

Domain, Factors and 0–3 Point Scale

Every student who meets eligibility as a child with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be determined to need specially designed instruction (SDI) in some way. Under previous funding structures, instructional setting (general education or special education classroom, home, hospital, off home campus, etc.) has historically played a significant role in how special education services were understood and funded. This new intensity of services funding model is intentionally designed to shift that focus from centering determinations based on where services are delivered, to instead emphasize the intensity of the SDI and related supports required for a student to access and make progress in their enrolled grade level curriculum. It is important to remember in this new funding model that SDI is typically addressing the actions required of a professional toward a student as a result of the student's disability to ensure that the student has access to and makes progress in their enrolled grade level curriculum, rather than a focus on the student's actions. SDI is individually determined and documented in a student's individualized education program (IEP). As a refresher, remember that SDI means adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the student that result from the student's disability, and to ensure access of the student to their enrolled grade-level general curriculum, so that the student can meet the same educational standards as their peers without disabilities. Designing and implementing SDI varies in intensity, which is what will drive the new intensity of services funding model for special education.

When an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee is developing an IEP for a student, SDI is typically determined once the committee thoroughly develops, reviews, and documents a student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAPF) and thoroughly discusses and determines measurable annual IEP goals that will drive that student's access to and mastery of their enrolled grade level curriculum, postsecondary transition plans, and/or functional needs forward. The SDI is then determined to note the staff level supports that are required for a student to make progress on their goals and improve their academic achievement and functional performance, which then leads to the determination of how the student's progress will be monitored and measured to ensure that meaningful student level data can be obtained.

To determine the tiers of intensity in the new intensity of services funding model, there will be 5 domains for which an intensity level of support must be determined based on ARD committee decisions documented in a student's IEP. **These domains are: Curriculum and Instruction Supports, Behavior Supports, Communication Supports, Independent Functioning Supports, and Personal Care/Health Supports.**

Domains:

Domain 1: Curriculum & Instruction Supports	4
Domain 2: Behavioral Supports:	9
Domain 3: Communication Supports	14
Domain 4: Independent Functioning Supports	18
Domain 5: Personal Care / Health Supports	22

Each domain represents a distinct area of support. Domains will be scored independently based on IEP documentation, even when supports overlap in practice.

When supports overlap in practice, it is critical for the domain itself be considered in determining the rating. For example, when provider-to-student ratios are in place and documented in a student's IEP and that ratio results in support in various domains (behavior, curriculum and instruction, independent functioning, etc.), think about why that ratio is required for FAPE. If the supports are primarily required for independent functioning and supports for behavior and curriculum and instruction are supplemental and a positive consequence of the independent functioning support ratio required for FAPE, then do not check the same ratio ratings in the behavior and curriculum and instruction domains. If, however, the ratio is required to meet FAPE in multiple domains, then the same ratio ratings may be checked.

Each domain will be defined at a high level, and then each domain will have 4 factors that must be considered before determining the level of support that is required using the student's IEP as the anchor for those determinations. Those factors are: the type, nature, and frequency of services provided; whether any specialized role or provider is required for that domain; whether any specific ratio is required for that domain; and whether any equipment or technology is required for that domain. For each factor, a review of the student's IEP will result in a rating of 0, 1, 2, or 3 as those are described below.

LEVELS OF SUPPORT	SCORE
No Support Required or Documented in IEP	Score = 0
Minimum	Score = 1
Moderate	Score = 2
Significant	Score = 3

Once each factor has been considered within each domain and a domain score is achieved (i.e., the highest rated factor within a particular domain equates to that domain score), each of the five domain scores will be added up to achieve a composite score of the total overall points.

In order for a student to qualify for special education (i.e., have the need for SDI based on their disability), a student with an IEP must receive at least one direct special education service in at least one of the five domains. Direct special education services are those delivered to the student as the recipient of the service and primarily designed to address IEP goals. Indirect special education services support the delivery of direct services and are not provided in isolation, and they are typically supports provided to staff or systems on behalf of the student to design, implement, or sustain the student’s programming.

An IEP consisting solely of indirect or consultative services (i.e., no SDI somehow connected to their academic achievement and functional performance), or solely of related services, does not represent the provision of special education and will therefore not be funded through the state special education allotment.

While instructional setting (general education or special education classroom or setting, home, hospital, off-home campus, etc.) can be a determining factor in intensity of services, the below information does not focus on where a child’s special education and related services take place; it focuses on the intensity of such services. While some settings will play into the tiered model, those will be considered separately and in addition to the rubric you’ll analyze below.

Note: Funding classifications must not determine placement, location, or services provided to a student. ARD Committees make individualized decisions to provide FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE) determined appropriate for that student.

Determining the Tier of Intensity Based on Domain Scores:

How to Determine the Tier of Intensity Based on Domain Scores:26

Service Groups:

Service groups are designed to recognize that, beyond a base level of special education funding determined through the intensity tiers, some students require additional, measurable resources to implement their individualized education programs (IEPs).

Service Groups 27

Domain 1: Curriculum & Instruction Supports

Definition: This domain captures the individualized specially designed instruction (SDI) and supports around curriculum and instruction that a student requires to access and make progress in academic content aligned to their enrolled grade level curriculum. It reflects how instruction must be designed, adapted, delivered, and supported beyond universal instruction for the student to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

This domain includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Direct special education services regardless of whether provided in general education or special education classrooms/settings as evidenced by schedule of services (could be delivered by pullout [removes student from general education classroom/setting to deliver], in-class support [support provided in a general education classroom/setting], co teach [a general education and special education teacher providing evidence-based coteaching instruction and supports in a general education classroom/setting], or other delivery methods)
- ▶ Indirect special education services only when they remain student-specific, are ongoing or recurring, and are essential to the student's access and meaningful progress
- ▶ Any reduction in the amount or complexity of the required knowledge and skills (TEKS- or non-TEKS-based), including modified content or significant adaptations to the enrolled grade level curriculum
- ▶ Supplementary instructional aids/services
- ▶ Instructional assistive technology
- ▶ Specialized instructional materials
- ▶ Instructional grouping or ratio requirements (for learning access and/or program fidelity)
- ▶ For eligible students who are continuing enrollment after meeting graduation requirements, instruction in academic content to prepare the student for postsecondary education or training that is not specifically aligned to high school TEKS

This domain does NOT include:

- ▶ Behavioral intervention (Addressed in Domain 2)
- ▶ Communication access systems (Addressed in Domain 3)
- ▶ Personal care or health needs (Addressed in Domain 5)
- ▶ Independent functioning goals and systems (Addressed in Domain 4)

Key Considerations While Reviewing IEP and This Domain:

What individualized SDI and supports in the domain of curriculum and instruction are required and documented for this student to access and progress in mastering curriculum and content at his or her enrolled grade level? For eligible students who are continuing enrollment after meeting graduation requirements, what instruction in academic content is delivered to prepare the student for postsecondary education or training that is not specifically aligned to high school TEKS?

