



New SED Teacher Handbook 2020

Compiled by
*Maine's Alternative Certification
Mentoring Program
(MACM)*

Guidelines and Resources

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Welcome to your first year as a special educator!

Welcome to the field of special education! Many of you are entering the field by means of an “alternative” pathway. This means that you did not undertake a traditional teacher preparation program before stepping into the classroom as Teacher of Record.

Many of you stepped into the classroom in the past in the role of educational technician III, and have been supporting students with disabilities in classrooms and other learning environments for a number of years. Others of you may have a degree in Education, and are moving to special education. Still others are coming from other fields, either related (i.e. psychology, child development) or unrelated (i.e. biology, business administration), and are embarking on a second career.

No matter your alternate pathway, you come with a mixture of advantages and disadvantages over those entering the profession through more traditional means.

Some advantages:

- Experience with students with disabilities (if you’ve been an ed tech)
- More, and/or different, life experiences from which to draw
- Connection with the surrounding community- many of you are well-established in the community and are less likely to move away after the first year or two teaching

Some disadvantages:

- No gradual, supervised entry to becoming teacher of record, as a student teacher would have- you are in charge from Day One, just like a veteran teacher
- Less grounding in foundational coursework before assuming teaching responsibilities- you are learning on the fly
- You may be supervising people who were your peers last year, or who have been with your students longer than you

Conditionally certified special educators are in the classroom because there continues to be a national special education teacher shortage. This is nothing new; it has been a factor since before IDEA became law (see Blessing, 1967). Maine, like most other states, does not have enough fully qualified, fully certified special educators. Each of you is working toward professional certification while teaching.

Statistics are not good for teacher retention in special education, no matter your pathway into the profession. Up to 33% of new educators (both general and special) leave the field after their first year, and as many as 50% leave within the first 5 years (Ingersoll, 2012). Special educators are more likely than their general education peers to leave the profession within 5 years (Roegman et al, 2018). This is especially true in rural areas (Berry et al, 2011) and- as you know- Maine is overwhelmingly rural.

Statistics also suggest that mentoring during the first three years can greatly increase the likelihood that new teachers like you will remain in the profession. This is especially true when your mentor and you are working with a similar population.

New Special Educators

New special educators teach in a variety of contexts. You may co-teach in a general education classroom or, in part, support your students in general ed classrooms. You may be a resource room teacher, or teach in a self-contained program or school. If you're in a rural school, you may be responsible for students with a wide variety of support needs. Those in more urban districts may be asked to coordinate student programming and scheduling with a dizzying variety of specialists.

In general, the concerns and support needs of new special educators can be categorized into these broad areas:

- ***Inclusion, collaboration, and interactions with other adults***
- ***Pedagogical skills- how to teach***
- ***Managerial, administrative tasks***
- ***Managing roles***

Special Educator Mentoring

As a new teacher, you will benefit from ongoing support from a veteran special educator whom you can trust and who has taught students similar to those on your caseload.

| Things Mentors do | Things Mentors do NOT do |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen to your concerns, questions• Offer emotional support, availability• Help you learn special ed and district procedures• Help you understand and manage paperwork• Share materials and help you develop curriculum, behavior management, and other strategies• Help addressing professional areas like working with families, integrating IEP goals into the general curriculum• Help you develop the skills of a reflective practitioner | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervise you• Evaluate you• Talk with others about you without your permission• Tell you what to do (although they may offer suggestions, or point you toward resources that will benefit you)• Solve problems for you (they can solve problems WITH you) |

Your Mentor

In-District Mentors

Most mentors come directly from your district's cadre of trained mentors, and work with your district's certification committee. They may have been trained by the district or regional collaborative, and/or may be veteran teachers who've served as mentors of many years.

In-district mentors will help you write your initial teacher action plan (each district has its own term for this plan- basically, it has your goals for the upcoming one to three years) They will conduct three formal observations during the school year and fulfill other responsibilities that are outlined in your district's professional development plan. You can ask for a copy of this plan so that you're better informed about local expectations. In-district mentors are well-versed in both special education and in the culture of your district. They may or may not report to the local certification committee or special education administrator. This mentor does not otherwise report to MACM.

MACM

Maine's Alternative Certification Mentoring program, or MACM, is required for new conditionally certified special educators per Maine DOE Rule Chapter 180. It is designed to give you extra support during your critical first year as teacher of record by ensuring that you have a trained special educator mentor, and through a one-semester "crash course" in IDEA policy and Individualized Education Programming. The course also touches on adapting instruction, supervising ed techs, and- an area that new teachers largely neglect- on taking care of yourself while learning a demanding new profession.

MACM Mentors

MACM mentors are veteran special educators trained to mentor. MACM mentors came with recommendations from a fellow teacher, their building administrator, and their special education director, or others who know their teaching, organizational, and "people" skills.

MACM mentors from a district different from your own do not usually report to or interact with your local certification committee or special education administrator. The MACM mentor is available for your special education-related concerns. If you have an external mentor from MACM, you will also be assigned an in-district mentor who will help you learn your district's unique culture, policies, and procedures.

MACM mentors often work in districts that do not have a qualified special educator mentor available. MACM mentors do not conduct the formal observations for certification committee purposes, but will observe you informally. They are available to help you problem-solve if you're having a particularly puzzling teaching issue and you want another pair of eyes (and another brain) to help brainstorm. They are available to listen, to offer support, and to help you manage various aspects of special education.

You and your MACM mentor might use email, texting, FaceTime or Zoom, or the telephone to communicate regularly, and you may meet in person if not too far away from each other to do so. MACM Mentor/mentee pairs have also used technology to observe each other. They've effectively used FaceTime, Zoom, Swivl robot technology, or other electronic means to record and review your teaching. You may also ask your mentor to record her/himself teaching to demonstrate a technique or resource you'd like to learn. Ideally, and with your permission, the MACM mentor will stay in touch with your in-district mentor to ensure that they're giving you consistent support (and are not overwhelming you).

Expectations

- 1. Get to know your mentor.** Share your previous experience, learn about your mentor's experience and areas of expertise. Ask about her or his teaching philosophy, and share your own philosophy. Discuss and decide how you will communicate with each other and agree on a schedule for touching base on a regular basis.
There are examples of getting-to-know-you surveys and checklists in a section that follows. You are not required to use any of them, but it might help to look them over for ideas of things to talk about with your mentor as you develop your relationship.
- 2. Set mentor/mentee goals for the year.** Talk about what you hope to gain from your mentor/mentee relationship, identify your goals for the year, or share your new teacher plan developed with your district. Your mentor can help you identify areas to consider (for example, developing effective classroom management techniques, organizing and managing paperwork, supervising your staff).
- 3. Initiate and maintain contact with your mentor.** You and your mentor should touch base a minimum of an hour every week. Part of your journey includes taking responsibility for your development in your profession, and initiating contact and asking for help are important skills to master!
- 4. Give your mentor guidance about specific things you want from her or him.** For example, before an observation, ask your mentor to pay attention to specific things, like how effectively you interact with every student, or how clearly you give directions. Keep a running list of things you want to discuss with your mentor so that you don't forget these things. It may be helpful to review your list before talking (or texting). This will also help you to form concrete questions and to clarify your thoughts and concerns.
- 5. Share your thoughts and develop your powers of reflection with your mentor.** Your mentor can help you develop perspective and offer insights that will help you grow, but needs you to contribute the raw material first. Yours is a reciprocal relationship, and your fresh approach and enthusiasm for the profession may provide your mentor with renewed energy and new ideas that will benefit her or him.
- 6. Ask for help!** Your mentor may not know that you're struggling or that you have questions, especially if you are not working in the same building or district. Your mentor wants to support you- don't be afraid to ask. Remember that your conversations are confidential, your mentor will not share anything without your permission. Your mentor probably has a mental toolbox full of ideas that will ease your stress! This person agreed to mentor you and is very likely receiving a stipend for supporting you. They expect to hear from you and to spend time with you.

New SED Teacher Resources

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Induction Insights



Supporting Special Education Teachers-Administrators [AII-02]

The Challenge of Managing Roles

Understanding the Needs of Novice Special Education Teachers

Briefly...

Understanding the challenges that novice special education teachers encounter in their first years provides important information for administrators as they consider policies and procedures that support new teacher induction.

Find out how administrators can help novice special education teachers manage their complex and challenging roles.

The learning curve is high for novice special education teachers. They must assume full teaching responsibilities, while at the same time become familiar with district and school policies, curriculum, and assessment policies and procedures. They are expected to build relationships with administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, families, and other service providers. For the most part, novice special education teachers have the same responsibilities as their more experienced counterparts, even though they may lack the knowledge and skills of their more experienced peers.

The range and volume of responsibilities can seem insurmountable to novice special education teachers. In fact, many do not see their workloads as manageable. Challenging work conditions—such as an uncertainty about their roles and responsibilities, time pressures, heavy caseloads, scheduling difficulties, paperwork, and routine requirements—can contribute to their decision to leave teaching.

An understanding of novice special education teachers' concerns can help administrators prepare mentors and plan more relevant induction programs.

This Brief looks at these teachers' concerns related to managing their complex and challenging roles. It offers some suggestions that administrators might use to help new teachers succeed.

Concerns: Time and Scheduling

Not having adequate time to teach and address the varied needs of students is a pressing concern for novice special education teachers. The task of scheduling, organizing, and managing an environment of adults, along with students with disabilities, across multiple grades and subjects can be overwhelming. The situation can become even more challenging when students change classrooms many times throughout the day or when teachers are assigned to two or more schools.

