

# Schools for All Children

Fall 2016

## The Los Angeles Unified School District's Position Paper Orthopedically Impaired Itinerant Services

Orthopedically Impaired Itinerant services are provided to support students with the eligibility of Orthopedic Impairment that have been placed in a special day program where the teacher does not possess a credential specific to physical and health impairment.

### **STUDENTS WITH LOW INCIDENCE DISABILITIES**

An orthopedic impairment is a low incidence disability.

The California Education Code Section 56026.5 defines a low incidence disability as "...a severe disabling condition with an expected incidence rate of less than one percent of the total statewide enrollment in kindergarten through grade 12. For purposes of this definition, severe disabling conditions are hearing impairments, vision impairments, and severe orthopedic impairments, or any combination thereof." A low incidence disability is further defined to state "...vision impairments do not include disabilities within the function of vision specified in Section 56338." Additionally, Section 56000.5 (a) (2) finds and declares that "Pupils with low incidence disabilities require highly specialized services, equipment, and materials."

### **BACKGROUND**

California Education Code 44265.6 provides that pupils who have Orthopedic Impairment (OI) eligibility must be taught by teachers whose professional preparation and credential are specific to that handicapping condition. As the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team considers the full range of placement options, some students with orthopedic impairments return to their neighborhood or home school. There, they are sometimes placed in a special day program (SDP) where the teacher does not possess a credential specific to physical and health impairments. These students may be provided with OI related services.

An orthopedic impairment is a bodily impairment that is severe enough to negatively affect a child's educational performance (IDEA 2004). Orthopedic impairments include a wide variety of disorders that can be divided into three main areas: neuro-motor impairments, degenerative diseases, and musculoskeletal disorders. Neuro-motor impairment is damage or an abnormality to one's brain, spinal cord, or nervous system. Degenerative diseases refer to various diseases that affect motor development. Musculoskeletal disorders are any of a variety of conditions that result in physical limitations. The specific characteristics of an individual who has an orthopedic

impairment will depend on the specific disease and its severity, as well as additional individual factors.

For most students with orthopedic impairments, the supports and/or services for learning is focused on accommodations and adaptations necessary to access the curriculum and the educational setting. Classroom accommodations for students with orthopedic impairments vary dependent on the individual needs of the student and the characteristics of the specific impairment. Students eligible as OI may require supports and/or services that include:

- Special seating arrangements to develop useful posture and movements;
- Instruction focused on the development of gross and fine motor skills;
- Augmentative or alternative communication devices or assistive technology.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this position paper is to identify guidelines for OI services available to students with orthopedic impairments within Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) that are enrolled in a special day class program where the teacher does not possess a credential specific to Physical and Health Impairments (PHI). The continuum of service delivery options for OI service support aligns with the District's three-tiered model of prevention and intervention and will be described in the following order:

- Section I: Pre-referral Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>)
- Section II: Referral for OI itinerant service
- Section III: OI Intervention Strategies within Special Education
- Section IV: OI Service Completion Guidelines

## **POSITION**

In an effort to ensure a successful school experience for all children, the District believes that:

1. Students will be able to access their educational environment.
2. Students will take an active role in their educational program.
3. Students will participate in their educational program to the maximum extent possible.
4. Students will take an active role in postsecondary education and community activities.
5. Students with disabilities will develop functional/academic skills, and participate in meaningful daily school activities.
6. Students eligible for OI services will be provided with purposeful, targeted interventions designed to help mitigate obstacles that may impede learning or active participation in school or society.
7. Students receiving OI services have the opportunity to participate in an integrated, educational environment with non-disabled, same aged peers.