Key Considerations Around Age/Grade Level and This Domain:

Rate intensity based on what is required beyond what is typical for same age/grade level peers, and whether the supports are essential for access and progress toward the student’s goals. For children 3 through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten), curriculum is often early learning standard-driven and play-based, so concentrate on specialized curriculum and instruction supports that replace typical early learning or requires extensive adaptation. Also keep in mind for children 3 through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten) who are served in the pre-K classroom setting, it is possible for a dually certified teacher to serve as both a/the general education and special education teacher. For eligible students who are continuing enrollment after meeting graduation requirements, curriculum and instruction may be functional or vocational. Rate intensity by how individualized, community-based, and essential it is for postsecondary education and training goals.

Factor A:

Consider the type, frequency, and nature of the special education services required for the student to receive a FAPE. For this factor, consider the combined minutes and pervasiveness of direct SDI provided to the student in this domain, as documented in the IEP.

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No direct academic SPED services are required for FAPE; instructional supplementary aids/services, including academic accommodations, require little staff effort/monitoring.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>At least one of the following is true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For a student receiving dyslexia instruction, the IEP does not require the instruction to be delivered through an evidence-based program or with fidelity as required by a program adopted under TEC §38.003. At least 1 academic goal or at least one functional goal directly tied to academic performance is present. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to curriculum and instruction supports is targeted, limited in intensity, and addresses specific, discrete needs. This is typically direct SDI provided less than 60 minutes weekly for each core subject area in which direct SDI is required. At least 1 academic goal or at least one functional goal directly tied to academic performance is present. 	<p>At least one of the following is true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For a student receiving dyslexia instruction, the IEP requires the instruction to be delivered through an evidence-based program with fidelity as required by a program adopted under TEC §38.003. At least 1 academic goal or at least one functional goal directly tied to academic performance is present. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to curriculum and instruction supports is necessary to maintain consistent access and progress and is delivered multiple times per week and/or across multiple routines/settings/periods. This is typically direct SDI provided most or all days per week and likely results in at least one to five hours cumulatively per week of SDI for each core subject area in which SDI is required. Multiple academic goals and/or functional goals tied directly to academic performance are present. 	<p>At least one of the following is true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For a student receiving dyslexia instruction, the IEP requires the instruction to be intensified beyond the standard evidence-based dyslexia program protocols. Multiple academic goals and/or functional goals tied directly to academic performance are present. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to curriculum and instruction supports is intensive, frequent, and often pervasive such that the services substantially structure participation throughout the day. This is typically direct intensive SDI provided daily in all core subject areas. Multiple academic goals and/or functional goals tied directly to academic performance are present.

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
	<p>Majority of the following are also true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are supportive and supplemental. <input type="checkbox"/> Supplementary aids and services, including academic accommodations, require staff planning or preparation with some follow-through but are predictable and with minimal disruption. 	<p>Majority of the following are also true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are necessary, provide and sustain SDI implementation, and require planning and staff coordination. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent provision/offering of supplementary aids/services; academic accommodations or modifications require active staff involvement and individualized implementation with ongoing monitoring or judgement. 	<p>For a student who requires intensive, frequent, and often pervasive SDI as described above, the majority of the following are also true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services drive the design, delivery, and sustainability of the student’s instructional programming across settings. <input type="checkbox"/> Significant modifications to enrolled grade level content/curriculum; access to enrolled grade level content could be through prerequisite skills. The student’s schedule and participation are often structured around receiving SDI and accessing instruction through specialized methods.

Factor B:

Are there any required certifications, licensures, or other qualifications for personnel serving the student?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No specialized qualifications for SPED providers required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI can and will be delivered by one or more of the following: SPED teacher; SPED paraprofessional with teacher oversight; or general education teacher with SPED staff support. <input type="checkbox"/> Typical special education instructional expertise is appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional planning does not require advanced specialization. 	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The student’s IEP requires direct SDI to be delivered by one or more of the following: SPED teacher or other SPED professional, including provider of dyslexia instruction (PDI). The IEP does not document that the PDI must be an advanced-level dyslexia practitioner as defined in the Dyslexia Handbook. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff will utilize targeted competencies beyond general practice as the SDI required by the student requires an increasing level of individualization based on their academic needs resulting from their disability(ies). 	<p>At least one of the following is true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The student’s IEP requires evidence-based dyslexia instruction to be provided by an advanced-level practitioner, as defined in the Dyslexia Handbook. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff will utilize targeted competencies beyond general practice as the SDI required by the student requires highly individualized instructional design, specialized methodologies, or complex modified curriculum implementation; without this level of expertise, instruction would be ineffective and progress/access would be significantly compromised.

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Requires planned coaching/consultation among special education and general education personnel to maintain fidelity and ensure generalization. This includes a provider of dyslexia instruction consulting with general and special education personnel about the student. 	<p>If advanced/specialized expertise is required as described above, the majority of the following are also true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized and highly trained staff are needed in multiple environments, routines, and settings, and student's instructional program and academic performance are dependent on that staff to function as designed. <input type="checkbox"/> Professional judgment and specialized knowledge are critical and frequent.

Factor C:

Is there an identified or curriculum-required provider-to-student ratio for the student to receive the appropriate services (beyond what is typical for same age/grade level peers, and does it directly enable access and participation rather than general supervision)?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No reduced ratio required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Reduced ratio is required but is engaged intermittently during certain instructional blocks, tasks, or settings to provide appropriate SDI.</p>	<p>At least one of the following is true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For a student receiving evidence-based dyslexia instruction, the group size is required to be within the program's fidelity requirements. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A planned reduced ratio is required during specific instructional blocks, tasks, or settings to provide appropriate SDI. Support may be shared, but coverage must be intentional and reliable. Student needs targeted support to access instruction or practice skills. 	<p>At least one of the following is true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> For a student receiving evidence-based dyslexia instruction, the group size is required to be smaller than the group size aligned to the program's fidelity requirements. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A highly restrictive or near-continuous ratio is required to deliver SDI and maintain instructional engagement/access. Instruction cannot be delivered with fidelity without individualized staffing across most of the day. Ratio needs may shape schedule/placement because instruction cannot be delivered effectively in typical group conditions.