Having insufficient time during the day to complete paperwork—such as writing Individualized Education Programs, referrals, and evaluations—along with planning for instruction also can be a major concern. Novice special education teachers find that they must complete substantial amounts of work outside of school, during nonschool hours.

Concerns: Caseloads

Heavy caseloads can make it hard for novice special education teachers to attend to the individual needs of their students. This can be particularly challenging if teachers are expected to provide services to students across many classrooms. Caseloads in which students have multiple academic and behavioral needs and require different levels of support also can create challenges for effective instruction, curriculum planning, and behavior management.

Concerns: Legal Requirements, Paperwork, and Meetings

Novice special education teachers can find it difficult to function effectively in the face of excessive and competing responsibilities. Legal requirements and paperwork—such as writing Individualized Education Programs and completing referral, placement, and evaluation documents—can be challenging. The volume of work and the logistics of completing it also can present challenges, particularly when tasks involve notifying parents, scheduling meetings, inviting appropriate people to meetings, creating meeting agendas, and completing forms.

Novice special education teachers expect to spend the majority of their time teaching and express frustration when their instructional pursuits are reduced because of bureaucratic tasks such as meetings and paperwork.

Concerns: Role Confusion and Ambiguity

Novice special education teachers often express confusion about their roles and what is expected of them. For example, they may be unclear about their roles and responsibilities relating to students, especially when working collaboratively with general education teachers. General education teachers also may be unsure about their role with students with disabilities, which can exacerbate role confusion as teachers collaborate. Role overload, ambiguity, and conflict are associated with job dissatisfaction, turnover, and weakened commitment to the teaching profession.

Administrative Support to Address Concerns

Administrators can help novice special education teachers better manage their roles and responsibilities in the following ways:

- Help novices develop time management skills. Work with them to develop schedules and organize their responsibilities.
- Provide sheltered status. Reduce caseloads, assign fewer administrative duties, and provide support for the improvement of their pedagogy.
- Encourage novices not to take on extracurricular assignments (e.g., cheerleading coach).
- Offer assistance with legal tasks and paperwork.
- Define roles and responsibilities. Structure and clarify novices' roles and responsibilities relating to students with disabilities throughout the school. Offer them support in negotiating their roles and coordinating

👁️👁️ Sightings

In addition to managing roles, novice special education teachers also have significant concerns about pedagogy and collaborating and/or interacting with adults. NCIPP has prepared briefs on these topics for administrators. These are available on the NCIPP website (www.ncipp.org):

- *Instructional Challenges: Understanding the Needs of Novice Special Education Teachers.*
- *The Challenges of Inclusion and Collaboration: Understanding the Needs of Novice Special Education Teachers.*

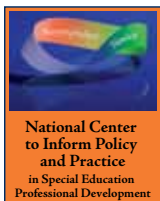


- complex responsibilities for inclusion and collaboration.
- Encourage novices to seek help. New teachers may be reluctant to seek help, especially from administrators and supervisors who have responsibility for evaluating them. Make sure they have opportunities to receive assistance in nonthreatening ways.
- Provide a structured system of support, including school-based socialization and instructional coaching.

Learn More. This Brief summarizes select findings from a comprehensive review of the literature:

Billingsley, B. S., Griffin, C. C., Smith, S. J., Kamman, M., & Israel, M. (2009). *A review of teacher induction in special education: Research, practice, and technology solutions* (NCIPP Doc. No. RS-1). Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, National Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development (NCIPP).

It is available on the NCIPP website at www.ncipp.org.



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MACM Mentee Needs Checklist

Adapted from:

Duffy, Mary Lou, & Forgan, James (2005). Mentoring New Special Education Teachers. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

| Support Areas | High Need | Moderate Need | Low Need |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------|
| Assessing Student Progress | | | |
| Accommodations and Modifications to Curriculum | | | |
| Lesson Planning, Co-Planning | | | |
| Compiling IEP Assessments, writing parent-friendly summaries | | | |
| Writing measurable, portable* IEP goals, objectives <i>*portable: applicable across environments</i> | | | |
| Managing student progress data collection | | | |
| Following district IEP procedures, meeting IEP timelines | | | |
| Using Maine's IEP template and guidelines | | | |
| Writing IEP | | | |
| Organizing student artifacts, record-keeping | | | |
| Organizing the classroom (physical space) | | | |
| Getting and locating classroom materials, supplies, resources | | | |
| Organizing myself, creating a time management system | | | |
| Creating and enforcing class rules and procedures | | | |
| Learning more about subjects | | | |
| Ideas for teaching specific lessons | | | |
| Motivating students | | | |
| Managing challenging student behavior | | | |

| Support Areas | High Need | Moderate Need | Low Need |
|--|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Collaborating with general ed peers | | | |
| Collaborating with related service professionals (i.e. SLPs, OTs, PTs) | | | |
| Working with parents/caregivers | | | |
| Supervising ed techs | | | |
| Others not listed here: | | | |

Priority Goals for this year

| <i>Goal area</i> | <i>What will success look like? (describe)</i> |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |

Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Beginning Teachers

Part A. Please choose the response for each item that most closely indicates your level of need for assistance in the area described.

Possible responses:

- A. Little or no need for assistance in this area
- B. Some need for assistance in this area
- C. Moderate need for assistance in this area
- D. High need for assistance in this area
- E. Very high need for assistance in this area

- 1. _____ Finding out what is expected of me as a teacher
- 2. _____ Communicating with the principal
- 3. _____ Communicating with other teachers
- 4. _____ Communicating with parents
- 5. _____ Organizing and managing my classroom
- 6. _____ Maintaining student discipline
- 7. _____ Obtaining instructional resources and materials
- 8. _____ Planning for instruction
- 9. _____ Managing my time and work
- 10. _____ Diagnosing student needs
- 11. _____ Evaluating student progress
- 12. _____ Motivating students
- 13. _____ Assisting students with special needs
- 14. _____ Dealing with individual difference among students
- 15. _____ Understanding the curriculum
- 16. _____ Completing administrative paperwork
- 17. _____ Using a variety of teaching methods
- 18. _____ Facilitating group discussions
- 19. _____ Grouping for effective instruction
- 20. _____ Administering standardized achievement tests
- 21. _____ Understanding the school system's teacher evaluation process
- 22. _____ Understanding my legal rights and responsibilities as a teacher
- 23. _____ Dealing with stress
- 24. _____ Becoming aware of special services provided by the school district

Part B. Please respond to the following items.

25. List any professional needs you have that are not addressed in the items above.

Decision Points Checklist

Retrieved and adapted from: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OA/OTL/Teacher%20Center/2a-mod-2-decision-points-check-list_v1.pdf

This checklist is designed to assist in exchanging information and generating ideas in planning the mentoring year. Check the column if this is an area of discussion and make notes regarding interest and/or expected action.

| DECISION POINTS | YES | NOTES/ACTIONS |
|--|-----|---------------|
| Communication Plans | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred types, phone, email, text, FaceTime, other | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best time to be reached | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled communication check-ins (at least weekly) | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning visits (who initiates, how, etc) | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective practices | | |
| Possible Areas of Discussion/Need | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom and behavior management | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time management | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing work load | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing data, recording and tracking | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing administrative and IEP responsibilities | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction/learning activities and resources | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using technology | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with families, working with colleagues | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student motivation | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional organizations, resources | | |
| Additional Areas | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State reporting | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification requirements | | |

Collaboration Log

Retrieved and adapted from: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OA/OTL/Teacher%20Center/21---mod-2-collaboration-log_v1.pdf

New Teacher:

Mentor:

School/Program:

Date:

Meeting Duration:

Collaboration Type (check all that apply):

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Analyzing student work | <input type="checkbox"/> | Discussing individual student needs | <input type="checkbox"/> | Observing a veteran teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Communicating with parents | <input type="checkbox"/> | Discussing student assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning lessons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Developing professional goals | <input type="checkbox"/> | IEP development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pre-observation conference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Classroom culture | <input type="checkbox"/> | Modeling lesson | <input type="checkbox"/> | Post-observation conference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Discussing curriculum | <input type="checkbox"/> | Observing instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reflecting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Using technology | <input type="checkbox"/> | Providing resources | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: |

| |
|--------------------------|
| Positives: |
| Key Points/Needs: |
| Next Steps: |

Next meeting date/time:

Mentee Signature:

Mentor Signature:

Checklist

Use this checklist prior to students' first day.

Adapted from: Alaska Statewide Mentor Project: <https://asmp.alaska.edu/>

Following are 10 important areas to consider when preparing for a successful school year:

1. Calendar
 - a. District
 - b. Site
2. Building Daily Schedule
3. Emergency Procedures
4. Curriculum Guide
5. Standards
 - a. District
 - b. State
6. Cumulative Student Records
 - a. Identify student records (location of IEP)
 - b. Review standardized test results
7. Assessments
 - a. District
 - b. Site
8. Consent Forms
9. Who's Who in Your School
10. Materials

Things to Consider

Adapted from: Alaska Statewide Mentor Project: <https://asmp.alaska.edu/>

Class Schedule (Have a Plan!)

Things to consider ...

