APPENDIX G

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANCE (SCIA) POLICY

Every school district within the Humboldt-Del Norte 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) and California laws and regulations describe a continuum of placements such as instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions (34 CFR § 300.551(b)(1)).

The IDEA also defines related services as the utilization of aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate. This applies to any general education program or special education program in which the student may participate (34 CFR Part 300.550-300.556). There may be special circumstances when a student may need additional support in order to be successful in his/her educational placement.

A goal for any student with special needs is to encourage, promote, and maximize independence. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team is responsible for developing and implementing a program that promotes that independence. Natural supports and existing staff supports should be used whenever possible.

If the IEP team is considering a Special Circumstance Instructional Assistance (SCIA) as a support for the classroom staff, the team must determine:

1. Natural supports and/or existing staff supports are not adequate for the student to participate and progress in the general education program;
2. Additional support is necessary to assist classroom staff in facilitating the student in:
    a. Advancing appropriately toward the annual goals and/or;
    b. Involvement in and progress in the general curriculum and/or;
    c. Participation in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities and/or;
    d. Participation with other disabled and non-disabled students.
3. How quickly it anticipates the support can be faded and develop a method for systematic evaluation toward independence and more natural supports.

If the IEP Team recommends SCIA support, the team is also responsible for monitoring the student's progress and ensuring that, when appropriate, a plan is put in place to create independence from the SCIA, with the ultimate goal of decreasing and removing the SCIA service from the student's IEP. If not carefully monitored and evaluated on a regular basis, SCIA support can unintentionally foster dependence.

Initial

When the members of the IEP team are considering the need for a SCIA support, unless there is an urgent need where health or safety is at imminent risk, the IEP team should do the following:

1. Have the parent consent to an assessment plan to determine whether the student requires a SCIA for FAPE. This assessment should include completion of the Referral for SCIA Assistance, Rubric to Determine Need for SCIA Support, an Evaluation Report and an Independence Plan. The assessment team can consider whether use of standardized tests, such as the BASC or the ABAS, would also provide the team with helpful data. This assessment typically will be completed by a school psychologist. See Initial SCIA Assessment Process.

2. Using the assessment data, the IEP team should be able to identify the specific activities and times for which additional assistance or supervision is required

Urgent-Need SCIA Support: There are some instances in which the need for SCIA support can be immediate because there is an imminent risk to one or more students' health and/or safety. In those situations, the IEP team can use existing data to support the need for a SCIA on a short-term basis. The IEP should be clear that the SCIA service is temporary, and the IEP team should proceed with a SCIA assessment quickly.

Review of need

At regular intervals, at least annually, designated members of the IEP team should use the tools to collect data about whether the level of assistance continues to be needed. As the student's level of independence or ability to use natural supports increases, behavior improves or the make-up of the class changes, the student's need for assistance should be reviewed, and decreased as able.

Areas of need

It is important that the team consider each type of assistance listed below in order to determine if the student needs assistance with a particular activity and to estimate the amount of SCIA time that will be needed.

1. Health/Personal Care-
   a. Self-help and bathroom needs- If a student needs assistance with toileting or other self-help skills, the team should note the times and duration for this activity. This should only be for brief periods during the day.
   b. Assistance during snack or lunch- If the student requires assistance with feeding, etc., note the type of assistance needed and note the times and duration required. Encourage reliance on peer helpers (with supervision) or other natural supports as much as possible for getting out food, opening containers, etc. An Occupational Therapist may need to be a part of the SCIA assessment if the student has feeding-related needs.