Factor D:

Is there any equipment or technology required beyond what we'd expect most peers in the student's age group/grade level to require, and is it essential for participation toward the student's current goals?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>Standard materials; no special technology or equipment required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>The use of assistive technology (AT) or specific supplementary or adapted instructional materials, equipment, or technology for academic purposes is documented in the IEP and is used independently and/or requires little or no prep time for implementation. Staff support for use is incidental (set up reminders, occasional troubleshooting).</p> <p>This might look like: Occasional text-to speech, speech-to-text, spellcheck, and basic graphic organizers; simple visual supports used alongside typical instruction; standard accessibility features used intermittently; could also include more sophisticated or high tech AT or equipment but student uses mostly independently.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The use of AT or specific supplementary or adapted instructional materials, equipment, or technology for academic purposes is documented in the IEP and is used with intermittent staff support and/or requires prep time for implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> Student relies on technology/equipment consistently to access curriculum content, respond, or produce work. <input type="checkbox"/> Tools require some individualized setup (profiles, settings, adapted digital materials). <input type="checkbox"/> Staff need predictable training and ongoing support to implement with fidelity. <p>This might look like: Routine speech-to text or text to speech with individualized settings; regular use of adapted digital curriculum materials (accessible versions, scaffolded passages); specialized software used consistently to access/produce academic work.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The use of AT or specific supplementary or adapted instructional materials, equipment, or technology for academic purposes is documented in the IEP and is used with continuous staff support and/or requires extensive preparation/training for implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> Without the equipment/technology, the student would be unable to access instruction or demonstrate learning in meaningful ways. <input type="checkbox"/> Tools are highly individualized, integrated across most of the day, and often require ongoing customization/troubleshooting. <p>This might look like: Integrated access system required for nearly all reading/writing/response tasks; technology that structures curriculum delivery (content primarily accessed through specialized platforms/materials); tools requiring frequent adjustment and consistent implementation across settings.</p>

Domain 2: Behavioral Supports:

Definition: This domain captures the individualized specially designed instruction (SDI) and supports required around behavioral, emotional, and social well-being, and the regulatory supports required for the student to access instruction, participate safely, and engage in class and school routines that build a positive learning community. It reflects the intensity and structure of behavior intervention, not the presence of disability related behavior alone.

This domain includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Direct services regardless of whether provided in general education or special education classrooms/settings as evidenced by schedule of services (could be delivered by pullout [removes student from general education classroom/setting to deliver], in-class support [support provided in a general education classroom/setting], co teach [a general education and special education teacher providing evidence-based coteaching instruction and supports in a general education classroom/setting], or other delivery methods)
- ▶ Indirect services only when they remain student-specific, are ongoing or recurring, and are essential to the student's access and meaningful progress
- ▶ Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) and functional behavioral analysis (FBA)-driven supports
- ▶ Counseling, social work, or psychological services
- ▶ De-escalation and crisis prevention systems
- ▶ Behavioral supervision and monitoring
- ▶ Behavior-related ratio or staffing needs
- ▶ Behavior data collection and progress monitoring systems

This domain does NOT include:

- ▶ Academic instruction (Addressed in Domain 1)
- ▶ Communication systems (Addressed in Domain 3)
- ▶ Executive functioning or independence supports unless behavior driven (Addressed in Domain 4)
- ▶ Personal care/health supports (Addressed in Domain 5)

Key Considerations While Reviewing IEP and This Domain

What individualized SDI and supports in the domain of behavior are required and documented for the student to access learning (and the broader community if applicable and required for FAPE) and maintain safety and participation?

Key Considerations Around Age/Grade Level and This Domain:

Rate intensity based on what is required beyond what is typical for same-age/grade level peers, and whether the supports are essential for access and progress toward the student's goals. For children 3 through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten), many behaviors are developmentally typical and staff support for regulation and routines is universally expected; significant ratings should hinge on frequency,

#2 Behavioral Supports

severity, and impact on access, safety, and learning. Also keep in mind for children 3 through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten) who are served in the pre-K classroom setting, it is possible for a dually certified teacher to serve as both a/the general education and special education teacher. For eligible students who are continuing enrollment after meeting graduation requirements, focus likely shifts to behaviors affecting employment/community participation, self-management at work, and independent living.

Factor A:

Consider the type, frequency, and nature of the special education services required for the student in order to receive a FAPE. For this factor, consider the combined minutes and pervasiveness of direct SDI provided to the student in this domain, as documented in the IEP.

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No direct behavior SPED services are required for FAPE; supplementary aids/services, including behavioral accommodations, require little staff effort/monitoring.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to behavior supports is targeted, limited in intensity, and addresses specific, discrete needs. This is typically direct SDI provided less than 60 minutes weekly. At least 1 behavior goal is present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are supportive and supplemental. <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral instruction focuses on specific skills or contexts. <input type="checkbox"/> Supplementary aids and services, including behavioral accommodations, require staff planning or preparation with some follow-through but are predictable and with minimal disruption. <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Occasional check-ins or brief skill instruction; targeted instruction around a specific behavior or routine; simple prevention strategies with limited need for ongoing adjustment; behavior support provided only during isolated situations.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to behavior supports is necessary to maintain consistent access and progress and is delivered multiple times per week and/or across multiple routines/settings/periods. This is typically direct SDI provided between 1 hour and 5 hours weekly multiple times per week. Multiple behavior goals are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are necessary, provide and sustain SDI implementation, and require planning and staff coordination. <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral instruction and services are primarily preventive and focused on positively engaging with the school environment, peers, and adults, and are needed across multiple settings or predictable high-need times. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent provision/offering of supplementary aids/services; behavioral accommodations or modifications require active staff involvement and individualized implementation with ongoing monitoring or judgement. 	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to behavior supports is intensive, frequent, and often pervasive such that the services substantially structure participation throughout the day. Multiple behavior goals are present, and the student has a BIP. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services drive the design, delivery, and sustainability of the student's behavioral programming across settings. <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral instruction and services are daily or near-continuous, whether scheduled as blocks or embedded across most routines. <input type="checkbox"/> Pervasive, intensive behavioral programming is required to maintain access to instruction and safety, with supports that are frequently reactive, safety-driven, or crisis-oriented. <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral intervention, instruction, and supports include regular de-escalation, crisis prevention, or emergency response procedures, and behavioral needs significantly disrupt access to instruction without staff intervention.