- Lunch/Recess
- Mandated block of time (reading/math)
- Student rotation for classes
- Music, P.E., Library, Computer Lab, Counselor, Bilingual/Bicultural
- Assembly schedule

Classroom Management

Things to have in place or to create with your students ...

- Classroom expectations—with plenty of modeling
- Seating arrangement
- Behavior contracts (as needed)

Classroom Design

Consider traffic patterns when arranging tables/desks

- Teacher's desk should be placed so that all students are visible at all times

Elementary:

Create designated areas, such as

- Classroom library
- Math center
- Handwriting area
- Art supply studio
- Science/exploration lab
- Computer center
- Drama center
- Block center (“noisy” area)
- Art supply studio
- Science/exploration lab
- Computer center
- Drama center
- Block center (“noisy” area)

Building Your Classroom Community (Have a Plan!)

Things to consider and/or implement:

- Interest surveys
- Students write things that help the teacher get to know them
- Greet students at the door
- Utilize morning meetings
- Design lessons to incorporate cooperative learning
- Partner or group activities

Assessments

Check students' cumulative files, and consider when and how best to use ...

- Pre-assessments
- Informal and formal assessments
- Post-assessments

Communication with Parents

Things to Consider and/or Implement:

- Welcome letter
- Syllabus
- Class newsletters
- Parent phone numbers and emails
- Folder or format for keeping records of parental contact and communication content
- Classroom expectations

Substitute Teacher Folder

Items to Include in Folder:

- Generic lesson plans
- Materials needed for lesson
- Class schedule
- Seating chart
- School/Emergency procedures
- Student/colleague helpers
- School/office staff

Documentation

Important information to maintain ...

- Parent contact—summary of conversation, date, name, action taken
- Copies of important emails
- Copies of action taken
- Anecdotal notes:
 - informal observations of what students know
 - informal observations of gaps in knowledge
 - student behavior
- Book check-out sheet
- Reading/writing conferences with students
- Check-off list of
 - student of the month
 - special awards
 - student in Author's Chair

Dealing with Paperwork

Devise a system to deal with

- Student files
- Work to be graded
- Work to be returned
- Unfinished work
- Your files—to avoid piles of paper stacking up on your desk
- School mail
- Emails—print and file if important
- Date and times of meetings, assessments, and assemblies—perhaps keep on an electronic or desk calendar

Procedures to Rehearse with Students

Adapted from Washoe County School District : <http://www.washoeschools.net/mentorteach>

1. Entering the Classroom
2. Getting to work immediately
3. What to do when you are late
4. End of period, class dismissal
5. Listening/Responding to questions
6. Participating in class discussions
7. When you need supplies
8. Keeping your desk/work space orderly
9. Checking out classroom materials
10. Indicating whether you understand
11. Coming to attention
12. When you are absent
13. Working cooperatively
14. Changing groups
15. Keeping notes, notebook
16. Going to the office
17. What to do when you need help/conferencing
18. Knowing the day/class schedule
19. Keeping a progress report
20. Finding assignment directions
21. Passing in work
22. Returning student work
23. Getting materials without disrupting others
24. Handing out materials
25. Moving around the room
26. Going to the library/other school areas
27. What to do when you finish early
28. When asking a question
29. When a school-wide announcement is made
30. Between class procedures
31. Responding to fire drill
32. Responding to a lockdown
33. When visitors are in the room
34. If the teacher is out of the room
35. If the teacher is suddenly ill
36. Classroom manners and expectations

Tips for Novice Special Education Teachers

Washoe County School District Special Education Teachers www.washoeschools.net/mentorteach
Tips for Novice Special Education Teachers

- Remember: IEPs are supposed to be a pleasant experience! Chocolate helps...
- Get to know the General Education Teachers
- You cannot do everything at once. Try to create one extra project per week.
- Don't take it personally!
- Give your aides specific tasks that they are good at. It helps the flow of the class.
- Begin immediately with scheduling
- Enjoy your students and take deep breaths frequently.
- Find humor in every day!
- Always think ahead.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. Use your mentor and fellow teachers.
- You have a life outside the classroom.
- Make a list of tasks that need to be completed each day to keep organized.
- Form friendships with other special education personnel.
- Take time for yourself!
- Laugh with your students.
- Keep a supply of chocolate or favorite guilty snack in your desk drawer. You will need it.
- Read and re-read the IEPs for your students.
- Write a letter of introduction to the parents of your students.
- Take advantage of attending workshops when offered.
- Take your lunch! Don't skip it!
- Engaging lessons= great behavior management.
- Structure the learning environment /classroom.
- Get behaviors under control by first teaching procedures/expectations.
- Prioritize!
- Learn where the school calendar is, how to distribute information, and where the supply area is.
- Pick your battles!
- Collect data- lots of it.
- Tomorrow is another day!

Tips for Novice Teachers

Adapted from the Washoe County School District Mentor Teacher Program
www.washoeschools.net/mentorteach

- Post Rules with Signature of Students and Stick to Them
- Send Letter Home: Discipline Rules and Plan to Be Signed by Parents & Student
- Send Home a Letter of Greeting with Rewards, Policy, Consequences and Philosophy and Have Students Return It Signed
- Use Name Tags
- Make Contact With Parents
- Make Room Bright & Colorful
- Obtain an Old Yearbook to Check Out Faculty
- Lesson Plans — More is Better, but Be Flexible
- Try Out Activities Ahead of Time
- Act Confident
- Know the Schedule: Start & Stop Time, Recess, Lunch
- SMILE

- Schmooze the Secretary & Custodian
- Make Bathroom Passes
- Keep Running Tab of What You Are Spending for Taxes & Personal Budget Control
- Always Have a Plan B (C, D, E & F)
- Plan Ahead & Extra Activities for Lessons That Run Short
- Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help
- Mingle — Get Out of Your Room — Avoid Cliques
- Do a School Tour with Your Class
- Go Home — Set a Limit of How Late You Will Stay
- You Don't Have to Do Everything, Every Day
- Know that You Won't Get Everything Done
- Practice Routines (Lines, Fire Drills)
- Take Time to Build Your Community
- Scrounge, Beg, Borrow (Return What You Borrow)
- Know How Your Students Get to and from School (Medical Information, Lunch Status)

- Teach and Re-Teach Rules and Procedures
- Always Over-Plan Your Day

- Get Plenty of Rest at Night — Teaching is Tiring!
- Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help
- Read the Faculty Handbook
- It's OK to Use Other Teachers' Ideas!
- Make and Keep a Seating Chart
- Learn Every Student's Name ASAP
- Prioritize — At School & At Home
- Get All Materials Ready for a Lesson Ahead of Time
- Keep a Sense of Humor & Have Fun

- Introduce and Practice Class Rules
- Really Talk with Students
- Insert Humor
- Take Your Vitamins, Bring Aspirin
- Get Out of Your Classroom at Lunch Time
- Have a Back-Up Plan
- Be Flexible
- Know When and Who to Ask for Help
- Have Some Fun
- Use Name Tags (Where Applicable)
- Be Sure Everyone has Access to "Stuff" (e.g. scissors, pencils, etc.)
- Prepare and Have Available Student Supply List
- Introduce Yourself to Parents Through Letter, Phone Call, etc.
- Have an Activity for Them to Do When They Come In
- Know the Following Procedures: Line-Up, Entering Building, Bathroom, Drinks, Sharpening Pencils, Using Manipulatives, Attendance, Lunch Count, Hall Passes
- Teach Rules & Consequences
- Set-Up Grade Book: Addresses, Birth Date, Parent's Name, Phone Numbers, Legal
- Names vs. Nicknames
- Plan More Than You Need
- For Primary Students — Keep Snacks
- Don't Expect Them to Sit for Long Periods
- Health Issues: Medications? Allergies?

Those Very Important First 3s

Adapted from: The Jumpstart Booklet, Washoe County School District Department of Professional Learning
<https://www.washoeschools.net/cms/lib/NV01912265/Centricity/Domain/189/Jumpstart%20Booklet.pdf>

First 3 Minutes of the School Day

The teacher is “very much in charge.” Time is spent greeting children, establishing order, and starting pupils on assigned learning tasks. Traditional “opening activities” are delayed.

First 30 Minutes of the School Day

A no-nonsense, get-down-to-work approach to learning may be observed. A “slice of the day’s work” will be accomplished. The usual opening activities follow the first half hour.

First 3 Days of the School Year

Class routine has been established. Pupils know what is expected and go about doing it. Learning is taking place in an orderly and productive manner. The die has been cast.

First 3 Weeks of the School Year

- a) A “get-acquainted-early report” in the form of a brief note and/or phone call will be made to the parents of all pupils.
- b) Severe learning and behavioral problems have begun to surface. Intervention plans are made and implemented. Parents are notified of the problems.

