

Temporary Special Needs Assistant (TSNA)

Guiding Principles

Rationale

Every school district within the West End SELPA is required to provide a full continuum of placement options for students with identified disabilities who are receiving special education services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) and California laws and regulations describe a continuum of alternative placements such as instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions (34 CFR Section 300.551(b)(1)). Both federal and state laws also contain provisions to ensure that children with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent possible with children who are not disabled, and that children are removed from the general education environment only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in the regular classroom cannot be satisfactorily achieved with the use of related services.

Special Needs Assistance/Support

By law, services to students with special needs must be delivered in the "least restrictive environment." When an IEP team is considering temporary special needs assistance support for a student, all aspects of the student's program must be considered with the intent of maximizing student independence. The teacher is responsible for the design and implementation of the student's program.

Factors for Special Circumstances

Whenever special circumstance support is being considered by an IEP team for a student with special needs, the following factors need to be considered:

Personal Independence

First and foremost, an important goal for all special education students is to encourage, promote, and maximize independence. If not carefully monitored, special circumstance assistance can easily and unintentionally foster dependence. A student's total educational program must be carefully evaluated to determine where support is indicated. Natural support and existing staff support should be used whenever possible to promote the least restrictive environment.

The two primary categories to be considered for Temporary Special Needs Assistant include:

1. Health/Personal Care Issues
2. Behavior and Safety

TSNA and Related Services

California's related services as defined in Education Code and Title 5 regulations are referred to as Designated Instruction and Services or DIS and are generally defined as follows:

"Related services means those services that are necessary for a pupil with a disability to benefit from his or her special education program in accordance with title 20 USC 1401 (22). (CCR Title 2 60010(S))." Further, as per CCR title 2 30010(h), "Designated Instruction and Services means specially designed instruction and related services ---, as may be required to assist a pupil with a disability to benefit educationally."

IEP teams should identify the need for related services based on appropriate documentation and assessment. If the IEP team recommends such services, the following statements must be considered for inclusion in the IEP:

- a) The related service is necessary for the child to benefit from his/her special education program;
- b) The program modifications or supports for school personnel are necessary to assist the child; and
- c) The related service will assist the child to:
 - Advance appropriately toward the annual goals;
 - Be involved in and progress in the general curriculum;
 - Participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and,
 - Be educated and participate with other children, with and without disabilities

The IEP team shall address the means for reviewing and evaluating the necessity of continuing Temporary Special Needs Assistant services to the student.

The IEP team shall also include a statement of the anticipated frequency and duration for the services and specify the necessary accommodations and modifications.

If it is determined that additional personnel support is required, the IEP team should periodically review the effectiveness of this additional support. A systematic, written plan needs to address how additional personnel support will be monitored.

For services requiring additional personnel support as a result of a child's behavioral difficulties, the child's IEP needs to include appropriate goals and objectives. In addition, a behavioral plan should be developed, or if appropriate, a Behavioral Intervention Plan should be developed in accordance with Sections 3001 and 3052 in Title 5, California Code of Regulations. The behavior plan needs to include a provision describing how

and when support, including personnel, will be utilized to implement the plan, and when the plan will be reviewed and modified.

When a need for additional support is due to medical need, a specialized health care plan will need to be developed.

When special circumstance assistance is being considered for a specific student, a district representative shall be required to participate in the decision making process of the IEP meeting.

Under What Conditions Might an IEP Team Consider a TSNA?

Temporary Special Needs Assistant (TSNA) may be provided for students with disabilities when additional support is necessary to the student in order to make progress on his or her goals and objectives and to benefit educationally. Whenever possible, additional assistance is assigned to a school environment, class, or case manager. Occasionally, however, a student requires individual support for a designated period of time to address a unique need. By law, services to students with special needs must be delivered in the "least restrictive environment." When the IEP team is considering TSNA, all aspects of the student's program must be considered. A request for TSNA is made only after other site interventions have proven to be ineffective. A student's educational program must be carefully evaluated to determine when and where the additional support is required. Additionally, the IEP team must plan for periodic reviews to assess the continued need for this type of individualized assistance.

