



## Para Support Request

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

**Document the need for a support assistant by answering the following questions:**

1. *What alternative supports/accommodations have been provided to the student or options discussed prior to the request for a para?*

2. *Review the student's day by period or activity and indicate the times and support needed.*

<b>Activity</b>	<b><i>Accommodations Needed</i></b>	<b><i>Assistance required</i></b>
Arrival/Time		
Period 1/Time		
Period 2/Time		
Period 3/Time		
Period 4/Time		
Lunch/Time		
Recess/Time		
Period 5/Time		
Period 6/Time		
Period 7/Time		
Period 8/Time		
Departure/Time		

3. *Indicate which student goal(s) from the IEP will require para assistance in order to be attained.*

Goal # \_\_\_\_\_      Goal # \_\_\_\_\_      Goal # \_\_\_\_\_      Goal # \_\_\_\_\_



# Para Support Request

Sample

Date: 2-27-2009

Student's Name: Sam Jones

Grade: 2

**Document the need for a support assistant by answering the following questions:**

1. *What alternative supports/accommodations have been provided to the student or options discussed prior to the request for a para? Sam is a newly identified student with ASD. Based on evaluation data Sam requires frequent and immediate cueing to follow directions and make transitions. The team considered having the program para provide cueing and assist with transitions however with 4 other sp ed students in the room the team did not feel she would be able to provide the intensity of interaction Sam requires.*

2. *Review the student's day by period or activity and indicate the times and support needed.*

<b>Activity</b>	<b><i>Accommodations Needed</i></b>	<b><i>Assistance required</i></b>
Arrival/Time	His photo to identify locker	Cue to take off outer garments and place in locker
Period 1/Time Free play time	Visual choice schedule	Cue to make choice, review and prep for days schedule
Period 2/Time Circle Time	Color mat to find place in circle Visual choice schedule	Cue to start transition from clean up and move to circle. Monitor & cue behavior
Period 3/Time		
Period 4/Time		
Lunch/Time		
Recess/Time		
Period 5/Time		
Period 6/Time		
Period 7/Time		
Period 8/Time		
Departure/Time		

3. *Indicate which student goal(s) from the IEP will require para assistance in order to be attained.*

Goal # 2      Goal # 4      Goal # \_\_\_\_\_      Goal # \_\_\_\_\_

## Guidelines Used by Special Education Teams When Considering Recommendation to Hire Special Education Paraprofessionals

Since the advent of the Education for Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) in 1975 (now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA 04), increasing emphasis has been placed on including students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Typically, to provide what some educators call “responsible inclusion”, schools assign some students with severe disabilities a paraprofessional to support them in the general education environment. The size of the para work force continues to climb as schools place more students with disabilities in programs alongside their peers without disabilities.

Recent research into this model has pointed to the potential damage to students when schools rely too much on paraprofessionals. These studies suggest that too much para support can have far-reaching effects on the following:

- The classroom teacher’s ability to assume ownership for the student.
- The frequency and types of peer interactions the student has.
- The student’s ability to become an independent learner.

Research has also shown that paras often assume too much responsibility for the student, bond with students to the point of becoming overprotective, inadvertently interfere with the student’s social interaction goals, and are viewed by parents and educators as the student’s primary teacher. In addition, there is a high turnover rate among paraprofessionals who burn out from increased reliance on them as the sole resource for implementing complex student programs while receiving little or no training to do so. (Teaching Exceptional Children, July/Aug 2001)

### Considerations for Need

1. Paraprofessionals are hired on the basis of need. Unless the information and data is significantly conclusive, the team should design a trial placement without a para. Observations should be made and data collected during this time to document need for paraprofessional support.
2. Document attempts to resolve the problem first before considering a para; use consultants, schedule changes, curriculum and equipment modifications.
3. Complete assessments to identify student’s strengths and needs. Include all appropriate disciplines. Do not rely on recommendations of outside agencies alone.
4. Include all the team members in a review of the assessments and the decision-making process.
5. The team should specify the exact role, duties, and activities of the para and include them in the “Adaptation in general and special education” section of the IEP. The actual para time required must be indicated on the “Service” grid of the IEP.
6. A student without an IEP cannot be assigned a para paid through special education funds. Nor can para time be spent in general education activities be reimbursed through special education funds (e.g., lunch room duty, study halls, recess etc.). Salaries must be prorated to allow for other duties.
7. Identify the para’s supervisor and the teacher who will direct the para’s work. Establish an evaluation policy and procedure.
8. Consider at each meeting:
  - a. Does the para need to be with the student during all parts of the day for all activities and in all environments? Designate environments and activities for student independence and assign para to other classroom/school duties, breaks, lunches, etc.
  - b. Will/is the student becoming dependent on the para? Does this conflict with the goal for the student to become independent? Plan for ways to decrease dependence.
  - c. What is the anticipated target date for the student to function independently without the support of a para?

## Increasing Student Independence

The process of gradually and systematically reducing the amount of assistance provided to a student makes them more independent. This procedure will be student specific.

### General Steps

1. Determine which skills the student needs to learn to be independent and successful in the mainstream classroom. Is there a skill deficit, performance deficit or both?
2. Task-analyze the skill to assist in teaching the skill and later fading.
3. Repeatedly teach the skill until the student demonstrates mastery. Use role-play, practice, and feedback, and praise. Involve the paraprofessional in the teaching process.
4. Define the skill that the para will be re-teaching and when the skill should be re-taught.
5. Teach the student self-monitoring and self-management techniques. Teaching the student to self-manage will reduce the need for the external cues and control that is provided by a paraprofessional.
6. Use the principals of generalization to increase the probability that the behavior will generalize to the mainstream classroom (i.e., teach the skills where they will be used; teach the skills that the student needs in the mainstream; teach the skills in different settings; use natural reinforcement).

### Prompts

Verbal or inflectional-provide the student with a verbal redirection.

Physical- there is physical contact between the adult and student. Examples: taking the student's hand and guiding it.

Modeling- model the desired behavior for the student or instruct the student to watch another person engaging in the behavior (e.g., "Look at the other student's. What are they doing?")

### Example:

#### Continuous Supervision

- The para is with the student during class time.
- The para is in the classroom with the student and in close proximity to the student throughout the class period. Prompts are delivered as needed and immediately.

#### Partial Supervision

- Distance to the student is increased (Para is 10-15 feet from student).
- If a prompt is needed, the para delivers prompt only after a sufficient time has elapsed to allow the student to respond independently.
- If necessary the para re-teaches the needed skill.
- Mainstream teacher begins to provide prompts.

#### Decreased Supervision

- Distance to the student is again increased (Para is now waiting near the door of the classroom or leaves the classroom.).
- Any needed prompts are delivered after additional time delay allowing the student sufficient time to respond independently.
- If the student does not respond independently, the para gives the needed prompt and/or re-teaches needed skill.
- Mainstream teacher continues to provide prompts.

#### Independent

- Student is independent in classroom.
- Para does not enter the classroom.