First 3 Months of the School Year

Critical learning, behavior, and/or health problems have been identified. A call for help is made to the immediate supervisor, nurse, psychologist, and other specialists in a position to assist. A remedial course of action will be determined and shared with parents for approval.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS' TRAINING PROGRAM (TATP)

FEEDBACK ON TEACHING

When providing feedback on a colleague's teaching performance, it is important to remember that our role is not to judge or evaluate a person's approach to teaching or teaching style, or to demonstrate everything that we might know about teaching. Rather, the goal is to share strategies and perspectives that will help the teacher identify a plan for improving her or his teaching practice. As observers, we are reflecting back to the teacher what it is like to be a student learning in his or her class. As teachers, we are hearing, perhaps for the first time, honest feedback on how we communicate ideas and whether we create a successful learning environment.

| As an observer giving feedback... | As the teacher receiving feedback... |
|--|---|
| <p>Focus on behaviours, not the individual. Describe what you see and what you hear. What does the teacher say or do? Remember: you are providing feedback on the teaching performance, not the person.</p> | <p>Be sincerely open to all comments. As soon as you invite someone's opinion, you need to be prepared to hear it! If you hear what you perceive to be negative comments, separate the comments from yourself as a <i>person</i> and focus on what could be changed next time to improve your <i>teaching</i>.</p> |
| <p>Be specific. Identify a specific comment or behaviour and describe how it affected you. Link your comments to specific moments in the teacher's lesson. Whenever possible, offer concrete strategies for addressing particular concerns.</p> | <p>Avoid being defensive. Try to react positively to comments. The observers providing you with feedback will need positive reinforcement, too! Saying "That's great advice, I hadn't thought of it that way" opens up a dialogue with your observers.</p> |
| <p>Be positive and constructive...and honest! Always offer a positive observation first. However, try to avoid insincere praise. Follow up constructive comments with your ideas for improvement or things to try.</p> | <p>Specify the feedback you're looking for. If you would like feedback on your voice production or time management or clarity of examples or your introduction...say so! Be specific when asking for feedback.</p> |
| <p>Check your ego at the door. This process isn't about you, and showing off all you know about teaching. This process is about the teacher you are observing. Avoid grandstanding or one-upmanship.</p> | <p>Confirm your understanding of the feedback provided. If you need to ask for clarification of a particular comment, feel free to do so. Ask an observer to rephrase a comment or paraphrase back to the observer what you think she/he is saying.</p> |
| <p>Offer options and alternatives. Don't just point out areas of difficulty. Remember, you're not providing a summative evaluation of this person's teaching—you're helping the teacher identify what to try next time.</p> | <p>Share your reaction to the feedback. Once you've heard all the verbal feedback, reflect back on your self-assessment of your lesson and think how your own assessment of your teaching compares with the observations of your colleagues. What have you learned?</p> |
| <p>Avoid prescriptive language. Instead of saying "You should do this..." or "Don't do that...", phrase your suggestions as stemming from your own observations: "I'm wondering if you tried X, what might happen..."; "I'd like to see you try Y"; "I would have benefitted from a clearer explanation here, could you try this...".</p> | |
| <p>Don't demand unreasonable change. Avoid pointing out challenges the teacher cannot reasonably change or address.</p> | |
| <p>Be concise. Too many comments will overload the listener. Focus on one or two key points.</p> | |

Adapted in part from Verderber & Verderber, (1983), in Leptak, J. 1989. Giving and receiving constructive criticism. *Lifelong Learning* 12(5), pp. 25-26. Also, "Giving and Receiving Constructive Criticism" handout from McGill University.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS' TRAINING PROGRAM (TATP)

MICROTEACHING CHECKLIST

This is a partial list of things to keep in mind when preparing your lesson. In a short microteaching lesson, you won't necessarily be able to hit all of the individual points below. This is fine. You can, however, keep in mind the 4 broad categories that contribute to an effective lesson.

An instructional presentation should incorporate the following 4 key elements:

1) Preparation of the learner.

- a. The learner is oriented to the subject at hand.
- b. The learner's interest is piqued.
- c. The learner is informed of the lesson's goals.
- d. The learner is told what to expect from the lesson.

2) Presentation/demonstration of materials.

- a. Topics are presented in a logical order.
- b. Topics are presented in a sequence, e.g. moving from general to specific or from superficial to most important or from foundational to complex.
- c. Each topic is clearly introduced and there is a clear transition from topic to topic within the lesson.
- d. The instructor models a concept or activity for learners.

3) Involvement of the learner.

- a. Learners are asked questions to probe their understanding of the material.
- b. Clarification of key concepts is provided at regular intervals; learners are asked to explain key concepts back to the instructor.
- c. Learners have the opportunity to interact with each other.
- d. Learners have the opportunity to practice or use the material being taught.

4) Review and summary.

- a. Instructor recaps main ideas.
- b. Instructor invites learners to share what they've learned.
- c. Instructor points the way to further information on the subject of the lesson.

Reflection Guide for Quarterly Reflections

Adapted from Douglas School District Educator Evaluation Guide:

<http://douglas.k12.ma.us/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=305198>

These are questions you can use to track your thoughts- and growth- throughout this school year.

Reflection # 1 - October

. Your first reflection could include the following:

1. One area of strength
2. One goal for next term
3. Reflection: My students are truly learning...

Reflection # 2 - December

Your second reflection could include the following:

1. Something that is really working is...
2. I continue to be challenged by...
3. My students should know _____ by January/midterms

Reflection # 3 February

Your third reflection could include the following:

1. I am frustrated by...
2. I am proud of...
3. One thing that would make a difference for the rest of the year is...

Reflection # 4 April

Your third reflection could include the following:

1. The biggest challenge I faced this year was...
2. Suggestions for next year include...
3. Overall, this year was...



Comprehensive Induction Program

Discussion Log One - Year 1

Classroom Environment

New Teacher : _____ Mentor: _____ Date: _____

What successes have you had with managing classroom procedures, managing student behavior, creating an environment to support learning and/or organizing physical space?

What challenges have you had with managing classroom procedures, managing student behavior, creating an environment to support learning and/or organizing physical space?

When you reflect on the challenges that you have faced, can you think of different ways that you could have addressed the situation? Describe the actions that you will take the next time that you face a similar situation.

When you consider the challenges that you have faced recently are there any that you would like guidance with from me as your Mentor or others that you feel could assist you in developing the skills and knowledge that you need?

The Gut-Level Teacher Reflection

Adapted from: <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/gut-level-reflection-questions/>

See website for more information and link to a related podcast.

These five questions can help you listen to your gut and uncover problem areas in your teaching. Under each question, space is provided for you to take notes on things that give you positive feelings (+), negative feelings (—), and mixed or unclear feelings (?).

1. Look around your classroom or work space. What parts of the room make you feel tense, anxious, or exhausted? What parts make you feel calm, happy, or proud?

| + | - | ? |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

2. Open your plan book and just start browsing, paying attention to how you're feeling as your eyes meet certain events. What days and weeks give you a lift when you see them, a feeling of pride or satisfaction? Which make you feel disappointed, irritated, or embarrassed?

| + | - | ? |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

3. Look over your student list. What do you feel when you look at each name? Which make you feel relaxed, satisfied, and proud, and which ones make your chest tighten with regret, and which ones make your stomach tense?

| + | - | ? |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

4. Mentally travel from classroom to classroom, picturing each teacher in the building. What are your feelings as you approach each one? Which give you a generally positive feeling, which ones are neutral, and which make you feel nervous, angry, or annoyed?

| + | - | ? |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

5. Look at the professional practice “buzzwords” in the left column. As you read each one, do you have a positive, negative, or mixed feeling? Blank spaces are for you to add your own buzzwords or terms that impact your work.

| | + | - | ? |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| Technology | | | |
| Data driven | | | |
| Evidence-based | | | |
| Standards based | | | |
| Higher level thinking | | | |
| PBIS | | | |
| RTI | | | |
| Social Emotional Learning | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Priorities and Action Plan: For each of the five areas above, identify one or two priorities for change. They may be positives into which you want to put more energy, negatives you want to address, or ambiguities that need more investigation. Then, jot down a concrete plan to address each priority.

| | Priorities | Action Plan |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Area 1: Classroom | | |
| Area 2: Planning | | |
| Area 3: Students | | |
| Area 4: Co-workers | | |
| Area 5: Professional Practice | | |

Five time-management tips for new teachers

Sarah Wright

10th August 2016 at 16:30

Retrieved from: <https://www.tes.com/new-teachers/five-time-management-tips-new-teachers>



Teacher educator Sarah Wright shares five tips for effectively managing your time

Time management can be a huge challenge for seasoned teachers, let alone those who are new to the classroom. As an NQT, you might be tempted to earn your stripes and prove yourself as a “real” teacher by burning the candle at both ends.

But this year is actually your chance to get into positive and healthy habits for managing your time. Here are my tips for how to do this:

- 1. The early bird does not get a sticker:** Nobody will give you a gold star for Instagramming your alarm clock when it goes off at an insanely early hour. Think about your time carefully. When and how [do you work best](#)? When will you be most productive? Plan a “power hour” for each day, when you give yourself uninterrupted, focused time to get things done.
- 2. Plan smart:** You will clearly consider the workload of your children when planning out your weekly lessons, but remember [to consider your own, too](#). If you have a lesson that is going to give you a heavy marking load, try to balance it out with another that will allow you to use peer-assessment, or give verbal feedback.

3. **Consider impact:** Will that perfect image that you spent three hours trawling Google for really have an impact on Year 9? Will a primary class notice whether your clip art is perfectly coordinated across all of your resources? Design is important, but don't get sucked into the black hole of seeking perfection.

4. **Anticipate heavy workload:** Invest in a diary and use it to plan out your week so that you can see your "pinch points". The aim should be to anticipate when you might need to put extra time in, but also to balance this with absolute downtime, perhaps by making a personal pact not to work after hours on a particular day.

5. **Don't disappear:** It will be easy to forget that a world exists outside of dry-wipe boards, Post-it notes and green biro. You might be tempted to spend your lunch break setting up for your next lesson, but it's imperative that you get to know your colleagues, too. So don't be a stranger to the staffroom. And the same goes for spending time with your friends and family. Make sure that you plan and *take time to be you*.