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral services are regular and planned, including prevention strategies and explicit teaching of replacement skills; includes instruction and supports to build social, emotional, or self-regulation skills, which may include social skills instruction, counseling services, and/or a BIP. <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral supports are proactively implemented and do not routinely require crisis response, emergency intervention, or intensive de-escalation to maintain safety. <p>This might look like: Regular behavioral instruction embedded into the day; consistent implementation of a BIP; scheduled services focused on regulation, coping, or social behavior; predictable staff support to prevent escalation during known high-risk times.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral supports dominate the instructional day and require high-frequency data collection, ongoing adjustments, and coordinated implementation across staff and settings. <p>This might look like: Continuous or near continuous behavioral facilitation; intensive, function-based intervention implemented across most activities; frequent staff response and ongoing adjustment of strategies; behavioral services integrated into nearly all routines and settings.</p>

Factor B:

Are there any required certifications, licensures, or other qualifications for personnel serving the student?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No specialized qualifications for SPED providers required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Behavioral supports can be implemented by typically qualified staff using routine training in classroom behavior supports. Plans are straightforward and do not require advanced behavioral expertise.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff with targeted behavioral competencies (structured data collection, implementation fidelity, consistent reinforcement systems, functional skill teaching) are required. <input type="checkbox"/> Requires periodic coaching/consultation to sustain implementation. <input type="checkbox"/> Direct behavioral and counseling supports provided by school psychologist, board certified behavior analyst (BCBA), behavior specialist, school counselor, social worker, or other mental health professional. <input type="checkbox"/> Supports address teaching replacement skills/behaviors and are primarily preventive and instructional in nature. 	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Highly specialized behavioral expertise is essential for safe and effective implementation (e.g., intensive function-based intervention requiring advanced judgment, frequent plan redesign, complex coordination). <input type="checkbox"/> Risk of ineffective support, escalation, exclusion, or regression is high without advanced expertise. <input type="checkbox"/> Highly specialized and trained personnel must be able react to crisis and emergency response, as well as de-escalation.

Factor C:

Is there an identified or curriculum-required provider-to-student ratio for the student to receive the appropriate services (beyond what is typical for same age span/grade level peers, and does it directly enable access and participation rather than general supervision)?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No reduced ratio required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Reduced ratio is intermittently required. Behavioral supports can usually be implemented through typical classroom routines and shared staff support. Staff support is intermittent and responsive.</p>	<p>A planned reduced ratio is required during specific times/settings to prevent escalation and support skill use (e.g., transitions, unstructured times). Support may be shared but must be reliable; staff presence is regular but not continuous. Student benefits from structured monitoring and consistent intervention in predictable contexts.</p>	<p>A highly restrictive or near-continuous ratio is required to ensure safety and sustain participation. Student needs frequent intervention, immediate response capability, and consistent implementation across most of the day. Ratio requirements often structure placement/schedule due to intensity of need.</p>

Factor D:

Is there any equipment or technology required beyond what we'd expect most peers in the student's age group/grade level to require, and is it essential for participation toward the student's current goals?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>Standard materials; no special technology or equipment required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Tools, technology, or equipment are intermittently used and/or are simple, low-tech, or commonly available; require minimal training for staff or student; and allow the student to typically regulate behavior without overreliance.</p> <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Visual schedules, behavior charts, choice boards, basic reinforcement systems, noise-canceling headphones.</p>	<p>Tools, technology, or equipment are used regularly across the day or settings; are intentionally chosen to address behavior needs; require predictable training and monitoring for staff and student; and are needed to support behavior programming.</p> <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Technology supported behavior tracking; self-monitoring apps; calming tools or other environmental behavior regulation equipment provided routinely; consistent use of sensory tools to prevent behavior escalation.</p>	<p>Tools, technology, or equipment are foundational to the student's ability to regulate behavior, remain safe, and participate in instruction; are highly individualized or complex; and require ongoing staff facilitation, monitoring, or adjustment.</p> <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Specialized technology used continuously to support regulation or safety; integrated systems that structure routines, transitions, and responses; augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems required to prevent significant behavioral escalation; monitoring or alert systems tied to behavioral safety plans; equipment that determines staffing patterns or environmental design.</p>

Domain 3: Communication Supports

Definition: This domain captures the individualized specially designed instruction (SDI) and supports around communication that are required for the student to understand, express, and exchange information across instructional and non instructional settings. It reflects communication access, not academic performance or behavior.

Note: if a student receives speech and language therapy as their ONLY special education instructional service (meaning no other direct SDI), the student will automatically be categorized as Tier 1 in the 8-tier service intensity system. That is the case regardless of whether the factor determinations are minimum, moderate, or significant in this communication domain.

This domain includes, but is not limited to:

- ▶ Speech and language therapy/services
- ▶ Direct special education services regardless of whether provided in general education or special education classrooms/settings as evidenced by schedule of services (could be delivered by pullout [removes student from general education classroom/setting to deliver], in-class support [support provided in a general education classroom/setting], co teach [a general education and special education teacher providing evidence-based coteaching instruction and supports], or other delivery methods)
- ▶ Indirect special education services only when they remain student-specific, are ongoing or recurring, and are essential to the student's access and meaningful progress
- ▶ Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- ▶ Assistive listening systems or amplification
- ▶ Interpreters (e.g., ASL), communication partners
- ▶ Communication related assistive technology
- ▶ Communication-specific ratio or staff facilitation

This domain does NOT include:

- ▶ Academic instructional methods (Addressed in Domain 1)
- ▶ Behavior plans unless communication is the primary driver (Addressed in Domain 2)
- ▶ Physical care or medical needs (Addressed in Domain 5)
- ▶ Executive functioning needs (Addressed in Domain 4)

Key Considerations While Reviewing IEP and This Domain:

What individualized SDI and supports are required in the domain of communication for the student to understand others and express needs, ideas, or learning?

Key Considerations Around Age/Grade Level and This Domain:

Rate intensity based on what is required beyond what is typical for same age/grade level peers, and whether the supports are essential for access and progress toward the student's goals. For children 3 through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten), early communication skills can vary widely, and some delays are expected, so focus on the true foundational supports that are required for FAPE. Also keep in mind for children 3

through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten) who are served in the pre-K classroom setting, it is possible for a dually certified teacher to serve as both a/the general education and special education teacher. For eligible students who are continuing enrollment after meeting graduation requirements, focus likely shifts to communication around self-advocacy, workplace communication, and adult literacy supports.

Factor A:

Consider the type, frequency, and nature of the special education services required for the student in order to receive a FAPE. For this factor, consider the combined minutes and pervasiveness of direct SDI provided to the student in this domain, as documented in the IEP.

