Tips from the Special Education Division: IEP Services-Every Minute Counts!

November 2024: Part 2

Question: How do teams determine the related services and supplementary aids and services (SAS) needed to support students in making progress in the general education curriculum?

Answer:

IEP teams play a critical role in ensuring students with disabilities can meaningfully participate, access, and make progress in the general education curriculum. Understanding the distinctions between services is essential for educators, administrators, and support staff. This understanding aids in thoughtfully planning for the level of services students need throughout their day. This Tip provides definitions, examples, and considerations for IEP teams when determining the need for related services and/or SAS in the IEP.

This guidance is Part 2 in a series about the special education services offered in an IEP and how teams can use these services to support students in making progress in the general education curriculum. For Part 1 on specially designed instruction (SDI), accommodations, and modifications, along with additional resources, see "IEP Services – Every Minute Counts! October 2024".

Related Services

Related services mean transportation, developmental, corrective, and other support services as are required to assist a student eligible for special education to benefit from special education. WAC 392-172A-01155. Related services can include but are not limited to:
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy

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- Additional Adult/Paraeducator Support[1]
- Nursing Services
- Transportation
- Counseling
- Educational Signing Interpreter
- Speech Therapy
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Services
- Vision Services

What is the difference between SDI and related services?

The difference between SDI and related services is based on the function of that service. SDI means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of a student eligible, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction. Related services are what is required to assist a student in benefiting *from their special education services—such as SDI.*

Some services could be considered either related services or SDI, depending on the function of the service. Services such as speech, occupational/physical therapy, and counseling, for instance, do not need to have measurable annual IEP goals if they are being provided as a related service (i.e., if they are provided for the purpose of assisting the student to benefit from their SDI and other special education services). If, on the other hand, they are provided as specially designed instruction, these services must each have a measurable annual goal.

It is the responsibility of the student's IEP team to determine whether a service is provided as SDI or as a related service.

Supplementary Aids and Services (SAS)

SAS are "aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education–related settings, and in extracurricular and non-academic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children." WAC 391-172A-01185.

- Examples include *equipment, adapted learning materials, environmental supports, and social supports.*[2]

Furthermore, a key difference between related services and SAS is that the related services are recommended by the professional members of the evaluation group. See WAC 392-172A-

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[1] On an IEP, additional adult/paraeducator support is often listed as a supplementary aid and service, related service, or accommodation depending on the intent of the adult/paraeducator support. Best practice is to include information about the specific purpose of the additional adult/paraeducator support in the IEP. For more information see TAP #6 "Paraeducators and Students Eligible to Receive Special Education Services" and the "Best Practices for Planning Paraeducator Support" Appendix.

[2] Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education. (2023). *Specially designed instruction, supplementary aids and services, accommodations & modifications* (p. 1).

03025(2)(a); WAC 392-172A-03035 (1)(d). SAS, by contrast, is determined by the IEP team, which includes the parents. See WAC 392-172A-03110(2)(b).

Supports for IEP Team Decision Making

Similar to assessing the need for SDI, an IEP team will discuss and carefully assess a student's individual needs to determine when they require SAS and related services, among other special education services. This process begins with a thorough evaluation of the student's strengths, areas of need, and specific challenges related to their disability. The IEP team then identifies specific areas where the student requires additional support to fully engage and make progress in the general education curriculum and/or benefit from their special education services.

Considerations for supporting teams in determining related services and SAS include:

1. How does the student's disability impact them as they learn, interact, and participate in activities in school?

2. Does the student's disability affect their ability to access or benefit from the general education curriculum? For example, does the student have speech or mobility limitations that may require therapy?

3. What are the barriers to participation for a student? Is there a specific area, such as physical, emotional, or behavioral, in which additional services could be provided to support a student in accessing the curriculum?

4. Can the student make progress in general education with SAS?

5. Would the student benefit from a combination of services to include related services and SDI? For example, a student may need both a modified curriculum (SDI) and speech therapy (related service) to address language processing needs.

6. How is family input included in the decision-making process? Families offer critical insight into their students' level of access and participation and that should support a team's decision-making.

As described in Part 1, "IEP Services – Every Minute Counts! October 2024", OSPI has partnered with the Center for Technology in Education at John Hopkins to develop further resources on providing guidance for teams. This partnership includes the Every Minute Counts Technical Assistance Guide. Additionally, the TIES Center, in collaboration with the Haring Center and OSPI, have developed the "Comprehensive Inclusive Education: General Education & the Inclusive IEP" process. For additional information and links to these resources, including a tool for mapping individual student support needs, see "IEP Services – Every Minute Counts! October 2024".

Appendix I: Guide to SDI vs Related Services vs SAS

	SDI	Related Services	SAS
How does a student meet eligibility?	Meet the three prongs requirement through a comprehensive evaluation.	Meet the three prongs requirement through a comprehensive evaluation and by team decision.	IEP team decision
Is there a goal required?	Yes	No (although a related service should support other IEP goals).	No
Are present levels required?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Are service minutes on the IEP matrix required?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is progress reporting required?	Yes	Yes	No