Sarah Wright is a senior lecturer at Edge Hill University in Lancashire. She tweets as [@Sarah__wright1](#).

Time Management Quadrants

“The Eisenhower Box”

Adapted from: James Clear: The Eisenhower Box. <https://jamesclear.com/eisenhower-box>

The Eisenhower Box: How to be More Productive

Eisenhower’s strategy for taking action and organizing your tasks is simple. Using the decision matrix below, you will separate your actions based on four possibilities.

1. Urgent and important (tasks you will do immediately).
2. Important, but not urgent (tasks you will schedule to do later).
3. Urgent, but not important (tasks you will delegate to someone else).
4. Neither urgent nor important (tasks that you will eliminate).

The great thing about this matrix is that it can be used for broad productivity plans (“How should I spend my time each week?”) and for smaller, daily plans (“What should I do today?”).

Here is an example of what my Eisenhower Box looks like for today.

| | | THE EISENHOWER BOX | |
|---------------|---|---|------------|
| | | URGENT | NOT URGENT |
| IMPORTANT | DO <i>Do it now.</i> Write article for today. | DECIDE <i>Schedule a time to do it.</i> Exercising. Calling family and friends. Researching articles. Long-term biz strategy. | |
| NOT IMPORTANT | DELEGATE <i>Who can do it for you?</i> Scheduling interviews. Booking flights. Approving comments. Answering certain emails. Sharing articles. | DELETE <i>Eliminate it.</i> Watching television. Checking social media. Sorting through junk mail. | |

*“What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important.”
-Dwight Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States*

Time Management Quadrant adapted for Teachers

Adapted from: The Owl Teacher: Time Management for the Teacher. <https://theowlteacher.com/time-management-for-the-teacher/>

Time Management for the Teacher

Time management can be tricky. I know. I recall many times that I just didn't have it under control. I would come to work early, burn up my prep time, stay late at night, and STILL come in on Saturday to work – not to mention the times I took my bag home and *actually* opened it. I often wondered, “Am I ever going to get this time management piece down and get my life back?”

As I mentioned in my blog post, [Tips to Leave Work Early](#), I did eventually start to figure some things out. It took time. I had to take some baby steps, but really, learning time management was a huge chunk of it.

A KEY TO TIME MANAGEMENT IS EVALUATION

One of the first things I needed to do was to stop and evaluate many different things. First, I had to evaluate how I was spending my time. I took note of my daily activities for a few days- everything. That was an eye-opener for me to see just how much time I waste. You don't realize until you actually keep a record just how much of a time sucker Facebook, Pinterest, and your email really are! I mean, I had an idea- but I guess I was just in denial. Once I was able to see how I was ~~wasting~~ spending my time, I then made a schedule and ~~forced~~ decided to stick to it.

Next, I evaluated when I felt I worked best. Was it morning? Evening? Afternoon? For me, it was first thing in the morning, right after my first cup of ...Dr. Pepper. Finally, I evaluated the list of tasks I needed to do and their level of priority. I took a four-quadrant chart and sorted my tasks based on how important and urgent they were. This is an example:

| | |
|--|--|
| A. Important and Urgent <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unscheduled tasks• Deadlines• Report cards• Emergencies• Last minute tasks• Intervention | B. Important and Not Urgent <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson planning• Goal setting• Relaxing• Grading papers• Professional development |
| C. Not important But Urgent <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emails• Some meetings• Phone calls | D. Not Important, Not Urgent <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Busy work• Organizing classroom/desk• Cleaning up room• Searching for new ideas |

Other time management tips (edited)

In addition to the evaluation tips above,

- I made sure that I did my tasks right the first time so I didn't have to do them again.
- I stopped and took frequent breaks. Taking a break actually allows your brain to work more efficiently and effectively.
- I always did those nasty, unwanted tasks first. That's when. Your brain is the freshest, and there is something fulfilling about having it done and moving on to better tasks!
- Finally, create routines that become second nature- or habits- and consider moving up your deadlines. Just something to consider.

Time Management Quadrant

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A. Important and Urgent | B. Important and Not Urgent |
| C. Not Important but Urgent | D. Not Important, Not Urgent |

10 Stress-Busting Secrets of Great Teachers

Posted by [Vicki Davis](#)

Retrieved from: <https://www.coolcatteacher.com/manage-teaching-stress/>

If I look through a window pane and see teaching as weather, teaching would be the thunderstorm. And as we sail our classroom ship on this maelstrom of hormones, stress, conflicting priorities, and distractions, it takes rock-solid habits of mind and life to be the kind of self-assured captain who can weather the storm.

"I feel thin, sort of stretched, like butter scraped over too much bread."

JRR Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Health professionals believe that 80-90% of all disease is stress related. [Gallup's 2014 State of American Schools](#) reports half of teachers claim they have [significant daily stress](#). (*The highest of all careers polled.*)

[callout]This month's Global Search on Education question is "What are the quick ways to combat teacher's stress in a classroom?" You'll see all of the answers collected [here](#). [/callout]

Here are some time-tested research-proven ways to be that Teacher-Captain with nerves of steel.

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #1: Kill Worry By Accepting the Worst and Working to Improve It

"Worry is a cycle of inefficient thoughts whirling around a center of fear." Corrie ten Boom

Many teachers house an internal storm between their ears. Worry rips through peace and electrocutes purpose.

The best technique for dealing with anxiety comes from Dale Carnegie's [How to Stop Worrying and Start Living](#). Carnegie interviewed Willis H. Carrier the engineer and founder of the Carrier Corporation, the company many of us use for our air conditioning system. Early in his career, Carrier had made a mistake and installed a massive air handling system that didn't work. After nights of not sleeping, Carrier adopted three steps that changed his life.

1. Analyze the situation fearlessly and honestly and figure out the worst that can happen as a result.
2. Accept the worst outcome
3. Calmly devote time and energy to improve upon the worst which has already been accepted mentally.

When I'm worried, I grab pen and paper and start by listing the worst thing that can happen. I go ahead and accept the worst, and then, I start improving it. As it says in Luke 12:22,

"Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #2: Interrupt Negative Thought Loops and Replace Them With Positive Ones

Your thoughts can swirl into a tornado — taking you to places of purpose or pathetic places of self-induced agony.

Your thoughts create a mental momentum that spills over into your physical world.

On [a recent episode](#) of *Every Classroom Matters*, Sir John Hargrave, author of *Mindhacking*, talked about "thought loops." Thought loops are those repeated loops of things we say to ourselves. Part of self-awareness and metacognition is the ability to pull back and observe your thoughts from a distance.

For example, early in my career I was struggling with classroom management. I found myself thinking "I can't manage my classroom." The more I said this, the more helpless I became. I quickly switched this stinkin' thinkin' to "I will learn how to better manage my classroom and become a better teacher." I did.

Gandhi said,

“I will not let anyone walk through my mind with his dirty feet.”

Sometimes we're the one with dirty feet and the negativity comes from ourselves. Sometimes our thoughts echo negative things people have said to us that we won't let go. We can master our thoughts and redirect our abilities. Interrupt your negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones. Even if you have to talk to yourself. Redirect your thoughts and regain your mind.

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #3: Keep a Joy Journal

Looking for joy is like looking for a color. When you look for the color blue, you see it everywhere. Start noticing and writing down things that bring you joy. You'll re-set your mindset and become happier.

[Research](#) has shown that keeping a joy journal will improve your “long term well being” more than winning a million dollars in the lottery.

Most of us are naturally tuned to notice certain things. Some people always see the negative, like old Eeyore in Winnie the Pooh.

Winnie the Pooh: *Lovely day, isn't it?*

Eeyore: *Wish I could say yes, but I can't.*

Some of us just need to re-set our mindset. Listing five things a day will have you looking for those things. The kind word, the fun time you had playing with the dog, the romantic dinner you had last night, the surprise phone call from an old friend. We all have moments of joy if we start noticing them instead of feeling blue.

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #4: Make Sleep a Priority

A tired teacher is a powderkeg looking for a match. Set an evening alarm to remind yourself that it is time to go to sleep. [Sleep loss](#) makes it harder to think, harms your health and worsens your mood. Women who sleep less than seven hours a night [are more likely](#) to be obese. [Norbert Schwarz](#) says, “Making \$60,000 more in annual income has less of an effect on your daily happiness than getting one extra hour of sleep a night.”

[Brooks and Lack](#) found that a ten-minute nap was ideal, but that even a five-minute snooze was better than nothing.

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #5: Drink Enough Water

Take time to drink water. [Seventy-five percent of Americans suffer](#) from chronic dehydration. [Dehydration is shown](#) to impact your mood and cognitive processes negatively. The effects of dehydration are real and especially detrimental to teachers who must stay positive and think clearly.

Many suffer not from lack of water, but an inability to take time to drink it. Apply the “[mud puddle principle](#)” and put a glass by each sink in your home. Drink a whole glass of water at the beginning of break and lunch. Drinking water must become part of your habits, so you do it automatically.

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #6: Exercise (preferably outside)

[Sitting](#) is the new cigarette. [Every 90 minutes](#) a human needs to move. We're not stuck on a ship, after all, we can walk around the building or visit a friend across campus. Some of us can even walk to work.

