

# Rural Champaign County Special Education Cooperative

## Guidelines for Consideration of Teaching Assistant Support

Under IDEA, we are required to meet the needs that result from each child's disability, and enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum. [34 CFR §300.320(a)(2)(i)(A)] In meeting the unique needs of the student, the IEP team must ensure placement in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Support by a teaching assistant should be considered temporary and regularly assessed by the team to avoid potentially negative effects such as social isolation, dependence and decrease in support from certified personnel. Teaching assistants must work under the supervision of a certified teacher and implement a plan designed by a certified teacher.

The Documentation of Need for Teaching Assistant Support form is to be used by teams as a tool to collect and analyze data as well as discuss the barriers and benefits to different levels of support. It must accompany any IEP in which the team is considering aide support. It is not to be used to predetermine services prior to an IEP meeting.

As a team please consider the following basic understandings:

- The service of a Teaching Assistant should support the student to become more independent and accelerate the student's progress towards goals.
- Any service must be educationally relevant and related to needs identified through an evaluation.
- Any service must support one of the following: access to/participation in school, access to the general education curriculum, progress towards IEP goals and/or progress towards general education learning outcomes.
- Teaching assistants should not be used as surrogate teachers, general or special education. Teaching Assistants should supplement the work of the teacher or service provider.
- The use of a Teaching Assistant is a highly restrictive service. Utilization of teaching assistants may inadvertently
  - Separate a student from their classmates
  - Create unnecessary dependence
  - Interfere with peer interactions
  - Make the student feel stigmatized
  - Limit access to competent instruction
  - Interfere with teacher engagement, ownership and responsibility
  - Create a sense of loss of personal control
  - Provoke problem behaviors
- Parents and guardians have a right to know who is providing the service to their child; IEPs must be clearly written to reflect instruction provided by a certified teacher vs service provided by a TA.