

June 2012



The role of the teacher's aide

One of the best ways to help your child to join in and learn is if everyone works together as a team to meet your child's needs. This includes your child's class teacher and education specialists working together with you and your family and whānau.

Your child's teacher's aide will be an important part of this team. They will work under the direction of the class teacher to support your child to make the most of every learning opportunity.

The following information is to help you understand:

- ▶ how your child's teacher's aide will work
- ▶ their relationship with the other people who support your child
- ▶ the most effective ways of working.

What teachers' aides do

Teachers' aides work in different ways, depending on the needs of

the child they are employed to support. While they're an important part of your child's team it's the teacher who remains responsible for your child's learning and behaviour. The teacher's aide will support them with this.

In general, your child's teacher's aide will:

- ▶ carry out learning activities with your child
- ▶ help your child's teacher by using strategies to manage your child's behaviour
- ▶ work with other students in the class and encourage students, including your child, to play and work together and learn

from each other – this can boost your child's learning and social skills

- ▶ take over some of the class teacher's duties so they have time to work more directly with your child.

If your child has special health or physical needs, a teacher's aide can help with medicines, feeding, toileting, moving about the school, using specialised equipment, and keeping a record of these things if this is important.



How your child's class teacher and teacher's aide work together

Your child's class teacher is responsible for the learning and behaviour of every student in their class, including your child. The class teacher will work with your child – your child won't be supported only by their teacher's aide.

The class teacher will:

- ▶ work with your child's education specialists, you, your family and whānau to develop your child's learning programme and decide how the teacher's aide will support this
- ▶ work out how your child's teacher's aide will work with your child
- ▶ decide what duties the teacher's aide can do to free them up to work with your child
- ▶ keep an eye on your child's programme and how well the teacher's aide is supporting this
- ▶ give the teacher's aide good feedback so their work is as effective as possible
- ▶ decide when and how to involve classmates in helping your child to learn and behave appropriately
- ▶ arrange the class furniture and programme so your child is

physically and socially included in all classroom activities

- ▶ get the teacher's aide to work with other students in the class right from the start, so that your child doesn't feel singled out for attention and can learn to be independent.

The class teacher will meet with your child's teacher's aide weekly. This is to go over your child's programme, look at what's working well, decide what changes might be needed and to look at whether everyone is on track to meet the goals set out in your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

It's important that these meetings take place to ensure the best possible use is made of your child's teacher's aide time. The meetings could be held before school, at lunchtime or straight after the children leave at the end of the day.

The way a teacher's aide works with your child

Your child's class teacher will work with their teacher's aide to:

- ▶ use specific strategies that will help your child to learn and manage their own behaviour
- ▶ help build your child's independence by knowing when to stand back and let your child try things on their own

(your child will quickly become dependent on them if they do too much for them or stay right beside them for long periods)

- ▶ praise your child in a way that encourages or rewards them when they:
 - stick with something they're working on for a bit longer
 - stick with something they're working on even if it's difficult or they're uncertain
 - learn something new
 - remember something they've learned the day before or week before
- ▶ use natural supports, such as including your child in a group of three or four others who are working together on a task where your child can make a contribution
- ▶ cut back the number of prompts they give your child over time to encourage the idea of working with less support
- ▶ help with any personal care needs or with using special equipment, such as standing frames or hoists.

It's good for a child if a different teacher's aide supports them in the playground, if it's necessary, so there's less risk of becoming too dependent on one person.



The relationship between the specialist/s and your child's teacher's aide

Specialists work with the rest of your child's team to set goals that are specific to your child, are achievable for them and can be measured to see how they are progressing. This is done at your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.

They also provide information and support to the class teacher, including how to use the teacher's aide time, what training the teacher's aide needs and how the class teacher can meet their responsibilities.

The role of your child's school principal

The principal provides professional leadership. They take overall responsibility for making sure your child, together with all the other students, is included in the life of the school and is able to learn.

The principal, along with the class teacher and teacher's aide, plans what professional training your

child's teacher's aide will get and approves funding for this.

The principal also approves funding for the teacher's aide to be paid for the weekly meetings with the class teacher.

Who to talk to if you have any concerns about your child

The class teacher has the main responsibility for your child's progress and for discussing this with you. However, if your concerns are about the class teacher, then the best person to talk with is the principal.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the support your child receives, please ask. Start by talking with those who work most closely with your child. You can also talk with staff at your local Special Education office or call the Special Education information line on 0800 622 222.

You can get more detailed special education information on our website: www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/YourChild/SupportForYourChild/ExtraSupport.

If you're deaf or have a hearing impairment, you can also contact Special Education through the New Zealand Relay Service on 0800 4 711 711 or go to www.nzrelay.co.nz.

Your feedback is important. By letting us know what's going well – and what we can do better – we can improve what we do to support all children with special education needs.

Contact details for my local Special Education office:



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