

Rifton Compass Chair

A Sample Letter of Educational Necessity

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PO Box 260, Rifton NY, 12471 • www.rifton.com • sales@rifton.com • **800.571.8198** • fax: 800.865.4674

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Components of a Letter of Educational Necessity

Date:

Therapist/student information:

Diego is currently a second grade student at _____ Elementary School. He spends 60% of his school day in an inclusion classroom and 40% in a special education classroom.

Diego's teacher and para-educators report that he lags substantially behind his peers in on-task activities and in-seat behaviors. When in the special education classroom, he has the opportunity to sit on therapy balls and air cushions, but when given a choice he frequently chooses a standard classroom seat. His educators have observed that Diego does not seek vestibular and proprioceptive input through repetitive rocking behavior, but rather requires a sense of stability for better postural control. However, when he sits in the standard chair in both the special education and inclusion classrooms, he struggles with maintaining an upright posture and slumps with his hips sliding forward on the seat within 3-5 minutes.

Diego then loses concentration and cannot stabilize his core to improve control of his upper extremities to participate in writing activities or interact in the classroom. He will get out of his chair or push back hard with his legs to regain stability and sensory input. This activity results in frequent tipping of the chair.

Explain the impact of student disability as this relates to a daily function essential for the school experience (This segment is included if the approving decision-maker is of the same or similar health care discipline):

Diego is an eight-year-old boy with autism. He was diagnosed at two years old. Diego presents with mild cognitive delay and moderate sensory disturbances which manifests in behavioral issues and poor social and communication skills. He has a difficult time processing sensory information such as where his body is in space and is often overwhelmed by the amount of sensory information that he has to process at once.

His postural control is fair, but he lacks endurance and has trouble with anticipatory and adaptive postural responses. Because Diego has a difficult time understanding where he is in space, he displays a slouched posture, fatigues quickly, and must conscientiously attend to sitting up. As his energy goes toward maintaining an upright posture, he has less focus on any other task at hand.

Diego additionally presents with mild motor incoordination in both upper and lower limbs and because of this, he is developmentally delayed in balance, gait, and bilateral manual dexterity tasks.

In his inclusion classroom, Diego demonstrates the potential to benefit from classroom instruction and enjoys being in the same room with his peers. However, without a supportive seating arrangement, Diego does not have the postural control necessary to sit for more than 5 minutes. His concentration focuses entirely on seeking stability and equilibrium to the exclusion of all other tasks, such as improving sensory-processing behaviors.

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

The purpose of this therapeutic seating intervention is to keep Diego with his class in the inclusion setting as much as possible. As Diego has only mild cognitive impairment, he will benefit from the inclusion classroom learning environment with advanced instruction, peer-to-peer interactions, and activities not offered in the special education classroom.



The Compass Chair will provide Diego with the positional support he needs to access and benefit from the learning environment. Because good seating improves motor skill acquisition, coordination and postural stability, the Compass Chair will give Diego the foundation he needs to shift his focus to visual, auditory, and somatosensory processing with improved adaptation behaviors.

This seating will improve Diego's ability to remain in his seat at school and attend to classroom instruction and interact with his peers. With core muscle stabilization, Diego will also be able to use his upper extremities more effectively, gaining improved functional control of his arms and hands.

This adaptive equipment is necessary for Diego to obtain this IEP goal, specifically:

“By the end of this semester, Diego will sit for 30 minutes during each of his four inclusion class subjects with a maximum self-interruption of no more than two times within that session.”

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

The Rifton Compass Chair will give Diego the postural support he needs to maintain a stable seated position for up to 30 minutes of classroom instruction. The chair height is adjustable so it can be set at the optimum floor-to-seat height for Diego. This allows him to have his feet squarely planted on the floor to engage his lower extremities in stable sitting, better maintaining his pelvis in the back of the chair without sliding forward. The Compass Chair will accommodate Diego's future growth because of the built-in adjustability of the seat height.

The contoured seat, sides, and back of the chair give Diego solid, sensory-satisfying, and comfortable sitting boundaries while subtly cueing a mid-line oriented, engaged posture. The Compass Chair allows Diego to feel supported and secure, with maximal contact area to his back and legs, which will help him identify where his body is in space. The lower, flared backrest simultaneously provides freedom of movement of the shoulder and the upper extremities for participation in his classroom activity.