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No direct communication SPED services are required for FAPE; supplementary aids/services, including communication accommodations, require little staff effort/monitoring.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to communication supports is targeted, limited in intensity, and addresses specific, discrete needs. This is typically direct SDI provided less than 60 minutes weekly. At least 1 communication goal is present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are supportive and supplemental. <input type="checkbox"/> Supplementary aids and services, including communication accommodations, require staff planning or preparation with some follow-through but are predictable and with minimal disruption. 	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to communication supports is necessary to maintain consistent access and progress and is delivered multiple times per week and/or across multiple routines/settings/periods. This is typically direct SDI provided between 1 hour and 5 hours weekly multiple times per week. Multiple communication goals are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are necessary, provide and sustain SDI implementation, and require planning and staff coordination. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent provision/offering of supplementary aids/services; communication accommodations or modifications require active staff involvement and individualized implementation with ongoing monitoring or judgement. <input type="checkbox"/> Communication services are regular and necessary to sustain educational access and participation; the student relies on structured, ongoing communication instruction/supports across multiple settings. <input type="checkbox"/> Student might use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and, if so, uses AAC independently or with minimal staff support. 	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to communication supports is intensive, frequent, and often pervasive such that the services substantially structure participation throughout the day. Multiple communication goals are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services drive the design, delivery, and sustainability of the student’s communication programming across settings. <input type="checkbox"/> Services are daily or near-continuous, whether scheduled as blocks or embedded across most routines. <input type="checkbox"/> Communication services are frequent, pervasive, or integrated throughout the day, and, without them the student cannot meaningfully communicate, participate, or demonstrate learning across the school day. <input type="checkbox"/> Student might use AAC, and, if so, uses AAC with ongoing or pervasive staff support. <input type="checkbox"/> Communication needs significantly structure daily participation (how the student responds, initiates, and accesses instruction).

Factor B:

Are there any required certifications, licensures, or other qualifications for personnel serving the student?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No specialized qualifications for SPED providers required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Communication supports can be implemented by typically qualified staff using routine training supports. Required training is routine, universal, or easily transferable.</p>	<p>Speech Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) supervised by a licensed speech language pathologist (SLP) or a licensed SLP is required to implement communication services effectively.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Highly specialized expertise or advanced qualifications are required (AAC specialist/sign language interpreter/ DB intervener/AT specialist) and/ or coordinated multi-provider team documented in IEP and are in addition to licensed SLP or SLPA being supervised by a licensed SLP. <input type="checkbox"/> Highly individualized systems require expert oversight (e.g., complex AAC systems, intensive language systems planning, specialized communication access supports); without this expertise, services would be ineffective and the student's access/communication would be significantly compromised.

Factor C:

Is there an identified or curriculum-required provider-to-student ratio for the student to receive the appropriate services (beyond what is typical for same age span/grade level peers, and does it directly enable access and participation rather than general supervision)?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No reduced ratio required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Reduced ratio is intermittently required. Communication supports can usually be implemented through typical classroom routines and shared staff support. Staff support is intermittent and responsive.</p>	<p>A planned reduced ratio is required at specific times/activities to support effective communication and participation. Ratio is required during key contexts (group work, transitions, academic responding, social interactions). Support may be shared but must be intentional and reliable. Student may need regular partner facilitation (prompting/modeling) but also has periods of independence.</p>	<p>The student requires a highly restrictive or near continuous ratio (often effectively 1:1 communication partner support) to communicate meaningfully across the day. Ratio needs apply across most or all of the day, not just specific activities; without this ratio, the student cannot reliably express needs, participate, or demonstrate their learning.</p>

Factor D:

Is there any equipment or technology required beyond what we'd expect most peers in the student's age group/grade level to require, and is it essential for participation toward the student's current goals?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>Standard materials; no special technology or equipment required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Equipment or technology supplements communication, but the student can typically demonstrate functional communication without equipment/technology. Minimal training required for staff or the student.</p> <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Visual supports (pictures, symbols, word banks); communication boards used intermittently; simple voice output devices used in limited situations; captioning or basic amplification used occasionally; communication apps used as optional supports.</p>	<p>Equipment or technology is routinely required for the student to communicate effectively and access instruction across significant portions of the day. Staff and the student need predictable training and ongoing support.</p> <p>This might look like:</p> <p>AAC systems used regularly but with emerging independence; speech generating devices programmed for academic and social contexts; communication technology integrated into daily routines; visual or digital communication systems required for transitions, participation, or comprehension; technology used consistently to reduce communication related frustration or breakdowns.</p>	<p>Equipment or technology is foundational to the student's ability to communicate; without it, the student cannot meaningfully express needs, participate, or demonstrate their learning. Systems are highly individualized and complex. Requires intensive training, ongoing programming, and staff facilitation.</p> <p>This might look like:</p> <p>High tech AAC systems that are the student's primary means of communication; integrated communication systems used across academic, behavioral, and social contexts; AAC required to prevent significant frustration, withdrawal, or behavioral escalation; technology that structures all expressive and receptive communication; systems requiring consistent partner training and modeling.</p>

Domain 4: Independent Functioning Supports

Definition: This domain captures the individualized specially designed instruction (SDI) and supports around independent functioning that are required for the student to manage routines, transitions, organization, self regulation, and functional participation in the school day. It reflects executive functioning, self-management, adaptive behavior, and independence, separate from academic or behavioral intervention.

This domain includes, but is not limited to:

- ▶ Direct services regardless of whether provided in general education or special education classrooms/settings as evidenced by schedule of services (could be delivered by pullout [removes student from general education classroom/setting to deliver], in-class support [support provided in a general education classroom/setting], co teach [a general education and special education teacher providing evidence-based coteaching instruction and supports in a general education classroom/setting], or other delivery methods)
- ▶ Indirect services only when they remain student-specific, are ongoing or recurring, and are essential to the student's access and meaningful progress
- ▶ Executive functioning or self-management supports (planning, organization, initiation)
- ▶ Self management and independence goals
- ▶ Transition supports within the school day
- ▶ Adaptive routines and environmental structuring
- ▶ Supervision needed for functional participation (not safety driven behavior)

This domain does NOT include:

- ▶ Academic instruction (Addressed in Domain 1)
- ▶ Behavior intervention plans (Addressed in Domain 2)
- ▶ Personal care or health procedures (Addressed in Domain 5)
- ▶ Expressive and receptive communication needs (Addressed in Domain 3)

Key Considerations While Reviewing IEP and This Domain:

What individualized SDI and supports are required in the domain of independent functioning for the student to manage themselves independently within school routines and expectations, as well as across settings (if necessary for FAPE)?

