

## Teachers' Desk Reference: Practical Information for Pennsylvania's Teachers

### Supplementary Aids and Services

As a classroom teacher, every day you have the opportunity to meet the diverse learning and behavioral needs of your students by responding to their individual differences. Educating students with and without disabilities together in inclusive school environments can be challenging, but it also offers many benefits. Providing the full range of supplementary aids and services is an essential part of ensuring that students with disabilities benefit from participating in the general education classroom.

Supplementary aids and services (SaS) are "aids, services, and other supports that are provided in general education classrooms, other education-related settings, and extracurricular and nonacademic settings." SaS are critical components of a system of support that enables students with disabilities, regardless

of their unique instructional needs, to learn, participate, and progress alongside typical peers.

IDEA 2004 supports inclusive practices by requiring that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (IDEA, 2004, 612(a)(5)).

Consistent with the least restrictive environment (LRE) principle of IDEA, IEP teams must thoughtfully consider a full array of SaS, which have the potential to make it possible for students with disabilities to be included in general education classrooms, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities. There are an infinite number of possible SaS to be considered and implemented by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams. It is important for IEP teams to contemplate educational placement in general education classrooms, not only as they currently exist, but also as they might be modified through the provision of SaS. It is the responsibility

of all school personnel to work together to minimize barriers and provide access to the general education curriculum for all students.

## Team-Developed Examples

School teams may develop supplementary aids and services (SaS) with or without using the facilitated *SaS Consideration Toolkit*. The SaS consideration process should be a collaborative endeavor between the general education teacher, special education teacher, and related service providers. The team

should look at the classroom expectation, consider the student's needs, and determine what is needed to enable the student to participate in learning. Figure 1 illustrates examples of how the SaS consideration process might be applied to a specific student in a particular classroom.

Figure 1. Team-Developed Examples

General Education Classroom Practice	Barrier Indicated by Student Profile	Possible SaS Strategies
Oral reports are assigned	Student uses alternative and augmentative communication (AAC)	Student's report may be prerecorded or programmed into voice output system
Large group instruction	Noise level and activity will interfere with participation	Use self-monitoring tool with teacher feedback
Cafeteria and gym are far away from classrooms and through a heavy door	Doors will be difficult to open; walking distance to classroom is lengthy	Provide peer or paraprofessional escort and allow extra time and bench to rest along the way
Assignment is to write a 5-paragraph essay	Writing tasks will require assistance with organization and time-management skills	Provide graphic organizers and develop a plan with student to break assignment into smaller components that build to completion

## The Facilitated SaS Consideration Toolkit

The *SaS Consideration Toolkit*, developed for use within schools throughout Pennsylvania, is a structured and facilitated process to analyze the instructional, physical, and social environment of a general education classroom from the perspective of an individual student. The intended outcome of using this tool is to identify a list of environmentally-referenced SaS to enhance participation and learning for a student with a disability in the general education classroom. The Toolkit is available at <http://tinyurl.com/sastoolkit>.

In this approach, IEP team members collaboratively gather and analyze information about a student, in relation to general education classrooms that are being considered for the student's educational

placement. The Toolkit process guides teams through information-gathering efforts, program planning, and development and revision of a student's IEP. After completing the activities that comprise the Toolkit, teams will have identified potential, environmentally-referenced SaS that could support a student to participate and learn within the general education classroom.

Training and Consulting staff from intermediate units, PaTTAN educational consultants, and local educational agency (LEA) personnel who have been trained as *SaS Consideration Toolkit* facilitators can facilitate the SaS consideration process and provide on-site support to the teams and to students with a wide range of disabilities.

There are four steps in this process:

### 1. Compile and organize information about the student

The first step in this process is to seek parent input, which is essential in creating a comprehensive profile of the student. This input includes, but is not limited to, the student's strengths and interests. In addition to parents, student peers can also be valuable sources of instructionally-relevant information.

