" - "Bun".

### 2. PHONICS

With the assistance of the teacher aide, student(s) will practice the letter-sound relationships they are learning.

1. Utilizing teacher-selected short books or stories, teacher aide will emphasize the specific letter-sound relationships they are learning with selected student(s).
2. Utilizing teacher-selected activity

sheets, teacher aide will assist students in writing the letters and letter combinations they are learning, and then combine these into words, sentences, messages, and their own stories.

### 3. FLUENCY

Utilizing teacher-selected reading selections, teacher aide will provide selected student(s) the opportunity to repeatedly read the selected text until reading fluency reaches predetermined rate. Teacher aide should first make sure that they can accurately recognize all words fluently read the selected text, to model

reading fluency.

### 4. VOCABULARY

Utilizing teacher-selected vocabulary words and concepts, the teacher aide will assist student(s) in applying word-learning strategies.

### 5. TEXT COMPREHENSION

Utilizing teacher's answer key, teacher aide will check student's reading comprehension knowledge on short answer questions (e.g. multiple choice, matching, etc.), on a variety of text (e.g. story, informational, poetry, etc.).

# IEPS & LESSON PLANS - LEARNING

## IMPROVE LEARNING IN ANY/ALL

### ACADEMIC SUBJECT(S):

The following are research-based strategies, which improve student learning, and can be integrated into most IEPs lesson plans:

**IEP Goal statement:** (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will increase his time on assigned task by 10 minutes per subject per assignment.

### ***Supplemental aids and services:***

(With the assistance of a teacher aide,.) the student's time on task will be increased by:

- Preparing student for lesson with clear, direct statement of expectations;
- Reviewing key words with student;
- Checking that student has the correct text, place and materials;
- Requesting student to verbally repeat teacher instructions, before beginning assigned written work;
- Checking student's seatwork and providing ongoing feedback;
- Supervising the student on the computer as an extension of the lesson with practice of the taught skill

**IEP Goal statement:** (With the assistance of a teacher aide,) the student will increase completed homework assignments.

### ***Supplemental aids and services:***

(With the assistance of teacher's aide,) the student's daily homework completion will increase by

- Checking the student's homework pad daily for accuracy and completeness;
- Checking that all materials needed for homework are organized and placed in the book bag;
- Adding notes to the parent if needed for the parent's assistance in the homework assignment;
- Checking the homework daily in the morning for completion and accuracy.
- Correcting and providing immediate feedback on short-answer homework assignments, where teacher provides

an answer key.

f. The student will model teacher aide on self-checking the homework chart when work is done daily;

g. The teacher aide will use positive verbal and/or visual feedback when the student completes work;

### **IEP Behavioral Intervention Plan-Target Behaviors**

The student will increase time on assigned tasks and completed assignments.

### ***Positive Behavioral Support***

Teacher aide will monitor and provide support to redirect the student's attention to the work at hand, classroom instruction, etc.;

### ***Data Collection and Management System***

Teacher aide will utilize "Student Observations For Work Completion" form and "Off-task On-task Behavior" form to record and track student's work completion and on-task, off-task behavior(s) before, during and after interventions (see following page for sample forms).

## LESSON PLANS TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING:

### **1. HOMEWORK**

- The teacher aide will ensure that student(s) copy all homework assignments in designated place (e.g. homework pad) and bring home needed books and materials.
- The teacher aide will provide teacher-selected home learning ideas, materials, and guides to families in how to help student(s).
- The teacher aide will record each student's completion of assigned homework on a teacher-selected form.
- The teacher aide will provide timely, corrective feedback on student's short answer homework assignments (e.g., multiple choice, True/False, matching, etc.), where the teacher provides the answer key.

### **2. FEEDBACK**

- Teacher aide will provide teacher-selected reinforcement (e.g. verbal praise, smiley face, points, etc.) when student completes assigned classwork and homework.
- Teacher aide provides information to students about their competence or the value of their accomplishments.
- Teacher aide helps students to better appreciate their thinking, problem solving, and performance.
- Teacher aide attributes student success to effort, implying that similar successes can be expected in the future.
- Teacher aide encourages students to appreciate their accomplishments for the effort they expend and their personal gratification.
- Teacher aide will provide timely, corrective feedback on student's short answer (e.g., multiple choice, True/False, matching, etc.) classwork, where the teacher provides the answer key.

