



## AMERICAN NICARAGUAN SCHOOL COMMUNICATION PARTNER

In the spirit of teaching and learning in a mission-driven school at ANS, we are leaders in excellence in inclusive practices and serving children with disabilities. ANS believes that every child has the right to learn within a community where children share the same needs to be challenged, to contribute, and to be respected for who they are.

Our program at ANS is designed to serve children who are prepared to make progress toward grade-level academic and social expectations.

**Job Goal:** At times, a child with autism might benefit from the support of a Communication Partner in order to become independent in achieving these grade-level expectations. Communication Partners work under the guidance of the STAR Case Manager. They implement the plans and goals outlined in the child's Specialized Learning Plan. The role of the Communication Partner is to model, reinforce, and track behavior that can help inform this planning, goal-setting, and teaching process.

**Class level for the position:** Paraprofessional  
**Reports to:** Divisional Principal

### Qualifications for Communication Partner

**Communication Partners must first see themselves as educators willing to collaborate with others to support the child's independence in achieving grade-level expectations.**

- Training and experience working with disabilities, including autism, is preferred.
- Evidence of a collaborative spirit in which decisions about teaching and guiding a student are made within a team.
- Excellent English proficiency - speaking, reading, writing, listening.
- Willingness to respect our expectations about Fidelity to Language in all settings.
- Model a growth mindset when confronting difficult situations.
- Ability to follow the directives and procedures described in a child's Specialized Learning Plan that define the child's behavior, academic, and social support.
- Demonstrate an awareness of how one's behavior and emotions can be interpreted by others and affect the child's performance.
- Exemplify professionalism in communication with others, especially in stressful situations.
- Willingness to ask questions, learn, and expand one's knowledge and skills to better serve our students.



## **What is the process to determine if a child would benefit from the services of a Communication Partner?**

- The Specialized Learning Team at the school will determine if a child with autism would benefit from a Communication Partner, based on the following factors:
  - Recommendations in a child's psychological-educational evaluation include behavioral and academic techniques that require consistent modeling, reinforcement, and tracking for the student to gain independence in achieving grade-level skills.
- A child with autism cannot be eligible for a Communication Partner without a comprehensive psychological-educational evaluation.
- The child has an autism diagnosis and participates in the STAR program.

## **What are the responsibilities of a Communication Partner?**

- In charge of delivering specialized instruction to support the student's learning, using communication techniques to support the child's ability to communicate.
  - Share and model regulation strategies.
  - Gather data through an observation notebook.
  - Understand that a child with autism sometimes can experience dysregulation or aggression, which can result in physical interaction - hitting, scratching, biting, and running away. The STAR Case Manager will work closely with you to develop a plan to decrease these incidents, but we cannot always prevent these situations. One must be able to understand that the child is not trying to hurt anybody, rather they are struggling to regulate their emotions, thoughts, or behavior at the time.
  - Implement the Sensory Diet Recipe Cards, schedule, and preferred activities available in all settings, and communicate with all teachers.
  - Constant supervision

## **Who hires the Communication Partner?**

- ANS administration will take the responsibility for interviewing and hiring. Input from the parents, teachers, and Specialized Learning Team will be considered important in the hiring process.
- They will be hired for the school and assigned duties at the discretion of the school administration.
- The Communication Partner will not be hired specifically for a particular child.

## **Who pays for the Communication Partner?**

- The child's parents will be billed separately for the services of the Communication Partner. If the parents cannot pay for these services, then the administration will review the child's eligibility as a student at ANS.

## **Who supervises and evaluates the Communication Partner?**

- The Communication Partner will be supervised and evaluated by the ANS administration.
- The Communication Partner will only provide services at the school. Just as an ANS teacher would not go to the home, the Communication Partner would not go to the parent's home. Parents who need support at home during these times will need to look for their solutions.