



# Pennsylvania's Supplementary Aids and Services Toolkit: An Overview for Parents

## The Process

The Supplementary Aids and Services (SaS) Consideration Toolkit is a facilitated process to inform Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams as they develop or revise a student's IEP. The goal of this process is to identify services and supports to enable students with disabilities to participate and succeed in general education settings.

The SaS Consideration Toolkit process can be useful in assisting IEP teams as they plan for many different situations. For example, IEP teams may use this process when the team is:

- Planning for a student to move into a new grade or new school

- Having challenges in providing supports for a student in a general education setting
- Addressing barriers to a student participating and learning in general education settings

During the SaS Toolkit process, a trained facilitator supports IEP team members in collaboratively gathering and analyzing information about a specific student in relation to general education classroom(s) that are being considered for the student's educational placement. The Toolkit process guides teams through information-gathering and program planning. This process leads to the development of an action plan, which often includes

supplementary aids and services that the IEP team can incorporate into the student's IEP when it is developed or revised.

## The Facilitator

The facilitator guides the team through the following steps:

- Compiling and organizing information about the general education classroom(s)
- Identifying barriers to participation and learning in general education settings
- Identifying potential supplementary aids and services as possible solutions to the barriers
- Creating an action plan

## The Parent(s)

As a parent of a child with a disability, you are an important member of your child's educational team. If your child is experiencing barriers in participating and learning in the general education environment, it may be appropriate for you to request the SaS toolkit process.

You validate and enrich the conversation about the uniqueness of your child by participating in all aspects of the SaS Toolkit process, and most importantly, by sharing information about your child's strengths and interests, so the team can build on these as they seek solutions to barriers. You should come to the facilitated meeting prepared to share your perspective regarding:

- Your child's strengths and interests
- Strategies and supports that have worked in the past for your child
- Approaches that have not been effective for your child
- Concerns about possible barriers to participation and learning

## The Educators

In addition to providing their input about strengths, strategies, and barriers, teachers will describe the methods, materials, practices, and environment of the general education setting(s) by completing a classroom profile that is shared with the team.

## The Team

During the facilitated meeting, the team compares the student's strengths to the classroom profile, discusses potential barriers that may exist if nothing changes in the learning environment, and brainstorms ways to avoid, accommodate, or remove those barriers. The Toolkit process works best when people who know and work directly with the student participate. The team needs input from people who have direct experience with the student during activities in general education settings where barriers to participation and learning may be evident.

After completing the activities that comprise the SaS Toolkit, the team will have identified potential supplementary aids and services that could support a student to participate and learn within the general education classroom. The team then works collaboratively to develop an action plan, by listening to suggestions and considering options, in order to mutually agree upon the next steps to be taken. The result, for IEP team consideration, is a cohesive plan that outlines what the student needs, what staff needs to effectively implement the supplementary aids and services, and how the plan will be accomplished. It is essential that all team members participate and be committed to the plan so there is a true sense of working toward a positive and successful outcome for the student.

## Learn More

If you are interested in finding out whether the toolkit process is appropriate for your child, you are encouraged to speak with your contact at your child's school. You can also contact your local intermediate unit's training and consultation department or regional PaTTAN office for additional information about SaS Consideration Toolkit facilitation.

To review the SaS Consideration Toolkit documents and view a recorded webinar about the process, go to <https://tinyurl.com/yxv4oxhd>

**Supplementary Aids and Services (SaS)** create a system of support that enables many students with disabilities to learn and participate alongside typical peers, regardless of their unique instructional needs and differences. Consistent with the least restrictive environment (LRE) principle of IDEA, IEP teams must thoughtfully consider a full array of SaS that make it possible for students with disabilities to be included in general education classrooms, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities. The SaS Consideration Toolkit, developed for use within schools throughout Pennsylvania, provides a systematic approach to structure this process.

