

Supervision of Students

All education providers need to be sure to make increased student independence a primary goal. Students with disabilities may develop a “learned helplessness” when deliberate steps to increase their independence are not taken. In our concern for providing assistance for students and keeping them all safe, we must not make the mistake of not requiring them to learn to act independently.

Fostering and encouraging independence applies for students with moderate to significant disabilities as well as students with high incidence disabilities. Inappropriate instruction and accommodations include providing too much help for students such as giving answers, unnecessary prompting, etc.

It may seem harmless at the time to give a student answers on difficult sections of an assignment, so that they can work on part of an assignment that is deemed to be more functional. Likewise, it might seem easier and more convenient to finish dressing a student so that the next instructional activity can be started. The teacher and/or paraeducator need to be cognizant at all times about these “small” decisions and the implied message that is given to the student and other observers. We must all remember that our teaching and actions DO make a difference in students’ lives and it is our responsibility to foster student’s learning and independence. The emphasis must be on skill development and actual learning **not** on getting students to complete worksheets or assignments.

✦ ✦ *IEP teams are responsible for considering all areas and assuring that each student’s program is teaching independence while providing appropriate supervision and assistance. A special education teacher, general education teacher, or a paraeducator may provide supervision or assistance. Staffing notes of meetings with parents should include discussions of supervision, as well as steps to develop independence. Paraeducators should be closely supervised to provide feedback and strategies for encouraging and fostering independence.*

Caregiving. All activities that might come under the heading of “care giving” (such as feeding, dressing, toileting, and administering medication) will be performed by a certified teacher or therapist, paraeducator, or other school personnel who have been trained in the appropriate procedures. Medical procedures, such as administering medication or performing catheterization can be done by school personnel **only if training and appropriate documentation have been provided by a nurse or doctor.** See Kansas regulations regarding delegation procedures and administration of medications on the back of this hand-out for further information.

Workstudy. At times students are enrolled in workstudy opportunities as part of their educational program. **Kansas Health Department regulations require volunteers and workstudy students in preschools to be at least 14 years old and to have a TB test.** TB tests are not needed for any other student volunteers or workstudy students, unless the facility where they will be working has this specific requirement.

✦ ✦ *For students working in a preschool, the “Assignment Agreement for Special Education Volunteers” form (following page) needs to be completed and returned to special education administration for approval.*

✦ ✦ *IEP teams must consider the appropriateness of the workstudy, not only for the student who will be working but also for the worksite. This discussion should be documented in staffing notes.*