The armrests on the chair further define Diego's seating boundaries and encourage him to remain sitting when adjacent to the table. The armrests also allow Diego to support himself to transition more smoothly between sitting and standing and to independently bring his chair nearer to the table surface. Additionally, the armrests provide a place for him to support his arms and use them to stabilize his upper trunk.

The seatbelt will be used for postural guidance to keep Diego's pelvis back in the chair. If he scoots too far forward, the chair will not serve its purpose in promoting an upright sitting position. Since Diego has difficulty knowing where he is in space, the seat belt will give him essential feedback.

As Diego frequently tips his current classroom chair when seeking stability, the stability feet available on the Rifton Compass Chair are necessary to prevent tipping and ensure safety. The adjustable legs provide postural positioning options such as a slight recline with the rear legs shortened if he's in a slightly reduced alert state, a condition caused periodically by his medication. Alternately, the front legs can be shortened to tilt the seat forward during his more alert times, thereby improving lower extremity weight-bearing and postural control, enabling Diego to be more attentive.

Another important feature of the Compass Chair that will benefit Diego's psychosocial development is its low-profile, compact geometry, designed specifically to blend discretely into an inclusion classroom without drawing unnecessary attention to Diego's disability. His educators have observed that Diego is attracted to the Compass Chair for this reason.

In his special education classroom, Diego has trialed an air cushion, Zuma chair, and therapy ball as seating options while working at a desk. However, these create additional instability to Diego's already challenged postural security. As a result, his in-seat behavior declines and he attempts to move to a standard classroom chair. The standard classroom chair offers more stability but does not offer height-adjustability or boundaries. When his feet don't sit firmly on the floor, Diego tends to slide in the seat or swivel his legs over the side of the chair using the backrest for arm support.



Every day during the past week, Diego has successfully used the Compass Chair once each day. With the height-adjustable Compass Chair, Diego can plant his feet on the floor and remain seated without fidgeting or distracting movement for close to 30 minutes. The contoured seat and backrest aid in cueing a stabilized, upright posture. Further opportunities in the chair were limited by the sharing system set up for this trial; the Compass 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).

Having a Compass chair available to Diego during the school day will improve his independence in sitting. Diego has proved to be more alert and confident when sitting in the Size 3 Compass Chair that was recently trialed. This adapted seating will promote improved upright posture, improve transitions, and provide a safe and secure means for him to focus on academics in his classroom.

With the opportunity to sit correctly, Diego will also improve his core strength and sitting postural control. Sensory-processing issues originating from his postural instabilities are expected to decline, resulting in the potential for decreased pharmaceutical intervention for behavioral management.




His overall school mobility and participation will improve in the school environment. Diego will progress through his day needing less direct supervision and therefore placing fewer demands on an already stretched school staff.

With improved seated positioning, Diego will be better able to access his classroom learning and interact with his peers. With this adaptive seating, we feel confident Diego could meet his IEP goal related to maintaining a more stable, prolonged seated position.

Finally, providing Diego with a seating option that is similar in appearance to standard classroom furniture will serve to more fully integrate him in his inclusion classroom, supporting the opportunity for psycho-social development and interaction with his peers.

This request has been respectfully submitted by _____, OT.

Itemization of the Rifton Compass Chair

Item	Description of Medical Necessity
<p>Compass chair</p> 	<p>The height adjustable legs and contoured seat and backrest of the Compass Chair provide minimal but adequate postural support and sensory boundaries for the child with autism spectrum disorder. The lateral thigh support and armrests curve gently around to provide subtle lateral cueing and additional security. The armrests additionally can be helpful to support the shoulder girdle for improved upper trunk stability and transfer into and out of the chair. The legs provide two inches of height adjustment to ensure optimal seating height and allow for growth. Adjusting the rear legs shorter than the front legs gives the chair a slight tilt, which can help students relax.</p>
<p>Seat belt</p> 	<p>The optional seat belt clips into the seat to provide positional cueing to keep the pelvis back in the chair or provide safety support as needed.</p>
<p>Stability feet</p> 	<p>The stability feet attach to the back legs of the chair to accommodate the more active, tip-prone students.</p>

Include pictures of the Rifton Compass Chair.



Adjusting the rear legs shorter than the front legs gives the chair a slight tilt, which can help some students relax.



Stability feet attach to the back legs to accommodate your more active, tip-prone students.