Just five minutes of exercise gives you a [positive mood-enhancing impact](#). [Exercising outdoors](#) will boost your mood even more.

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #7: Make Time for Mindfulness

“If patience is worth anything, it must endure to the end of time. And a living faith will last in the midst of the blackest storm.” Mahatma Gandhi

[A strong correlation](#) exists between mindfulness and positive mental health. Research-proven ways of handling stress include [meditation](#), [deep breathing](#), [aromatherapy](#), [listening to music](#), [visualization](#) and [prayer](#).

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #8: Develop deep relationships

As humans, we need intimacy. But just being together is not enough. Be careful that your stressful career doesn't ruin your close relationships. While [journaling your problems](#) is shown to reduce stress, [just talking about them](#) with another person is not. And [cynical gossip](#) has an intensely [negative](#) impact on your life.

Build healthy relationships of mutual respect and common interests. Do fun things together. Take time off from work-worries and just be a human being, not a human doing.

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #9: Make Physical Affection Part of Your Day

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” Leo Buscaglia, Author
[Kissing](#), [hugging](#), and even [massages](#) are proven ways to reduce stress. Even a simple, appropriate [hug](#) or pat on the back can help.

Teacher Stress Busting Secret #10: Unplug, Recharge, and Focus

A distracted captain can run his ship aground. A [distracted person](#) is a danger to himself and those he cares for most. Constant interruptions can make you feel like a human doing and not a human being.

Unplug. First, we need at least [an hour before bed](#) when we are not looking at or around our brightly lit devices. Technology devices wake us up and interrupt our circadian rhythms, making it difficult to sleep. Stop using technology one hour before bedtime.

Recharge. [Charge your phone outside of the bedroom](#). Even in airplane mode and do not disturb, some apps can wake us up.

Have a Do Not Disturb Time. You [need uninterrupted moments](#) of DND (Do Not Disturb) time. Any time you're at an event and want to focus on the event, set your phone to DND, particularly if using your phone as the camera. This way, you won't be interrupted with an “urgent” email when you go to snap a picture of a never-to-be-repeated moment. You will also be [more productive](#) at work. Teachers who mess around with computers instead of focusing on students, make a mess of great teaching opportunities.

Planning for the Paraeducator (Ed Tech)

From Special Connections, University of Kansas. URL:

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How is planning for a paraeducator different than planning for yourself and from co-planning with a peer?

You may have already read about **co-planning** in another section of the Special Connections website. The forms contained in that section provide an excellent basis for planning with another teacher. However, planning for a paraeducator is different because the role is different than yours, and it doesn't legitimately allow them to make decisions about the curriculum or instruction that students receive. While you may be able to use shorthand in your plan book or on a planning form to remind yourself of what you intend to do, a paraeducator cannot be expected to read your mind and is left stranded without written plans.

Why is planning for paraeducators important?

Dynamic instruction is founded on good planning and good planning is founded on assessment information. While most teachers have stopped using the planning forms their education professors gave them, effective teachers are absolutely clear about the purposes of their lessons and they create classroom experiences that target those purposes. They decide ahead of time what activities they'll engage students in, how they'll provide directions to students, and what materials they'll need at their fingertips. They know what homework will be assigned and they know beforehand how they'll prepare students to engage with the concepts.

When experienced school professionals fail to plan, they may be able to wing it or make it through a class or two without disastrous results. However, when no one plans for the instruction delivered by paraeducators, it means that paraeducators, who are unprepared to plan lessons, are on their own to design the instruction. It is legally and ethically unacceptable for a paraeducator to work with students who have complex learning needs, or with social, emotional, or health issues, with no written plan provided by a supervisor. Yet, it is commonly done.

Paraeducators, unfortunately, are frequently allowed to make decisions that should be rightfully made by fully qualified professionals. Interviews with paraeducators have revealed intuitive or "home grown" attitudes about their roles in supporting students, in the absence of written plans. Some paraeducators believe it is their job to keep students with disabilities from "bothering the classroom teacher." They believe that they are responsible for all aspects of a child's education, that they have to create all adaptations for the child, and that they are responsible totally for the child. And, sadly, they have been allowed to deliver services with little guidance.

Paraeducators who are placed in such positions realize that they are poorly equipped to do the job. Some paraeducators have reported that, "I make my own plans." Others reported, "No one plans, I just follow along trying to do what I'm supposed to," and still others reported that they "write lesson plans for the reading group." Paraeducators in many locations have reported that they held full responsibility for students, including planning lessons and activities, creating curricular and instructional adaptations and modifications even though state policies do not advocate such responsibilities for paraeducators.

When teachers were asked if they planned for paraeducators, they often admitted that they did not. Some teachers justified their lack of planning for paraeducators, "I don't need to plan - she just knows what to do." Some said, "She doesn't need a written plan, I just tell her what to do on the 'fly' (French, 1998)." While these responses may reflect the current state of affairs, none of them exemplify a legal or ethical position.

Should we expect something different from paraeducators than we expect from teachers? In a word, yes. Paraeducators are not teachers. They are valuable school employees who hold a legitimate role in the teaching process, but they work in a different capacity than teachers. For example, paraeducators assist teachers of students who are learning English but they do not have the skills to conduct language assessments or to plan lessons that focus on language acquisition.

We expect nurses and doctors to have different roles. We recognize that a nurse may give the injection to a patient, but we understand that the doctor prescribed it. Nurses do not prescribe medications or courses or treatment-they deliver them. They provide daily care to patients; ensure the delivery of prescribed medications and treatments, and record data so that the doctor can make informed decisions about further treatment. Similarly, we do not want paraeducators prescribing instructional sequences, units, lessons, or adaptations. We do want paraeducators delivering instruction and interventions, carrying out the curricular adaptation plans made by the professional.

Designing instructional environments and making decisions about the goals, objectives, activities, and evaluations of instructional episodes are tasks that are well outside the paraeducator's scope of responsibility. We should not let it slide when a paraeducator, who works on an hourly basis, with little preparation, and no professional credential, is allowed to plan or, worse, is forced into planning for students because the professional has neglected to do so. Paraeducators should not be asked to do the teacher's job. There is an important instructional role for paraeducators, but that does not include usurping the teacher's role.

What factors should I consider in planning for paraeducators?

First, let's consider what it is that a special educator plans. Those who work in self-contained classes plan like any other teacher for all the curricular and instructional needs of their students. There is little else to say about that situation.

On the other hand, special education teachers who work in inclusion programs have to plan differently. Their plans are not so much about the curricular standards (because general education teachers plan

the class lessons). They are about the adaptations to general education curriculum and instruction that are driven by the IEP and are necessary to the success of students in general education classes.

Because the tasks that paraeducators perform vary substantially in complexity and risk, the type and level of planning also varies. Consider the following factors.

Paraeducator Experience, Skill, and Training.

If a paraeducator has performed the same type of instructional activity, student supervision assignment, clerical task, behavior management technique, data collection, or health service in the past, and has performed satisfactorily, then plans may be very brief. A sentence or phrase added to the schedule would suffice. On the other hand, if a paraeducator is new to the position, has received only a brief training, or doesn't have the skills, the plan must be more detailed, specifying outcomes, actions, materials, cautions, and levels of authority.

Complexity of the Task

Obviously, clerical work requires minimal planning and direction, but instructional work requires more. The more complex the instruction, or the intervention, the more important it is to give specific directions in the plan for data recording and instructional techniques. For example, a paraeducator should be given specific directions regarding the amount of student success or failure to tolerate. A paraeducator may be directed to allow a student to fail at a task and then redirect his or her efforts or, alternatively, to give enough prompts and cues so that student performance is errorless.

Behavior issues are also complex. A paraeducator working with students who have significant behavior or social issues needs more guidance about appropriate ways to interact with the students, appropriate limits to set, and types of behavior to tolerate or ignore, as well as the behaviors that require interruption, redirection, or reinforcement.

Risk

Two circumstances that increase risk are structure and distance. Structure refers to the circumstances of the situation. Where there are walls and doors, where the activities are performed uniformly with other students, where there is little movement or few choices, there tends to be less risk. Within a school, physical education classes pose greater risks for students than English classes.

Distance is the physical separation between the paraeducator and the person responsible for the outcomes of instruction. Where the paraeducator performs his or her work matters. The distance of the paraeducator from the supervising professional is one factor that contributes to risk. The greater the distance, the greater the risk. Greater risk requires more specific guidance.

For example, Ruby works one-to-one with an elementary school student with autism in the general classroom, hallways, lunchroom, and playground—all at some distance from the special education teacher. Ruby needs full information about the student's health, academic needs, appropriate

adaptations, and appropriate instructional techniques, as well as specific directions on how to cue the student to engage in activities. The plan should tell Ruby how much or little verbalization to use and how to work around the student's sensitivities to touch and other sensory inputs.

Another example is of a secondary special education program where students go into the community for life-skills experiences, vocational exploration, or work experience. The paraeducator is working in a high-risk situation, away from the teacher, and in a low-structure situation. Such a paraeducator should have a list of precautions and emergency procedures, as well as specific goals and directions for the instructional sequences that take place in the community setting.

What do plans for paraeducators contain?

Components of Plans

1. Purpose of task, lesson or adaptation
2. Long term student goals, short term objectives
3. Specific student needs & strengths
4. Materials & Research
5. Sequence of actions, use of cues or prompts, permissible adaptations
6. Data structure for documenting student performance

Good plans are brief, easy to read at a glance, and relatively easy to write. They also contain six key components.

