

Best Practice Guidelines for Related Services

Related services are additional special education services that a student may require in order to make progress in his or her Individualized Education Program.

1) Considerations for Assessment Requests:

An “area of need” identified on an IEP does not automatically indicate that related services are required. Related services are required when a student needs additional support in order to make progress towards annual IEP goals. Related service providers may have detailed knowledge concerning areas of need that require assessment or support and should be consulted prior to developing an assessment plan. The related service provider may determine that current supports are appropriate for addressing the student’s needs or that assessment is necessary. A related service shall not be added to an assessment plan without consultation from a representative for that related service.

2) Considerations for Assessment Reports:

When writing an assessment report the student’s performance in the classroom must be considered and areas of need discussed in relation to the student’s educational performance. The assessor(s) should also consider how the student would best be supported within the educational setting. Although an assessor may document an area of need or a specific area of difficulty in the educational setting, it does not mean that the student would necessarily require support from the related service provider in order to make educational progress.

3) Considerations for Present Levels:

With the exception of Health, all sections of the Present Levels of Educational Performance may include input from multiple IEP team members; there is no area of the Present Levels that is the sole responsibility of a specific related service provider. Although Speech Language Pathologists may have valuable information on how a student communicates, a student’s teacher or Educational Specialist may provide input on how the student is communicating in class on a daily basis. Adapted Physical Educators, Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists may have detailed knowledge about a student’s motor ability, but a student’s teacher or Educational Specialist may provide input on how a student is navigating the school environment or how the student is using classroom tools.

4) Considerations for Student Goals:

Goals are specific to the student and are created based on student needs. Goals should focus on developing skills that will support student growth in the educational setting and need to be implemented across the school day. Therefore, student goals should be supported by all staff working with the student (i. e. classroom teacher, education specialist, related service providers).

If the IEP team determines that related services are required for the student to make academic progress then the related service provider must be connected to a goal or goals that support student achievement in the classroom setting. Individuals, including related service providers, responsible for implementing the goal need to be indicated in the “persons responsible” section of the goals. It is important to note that all IEP team members need to be aware of all student goals and their role in IEP implementation.

5) IEP Meetings:

Whenever possible, it is best to organize the IEP meeting with a student centered focus. IEP meetings are typically best organized when an agenda is provided that follows this sequence:

- a) Purpose of the meeting is clearly stated
- b) Procedural Safeguards are provided to the family
- c) Families are encouraged to state concerns related to educational progress
- d) Student strengths and areas of need are identified and discussed
- e) Proposed goals for each area of need are reviewed
- f) Required accommodations or modifications are identified and recorded
- g) Related services that are required for a student to make progress are identified
- h) A placement is identified that would best support the student's educational progress

In the IEP process, Related Services should not be thought of as an area of need. Instead, Related Services may support an area of need. For example, a student does not have "OT needs" but has fine motor needs that may require the support of an occupational therapist or the educational specialist. Related services should be discussed only after the student's instructional needs have been identified.

6) Service Delivery Model:

Special education and related services are provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The **Continuum of Services** ranges from the least restrictive *service (Collaborating with staff)* to the most restrictive *service (removing student from their educational setting to provide service)*. It is a popular misconception to view "one-on-one or small group pullout intervention" as the only "direct" intervention services. The student's needs are best met in the least restrictive environment, using a range, or continuum of services, so that skill acquisition is connected to meaningful school activities, with classmates, and in natural settings where teachers, support staff, parents and service providers co-teach and model effective strategies. IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) specifically directs the IEP team to provide services that promote the student's participation and inclusion in general education curricula. This is not possible using a pull-out approach exclusively. A range of service delivery models are available to support student performance in the Educational Setting.

7) Service Frequency:

The frequency of service is determined by the needs of the student. Given regular intervention over the school year and Best Practice guidelines, what is the reasonable amount of service time the student requires in order to make progress on his/her IEP goals? When determining the amount and frequency of services it is important to consider how goals are already being supported within their educational program and the amount of additional service required for the student to make progress.

8) Special Factors:

It is the District's responsibility to describe how students are to receive specialized instruction and related services supports. In *Union v. Smith*, it was decided that the parent has to understand exactly how the services will be delivered in order to agree to the offer of FAPE.

"List Subject Area" - WHAT is the content area(s) that require support?

Example -

Written language, reading comprehension, speaking & listening, social interaction, self-help, physical education

"Service" - WHICH service will be supporting these areas?

"Environment" - WHERE will this service be provided the majority of the time? Services provided within a special education classroom need to be listed as *Separate Classroom*. In some cases it may be appropriate to list a service twice with 2 different environments when the content area being supported is different.

Example-

Speaking & Listening - Speech Development	Language & Speech	Separate Classroom
Speaking & Listening - Language Development	Language & Speech	General Education

"Comments" - HOW will the service be provided? Do NOT include specific hours of minutes per week since students benefit from some flexibility in how services are to be provided. It may be appropriate to indicate how frequently a service will be implemented (twice weekly, weekly, every other week)

Example-

"Services will typically be provided on an every other week basis for up to 8 hours per year (allowing for some student absences, special activities, statewide testing, etc)."

Indicate how a specific area of need could be addressed through **direct** interaction with the provider

Example-

"Skill building with [service provider] present will focus on..."

"Co-teach with teaching staff."

"Small group instruction."

For **collaboration** services, indicate who the service provider will collaborate with and for what purpose.

Example -

"The [service provider] will collaborate with... to facilitate...."

(such as "the PT will collaborate with APE, MT, SLP and teacher to increase movement opportunities in all settings.")

The SLP will collaborate with teaching staff to develop and implement classroom language lessons.

For **consultation** services indicate *who* the intended focus of the consultation is and for *what* skill / area of need. Consultation is with another adult, and the child may not be present.

Example -

"The [service provider] will consult with 'whom' for 'what'..."

Special Factors: (con't)

If the parent remains concerned about knowing the "weekly minutes", it would be appropriate to write in special Factors Page 2, section C:

"Service time for PT is approximately XX minutes every other week. Amount of time per session may depend on the intervention focus at that time."

9) Easy Trac

All Related Services Providers document IEP services provided to students in Easy Trac. (Easy Trac is the program designated by the district for logging services provided to students.) Parents, Principals and other school officials may request Easy Trac documentation to verify services provided. Parents wanting access to this information should make their request directly to the principal.