### **3. TIME ON TASK**

The teacher aide will increase student(s) on task behavior and work completion by:

- Providing encouragement and reinforcement for on-task student behavior;
- Providing reminders and redirections for off-task student behavior;
- Preparing teacher-selected materials for lessons and ensuring that students have needed materials for lessons;
- Ensuring that students follow established classroom procedures for:
  - Smooth transitions between activities;
  - Routine housekeeping chores; and
  - Instructional tasks,

**\* NOTE: THESE TEACHER AIDE ASSIGNMENTS SUPPLEMENT AND SUPPORT THE TEACHER'S ONGOING ACTIVITIES.**

# IEPS & LESSON PLANS - MONITORING TOOLS, WHICH TEACHERS, AIDES, & IEP TEAMS CAN USE

**THE FOLLOWING CHARTS CAN BE UTILIZED BY TEACHER(S), TO HAVE TEACHER AIDE(S) ESTABLISH BASELINE DATA & TRACK BEHAVIORAL CHANGES FOR ASSIGNED STUDENT'S TIME ON TASK, WORK COMPLETION, SELECTED MISBEHAVIORS, & TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO STUDENT(S) AND PARENT(S). THE CHARTS CAN BE ALTERED TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF SPECIFIC STUDENTS AND BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS.**



**13TH AVE TEACHER AIDE BARBARA GIBSON DISCUSSES BEHAVIOR CHARTING WITH TEACHER LAURIE CENTINO AND SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST JENNIFER RAMOS.**

## STUDENT OBSERVATIONS FOR WORK COMPLETION

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Classwork (circle)** - Complete; Incomplete - attempted but couldn't do; Attempted but couldn't complete; Attempted - asked for help, but couldn't complete; Didn't attempt;

**Supplies (circle)** - Has needed supplies to complete classwork; Doesn't have needed supplies to complete classwork, but asks to borrow; Doesn't have needed supplies to complete classwork and doesn't ask to borrow;

**Homework (circle)** - Complete; Incomplete - attempted but couldn't do; Attempted but couldn't complete; Didn't hand in

**Tests/quizzes (circle)** - Completed; Attempted but couldn't complete; Attempted - asked for help, but couldn't complete; Didn't attempt;

### Off-task On-task Behaviors - 2 minute observations

	<u>ON TASK BEHAVIORS</u>	<u>OFF TASK BEHAVIORS</u>
Time - From: _____ To: _____	Looking at teacher when giving lesson, directions and/or instructions (L); participating in class discussion (P); working on seat work (S); working cooperatively on cooperative project (C);	doesn't look at teacher when giving lesson (NL); doesn't participate in class discussion (NP); doesn't work at seat work (NS); doesn't work cooperatively on group project (NC);
From: _____ To: _____		

### OTHER BEHAVIOR OBSERVATIONS

<u>STUDENT MISBEHAVIORS</u>	
STUDENT NAME: _____ DATE: _____	
Time: From: _____ To: _____	out of seat behavior without permission (OS); talks to others without permission (T); Calling Out (CO); looks around instead of attending to task at hand (LA); daydreams instead of attending to task at hand (DD); makes inappropriate gestures (G); acts silly (S)
Time: From: _____ To: _____	

# IEPS & LESSON PLANS - DISCIPLINE

## IEPS & LESSON PLANS - POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

When a student exhibits a behavior that impedes their learning, or the learning of their classmates, that student's IEP should have a Behavior Intervention Plan (IDEA refers to it as a positive behavior support plan).

### **1. TARGET BEHAVIOR -**

If the selected target behavior is to increase the student's adherence to classroom rules and behave appropriately in the classroom, the teacher aide could assist in implementing the positive supports and interventions.