## **SECTION I**

### **PRE-REFERRAL AND RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTION (RTI<sup>2</sup>)**

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) is a systemic multi-tiered framework that guides the development of a well-integrated and seamless system of instruction (e.g. literacy, numeracy, language development, and positive behavior support across content areas) and intervention that

is matched to student need and directed by student outcome data from multiple measures. (BUL-4827.1: Multi-Tiered Framework for Instruction, Intervention, and Support)

The RtI<sup>2</sup> framework establishes a process for providing increasing levels of instructional time and intensity whereby the needs of all learners are identified, supported early, and effectively, and high performing students have access to acceleration in learning. The RtI<sup>2</sup> framework is based on the provision of good, quality, first instruction and the use of data to identify students for appropriate acceleration and interventions. RtI<sup>2</sup> implementation is everyone's responsibility and advances academic achievement through frequent progress monitoring, ongoing data collection and analysis, as well as the provision of immediate, evidence-based intervention for students who need it.

There are five essential components of RtI<sup>2</sup> :

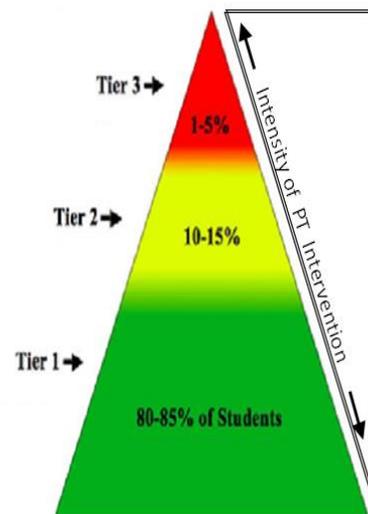
1. Multi-tiered framework to instruction and intervention
2. Problem-solving process
3. Data-based decision making
4. Academic engagement time
5. Professional development

At each tier of service in a multi-tiered approach to instruction and intervention, teachers provide instruction that is differentiated, culturally responsive, data based, and aligned to the Common Core Standards. All students should have universal access to high-quality instruction. Universal access refers to the right of all students to equal opportunity and access to high quality, grade level instruction and behavioral support. The OI Itinerant teacher is an important part of the RtI<sup>2</sup> process in the general education setting. By participating in this intervention approach, the OI Itinerant teacher contributes expertise to the problem solving process and provides strategies for any student who may have physical conditions that restrict their ability to gain physical access to the campus and/or educational activities. The problem solving process requires a step-by-step focus to define the problem, analyze the problem, implement intervention strategies, and evaluate the response to the instruction and intervention.

**Tier 3: Intensive Instruction and Intervention**  
“Intensive Intervention,” is for an estimated 1-5% of students that need individualized and/or very small-group instruction that is highly focused, in addition to Tiers 1 & 2, and designed to accelerate student progress.

**Tier 2: Strategic or Supplemental Instruction**  
It is expected that 10-15% of students will need additional time and type of instruction to learn successfully.

**Tier 1: Core Instruction**  
It is expected that of all of the students receiving core instruction, 80-85% of students will be proficient when good first instruction is delivered.



## A Problem Solving Cycle in General Education

### Identification

OI Itinerant teachers may be called upon to assist in the educational access issues students may be experiencing.

### Problem Analysis:

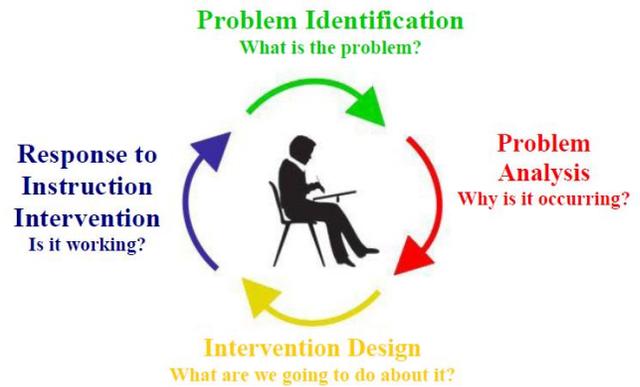
OI Itinerant teachers may be called upon to evaluate how and when a physical condition might interfere with, limit, or prevent physical and/or educational access issues students may be experiencing.