Key Considerations Around Age/Grade Level and This Domain:

Rate intensity based on what is required beyond what is typical for same age/grade level peers, and whether the supports are essential for access and progress toward the student's goals. For children 3 through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten), routines and transitions are staff-supported for most children, so concentrate on supports that are far beyond typical for same age peers. Also keep in mind for children 3 through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten) who are served in the pre-K classroom setting, it is possible for a dually certified teacher to serve as both a/the general education and special education teacher. For eligible students who are continuing enrollment after meeting graduation requirements, focus likely shifts to independence levels in adult routines (time management, transportation, workplace habits, self-direction and motivation, etc.).

#4 Independent Functioning Supports

Factor A:

Consider the type, frequency, and nature of the special education services required for the student in order to receive a FAPE. For this factor, consider the combined minutes and pervasiveness of direct SDI provided to the student in this domain, as documented in the IEP.

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No direct independent functioning SPED services are required for FAPE; supplementary aids/ services, including independent functioning accommodations, require little staff effort/ monitoring.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to independent functioning supports is targeted, limited in intensity, and addresses specific, discrete needs. This is typically direct SDI provided less than 60 minutes weekly. At least 1 independent functioning, executive functioning, or self-management goal is present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are supportive and supplemental. <input type="checkbox"/> Supplementary aids and services, including independent functioning accommodations, require staff planning or preparation with some follow-through but are predictable and with minimal disruption. <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal ongoing monitoring or adjustment is required. <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Occasional check ins to support organization or task initiation; limited instruction in routines or self management strategies; support provided during specific transitions or activities; services that occur less than daily or only at identified points.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to independent functioning supports is necessary to maintain consistent access and progress and is delivered multiple times per week and/or across multiple routines/settings/ periods. This is typically direct SDI provided between 1 hour and 5 hours weekly multiple times per week. Multiple independent functioning, executive functioning, or self-management goals are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are necessary, provide and sustain SDI implementation, and require planning and staff coordination. <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent provision/offering of supplementary aids/services; independent functioning accommodations or modifications require active staff involvement and individualized implementation with ongoing monitoring or judgement. <input type="checkbox"/> Services are regular and necessary to sustain the student's ability to manage routines, transitions, and participation, but they do not dominate the school day. <input type="checkbox"/> Supports are targeted to specific routines, times, or skill areas, are predictable and instructional in nature, and are designed to build independence rather than replace it. <input type="checkbox"/> Student demonstrates partial independence with consistent support. 	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to independent functioning supports is intensive, frequent, and often pervasive such that the services substantially structure participation throughout the day. Multiple independent functioning, executive functioning, or self-management goals are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services drive the design, delivery, and sustainability of the student's independent functioning programming across settings. <input type="checkbox"/> Independent functioning services are intensive and frequent, and without them, the student would be unable to manage routines, transitions, or functional participation across the school day. <input type="checkbox"/> Services are daily or near-continuous, whether scheduled as blocks or embedded across most routines. <input type="checkbox"/> Services structure the student's day, not just support it. <input type="checkbox"/> Student requires ongoing staff facilitation for initiation, persistence, and completion. <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Continuous or near continuous facilitation of routines and transitions; intensive instruction embedded in most activities; repeated prompting, modeling, and scaffolding throughout the day; services that define how the student moves, participates, and engages across settings.</p>

#4 Independent Functioning Supports

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
		<p>This might look like: Daily instruction in routines, organization, or self management; organizational coaching; calendar support; regular support for transitions, initiation, or task completion; scheduled services embedded across settings or activities; ongoing instruction to generalize independent functioning skills.</p>	

Factor B:

Are there any required certifications, licensures, or other qualifications for personnel serving the student?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No specialized qualifications for SPED providers required for FAPE. OR No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Independent functioning supports can be implemented by typically qualified staff using routine training supports. Required training is routine, universal, or easily transferable.</p>	<p>Personnel with specific training, documented competencies, or specialized knowledge, but not advanced licensure or rare expertise, are required. Qualifications are student specific and tied to identified needs.</p>	<p>Highly specialized expertise or advanced qualifications are required, and instruction cannot be delivered effectively without this level of professional skill. These would include, but not be limited to: O&M/ TVI/TODHH/DB intervener. Significant professional judgment is required to design and adjust supports. Qualifications may drive staffing, placement, or service delivery decisions.</p>

Factor C:

Is there an identified or curriculum-required provider-to-student ratio for the student to receive the appropriate services (beyond what is typical for same age span/grade level peers, and does it directly enable access and participation rather than general supervision)?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No reduced ratio required for FAPE. OR No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Reduced ratio is intermittently required. Independent functioning supports can typically be shared across students. The student can initiate and complete most routines with minimal staff involvement.</p>	<p>A planned reduced ratio is required at specific times, settings, or activities to maintain functional independence. Support may be shared, but coverage must be intentional and reliable. Staff support is regular but not continuous.</p>	<p>The student requires a highly restrictive or near continuous provider to student ratio to function independently during the school day. A dedicated or near constant staff presence is required. Ratio needs may define placement, schedule, or participation opportunities.</p>

Factor D:

Is there any equipment or technology required beyond what we'd expect most peers in the student's age group/grade level to require, and is it essential for participation toward the student's current goals?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>Standard materials; no special technology or equipment required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment or technology is supplemental and helps the student function more efficiently, but the student can manage some routines, transitions, and organization without consistent reliance on it and can demonstrate functional independence with minimal prompting. <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal training is required for staff or the student. <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Visual schedules or checklists used as reminders; timers for occasional task completion; color coding or folders for organization; simple self monitoring tools used intermittently; break cards used occasionally for self regulation.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment or technology is routinely required for the student to manage daily routines, transitions, organization, or self regulation and must be implemented consistently for the student to function independently. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and the student need predictable training and ongoing support. <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment supports and sustains independence but does not fully replace it. <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Consistent use of visual or digital schedules throughout the day; task analysis systems broken into sequenced steps; self monitoring or regulation apps used daily; organizational systems that must be maintained by staff; technology used to support transitions, initiation, or task completion across settings.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment or technology is foundational to the student's ability to function independently during the school day. Without it, the student would be unable to initiate, transition, organize, or regulate sufficiently to participate. <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing staff facilitation, monitoring, and adjustment are required. <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment defines how the student moves through the day. <p>This might look like:</p> <p>Integrated systems that structure the entire school day (routines, transitions, tasks); continuous visual or digital supports required for all activities; technology that replaces internal executive functioning (initiation, sequencing, completion); systems requiring constant staff setup, prompting, or monitoring; equipment that determines staffing patterns or environmental structure.</p>

Domain 5: Personal Care / Health Supports

Definition: This domain captures the individualized specially designed instruction (SDI) and supports around personal care, health, and medically related care that are required for the student to attend school safely and access the educational environment (or community if applicable to the student and required for FAPE). It reflects physical support needs and medical complexity, not instructional or behavioral need. Personal care and health supports do not have to align with definitions for Personal Care Services for Medicaid billing purposes. These supports are provided based on the student's educational need and may not meet the criteria of being medically necessary for Medicaid reimbursement.