In this step, the student's current IEP and progress reports are reviewed to: (1) summarize the student's current status with regard to accessing and participating in general education settings, and (2) compile information about strategies that have a track record of success with the student, as well as those that have not been effective. This information will be used by the team to identify SaS that build upon previous "lessons learned" about how best to support this student in general education classrooms (see Figure 2). The team should discuss:

- What supports are necessary to help this student participate in routine activities throughout the day, relative to the skills identified?

- What student interests can be used to support the instructional process? What are the student's strengths?
- What, if any, sensory, motor, behavior, and processing characteristics of this student need to be considered when identifying instructional support needs?

### 2. Compile and organize information about the general education classroom

In this step, the team develops a Classroom Profile. A Classroom Profile is a compilation of information about the methods, materials, practices, and physical characteristics of a general education setting.

The Sample Classroom Profile (see Figure 3) shows only the Printed Materials section of the profile. Additional sections in the profile are: Technology, Information Presentation Methods, Student Assessment Formats, Project/Presentation Formats, Instructional Format, Classroom Management, Response to Diversity, Interpersonal Relationships, Social Activities, and Physical Classroom Environment.

Figure 2. IEP Team Consideration of SaS

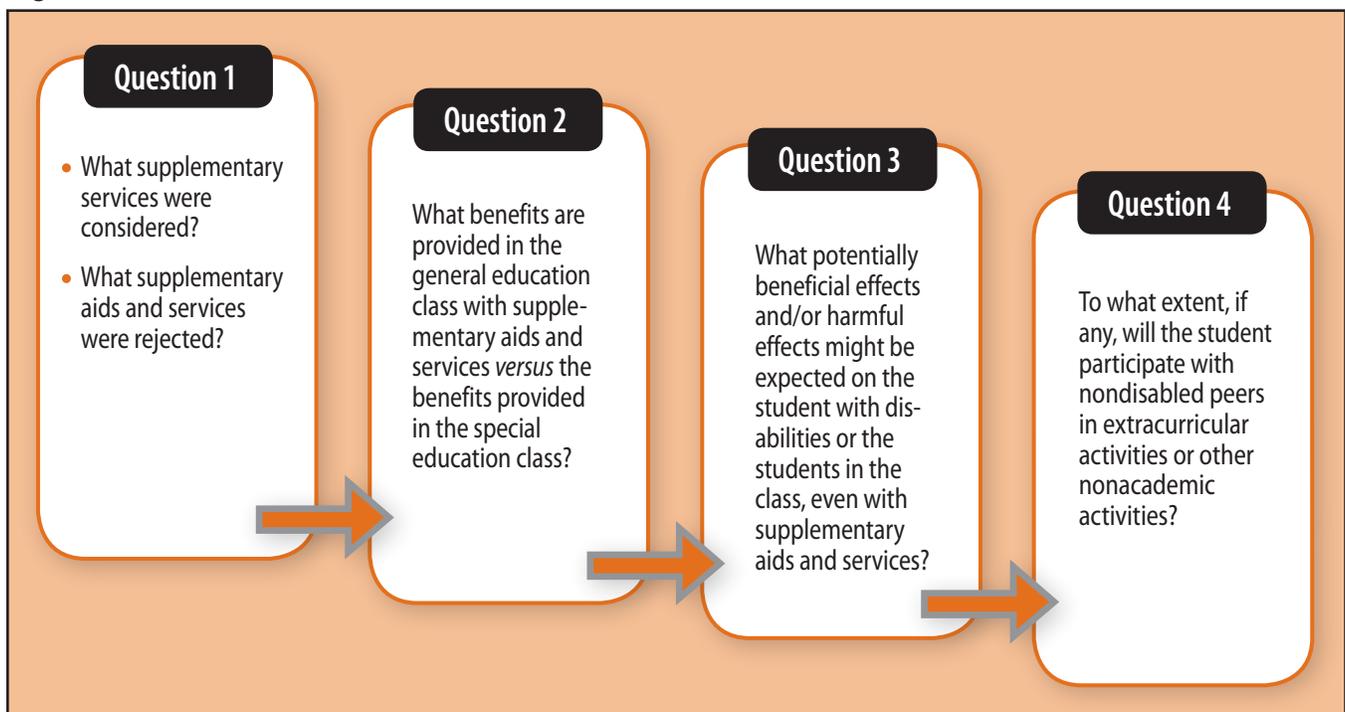


Figure 3. Sample Classroom Profile.