Existing TSNA for Newly Enrolled Student

When a student new to the district/SELPA enrolls with an existing IEP that indicates TSNA services, staff should be assigned as soon as practicable during the 30 day interim placement to provide the student with comparable services based on the last agreed upon IEP from the previous district (EC 56325). If an evaluation is warranted to determine the continued need for a TSNA, it should be completed during the 30 day interim placement.

Complete the Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant

If the IEP team at the site believes extra support may be necessary to meet the student's goals and objectives, they must discuss the need at an IEP meeting, at which time these needs will be considered. The **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)** needs to be completed if the IEP team believes that temporary special needs assistance to support the student is necessary. It should be indicated on the notes page that the IEP team is making a referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant.

If TSNA is requested during an IEP meeting without a previous referral, the procedure for requesting TSNA must be initiated at that time. It should be indicated on the notes page that the IEP team is making a referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant.

Use the **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)** to assist in quantifying the severity of student's needs. Supporting documentation should include the documents indicated on page 3 of the **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)**.

If the parent requests additional support, an IEP meeting will be held to review the parent request. The IEP team will clarify parent's concerns and discuss options. If the IEP team at the site believes extra support may be necessary to meet the student's goals and objectives, they must discuss the need at an IEP meeting, at which time these needs will be considered. The **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)** needs to be completed if the IEP team believes that temporary special needs assistance to support the student is necessary. It should be indicated on the notes page that the IEP team is making a referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant.

As a reminder the grey shaded columns *Health/Personal Care Issues/Medical and Behavior Safety* are the primary areas to consider for a **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)**.

It is important when completing **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)** that information on Instruction/Educational Benefit as well as Inclusion/Mainstream are considered as they may be impacted by either Health/Personal Care Issues/Medical and/or Behavior Safety.

The Director of Special Education or designee will review the **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)** within 15 days of the request with a written response.

Submit the **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)**, along with the suggested documents indicated on page 3 of the **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)** to the Director of Special Education or designee.
Letter of Prior Written Notice (LPWN)

The TSNA Referral should be submitted to the Director of Special Education or designee who will review the referral and process the TSNA Assessment request. This will be noted on page 4 of the **Referral for Temporary Special Needs Assistant (Step 1)**. A Letter of Prior Written Notice will be sent out to the parent indicating that the TSNA Assessment request is or is not recommended and the rationale. If the TSNA Assessment request is recommended, the Assessment Plan will be included with the Letter of Prior Written Notice within 15 days of completion of the referral.

If the IEP team determines that additional temporary support is **NOT needed**, an IEP meeting will be scheduled to develop/modify IEP goals, modifications and/or accommodations, behavior supports/plan, or other additional recommendations.

The Director of Special Education or designee will assign the appropriate staff to be the TSNA case manager, that will be responsible for completing the TSNA Assessment within 60 days

from receiving parent consent. It is encouraged that the TSNA case manager coordinate with IEP team members to complete the assessment.

Step 2: Complete Temporary Special Needs Assistant Assessment including:

- **TSNA Assessment Protocol** ○ **Parent, Staff, Student Interview/Questionnaire** ○ **Health Care/Medical and/or Behavior and Safety Rubric** ○ **Student Observation Data Collection Form(s)**

The TSNA case manager should complete the **TSNA Assessment Protocol (Step 2)**. Best practice would be for the interviews to be completed at the beginning of the evaluation process. **Parent and Teacher Interview/Questionnaire** should be completed to identify specific areas of concern. It may also be appropriate to complete the **Student Interview/Questionnaire**. In conjunction with the **Parent and Teacher Interview/Questionnaire**, completion of the **Health Care/Medical and/or Behavior and Safety Rubric** is required.