This domain includes, but is not limited to:

- ▶ Direct services regardless of whether provided in general education or special education classrooms/settings as evidenced by schedule of services (could be delivered by pullout [removes student from general education classroom/setting to deliver], in-class support [support provided in a general education classroom/setting], co teach [a general education and special education teacher providing evidence-based coteaching instruction and supports in a general education classroom/setting], or other delivery methods)
- ▶ Indirect services only when they remain student-specific, are ongoing or recurring, and are essential to the student's access and meaningful access
- ▶ Toileting, feeding, mobility, and hygiene assistance
- ▶ Nursing services and health procedures
- ▶ Medical monitoring or interventions
- ▶ Health related assistive equipment
- ▶ Personal care driven staffing or ratio requirements
- ▶ Training and coordination related to health needs

This domain does NOT include:

- ▶ Academic or instructional supports (Addressed in Domain 1)
- ▶ Communication systems unless medically driven (Addressed in Domain 3)
- ▶ Behavioral supervision unrelated to health/safety (Addressed in Domain 2)
- ▶ Independent functioning services unless primarily driven by medical needs (Addressed in Domain 4)

Key Considerations While Reviewing IEP and This Domain:

What individualized SDI and supports in the domain of personal care and health are required for the student to attend and participate in school safely and across settings (if necessary for FAPE)?

Key Considerations Around Age/Grade Level and This Domain:

Rate intensity based on what is required beyond what is typical for same age/grade level peers, and whether the supports are essential for access and progress toward the student's goals. For children 3 through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten), most students will need hands-on help from staff, so concentrate on supports that are far beyond typical for same age peers. Also keep in mind for children 3 through 5 years of age (not in kindergarten) who are served in the pre-K classroom setting, it is possible for a dually certified teacher to serve as both a/the general education and special education teacher. For eligible students who are continuing enrollment after meeting graduation requirements, focus likely shifts to those supports that are necessary across community-based settings (work sites, travel, healthcare management).

Factor A:

Consider the type, frequency, and nature of the special education services required for the student in order to receive a FAPE. For this factor, consider the combined minutes and pervasiveness of direct specially designed instruction and related services provided to the student in this domain, as documented in the IEP.

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No direct personal care/ health SPED services are required for FAPE; supplementary aids/ services, including personal care/health accommodations, require little staff effort/ monitoring.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to personal care/health supports is targeted, limited in intensity, and addresses specific, discrete needs. This is typically direct SDI provided less than 60 minutes weekly. At least 1 functional goal related to personal care/health is present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are supportive and supplemental. <input type="checkbox"/> Personal care/health services can be scheduled around instruction with minimal disruption. <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal ongoing monitoring or adjustment is required. 	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to personal care/ health supports is necessary to maintain consistent access and progress and is delivered multiple times per week and/or across multiple routines/settings/periods. This is typically direct SDI provided between 1 hour and 5 hours weekly multiple times per week. Multiple functional goals related to personal care/health are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services are necessary, provide and sustain SDI implementation, and require planning and staff coordination <input type="checkbox"/> Personal care/health services are regular and necessary to sustain the student’s safety and access to the school environment but do not dominate the school day. <input type="checkbox"/> The student requires regular monitoring or assistance. <input type="checkbox"/> Personal care/health needs are stable but require consistent attention. <input type="checkbox"/> Personal care/health services occur across multiple parts of the day but allow for periods of independence. 	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Direct SDI related to personal care/ health supports is intensive, frequent, and often pervasive such that the services substantially structure participation throughout the day. Multiple functional goals related to personal care/health are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect SPED services drive the design, delivery, and sustainability of the student’s personal care/health programming across settings. <input type="checkbox"/> Personal care/health services are daily or near-continuous, whether scheduled as blocks or embedded across most routines. <input type="checkbox"/> Personal care/health services are intensive and frequent, and, without them, the student would be unable to attend school safely or access the educational environment. <input type="checkbox"/> Student requires ongoing monitoring or hands on assistance with personal care/ health needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Personal care/health services significantly structure the school day. <input type="checkbox"/> Health or safety risks are present if personal care/health services are reduced or delayed.

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
		<p>This might look like: Daily assistance with personal care routines; regular health monitoring tied to school participation; scheduled support for feeding, mobility, or positioning; predictable interventions embedded into the school day.</p>	<p>This might look like: Continuous or near continuous personal care support; frequent health related interventions throughout the day; services integrated into most activities and transitions; intensive supports that cannot be postponed or clustered.</p>

Factor B:

Are there any required certifications, licensures, or other qualifications for personnel serving the student?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No specialized qualifications for SPED providers required for FAPE. OR No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>The student’s personal care/health supports do not require personnel with specialized certifications or licensure beyond typical school based training. No ongoing clinical judgment or specialized credential is required.</p>	<p>Personnel with specific training, credentials, or documented competencies, but not continuous clinical licensure or advanced specialization, are required. Qualifications are student specific and tied to identified needs. Supports may require periodic clinical oversight or consultation.</p>	<p>Personnel with advanced certifications, licensure, or highly specialized qualifications are required, and instruction cannot be safely provided without this expertise. Continuous or frequent clinical judgment is necessary. Qualifications may drive staffing, scheduling, or placement decisions.</p>

Factor C:

Is there an identified or curriculum-required provider-to-student ratio for the student to receive the appropriate services (beyond what is typical for same age span/grade level peers, and does it directly enable access and participation rather than general supervision)?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>No reduced ratio required for FAPE. OR No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Reduced ratio is intermittently required. No requirement for continuous or dedicated staff presence. Staff availability, rather than ratio, is most often the focus.</p>	<p>A planned reduced ratio is required for portions of the day or for specific activities to ensure safety and access. Support may be shared, but coverage must be intentional and reliable. Staff presence is regular but not continuous. Ratio requirements are tied to specific health, mobility, or personal care needs.</p>	<p>Highly restrictive or near continuous ratio is required (e.g., dedicated or near constant staff support) to attend school safely and access the educational environment. The student cannot function safely without continuous supervision or assistance. Ratio requirements apply across most or all of the school day. Ratio needs may dictate placement, scheduling, or environmental access.</p>

Factor D:

Is there any equipment or technology required beyond what we'd expect most peers in the student's age group/grade level to require, and is it essential for participation toward the student's current goals?