Components of Plans

A good plan specifies how to do the task, the purposes of the task or lesson, the specific student needs to be addressed or strengths on which to capitalize, the materials to use, and the type of data needed to determine whether the student achievement is satisfactory, moving in the right direction, or unsatisfactory.

It is also important for the paraeducator to understand how the task fits into the broader goals and outcomes for the student. For example, James, a student with severe and multiple disabilities, has been learning to raise and lower his left arm. If Lu, the paraeducator who works with him, understands that James is preparing for a communication device that depends on this skill, she will be sure that he practices many times a day and that he practices correctly. So, the plan may tell Lu that the goal is for James to raise and lower his left arm deliberately. It should also tell her that the long-range goal is that he will be able to use a button or switch that controls an assistive speaking device. The plan also needs to have a place to document the number of opportunities he had to practice the skill, the amount of cueing or prompting he required to perform the skill, and the number of times he successfully performed the skill, with or without cueing or prompting.

How can I plan for paraeducators efficiently?

Communicating About Plans

When you plan for yourself, communicating with another person isn't an issue. But, when you plan for paraeducators, lack of clarity can cause unexpected problems. Try to look at the plan from the paraeducator's point of view. Unless the plan is communicated in a format that she understands, she may not be able to use it.

Good planning formats are easy to use and user-friendly. If the planning form or format is handy, simple, and includes all key components, you will improve your communication and minimize the amount of time you spend doing it. How can you be sure the paraeducator knows how to carry out the plan? You may also need to check for understanding about the plan. Asking the paraeducator if he or she has any questions is one way to open the opportunity for clarification.

Planning Forms and Formats

Plans do not necessarily adhere to a predetermined format. Many teachers use their creative talents to design forms and formats that respond to the unique characteristics of their own situation. Professionals have sufficient latitude to create a planning form or format that pleases them and addresses the combined needs of the team. What is contained in the written plan, the amount of detail, and the specificity of directions are all negotiable.

Although a paper-based planning form isn't necessary and plans certainly may be written on any type of surface (chalkboards, dry-mark boards) or electronic platform (hand-held electronic planner, centrally located computer), school professionals tend to rely on paper.

Using blank paper means that the plan-writer will have to write certain pieces of information or structural aspects of the plan over and over again. Forms eliminate the duplication of effort and streamline the planning process. Paper-based planning forms, like other planning formats, must also meet the dual tests of ease-of-use and user-friendliness.

Click the links below to view various examples of planning forms that can be downloaded for your own adaptation.

- [Example Student Daily Communication Sheet and IEP Goals](#)
- [Example Communication Sheet: Academic and Physical Activities](#)
- [Example Pull-Out Activity Plan](#)
- [Example Lesson Plan for Application of Modifications and Adaptations](#)
- [Example Small Group Vocabulary Procedures](#)

Ease of Use

Ease-of-use means that the plan form or format should be readily available and comprehensive enough to cover all the key components, yet simple enough that the professional can use it consistently. The professional is the best judge of ease-of-use. For example, a template created and kept on a word

processor may be readily available for a professional who has a computer on his or her desk. Multiple copies of a printed form kept in a desktop folder may be easier for another teacher who prefers the pen to the keyboard.

Length of the form is also important. Too many components make it difficult to know what to write and too tedious to write it in each space. Including too few components may result in the transmission of too little information or of information that is too general to be useful.

User-Friendly

User-friendliness refers to the visual appeal of the form and its familiarity. User-friendliness is best judged by the paraeducator. Visual appeal often means that there is a lot of white space or graphics on the page and that the length is sufficient but not overwhelming. A paraeducator faced with a two- to three-page plan will be less likely to read the plan carefully than she would given a single page, neatly written or typed. The use of common terminology and a reading level that is consistent with the knowledge and literacy level of the paraeducator are also important factors in user-friendliness.

What is the role of the paraeducator in adapting curriculum and instruction?

The paraeducator holds the ethical responsibility to follow written plans and oral directions provided by any or all school professionals assigned to the student with disabilities. The written plans need not be complex, but must be developed by the professionals who participated in assessment of the student and in the IEP planning, and who hold responsibility for that student's IEP goals and objectives. A list of goals and the related adaptations covering the range of classroom instructional situations meets the legal requirements if it is shared with the paraeducator as well as general education teachers.

University of Kansas

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Starting Off On the Right Foot: Getting Acquainted

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Starting Off on the Right Foot: Getting Acquainted

How do I do a Getting Acquainted Interview?

Getting to know the individual or team that will provide supervision is of primary importance to the paraeducator. One way for school professionals and newly employed paraeducators to get to know one another is to have a structured initial conversation. The Getting Acquainted Questions can help two people get acquainted. Click [here](#) for a printable form of the interview questions. You may want to ask other questions that will help you get to know the new person. The structured conversation is not meant to replace a hiring interview. It is meant to occur at the beginning of employment to help newly employed paraeducators gain knowledge of their fellow workers and to help team members get to know one another.

How do I compare my work style and preferences to that of the paraeducator's?

To compare work styles and preferences, click [here](#) to access the Work Styles and Preferences Worksheets. The first page, Teacher Work Style and Preferences, allows you to reflect on your own preferences and to share them with the paraeducator you work with. The paraeducator version, Paraeducator Work Style and Preferences allows the paraeducator to tell her preferences on the same kinds of items.

It is important for all team members to recognize that style preferences are not inherently good or bad, but that they do exist. The lack of initial recognition of differences often creates a breeding ground for interpersonal problems between paraeducators and professionals. Managing differences from the start means that the team members must note differences in work style preferences, recognizing that preferences are just that—preferences. They are not flaws or personality defects, but simple likes and dislikes. And everyone is different.

How do I create a personalized job description?

Paraeducators deserve to know what is expected of them. Many teachers haven't thought carefully about what the paraeducator should or shouldn't do. But, once you've reviewed the tools on legal, ethical, and liability considerations regarding the types of tasks paraeducators perform, and you've examined the material on sharing supervisory responsibilities, you are equipped to handle the task of creating a personalized paraeducator job description. There are four steps after you've conducted the work style and preferences analysis described above.

Step 1: Create a task list for paraeducators.

The first step is to analyze all the tasks that need to be performed for the paraeducator program to function, for students to thrive, and for the paraeducator's own needs to be met. The Master List of Tasks and Duties can be used to help professionals list all the possible duties. Professionals who work together may want to create one master list or each professional may want to create his or her own master list. Either way, such a list represents categories of tasks that typically need to be done to ensure student success at school and to maintain the program, the team relationship, the classroom, and the work climate.

Adapt your master list to fit the characteristics of your program, students and professionals. For example, professionals in a preschool program might eliminate some tasks (e.g., giving spelling tests) and keep others (e.g., self-help, read to students). They might also add tasks that are specific to a program (e.g., work on articulation skills with children). Professionals in a vocational preparation program, on the other hand, might reword a task such as "Help students in drill and practice lessons," to read "Help students apply basic computational skills on the job" to reflect the differences in programmatic emphasis, as well as the age and needs of students. Again, the wide variety of programs, professionals, and student needs precludes the possibility of creating a single list that is entirely useful in all situations. The examples presented are intended as starters from which professionals can create unique lists that address their own program needs.

Step 2: Ask paraeducator to review list.

The second step is to invite the paraeducator to review the list(s), considering his or her skills, knowledge, and areas of confidence. While it is not necessary to use forms to perform the analysis and comparison, a systematic format, once created, saves time in the future and assures team members that they have addressed all relevant issues. The companion to the Master List of Tasks and Duties is the Paraeducator Task Preparation and Confidence Inventory ([click here to view this form](#)). It may be given to the paraeducator to obtain his or her input.

Step 3: Analyze the list.

The third step occurs after the list is made and the paraeducator has responded to it. This step is essentially a needs vs. preferences analysis in which the professional examines both the master list and the paraeducator's responses to the items to decide which tasks will become an immediate part of the expectations for the paraeducator and which tasks require further preparation.

Step 4: Create a personalized job description.

The fourth step of defining the job involves creating a personalized job description. Items on which there is a scoring match (that is, the professional needs the task done and the paraeducator agrees that he or she is prepared to perform it) automatically become part of the personalized job description. Items for which the need exists, but paraeducator preparation or confidence are lacking, deserve examination and individual evaluation. You will want to negotiate with the paraeducator on these

items. The inventories become the vehicle by which these important negotiations are structured. Tasks that the professional needs, but that are not matched by paraeducator training or confidence, may be treated in one of three ways. They may be listed as expected tasks, in which case training must be immediate. They may be listed as future tasks, following appropriate preparation. Or, they may be eliminated completely. You decide.

Is creating a personalized job description in conflict with the job description my district uses or the union agrees upon?

The personalized job description should never exceed the limitations imposed by the official district position description or go beyond the duties prescribed by union agreements. This is generally not a problem because the items listed in the Master List of Tasks and Duties and in the Paraeducator Task Preparation and Confidence Inventory are just specific examples of the general categories that are typically found on official position descriptions and are well within the scope of legal and ethical tasks.

For example, one category typically found on a paraeducator position description is "Assist with Instruction." Rarely do official position descriptions specify what such assistance is composed of. The personalized job description gives definition to the category by describing the specific actions to be taken by the paraeducator.

