

A PEATC

Do You Know....



Factsheet for Virginia's Parents 1:1 Aide in Special Education

What is a One-to-One (1:1) Aide in Special Education Services?

A **1:1 aide**, sometimes called a **paraprofessional**, may be needed if your child with a disability is unable to receive a **free appropriate public education (FAPE)** without additional support, beyond the classroom teacher. An aide is an adult who **supports a child with an IEP** during school. The aide can be present all day or only be needed for certain times during the day.

Who Makes the Decision about an Aide?

The **Individualized Education Program (IEP) team** makes the decision on whether to provide an aide and there is **often disagreement** among IEP team members. As an equal IEP team member, if you feel your child requires an aide, you will need to present a good case on why an aide is required for your child to receive FAPE.

Under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, **cost cannot be a factor in a decision regarding FAPE**; however, sometimes parents are told the school does not have the resources to provide a one-on-one aide for their child. If you feel strongly that an aide is needed for your child to receive FAPE and the school denies the request, you can access **dispute resolution options**.

Should I Ask for an Aide?

This is not a decision that should be made lightly. Parents may think it is obvious their child needs extra support to be successful and that may very well be true. But remember, the **goal of school is to make your child as independent as possible** and to have them **blend in with peers** to the maximum extent possible. Having another adult follow your child around from class to class, wherever they go in the school, can be stigmatizing and may stunt peer relationships. Sometimes aides in trying to be helpful, stick like glue to the student and may even do the student's work rather than encouraging independence.

Helpful Resources

[The IEP Classroom: One-to-One Aides - ExceptionALLY \(growexceptionally.com\)](http://growexceptionally.com)

[How 1:1 Aides Support Autistic Students \(verywellhealth.com\)](http://verywellhealth.com)

[How to Get a 1:1 Aide/Para added to your child's IEP. | A Day in Our Shoes](#)

[\[Special Education Paraprofessionals\] Your IEP has a 1:1 Aide, now what? | A Day in Our Shoes](#)

[One to One Aide for Your Child in the Classroom \(woodsmalllawgroup.com\)](http://woodsmalllawgroup.com)



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Remember, an **aide does not replace a teacher** and should not be used in place of a teacher. For example, if your child is in 7th grade science, you want the science teacher to feel **responsible for all their students**. Sometimes having an aide can blur the lines of responsibility and the teacher doesn't take "ownership" of the student with an IEP.

That's not to say an aide should not be pursued. If you have a child with a significant disability who receives services in the general education classroom for all or part of the day, **an aide may be needed to help the student stay on track with assignment, assist with a modified curriculum or even provide direct instruction**, as appropriate. Aides can help students who have **difficulty transitioning from one classroom to another; they can support communication and social interaction** for students who have challenges in these areas.

There are also ways to get paraprofessional support without having a 1:1 aide specified in the IEP. If the IEP team is reluctant to assign an aide to your child, you can request that the IEP include a provision that **your child receive direct 1:1 assistance** as needed throughout the school day. That doesn't specify who will provide the support, however it does require the school to provide it.

You may want to discuss **whether the aide can support the entire classroom**. So instead of just being there for your child, if other children (with or without disabilities) need assistance, the aide can help them too. **This way, the aide is not hovering over your child all the time and the teacher and class benefit** from having extra support. The ultimate goal is to be able to **reduce** the services of the aide as your child develops more skills and independence.

Some students will need an **aide who serves as a personal care attendant (PCA)** to help with eating, toileting, providing physical support or assistance with other activities of daily living. This is a different situation and one more likely to be recognized and approved by the IEP team as necessary for the student to benefit from their education.

Other Tips re Paraprofessionals

- **If your child does not get along with their aide**, you can ask for a replacement, however staff are usually under contract to the school, and it may be difficult to make a switch mid-year.
- **If you don't agree with the approach of the aide**, be sure to talk with them or even call an IEP meeting to discuss how your child can best be supported.
- **If the IEP team turns down a request for a 1:1 aide**, they must give you Prior Written Notice (PWN) explaining their decision as well as alternatives considered.
- You may want to see if the **school will agree to a trial period with an aide** to see if the student makes progress and develops skills due to increased support.
- Be sure the aide is **qualified to meet your child's needs**. For example, if it is a behavior aide, that person should have proper training in this area.

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools, and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.



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