NO SUPPORT REQUIRED OR DOCUMENTED IN IEP	MINIMUM	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT
<p>Standard materials; no special technology or equipment required for FAPE.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No documentation or evidence in the IEP.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment or technology is used intermittently and situationally. <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal training is required for staff or the student. <input type="checkbox"/> The student does not require continuous monitoring or physical assistance. <p>This might look like: Occasional use of mobility aids for long distances; simple health or comfort supports (e.g., cushions, basic positioning aids); intermittent use of monitoring tools with minimal follow up; adaptive equipment used for convenience rather than necessity; etc.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment or technology is routinely required to ensure the student's safety, health, or physical access and must be implemented consistently (typically daily or across multiple settings) throughout the school day. <input type="checkbox"/> Predictable staff or student training and monitoring are required. <input type="checkbox"/> Some staff assistance or oversight is required. <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment is intentionally selected based on the student's physical or health needs. <p>This might look like: Daily use of mobility equipment that requires staff assistance; health related monitoring equipment requiring routine checks; adaptive toileting, feeding, or positioning equipment used consistently; assistive devices that support endurance, posture, or physical regulation; technology used regularly to monitor health status impacting school access; etc.</p>	<p>Majority of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment or technology is foundational and essential to the student's ability to attend school safely, remain medically stable, or physically access the educational environment; without it, the student would be unable to attend school safely or would face significant health or safety risk. <input type="checkbox"/> Requires intensive staff training, continuous monitoring, or hands on physical support. <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment or technology drives staffing, scheduling, and environmental design. <p>This might look like: Complex mobility systems required at all times; continuous health or medical monitoring equipment; specialized feeding, respiratory, or positioning systems; equipment integrated into emergency or safety response plans; technology that determines how and where the student can participate during the day; etc.</p>

How to Determine the Tier of Intensity Based on Domain Scores:

Once each factor has been considered within each domain and a domain score is achieved (i.e., the highest rated factor within a particular domain equates to that domain score), each of the five domain scores will be added up to achieve a composite score of the total overall points.

Once the composite score is calculated, the tier of intensity will be determined by the following:

OVERALL POINT TOTAL	TIER OF INTENSITY
0-1	Tier 1
2-4	Tier 2
5-7	Tier 3
8-10	Tier 4
11-13	Tier 5
A score of 14 specifically due to four domains rated as significant and one domain rated as moderate	Tier 6
A score of 15 due to all 5 domains rated as significant	Tier 7

The exceptions to the above occur in three service and placement situations:

1. If the student receives speech therapy as their only instructional service, the assigned tier is Tier 1.
2. If the student is placed by their admission, review, and dismissal committee in a private or public day placement program, the assigned tier will be Tier 7.
3. If the student is placed by their admission, review, and dismissal committee in a residential placement program, the assigned tier will be Tier 8.

Service Groups

Service groups are designed to recognize that, beyond a base level of special education funding determined through the intensity tiers, some students require **additional, measurable resources** to implement their individualized education programs (IEPs). While the tier intensity funding amount is intended to support core special education instruction and general programmatic costs, service groups function as **add-on funding mechanisms** that account for **variations in service intensity, staffing requirements, and delivery costs** across students.

The premise of service groups is that certain services—such as related services delivered at higher frequencies or sustained 1:1 provider support—create **incremental costs** that are not adequately captured through a single base allocation. By layering service group funding on top of intensity tier funding, the model more accurately aligns state funding with the **actual service needs documented in a student’s IEP**, while maintaining transparency, predictability, and consistency across districts.

Service groups are structured to be:

- ▶ **IEP-driven**, relying on documented services and supports;
- ▶ **Mutually exclusive within categories**, to prevent overlapping or duplicative funding; and
- ▶ **Additive**, ensuring that students receive supplemental funding only when additional services are required.

The model includes five service groups, organized into two categories:

- ▶ **Related services intensity (Service Groups 1–3)**
- ▶ **1:1 provider support intensity (Service Groups 4–5)**

A student may qualify for **at most one service group from each category**, or none, depending on their IEP.

Service Groups 1–3: Related Services Intensity

Service Groups 1 through 3 provide additional funding based on the **amount and type of related services** a student receives during a six week period, as documented in the student’s IEP. These service groups are mutually exclusive; a student may qualify for **only one of Service Group 1, 2, or 3**.

Service Group 1: Minimum Intensity Related Services

A student qualifies for Service Group 1 if **one or more** of the following conditions are met:

- The total related services received by the student are **at least 180 minutes and less than 270 minutes per six week period**, as documented in the IEP; **OR**
- The student receives **special transportation** as a related service; **OR**
- The student receives **parent counseling and training** as a related service.

This service group recognizes that even relatively lower amounts of related services—or specific services with unique cost structures—require additional staffing, coordination, or transportation resources beyond base funding.

Service Group 2: Moderate Intensity Related Services

A student qualifies for Service Group 2 if:

- The total related services received by the student are **at least 270 minutes and less than 540 minutes per six week period**, as documented in the IEP.

This service group reflects a **moderate level of service intensity**, typically involving multiple service types or more frequent service delivery, which increases staffing demands and scheduling complexity for districts.

Service Group 3: Significant Intensity Related Services

A student qualifies for Service Group 3 if:

- The total related services received by the student are **at least 540 minutes per six week period**, as documented in the IEP.

This service group represents students with **significant related services needs**, requiring sustained involvement from specialized providers. The add on funding acknowledges the substantial and ongoing resource commitment required to deliver these services with fidelity.

Service Groups 4–5: 1:1 Provider Support Intensity

Service Groups 4 and 5 provide additional funding based on the **extent to which a student requires a 1:1 provider to student ratio** during the instructional day, as documented in the IEP. These service groups are also mutually exclusive; a student may qualify for **either Service Group 4 or Service Group 5**, or neither.

Service Group 4: Moderate 1:1 Support

A student qualifies for Service Group 4 if:

- The student requires a **1:1 provider to student ratio for at least 50 percent and less than 80 percent** of the student's instructional day.

This service group captures students who require **moderate individualized support** to access instruction, while not needing continuous 1:1 assistance throughout the entire day.

Service Group 5: Significant 1:1 Support

A student qualifies for Service Group 5 if:

- The student requires a **1:1 provider to student ratio for at least 80 percent** of the student's instructional day.

This service group reflects **significant support needs**, often associated with the highest staffing costs, and is intended to ensure districts are adequately resourced to provide consistent, individualized support across nearly the full instructional day.