### Intervention Design:

OI Itinerant teachers will assist the educational team with strategies, accommodations, or adaptations to the campus and educational activities for students experiencing physical challenges when accessing the campus and/or educational activities.

### Response to Instruction and Intervention:

OI Itinerant teachers may be called upon to assist the educational team with progress monitoring, ongoing data collection, and evaluation to determine the success or failure of an intervention related to physical challenges. Results are utilized throughout the school year to determine the nature of the service, and the level of intensity and/or support necessary for individual students with orthopedic impairments.



## Intervention Strategies

### Tier 1: Core Instruction:

Within the Tier 1 level of universal access to core curriculum and instruction for all students, the OI Itinerant teacher acts as a consultant to educational teams regarding issues related to the skeletal and muscular functions affecting movement. Consultation may be formal or informal and focuses on increasing the general knowledge base of administrators, teachers, school staff, and parents regarding the needs of students with physical movement limitations. The consultations may include:

- Distribution of literature, provision of resources, in-services for staff and parents regarding medical conditions and their effects on development
- Suggestions for proper seating that encourages healthy posture and movement
- Suggestions for creating environmental conditions that support gross and fine motor development and skills

### Tier 2: Strategic or Supplemental Instruction and Intervention

Within the Tier 2 level of intervention serving students who are not making adequate progress, the OI Itinerant teacher is qualified to screen a student for possible educational adaptations based on the student's physical limitations. An OI Itinerant service screening includes an observation of the student conducted in a natural environment to elicit a representative sample of his/her

physical motor movements and abilities. Screening observations are conducted in collaboration with the Least Restrictive Environment Counselor (LRE-C) and do not involve any activity that removes the student from his/her regular school program or singles-out him/her from peers.

The OI Itinerant teacher acts as a member of the educational team and may engage in one or more of the following activities:

- Observes the student in the classroom and/or other environments
- Consults with parents, teachers, and other school staff regarding concerns about the student
- Reviews teacher data regarding the outcomes of the classroom accommodations from Tier 1
- Provides follow-up observation, as appropriate

The OI Itinerant teacher's observation and evaluation of a student's educational access that may be due to his/her physical limitations can result in the following outcomes:

- Provision of information to the classroom teacher, school staff, or parent to support the determination that the student's physical abilities are adequate to access their educational instruction and environment;
- Provision of recommendations for targeted interventions or program adaptations to be implemented and documented by the classroom teacher and/or parents;
- Recommendation to schedule a Student Support and Progress Team (SSPT) meeting to address student's physical needs, review the program adaptations and their effect on the student's progress, and next steps.

### **Tier 3: Intensive Instruction and Intervention**

If the student does not demonstrate a physical limitation that is significant enough to meet the criteria for referral for an OI Itinerant screening, the Tier 3 support of the OI Itinerant teacher can result in follow-up consultation and monitoring to the educational staff and parents to support the student's SSPT determined targeted physical needs. The focus of the intensive support is on specific physical abilities and skills required by the student to access the educational program.

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to implement and document progress for the recommended targeted interventions. It is the role of the OI Itinerant teacher to consult with the classroom teacher and parent on a regular basis to monitor the recommended supports and/or adaptations as well as to make adjustments to the recommendations when appropriate.

At the Tier 3 level of instruction and intervention, a 504 plan may be considered to ensure the student has the appropriate recommendations and/or adaptations necessary to continue accessing and making progress in his/her curriculum.

If a student continues to struggle with physical access despite the consistent, documented implementation and use of targeted interventions and adaptations, a referral for a special education evaluation in all areas of suspected disability should be made. Within the Tier 3 level of services, the OI Itinerant teacher may utilize the results of any screening observations as

factors in determining the appropriate assessments necessary to evaluate the student's physical needs.

## SECTION II

### Referral and Assessment

*The mission of the Division of Special Education is to provide leadership, guidance, and support to the school community in order to maximize learning for all students within an inclusive environment so that each student will contribute to and benefit from our diverse society.*

The purpose of an initial special education eligibility evaluation is to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs (34 CFR §300.15). The results of the evaluation will help to determine whether a child with a physical or health impairment requires OI Itinerant services.

