

# Rifton Compass Chair

## A Sample Letter of Medical Necessity

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## Components of a Letter of Medical Necessity

### **Briefly introduce who you are, what you want and the beneficiary's name.**

As John Doe's therapist, I am requesting funding authorization for a Rifton Compass Chair.

### **Establish your credentials, experience in the field and relationship to the beneficiary.**

I have worked in the school system as an occupational therapist since graduating in \_\_\_\_\_, providing intervention services for children and young adults with disabilities. Five years ago, I became a certified Assistive Technology Specialist and since have focused on the recommendation, fitting and positioning in adaptive chairs and toileting systems. I have worked with John for the last year.

### **Provide the beneficiary's diagnosis and describe clinical presentation.**

John is an eight year old boy with autism. He was diagnosed at two years old. John presents with mild cognitive delay and moderate sensory disturbances which manifests in behavioral issues and poor social and communication skills. His postural control is fair, but he lacks endurance and has trouble with anticipatory and adaptive postural responses. He also presents with mild motor incoordination in both upper and lower limbs and because of this he is developmental delayed in balance, gait and bilateral manual dexterity tasks.

### **Discuss the impact on the beneficiary's life. Note both his or her limitations and abilities without the requested equipment.**

John is currently a second grade student at Hopkins Elementary School. He spends 60% of his school day in an inclusion classroom and 40% in a special education classroom. He has the opportunity to sit on therapy balls and air cushions when in the special education classroom, but when given a choice, he frequently chooses a standard classroom seat. This indicates that John 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 pelvis moving into posterior tilt after 10 minutes. In posterior pelvic tilt, John loses concentration and cannot stabilize his core to gain more control of his upper extremities to participate in writing activities or interact in other classroom environments. He gets out of his chair or pushes back hard with his legs in order to regain stability and sensory input. As a result, John lags substantially behind his class in on-task activities and in-seat behaviors.

Research informs us that for children with autism there is an important link between motor skill development and cognition. So providing John with adequate postural and motor support in the classroom is necessary for him to thrive in his education.

### **State the type of equipment and components you are requesting.**

For this reason I am requesting a size 3 Rifton Compass Chair with a seat belt and stability feet for John.

### **Describe the equipment, adjustments for growth and psychological benefits to the beneficiary and caregiver.**

The Rifton Compass Chair will provide John with the postural support he needs to maintain a stable, seated position for up to 30 minutes of classroom instruction. The chair is height-adjustable so it can be set at the optimum floor-to-seat height for John. This will allow him to plant his feet squarely on the floor to engage his lower extremities in stable sitting, and better maintain his pelvis in the back of the chair without sliding forward.



The contoured seat, sides and back of the chair will give John solid and comfortable sensory and sitting boundaries while subtly cueing a mid-line oriented, engaged posture. The low, flared backrest will provide freedom of movement at the shoulders and upper extremities for participation in classroom activity. The armrests on the chair further define John's sitting boundaries and let him support his arms and use them to stabilize his head and upper trunk when needed.

The seatbelt will be used for postural guidance to keep John's pelvis back in the chair. Because John has an inclination to tip his classroom chair when seeking sitting stability, the stability feet are necessary to prevent this and ensure his safety. The chair also has a low-profile, compact build, and blends nicely into an inclusion classroom without drawing unnecessary attention to John's disability, thus improving his social development.

**Describe why the device is medically necessary. Show how the requested equipment will result in an increase of function and other physical benefits.**

A Rifton Compass Chair is medically necessary in order for John to experience the benefits of a good seated posture. This includes improved core muscle performance which results in stabilizing and opening the ribcage for lung expansion and improved vocalization. With core muscle stabilization, John will also be able to use his upper extremities more effectively, gaining strength and functional control of his arms. Because good seating improves motor skill acquisition, coordination and postural stability John will have the necessary foundation to then shift his focus to visual, vestibular and somatosensory processing and improving adaptation behaviors. This will lead to an increased ability to remain in his seat at school, attend to classroom instruction and interact with his peers.

Ultimately, the goal for therapeutic seating intervention is to keep John as much as possible with his class in the inclusion setting. As John has only mild cognitive impairment, he displays great potential to benefit from the classroom learning environment with the advanced instruction, peer-to-peer interactions and activities not otherwise offered in the special education classroom. The Compass Chair provides John the positional support he needs to best access and benefit from the learning environment

**Describe other equipment previously trialed and why it didn't work.**

In the special education classroom, John has trialed an air cushion, Zuma chair and therapy ball as seating options while working at a desk. However, these create additional instability to John'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 have height-adjustability or boundaries. When his feet don't plant firmly on the floor, John tends to slide in the seat or swivel his legs over the side of the chair using the backrest for an arm support. With the height-adjustable Compass Chair, John can plant his feet on the floor and remain seated without restless movement for close to 30 minutes. The contoured seat and backrest aid in cueing a stabilized, upright posture.




**Make the person real and include goals.**

John's goal for this semester is to sit for 30 minutes during each of his four inclusion class subjects with a maximum interruption of two times. John displays capacity to benefit from classroom instruction and enjoys being in the same room with his peers. However, without a supportive seating arrangement, John does not have the postural control necessary to sit for more than 10 minutes. His concentration moves to seeking stability and equilibrium and there is no bandwidth left for improving sensory-processing behaviors or attention to task.

The Rifton Compass Chair provides John with the perfect support, while not being overly restrictive and glaring in the inclusion environment, to foster his motor control and direct focus on the learning activities presented in the classroom.



## Itemization of the Rifton Compass Chair

| Item  | Description of Medical Necessity   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Compass chair</b></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><b>Seat belt</b></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><b>Stability feet</b></p>  | <p>The stability feet attach to the back legs of the chair to accommodate the more active, tip-prone students.</p>   |

### Summarize the cost benefits.

Having a Compass Chair available to John during the school day will improve John's independence in sitting. He will progress through his day needing less direct supervision and therefore placing less demands on an already stretched school staff. With the opportunity to sit correctly, John will also improve his core strength and demonstrate better physical health overall. Sensory-processing issues stemming from postural instabilities are expected to decline resulting in less pharmaceutical intervention for behavioral management.

### Conclude with a paragraph restating the main points of the report.

Therefore, according to evaluation and adaptive seating performance, it is my opinion that the most effective and least costly option for John to fully participate in school is the Rifton Compass Chair.

**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.