Develop Profile of General Education Classroom(s)		Identify Potential Barriers to Curricular Access and Instruction	Identify Strategies and Services to Eliminate Barriers
Create a profile of the classroom environment(s) by circling the number that best describes the frequency of use of identified materials and instructional practices.		Identify difficulties you can anticipate for this student <b>if nothing is changed</b> , based on his/her current skills, needs, and learning style.	Identify Supplementary Aids and Services to address potential barriers. <b>Consider all possibilities</b> , consulting available resources and support personnel.
1.1 Instructional Method/Materials			
Printed Materials	Frequency of Use		
• Textbook	1 2 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text size is too small</li> <li>• Student reads at 1st grade level; text is written at a 7th grade reading level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide materials in large print and books on tape or use digital version</li> <li>• Allow use of digital version of text</li> </ul>
• Workbook	1 2 3		
• Trade book	1 2 3		
• Worksheets	1 2 3		
• Newspapers/magazines	1 2 3		
• Other _____	1 2 3		

**3. Identify potential barriers to curriculum and instruction in the general education environment**

Using the profile of the general education classroom, the team identifies potential barriers to curricular access and instruction that need to be addressed. The focus must be on providing participation and learning, regardless of student skill levels. In this step, the team identifies difficulties that are anticipated for this student if nothing is changed. The team also identifies the student’s learning characteristics and prioritizes the student’s instructional needs in the context of general education classroom. It is critical to understand and use all available information about the student as effective strategies that will support the student and eliminate barriers in the general education classroom are considered.

**4. Identify appropriate supplementary aids and services strategies to eliminate barriers**

Once the team has identified potential barriers, SaS must be identified to address these barriers. Support strategies should maximize participation, take advantage of strengths, and reduce instructional barriers. It is important that the team thoroughly examine all possibilities and consult available resources and support personnel. Seek the involvement of a resource person who is knowledgeable about a variety of SaS, as well as specific support strategies. It may be necessary to seek out new information, support, and training in order to develop plans that are consistent with LRE principles.

One framework that may assist IEP teams in considering the full range of SaS includes four categories of SaS for consideration: Collaborative, Instructional, Physical, and Social-Behavioral (Etscheidt & Bartlett, 1999). Figure 4 provides illustrative examples for each of the categories.

Figure 4. Framework for Considering the Full Range of Supplementary Aids and Services (SaS)

Category	Examples
<p><b>Collaborative</b></p> <p>Adults working together to support students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduled time for coplanning and team meetings</li> <li>• Instructional arrangements that support collaboration (e.g., coteaching, paraprofessional support)</li> <li>• Professional development related to collaboration</li> <li>• Coaching and guided support for team members in the use of assistive technology for an individual student</li> <li>• Scheduled opportunities for parental collaboration</li> <li>• All school personnel collaborate in the development and delivery of SaS</li> </ul>
<p><b>Instructional</b></p> <p>Development and delivery of instruction that addresses diverse learning needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing modified curricular goals</li> <li>• Providing alternate ways for students to demonstrate learning</li> <li>• Providing test modification</li> <li>• Providing alternate materials and/or assistive technology (e.g., materials on tape, transcribe text into Braille, large print, alternate computer access)</li> <li>• Providing instruction on functional skills in the context of the typical routines in the general classroom</li> <li>• Changing method of presentation</li> <li>• Using reader services</li> <li>• Providing research-based supplementary materials</li> <li>• Providing instructional adaptations (e.g., preteaching, repeating directions, extra examples and nonexamples)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical</b></p> <p>Adaptations and modifications to the physical environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Furniture arrangement in environments</li> <li>• Specific seating arrangements</li> <li>• Individualized desk, chair, etc.</li> <li>• Adaptive equipment</li> <li>• Adjustments to sensory input (e.g., light, sound)</li> <li>• Environmental aids (e.g., classroom acoustics, heating, ventilation)</li> <li>• Structural aids (e.g., wheelchair accessibility, trays, grab bars)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social-Behavioral</b></p> <p>Supports and services to increase appropriate behavior and reduce disruptive or interfering behavior</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social skills instruction</li> <li>• Counseling supports</li> <li>• Peer supports (e.g., facilitating friendships)</li> <li>• Individualized behavior support plans</li> <li>• Modification of rules and expectations</li> <li>• Cooperative learning strategies</li> </ul>