Upon request, the school staff and/or District providers, including an OI Itinerant teacher, will observe and evaluate the student's physical abilities that support or limit his/her participation in and/or access to his/her educational environment and/or curriculum. The OI Itinerant teacher's observation may include:

- Review of academic skills including, but not limited to, school readiness, reading, math, and activities of daily living;
- Teacher and/or parent interviews;
- Observations of access to the campus and the curriculum in the educational environment.

The OI Itinerant teacher will analyze and evaluate all components of the three-tiered approach within the context of the student's environment and curriculum. If the student is supported by the appropriately credentialed teacher and, with appropriate supports, is able to access his/her educational environment and make progress, then OI Itinerant teacher's services are not required. When OI Itinerant teacher's services are not required, they will consult with the Least Restrictive Environment Counselor (LRE-C). If, however, the student's physical disability and health issues require additional support for accessing and progressing in the educational curriculum, OI Itinerant services would be recommended as a related service. Based on the student's assessed needs, the OI Itinerant teacher will use his/her professional expertise to recommend observations and/or screenings by other related service providers. Further assessments may result from these recommendations.

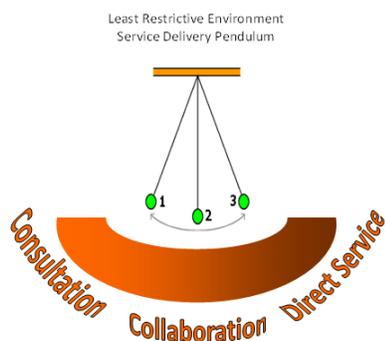
Based on the determination of the IEP team, some students with OI eligibilities who need more intensive levels of support may require placement in a special day program (SDP). If the SDP teacher does not possess a credential specific to physical and health impairments, the student would qualify for the services of an OI Itinerant teacher. The OI Itinerant teacher would support the implementation of the student's academic goals with a time and frequency determined by student need as documented in the student's IEP.

In instances where the student's health and physical conditions demonstrate an apparent orthopedic disability, a referral for a comprehensive special education assessment is appropriate

without the need to implement pre-referral interventions, adaptations, accommodations and/or modifications.

### SECTION III OI INTERVENTION STRATEGIES WITHIN SPECIAL EDUCATION

The District supports a variety of strategies for the delivery of OI Itinerant teacher services. Services may fall into any of these three categories and, like a pendulum, service delivery may swing between more intense and less intense depending on the level of support required to meet the student's core academic program needs:



- **Consultation** is a service provided indirectly to the student consisting of regular review of student progress, student observation, accommodations, and adaptations to core material, developing and modeling of instructional practices through communication between the general education teacher, the special education teacher, parent, and/or related service provider.

- **Collaboration** is a service by which general education teachers, special education teachers, and/or related service providers work together in the classroom and school community to teach and support students with physical and/or health impairments to meet their goals and objectives and to access the curriculum and participate in all educational activities.

- **Direct (Collaboration)** is a service by which general education teachers, special education teachers and/or related service providers work together to teach and support students with and without disabilities in the classroom. All are responsible for direct instruction, planning, and delivery of instruction, student achievement, progress monitoring, and discipline to support student goals and objectives and to access the curriculum and participate in all educational activities.

All providers are expected to report progress of the students with disabilities on their caseload toward meeting their IEP goals and objectives. Providers should coordinate with the school site to ensure they are following the school site procedures for reporting.

### SECTION IV OI ITINERANT TEACHER SERVICE COMPLETION GUIDELINES

Best practices require that expected outcomes and service completion guidelines are discussed with the IEP team upon the initiation of OI Itinerant services and upon change in services. The recommendation for continuation or discontinuation of OI Itinerant services is determined by the expertise of the OI Itinerant professional in collaboration with the IEP team. There are several factors the IEP team should consider when making decisions regarding OI Itinerant service completion:

1. The student's needs being addressed by OI services no longer negatively affect his/her educational performance in the general education or special education program.

