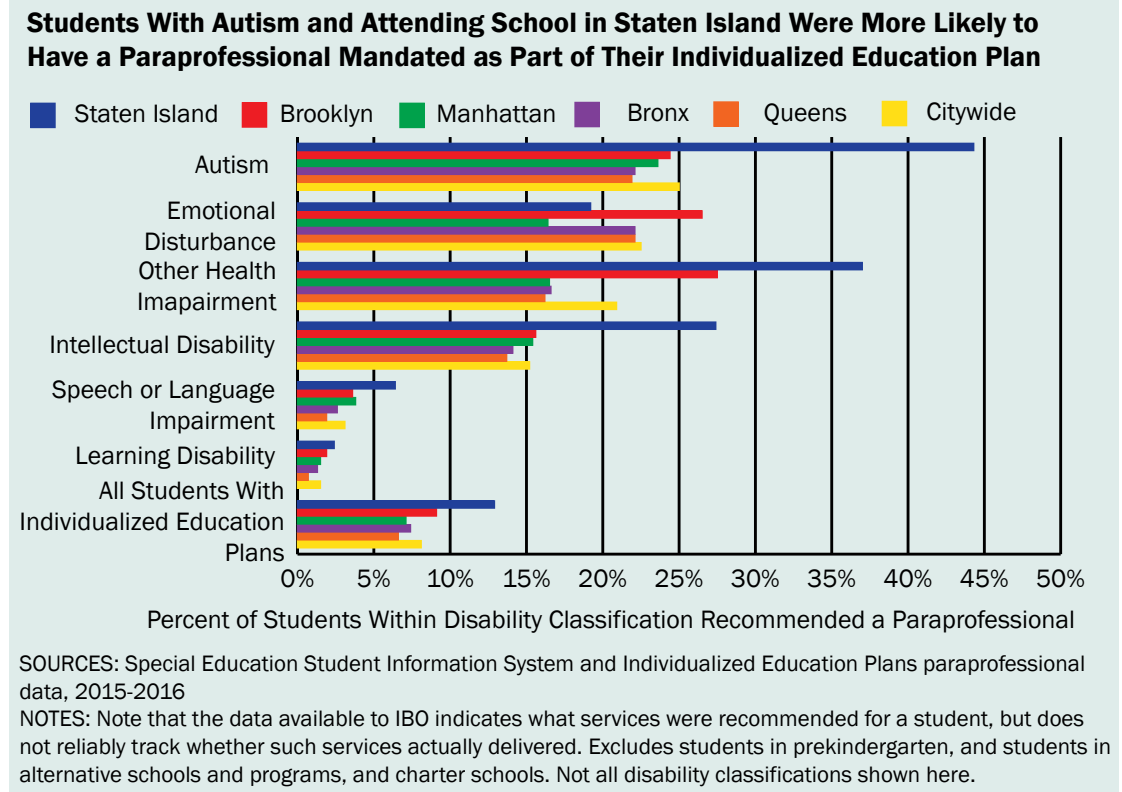


# Are Some Students With Disabilities More Likely to Receive a Recommendation for a Paraprofessional?

As a recent IBO [post](#) showed, the number of paraprofessionals, or teaching assistants, in the city's public schools has grown considerably over the past decade. In school year 2015-2016, there were 15,322 paraprofessionals mandated under the terms of students' Individualized Education Plans, which lay out the services recommended for each student found to have a disability and is agreed to by their parents or guardians. Whether students with disabilities were recommended a paraprofessional differed based on the type of disability classification and the borough where the student attended school.

- Twenty-five percent of students citywide classified with autism spectrum disorder were recommended a paraprofessional. Students classified with emotional disturbance (22.5 percent) and other health impairments (20.9 percent), a broad category that covers conditions such as attention deficit disorder, asthma, and lead poisoning were also more likely to be recommended a paraprofessional than students with other high incidence disability classifications under federal law.



- We looked at the assignment of paraprofessionals in Community School Districts 1-32, where the vast majority (roughly 88 percent) of students with disabilities attend school, along with those in District 75 schools, which only serve special education students. Students in District 75 schools were generally more likely to be recommended a paraprofessional (21.3 percent) compared with students in districts 1-32 (6.2 percent).
- Students with disabilities attending Staten Island public schools were more likely to be recommended to have a paraprofessional than similar students in the rest of the city. Overall, 12.9 percent of students with Individualized Education Plans attending school in Staten Island were recommended to have a paraprofessional assigned compared with 9.1 percent in Brooklyn, 7.1 percent in Manhattan, 7.4 percent in the Bronx, and 6.6 percent in Queens.
- Staten Island schools were more likely to recommend a paraprofessional for students classified with autism (44.3 percent), other health impairments (37.0 percent), intellectual disabilities (27.4 percent), speech or language impairments (6.4 percent), and learning disabilities (2.4 percent). Brooklyn schools, however, were more likely to recommend a paraprofessional for students classified with emotional disturbance (26.5 percent).
- Recommendations for providing students full-time paraprofessionals were also higher in Staten Island. Full-time paraprofessionals were recommended for 8.9 percent of students in Staten Island compared with 6.5 percent in Brooklyn, 5.1 percent in the Bronx, 3.9 percent in Queens, and 4.8 percent in Manhattan.

While students with autism were more likely than students with other disabilities to have Individualized Education Plans with recommendations for a paraprofessional, there was one exception: students in the ASD Nest program, which includes students with autism and general education students in smaller than typical classes with two teachers and other enhanced supports. In 2015-2016, only 5.5 percent of the nearly 960 students classified with autism in this specialized program were recommended to have paraprofessionals compared with 26.3 percent of the more than 13,940 other students classified with autism.