

Guideline for Students with Severe Disabilities

1. **Class Composition:** Class size averages between 10-12 students depending on age level and classroom dynamics. Students are grouped by age and grade level (preschool, lower elementary, upper elementary, middle school, high school, 18-22).
2. **Staffing:** Each class has one teacher and two full or part time assistants. If a classroom is experiencing significant disruptions, a temporary support assistant (TSA) may be assigned to support the classroom or an individual student for a brief periods of time so that the teacher is able to establish instructional control.
3. **Student Services:** Classroom time and Designated Instructional Services (DIS) for each student are based on individually assessed needs and IEP team decisions. Services may include but are not limited to Speech and Language, APE, OT, PT, assistive technology, sensory regulation, individualized specific skill training, social cognition instruction, and positive behavioral support.
4. **Administration:** An administrator selected by the lead education agency (LEA) provides support to the classroom. This individual must have knowledge of the needs of students with autism spectrum disorders and be able to represent the district at IEP meetings.
5. **School Psychologist:** A school psychologist is assigned to support the special day classes. This individual must be able to conduct assessments and file reviews for students with autism spectrum disorders, may be able to handle intakes and placement changes, in addition to other administrative and typical duties assigned to this role. The school psychologist may be required to do an FAA/PBIP, FBA/BIP and act as a trainer in assault prevention and management.
6. **Nursing Services:** A school nurse experienced with students with autism spectrum disorders serves the special day classes. The school nurse provides training and support for all specialized health care needs and medication management. The school nurse monitors dietary and nutritional needs and completes all required health care documentation, including medication monitoring.
7. **Credentials:** The teacher has either a moderate/severe or SH credential.
8. **Curriculum:** The classroom provides a functional skills curriculum in the following domains: daily living skills, standards based functional academics, gross and fine motor skills, social communication, community-based instruction, vocational preparation and recreation/leisure.
9. **Instructional strategies:** Appropriate, research-based instructional strategies are implemented utilizing a prompt hierarchy and fading and shaping techniques as appropriate. Instruction will include teaching and reinforcing positive replacement behaviors. Instruction is tied to IEP goals and changes are data driven. Emergency procedures for behavior are used only in extreme situations when a student presents a danger to self or others and are documented by credentialed staff. De-escalation techniques (such as Pro-ACT) are used in preference to restraint.
10. **Behavior Supports:** A behaviorist or school psychologist supports the classroom for behavioral consultation and the development, implementation and management of behavior plans. In addition to the individual plans, each classroom utilizes positive behavioral support systems, such as positive reward systems or a token economy.

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11. **Staff Training:** All teachers and assistants are trained in diffusion of behavior escalation and assault prevention techniques utilizing a program such as Pro-ACT or other research based programs. This training is provided in-house by a trained trainer. Additionally, teachers and assistants participate in positive behavior intervention trainings during minimum, half days, and in-service days. Staff are also required to attend mandatory district trainings (CPR, epi-pen, sexual harassment, child abuse reporting, blood borne pathogens, etc.).
12. **Scheduling:** Class is scheduled, as much as possible, to allow for mainstreaming students in the least restrictive environment. Parent involvement is sought and regular communication is an ongoing part of the program.
13. **Facilities:** All facilities for students with disabilities follow SELPA housing guidelines. (See SELPA policies manual.) Classrooms are located so that site administrators can respond quickly and efficiently in an emergency, or if assigned support staff are not available.
14. **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** Training locations, scheduling, and access to extracurricular and non-academic activities are designed to foster interaction with non-disabled peers.
15. **Specialized Budget:** Programs for students with severe disabilities may have a specialized budget for their unique needs, e.g., specialized curriculum such as Community Based Instruction (CBI), domestic, social communication, vocational training materials, assistive technology, and behavior reinforcers.
16. **Inter- and Intra-agency Agreements:** Agencies appropriate to the program will have agreements for issues such as campus safety, site emergency procedures, communication with district personnel, regional center, social services, SCOE, etc. to define roles and responsibilities and communication procedures.