2. The student no longer requires OI as a related service in order to benefit from his/her special education program.
3. The student's needs are better served by an alternative program and/or service, as determined by the IEP team.
4. Service is suspended because of a change in medical or physical status.
5. The student/parent refuses OI Itinerant services.
6. The student graduates from high school.
7. The student reaches the age of 22 years.
8. The current Special Day Program (SDP) teacher has an appropriate credential to service students with physical and health impairments.

## RELATED RESOURCES

Elliot, Judy. *Response to Intervention: What & Why?* The School Administrator. September 2008

*Providing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in State and District Assessments. An NCEO Policy Directions Number 7* by J. Elliot, J. Yesseldyke, M. Thurlow, and R. Erickson (1997) at the National Center on Educational Outcomes, University of Minnesota

REF-3557.1. *Implementation of Related Services Support for Students with Orthopedic Impairments in Special Day Programs* dated January 26, 2015, issued by Los Angeles Unified School District Office of the Division of Special Education

REF-4984.1 *Implementing a Multi-Tiered Framework for Instruction, Intervention, and Support* dated March 19, 2010, issued by Los Angeles Unified School District Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Support

Special Education Resource on the Internet (SERI)- (<http://www.seriweb.com/>)

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sacramento, 1996, California Department of Education, *Program Guidelines for Individuals Who Are Severely, Orthopedically Impaired*, 1996, Information specific to orthopedically impaired students is available from Policy Services Unit, Special Education Division, 721 Capital Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814

### **Guidelines to Request an Emergency Use Evacuation Chair**

Guidelines to request an emergency use Evacuation Chair for students who cannot negotiate stairs:

1. Determine if this is the best option for student, as it requires transfer to and from the evacuation area, and holds the child in a sling position. Someone who knows the child's disability and medical history should be involved in making that determination. Student should weigh at least 70 pounds.
2. Have all staff members\* (and back-ups) who may assist with transport of student or use of device take the Learning Zone course, "Assisting Students With Special Needs During an Emergency" (collect certificates to verify completion). A minimum of six school staff members must complete this course, if a school only has one student who will use the chair. At least ten school staff members must complete the course if there are two or more students who will use the chair.
3. Call/email the Office of Emergency Services after relevant staff has completed the online training to arrange delivery and hands-on training of all relevant staff members (and back-ups) on device. The training is participatory; everyone attending the training will rotate among the assisting roles, including being a passenger in the chair.

The expectation of the hands-on training is that schools will incorporate the Evacuation Chair into their drills, and practice with the chair. Schools are expected to train new staff members themselves after the initial hands-on training provided by the Office of Emergency Services.

\*It takes three adults to utilize the Evacuation Chair during an evacuation, and each person must have a designated back up. Any certificated or classified staff member can be trained.

**Schools are encouraged to consider relocating the classrooms of students who cannot easily negotiate stairs to the ground floor.**

Office of Emergency Services, School Operations  
Office of the Superintendent  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
333 S. Beaudry Ave., 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
(213) 241-3889

**Appendix**

**Access Opportunities to Learning:**

- Supports and services for behavior, language, communication, vision, and hearing needs
- Classroom support-aides and tutors
- Remedial instruction
- Counseling
- Behavioral planning
- Transportation
- Assistive technology
- Home, school, interagency collaboration
- Safety

**Classroom Accommodation and Instructional Strategies:**

- Cooperative group work
- Individualized grading
- Peer tutoring
- Draft copy assistance
- Instructional scaffolding
- Multi-modality materials
- Respectful interactions
- Instruction in smaller bits
- Build on smaller units
- Note taking
- Emphasis on study skills
- Focus on appropriate behaviors/choices

**Timing/Scheduling:**

- Extended time
- Particular time of day
- Several sessions
- Several days
- Frequent breaks