

Key points:

- Review FBA, BIP to determine student's need for one-to-one aide
- Make sure aide is qualified in special education
- Periodically monitor interactions between student, aide to ensure student doesn't become over-reliant on aide

A guide to providing 1-to-1 aides for students with behavioral issues

Parents may request a one-to-one aide to help manage their child's behavioral issues in the classroom. When considering such requests, ensure your IEP teams avoid common pitfalls such as denying the request based on cost rather than the student's needs, failing to ensure that the aide is appropriately trained, or letting the student rely too much on the aide.

"The goal is to have the aide help the student develop needed behavioral skills, not handle problems for the student," said Canon Hill, a school attorney with [Bowles Rice LLP](#) in Charleston, W.Va.

Indeed, in a recent case, *Smith v. Cheyenne Mountain School District*, [71 IDELR 185](#) (D. Colo. 2018), a judge noted that a student with autism had become increasingly dependent on his one-to-one aide due in part to the district's failure to ensure that the aide was appropriately qualified in special education.

Use these questions to help guide IEP teams in their decision-making:

| Does the student need a one-to-one aide? | |
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| 1. Review student's special education file. | Ask these questions to determine what additional information may be needed to support your decision, Hill advised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Does the student have a current psychological evaluation? · Do we need to conduct a functional behavioral assessment? · Does the student have a behavioral intervention plan? If so, what has the IEP team learned from implementation of the BIP? · What have the student's teachers observed? |
| 2. Explore alternatives. | Analyze why the parent may be requesting an aide, Hill said. "What other, less-restrictive alternatives may be appropriate to address the [student's] behavior?" she asked. For example, consider if the student's BIP needs to be modified. |
| 3. Discuss potential benefits, drawbacks. | Consider: Is there a chance the student will become dependent on the aide? Could having an aide isolate her from other students? On the positive side, could an aide help the student develop independence? |
| What should your district do to prepare for and train a one-to-one aide? | |
| 1. Determine when aide is needed. | Identify portions of the day or circumstances where the student needs additional support, such as during transitions between classes or less-structured periods like lunch, Hill said. |
| 2. Verify aide's qualifications. | Make sure the aide is trained on the student's specific behavioral needs, Hill said. This could include training on specific topics -- such as deescalation techniques -- or working regularly with a board-certified behavior analyst, she said. |
| 3. Give aide required information. | Confirm that the aide has received a copy of the student's IEP and has been informed of her specific duties and responsibilities, Hill said. |

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| 4. Plan for substitutes. | Consider creating a plan to address the essential elements of the student's IEP to give to substitute aides if the regular aide is absent, Hill recommended. |
| How should your district monitor the student's progress with the one-to-one aide? | |
| 1. Plan ahead in IEP. | Develop IEP goals and objectives that work toward the student developing independence and eventually managing his own behavior, Hill said. |
| 2. Schedule periodic check-ins throughout school year. | Consider convening the student's IEP team prior to the annual IEP meeting to monitor the interaction between the student and his aide as well as evaluate the student's progress on his behavioral goals and objectives, Hill said. "Establishing check-in dates at the beginning of the school year or at the annual IEP meeting will help ensure this monitoring takes place," she said. |
| 3. Confirm that aide is following IEP. | Have an appropriate staff member supervise the aide to ensure compliance with the IEP, Hill said. |

Save the date for LRP's May 17 webinar [How to Avoid Reinforcing and Effectively Address Challenging Behaviors in Students With Disabilities](#).

See also:

- [Q&A: Learn how to ward off student's 'learned helplessness' with one-to-one aide](#)
- [Weigh pros, cons of pairing student who has autism with one-to-one aide](#)
- [Develop student plan for independence before assigning one-to-one aide](#)

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