It is the responsibility of the TSNA case manager to conduct the observation, using the TSNA Assessment Protocol and Student Observation Data Collection Form(s). The TSNA case manager may opt to use alternate data forms as a component of the assessment process. The TSNA case manager will review strategies, materials, modifications, and/or accommodations currently in place to assist the student toward achieving goals and objectives.

Step 3: Write the Temporary Special Needs Assistant Assessment Report

When an IEP team is considering TSNA for a student, all aspects of the student's program must be considered with the intent of maximizing student independence. The **Temporary Special Needs Assistant Assessment Report (Step 3)** should address the areas of concern identified in the referral, interviews, and observations that were conducted as part of the assessment. The TSNA case manager will write the **Temporary Special Needs Assistant Assessment Report**.
Review TSNA Assessment at IEP Meeting

Within 60 days following the receipt of parent consent for the TSNA assessment, an IEP team shall review the results of the TSNA assessment and the recommendations at an IEP meeting. If the IEP team determines that additional temporary support is needed, proceed to step 4. If the IEP team determines that additional temporary support is **NOT needed**, it is recommended that the IEP team develop/modify IEP goals, modifications and/or accommodations, behavior supports/plan, or other additional recommendations.

Step 4: Develop a Plan of Action

- **Goals and Objectives**
- **TSNA Behavior and Task Completion Data Collection Forms**
- **Student Independence Plan**
- **Training Plan**
- **Request/Assign TSNA**

- **Progress Monitoring – Review of Progress to Determine Continued Need for TSNA**

If the IEP team determines a need for TSNA, it is written on the IEP with specific goals and objectives, training plan, progress monitoring and fading strategies, and review dates. Regardless of the circumstances that may indicate the need for support, it is imperative for every IEP to address the skills that will be taught in order for TSNA to be faded. The level of support required for the student to advance appropriately toward annual goals needs to be defined. A systematic, written plan should specify how additional support should be utilized and monitored. An IEP meeting should be convened if necessary to modify TSNA support. Discussion at this IEP meeting should be documented in the notes page of the IEP and include a written plan outlining the team's criteria and possible timeline for phasing out the necessity for TSNA support. Refer to **TSNA Appendix: Suggested IEP Language** for appropriate wording to use on the IEP notes page and Offer of FAPE Services page of the IEP.

If the IEP team has determined that TSNA support is required, the Special Education Director or designee will process the appropriate paperwork in accordance with district procedures. The District may use their own LEA request form or **Temporary Special Needs Assistant Request Form (Appendix)**.

Goals and Objectives

Using the IEP Goal Page, the TSNA case manager will develop appropriate goals. The goals need to address the specific target behavior(s) that were indicated in the assessment findings which led to the need for a TSNA.

TSNA Behavior and Task Completion Data Collection Forms

The TSNA case manager will develop an appropriate data collection system to monitor the TSNA goal(s). Refer to the **SAMPLE TSNA Behavior or Task Completion Data Collection Form (Appendix)**, for sample data collection forms. Additional forms are available from the WESLEPA Behavior Specialist.

Student Independence Plan

The TSNA case manager will develop an appropriate Student Independence Plan by using the **Student Independence Plan (Appendix)**. It is recommended that the Independence plan be attached to the IEP.

TSNA Training Plan

It is critical that all staff receive appropriate training on the student's health issues, curriculum modifications, the student's instructional environment, behavior interventions, using and fading prompts, data collection and reporting, etc. The TSNA case manager will develop an appropriate TSNA Training Plan by using the **TSNA Training Plan (Appendix)**. It is recommended that the training plan including training, consultation and support be indicated in the Supplemental Supports and Services on the Offer of FAPE services page.

Step 5: Progress Monitoring – Review of Progress to Determine Continued Need for TSNA The goal for any student with special needs is to encourage, promote, and maximize independence. Periodic observations and review of data is required to review the continued need for the temporary additional support and to monitor the duration of services. The **Review to Determine Continued Need for TSNA**

should be used for direct observation of the student. The IEP team should identify periodic reviews that align with the goals and objectives reporting period.