### **2. EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS TEACHER AIDE WILL ASSIST IN:**

- a. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will participate in the development of classroom rules with other students;
- b. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will participate with other students in printing and posting the classroom rules;
- c. The student will use his own words to explain the class rules to the teacher aide;
- d. Based on these rules, the student will [be able to] identify appropriate and inappropriate classroom behaviors to the teacher aide;
- e. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will identify the factors that support his/her ability to behave appropriately in the classroom;
- f. (With the assistance of a

teacher's aide,) the student will identify his "feelings fingerprints," the signs that he is experiencing stress or frustration that may lead to inappropriate behaviors;

g. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will use his own words to describe his "feelings fingerprints" as they occur and will implement a planned series of steps to avoid inappropriate behavior in the classroom (e.g., Identify feelings fingerprints; identify a goal; brainstorm possible behaviors to reach that goal, and the likely consequences of those behaviors; pick a behavior; try it; analyze the results);

h. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will participate in his/her own functional behavior assessment to identify the antecedents of his inappropriate behavior, specific nature of inappropriate behavior, and consequences of inappropriate behavior;

i. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will learn to identify his off-task or otherwise inappropriate behavior, chart this behavior, indicating the frequency, duration, time of day, period or circumstances under which the behavior is most likely to occur, and interventions that are most and least successful in avoiding or minimizing his inappropriate behavior vs. those interventions that escalate the behavior;

j. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) when the student behaves inappropriately or fails to follow classroom rules, the student will explain the nature of his inappropriate behavior and the classroom rule that was violated, why it was inappropriate, what the conse-

quences are, and alternative behaviors that he/she could have used;

k. Under the direct supervision of the teacher and with the assistance of a teacher's aide, the student will identify goals to improve his behavior and positive consequences or reinforcements for improvements;

l. The teacher aide will provide positive reinforcement for the student's appropriate behavior;

m. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student's self-monitoring and self-reinforcing behaviors will increase self-discipline and self-motivation;

n. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will be assigned daily classroom tasks he/she enjoys, such as collecting homework, book inventory, operating audio-visual equipment, serving as classroom reporter, area monitor, supply manager, or bus ticket monitor, providing community service within the building (helping librarians clean and shelve books), and engaging in peer tutoring.

o. Student's difficulties with social relationships requires the assistance of a teacher aide to interact appropriately with other students, engage in conversations with other students, and develop positive relationships with other students.

### **3. DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

*(see monitoring tools on page 9)*

A teacher's aide can be an integral part of the data collection and

# IEPS & LESSON PLANS - DISCIPLINE

management system required to implement a Positive Behavior Support Plan in a variety of ways. For example:

- a. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will record and chart his positive behaviors based on selected behavior goals and monitor his progress daily, weekly, and monthly;
- b. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the student will rate his adherence to classroom rules (excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor) daily, weekly, and monthly.
- c. (With the assistance of a teacher's aide,) the teacher will establish a daily record of student behaviors, including antecedents and consequences, descriptions of the frequency, duration, seriousness, and extent of inappropriate behaviors, and amelioration or escalation of behaviors over time based on various interventions.

## LESSON PLANS -

Teacher aides can be an integral part in daily classroom management. For example, the teacher's daily lesson plans for any and all subjects/periods can state, "The teacher aide will":

1. Consistently acknowledge and reward student behavior, which complies with classroom rules and procedures;
2. Consistently apply sanctions to student behavior that violates classroom rules;
3. Ask student(s) to recite classroom rules and procedures;
4. Assist in contacting parent(s) to keep them informed about student's adherence to classroom rules

and routines;

5. Consistently assist in enforcing classroom procedures, such as: housekeeping tasks:
  - Storing personal belongings;
  - Using the bathroom or the water fountain;
  - Distributing and collecting materials and assignments;
  - Getting the teacher's attention;
  - Lining up;
  - Movement within the classroom or to other school areas;
  - The proper way to head papers, and
  - Taking down assignments, etc.
6. Utilizing "Before - Class - Starts" activities in the classroom to engage students in positive and productive interactions.
7. Maintaining a homework place and monitoring students who hand in and don't hand in assigned work;
8. Schedule routine classroom procedures smoothly and with the least disruption as possible (i.e., taking attendance, tardiness, leaving the room, bulletin boards, grades, make-up work); and
9. Greeting students as they enter classroom and targeting potential problems for interventions.

**ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS  
TEACHER AIDES ARE ASSIGNED TO  
STUDENTS IN IEPs IS TO PREVENT  
STUDENT(S) FROM ENDANGERING  
THEMSELVES OR OTHERS WITH  
THEIR ACTING OUT BEHAVIORS**

***Prevent student from acting out and hurting himself &/or others.***

Therefore, the IEP and lesson plan(s) would specify that teacher aide, under the direct supervision of the teacher, would:

- Give attention, verbal cues, or non-verbal cue (e.g., thumbs up) for desired behavior;
- Provide opportunities for student movement throughout the day;
- Work out a contract or agreement to enable child to acquire desired things without giving into tantrums;
- Help to restructure student's activity patterns to avoid settings and situations, which lead to acting out behavior;
- Use proximity as a tool, move close to the child before she becomes agitated;
- Gently touch the child to help her stay on task unless otherwise specified in the IEP;
- Give direct verbal cue, quietly explain what is expected;
- Offer a choice when possible;
- Move the child into a different or smaller group &/or work with student individually when possible problems could occur;
- Have student verbally identify negative consequences for acting out misbehaviors and alternative ways to deal with frustration/conflict;
- Use physical restraint only as a last resort and only to the extent and for the amount of time needed to avoid harm to the student and/or others or damage to properties (consistent with state's corporal punishment rules). In order to utilize physical restraint, the teacher and aide should receive training in its use, and the circumstances for its use should be specified on the IEP.

For additional resources, see back page.



# BEST PRACTICES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION



## RESOURCES & CONTACT INFORMATION

### NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Dr. Helene Feldman - Director - (973) 733-7064 - [HFeldman@nps.k12.nj.us](mailto:HFeldman@nps.k12.nj.us)

**THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

FOR CODE AND NPS PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS,

CONTACT AT MCKINLEY SCHOOL:

SAKINAH SPRINGS  
MITCHEL GERRY  
MARY HART  
(973) 350-5811



TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION  
JOSEPH FONSECA (973) 481-5398

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION'S RESOURCE TEACHER COORDINATORS**



FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR TEACHERS AND TEACHER AIDES CONTACT:

GLEENDA WIMBERLY (973) 733-4336  
KATHY GREENAWALD (973) 424-4335  
NICK COLUMBO (973) 424-4339  
AIDA VASQUEZ (973) 424-4334  
JANET CHAVIS (973) 733-6708

### NEWARK TEACHERS UNION (NTU)

FOR INFORMATION ON SPECIAL EDUCATION AND THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT, INCLUDING CODE CONCERNS, CONTACT MITCHEL GERRY AFTER 3:30 P.M. AT (973) 643 - 8430, OR E-MAIL HIM AT [MG@NTU-AFT.COM](mailto:MG@NTU-AFT.COM)

### STATEWIDE PARENT ADVOCACY NETWORK (SPAN)

FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS, PROFESSIONALS, TEACHER AIDES, SPECIAL EDUCATION, NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND & COLLABORATION. INFORMATION ON HOW TO INCREASE PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES  
CONTACT: (973) 642 - 8100

#### NPS Special Ed. Legal Staff

Arsen Zartarian - (973) 733 - 8708  
Joe Virga - (973) 733 - 8708

#### Employment Opportunities

Jean Avenosa - (973) 733 - 6707  
Helene Feldman - (973) 733 - 7064

#### Assistive Technology

Mike Scolomeira - (973) 350 - 5802  
Karen Guilmarten - (973) 497 - 5790

#### Transition

Gary Thompson - (973) 268 - 5123  
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PLEASE SEND US ANY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, ETC.

### **OTHER RESOURCES ON PARAPROFESSIONALS**

THE PARAEDUCATOR PARADOX, BY DR. PATRICIA H. MUELLER  
(<http://www.wested.org/nerrc>)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP  
(<http://ericec.org/osep/recon12/rc12sec2.html>)

**THE NEWARK TEACHERS UNION (NTU), THE NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE STATEWIDE PARENT ADVOCACY NETWORK (SPAN) HAVE FORMED A COLLABORATION TO DEVELOP AND PUBLICIZE BEST PRACTICES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. THESE PUBLICATIONS CAN SERVE AS A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS.**