

Rifton Activity Chair

A Sample Letter of Educational Necessity

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Rifton Activity Chair

Components of a letter of Educational Necessity

Therapist/student information:

Date: _____

Nelson is enrolled at _____ and receives specialized academic instruction (SAI) in the Medically/Physically challenged class. Nelson is provided with related services specific to his primary IEP disability code of Multiple Disabilities and secondary code of Orthopedic Impairment.

Nelson's teacher and para-educators report ongoing difficulty with keeping his head in an upright position, which has made the process of feeding very challenging and potentially unsafe. Lack of positioning to enable both head and arm control has also limited Nelson's ability to participate in educational, music and speech activities. These concerns were brought to the attention of Nelson's IEP team. A team assessment including related service supports of speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy was requested to evaluate and address these issues.

Explain the impact of student disability as this relates to a daily function essential for the school experience:

[This segment is included if approving decision-maker is of the same or similar health care discipline.] Nelson's medical diagnosis is cerebral palsy, spastic quadriplegia, seizure disorder, myoclonus, and global developmental delays. Medical history includes asthma and GI reflux with chronic episodes of respiratory congestion. Nelson has the potential for aspiration while eating and drinking, so appropriate positioning is essential for his safety.

Nelson received an assessment on _____ to determine positioning needs in the context of his daily educational routines and tasks. This assessment was conducted by his multi-disciplinary team of related service providers: _____, PT, _____, OT and _____, SLP. Assessment concurred with the reports from classroom staff. It was determined that Nelson requires full postural support to maintain the upright seated posture and head control required for both switch-based education-related participation and for safer feeding techniques.

Explain the educational relevance/necessity of the requested adaptive device:

Nelson arrives in school in a transport stroller and currently remains in this device for the duration of the school day. This is inadequate for the educational environment and does not offer the customized positioning that Nelson needs; it has limited postural supports for his functional access to instruction.

Nelson requires full postural support to maintain the upright seated posture and head control required for both switch-based education-related participation and for safer feeding techniques. Appropriate adaptive seating will provide essential head and trunk supports as well as hi/lo and tilt-in-space features in order to enable Nelson to access switches and educational materials at various levels in his school environment. These features will also support positional changes for his complex feeding process, as well as enable complete pressure relief required to assure Nelson's skin health and ongoing class participation.

This adaptive equipment is necessary for Nelson to obtain two of his IEP goals, specifically:

"Nelson will successfully initiate right hand activation of switch during learning activity with no more than two verbal prompts, while seated with support of trunk laterals and butterfly harness."



“Nelson will maintain head control independent of head support for a minimum of 20 seconds duration at repeated intervals during oral feeding of lunch while seated in 15° or less of posterior tilt.”

Explain the specific adaptive device and components required to meet student needs:

A large hi-lo Rifton Activity Chair is requested to meet Nelson’s current educational needs and to enable access to his school routine with appropriate positioning for function and health.

Requested components include the adjustable backrest with spring, winged headrest, large trunk lateral pads, butterfly harness, large armrests and a tray, and a footboard with sandals.

The hi-lo base will allow Nelson to be raised or lowered while in the chair in order to access all the educational opportunities and classroom activities offered at our school. It will also enable multiple seating angles to promote improved head and trunk posture. Due to Nelson’s myoclonus, which refers to sudden, involuntary jerking motion of a muscle or muscle group, it is important that the chair also allows for some movement. The specialized back with spring will allow movement to decrease the impact of myoclonus and spasticity on Nelson’s posture.

A winged headrest is recommended to prevent injury during seizures and to enable appropriate head positioning during classroom activities. A pair of large trunk lateral pads as well as a butterfly harness are recommended for sufficient trunk stability and safety. Large armrests as well as a tray are recommended for additional support for Nelson’s trunk and upper extremities.

The footboard allows for foot placement, and will facilitate Nelson’s weight bearing through his legs and feet and overall postural control during functional sitting activities. Sandals are placed on the footboard to secure the foot position for Nelson’s specific positioning needs. Leg positioning and control is facilitated with the footboard’s knee angle that adjusts easily, while the footplate angle adjusts in increments of 5° over a range of 20° to support specific ankle and foot positions. The footboard can flip up, swing backward out of the way, or Nelson may use the footboard as a step for transfers. This Rifton Activity Chair will accommodate Nelson’s future growth in both weight and height because of the built-in adjustability of seat depth, seat width, and the seat height distance to footboard.

Nelson’s current wheeled seated transport device does not have the hi/lo or tilt-in-space features with additional supports that he requires for greater positioning variability in order to meet his academic and health needs.

Nelson’s related services assessment team was able to instruct the classroom staff in use of a borrowed Activity Chair for a trial period. Every day during the past week, Nelson has successfully used this chair once each day. Further opportunities in the chair were limited by the sharing system set up for this trial; the Activity Chair was simultaneously being used by another student and it was not possible to coordinate a schedule to meet both students’ needs.

Summarize main points in concluding sentence(s):

Nelson’s goals are to participate in switch-based activities to access learning technology across a variety of settings at school, as well as to improve his oral feeding capabilities. A Rifton Activity Chair will provide the specialized, customized, supportive seating that Nelson requires, along with the specialized back with spring that allows for movement to accommodate his positioning requirements due to medical issues of spasticity and seizures.

With improved seated positioning, Nelson will be better able to access classroom and daily activities and interact with his peers. With this adaptive seating, we feel confident Nelson could meet his IEP goals related to participation with feeding and adaptive switch access during his educational program.

This request has been respectfully submitted by _____, PT, _____, OT and _____, SLP.