### 5. Create an Action Plan

Based on the analysis of the general education classroom setting, the team should support learning and participation in the general education setting. Decisions about which SaS to implement and how that will happen are likely to have resource,

personnel, training, and administrative support implications. This step in the consideration process focuses on the supports necessary for team members, consultants, and related service personnel to effectively implement the SaS (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Supports for SaS Implementation

Student Support Strategies (What does the student need?)	Adult Supports and Resources (What do the adults need?)	Other Supports for Implementation (How will we get there?)
Example: Student needs visual supports throughout the day to understand the schedule of activities and the demands of individual activities	Example: Special educator needs access to, and training in, appropriate software for creating visual supports	Example: IU AT consultant will provide teacher training; school will purchase software, technical coordinator will install on computer with access to a color printer

Supplementary aids and services (SaS) create a system of support that enables many students with disabilities to learn and participate along-side typical peers, regardless of their unique instructional needs and differences. As a classroom teacher, your thoughtful consideration of the full range of SaS is an essential part of ensuring that all students benefit from participating in the general education classroom, as well as nonacademic and extracurricular activities. Keep in mind that SaS should be:

- Available to all students who need them
- Designed to provide meaningful educational benefit
- Provided in a manner that avoids stigmatizing students

For more information and resources about SaS, including a “Self-Check Tool for IEP Teams,” which can be used before, during, and after the IEP team meeting, please visit the PaTTAN website at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net) or contact your local intermediate unit.

### **Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon School District 995 F.2d 1204 (3rd cir.1993)**

Court decisions have emphasized the importance of the consideration of supplementary aids and services by local educational agencies (LEAs). Specific supplementary aids and services to be considered by LEAs include:

- Modification of curriculum
- Teacher training
- Provision of a paraprofessional or aide
- Effective behavior support

LEAs are required to make a concerted and good faith effort to use SaS to address behavioral issues in the general classroom. The provision of positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports is designed to foster increased participation of students with disabilities in general education environments or other less restrictive environments.

## Supplementary Aids and Services: Implications for Making Educational Placement Decisions

It is important to understand that both the law and the Pennsylvania Department of Education's policy support placement in the general education classroom with supplementary aids and services as the least restrictive environment (LRE) for students with disabilities. Supplementary aids and services (SaS) are an integral part of the educational placement decision-making process.

A thorough understanding of the concept of SaS benefits Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members as they consider how best to construct a program of special education supports and services to meet a student's needs in the LRE. Providing SaS can minimize the amount of time a student with disabilities receives special education services outside the general education classroom.

The concept of LRE, by definition, encompasses the provision of SaS, and each student with an IEP must be provided a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) that is delivered in the LRE. Multiple factors related to SaS must be considered and addressed by IEP teams. An annotated IEP, which provides detailed guidance to IEP teams on the consideration of SaS, can be found on the PaTTAN website at <http://tinyurl.com/annotatediepform>.

Note: For more details on the specific requirements related to SaS and LRE, refer to the Basic Education Circular on LRE and Educational Placement at <http://tinyurl.com/pdebecs>.

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Governor



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