

Educational Assistants Assignments

The number of Educational Assistants (EA) in our school system has increased dramatically over the last 5-10 years. As a result, it is very important that principals, in collaboration with the Learning Support Services staff in their schools, monitor closely E.A. assignments.

September Start Up:

- Meet with you School Based Team regarding students who require E.A. time and their case managers.
- Use the ***Student Needs Rating Scale*** to determine level and priority of student needs and level of EA support (School Staff can find the *Student Needs Rating Scale* on Abby Connect <https://abbyconnect.sd34.bc.ca/>)
- Whenever possible group students with similar needs in the same class. EAs need to be encouraged to assist all of the students in the classroom so that his/her assistance does not single out the designated student. Also, this way more students can benefit.
- E.A.'s should have a "schedule" which is available to all teachers they support.
- Ensure all school staff understands that ***EAs assignments can change throughout the year.***
- Wherever possible EAs should regularly work with various students to avoid co-dependence developing between the EA and the student.

As the year progresses:

- It is important to check periodically with the EAs regarding their assignments and schedules. They know when they are "not as busy" as they should be. For example - E.A.'s who accompany students to gym and then observes the class because the child handles P.E. quite well now. Or T.A.'s who are assigned to monitor a student at recess and lunch but the student no longer needs close supervision.
- EAs assignments can change anytime throughout the year at the request of the Principal and/or SBT

Level of Support:

- There can be as much risk in providing too much teacher assistant support as too little support.
- Too much EA support sometimes "block" social interactions between the student and other children.
- Too much EA support also cuts down on the amount of interactions the student has directly with the teacher
- There is also the risk that the teacher assistant becomes so in tune with his/her student that the student never needs to solve a problem or communicate his/her needs. Dependency now becomes an issue to overcome in the future.

Time with one E.A. and the future:

- The length of time a EA should provide support for the same student is a matter to be considered carefully.
- Some of our more dependent students have the same E.A. for many years and there is a risk of the child becoming too dependent on that one person. The primary care EA must be present to do the procedures that are medically trained (g-tube, catheter etc.). However, other EAs can /should work with the dependent student for other activities.
- Decisions regarding students' program should be made collaboratively by the team. The classroom teacher, in collaboration with the LSS teacher and the EA, is responsible for the educational outcomes for the student.