Paraeducator Task Preparation / Confidence Inventory

Directions for the Paraeducator: Complete this form by considering your own preparation and confidence to perform each task. Decide how prepared and confident you feel for each task / duty. Check 1 if you are unprepared to do the task and want / need training in order to begin. Check 2 to show that you may begin doing the task, but need further instruction. Check 3 or 4 to show that you want more training to improve your skill. Check 5 if you feel well prepared and confident.

Supervision of Groups of Students

1. Assist individual students on arrival or departure (specify _____) 1 2 3 4 5
2. Supervise groups of students during lunch..... 1 2 3 4 5
3. Supervise groups of students during recess 1 2 3 4 5
4. Supervise groups of students loading / unloading buses 1 2 3 4 5
5. Monitor students during hall passing periods 1 2 3 4 5
6. Escort groups of students to bathroom, library, gym, etc. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Accompany students to therapy sessions, individual appointments, etc. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Teach appropriate social behaviors in common areas 1 2 3 4 5
9. Carry out behavior management 1 2 3 4 5
10. Participate in classroom behavioral system as directed 1 2 3 4 5
11. Provide reinforcement /support in IEPs / behavior plans 1 2 3 4 5
12. Mediate interpersonal conflicts between students 1 2 3 4 5
13. Provide instruction to students on how to mediate their own conflicts 1 2 3 4 5
14. Provide cues, prompts to students who are mediating conflicts 1 2 3 4 5
15. Provide physical proximity for students with behavior problems 1 2 3 4 5
16. Circulate in classroom to provide behavioral supports where needed 1 2 3 4 5
17. Enforce class and school rules 1 2 3 4 5
18. Assist students who are self-managing behavior (e.g provide cues, prompts) . 1 2 3 4 5
19. Help students develop / self-monitor organizational skills 1 2 3 4 5
20. Provide cues, prompts to students to use impulse / anger control strategies ... 1 2 3 4 5
21. Provide cues, prompts to students to employ specific prosocial skills 1 2 3 4 5
22. Teach pro-social skill lessons 1 2 3 4 5
23. Facilitate appropriate social interactions among students 1 2 3 4 5
24. Assist other students in coping with the behaviors of specific students 1 2 3 4 5

Delivery of Instruction

25. Conduct drill & practice activities (e.g. vocabulary, math facts, articulation protocols) 1 2 3 4 5
26. Read / repeat tests or directions to students 1 2 3 4 5
27. Read with students (specify techniques _____ [e.g. guided oral reading, neurological impress, repeated readings, choral reading]) 1 2 3 4 5
28. Help students complete written assignments 1 2 3 4 5
29. Give objective tests (e.g. spelling, math)..... 1 2 3 4 5
30. Assist students to compose original work (e.g. stories, essays, reports) 1 2 3 4 5
31. Tape record stories, lessons, assignments 1 2 3 4 5
32. Create individualized instructional materials according to the adaptation list provided or specific directions (e.g. lesson plans, IEPs) 1 2 3 4 5
33. Read to students (specify _____ [e.g. texts material, stories]) 1 2 3 4 5
34. Listen to students reading orally 1 2 3 4 5
35. Help students' work on individual projects 1 2 3 4 5
36. Facilitate students' active participation in cooperative groups 1 2 3 4 5
37. Help students select library books / reference materials 1 2 3 4 5
38. Help students use computers (specify purpose _____ [e.g. keyboarding, drill & practice, composing written assignments, printing, Internet) 1 2 3 4 5

- 39. Translate instruction / student responses (e.g. sign or other language) 1 2 3 4 5
- 40. Translate directions into other language for student(s) (e.g. ASL) 1 2 3 4 5
- 41. Translate teacher made materials / text materials into another language 1 2 3 4 5
- 42. Use another language (e.g. sign, Spanish), to discuss and elaborate on concepts that have been taught in English 1 2 3 4 5
- 43. Carry out lessons on field trips as directed 1 2 3 4 5
- 44. Monitor student performance as directed 1 2 3 4 5
- 45. Re-teach / reinforce instructional concepts introduced by teachers to small groups or individual students 1 2 3 4 5

Data Collection / Reporting

- 46. Observe and record student progress in academic areas 1 2 3 4 5
- 47. Observe and record individual student behaviors 1 2 3 4 5
- 48. Observe and record student health needs 1 2 3 4 5
- 49. Observe and record student food / liquid intake 1 2 3 4 5
- 50. Observe and record student bathroom use / needs 1 2 3 4 5
- 51. Observe and record student communication skills, adaptive equipment 1 2 3 4 5
- 52. Observe and record student social interactions / initiative, etc. 1 2 3 4 5
- 53. Observe and record behavior of classes, large, or small groups 1 2 3 4 5

Activity Preparation / Follow-up

- 54. Find / arrange materials / equipment (e.g. mix paints, set up lab materials) 1 2 3 4 5
- 55. Adapt materials / equipment as specified for particular student 1 2 3 4 5
- 56. Construct learning materials as directed 1 2 3 4 5
- 57. Prepare classroom displays 1 2 3 4 5
- 58. Order materials and supplies 1 2 3 4 5
- 59. Organize classroom supplies / materials 1 2 3 4 5
- 60. Operate equipment (e.g. tape recorders, VCRs, overhead projectors) 1 2 3 4 5
- 61. Make audio and/or visual aids (transparencies, written notes, voice notes etc.) 1 2 3 4 5
- 62. Schedule guest speakers / visitors as directed 1 2 3 4 5
- 63. Help prepare and clean up snacks 1 2 3 4 5
- 64. Help students clean up after activities 1 2 3 4 5
- 65. Distribute supplies / materials / books to students 1 2 3 4 5
- 66. Collect completed work from students / return papers to students 1 2 3 4 5
- 67. Make field trip arrangements (e.g. schedule buses, notify cafeteria) 1 2 3 4 5

Ethical Practice

- 68. Maintain confidentiality of all information regarding students 1 2 3 4 5
- 69. Respect the dignity of every child at all times 1 2 3 4 5
- 70. Report suspected child abuse according to the law, local policies, procedures. 1 2 3 4 5
- 71. Abide by school district policies, school rules, and team standards in all areas 1 2 3 4 5
- 72. Communicate with parents and families only as directed by the teacher 1 2 3 4 5
- 73. Provide accurate and timely information about the student to those who have know [e.g. team members] 1 2 3 4 5
- 74. Carry out all assigned duties responsibly, in a timely manner 1 2 3 4 5
- 75. Protect the welfare and safety of students at all times 1 2 3 4 5
- 76. Maintain composure / emotional control while working with students 1 2 3 4 5
- 77. Demonstrate punctuality, good attendance, and report absences as directed .. 1 2 3 4 5
- 78. Maintain acceptable hygiene and appearance 1 2 3 4 5
- 79. Protect the privacy and dignity of school staff members, team members, co-workers, other adults in the school 1 2 3 4 5
- 80. Accept assigned tasks graciously 1 2 3 4 5

81. Request direction, instruction, or guidance for new or unfamiliar tasks 1 2 3 4 5

Team Participation / Membership

82. Meet with team as scheduled / directed 1 2 3 4 5
 83. Participate in team meetings by contributing information, ideas, and assistance 1 2 3 4 5
 84. Participate in team meetings by listening carefully to the ideas of others 1 2 3 4 5
 85. Engage in appropriate problem-solving steps to resolve problems..... 1 2 3 4 5
 86. Engage in mature conflict management steps / processes 1 2 3 4 5
 87. Use appropriate communication actions in adult-adult interactions 1 2 3 4 5
 88. Respect the dignity of other adults 1 2 3 4 5
 89. Participate in learning activities as specified in growth and development plan . 1 2 3 4 5
 90. Participate in school wide growth and development activities as specified..... 1 2 3 4 5

Clerical Work

91. Take attendance 1 2 3 4 5
 92. Type reports, tests, IEPs, assessment reports 1 2 3 4 5
 93. Make copies..... 1 2 3 4 5
 94. Sort and file student papers 1 2 3 4 5
 95. Record grades 1 2 3 4 5
 96. Collect fees, i.e. lab, book, milk, activity, etc. 1 2 3 4 5
 97. Correct assigned student-lessons / homework..... 1 2 3 4 5
 98. Grade tests..... 1 2 3 4 5
 99. Help with paperwork to facilitate parent-teacher appointments 1 2 3 4 5
 100. Inventory materials and fill out routine forms Maintain files for IEPs,
 assessment reports, other program reports 1 2 3 4 5
 101. Maintain databases of student information 1 2 3 4 5

Health / Personal Related Services

102. Assist students using the restroom 1 2 3 4 5
 103. Change diapers..... 1 2 3 4 5
 104. Clean up after student accidents 1 2 3 4 5
 105. Help students with health related services as directed by school nurse
 (e.g. trach tube suction, nebulizer treatments) 1 2 3 4 5
 106. Help student(s) eat, mix food, feed (e.g. G-tube) 1 2 3 4 5
 107. Transfer, turn, position, lift students 1 2 3 4 5
 108. Assist student to use wheelchair, stander, other mobility devices..... 1 2 3 4 5
 109. Check functioning of equipment (e.g. hearing aid batteries, oxygen tank) 1 2 3 4 5
 110. Dispense medication to students according to health plan, as directed by nurse 1 2 3 4 5

Other

111. Attend IEP meetings 1 2 3 4 5
 112. Participate in unit, lesson, individual student planning sessions with teacher.... 1 2 3 4 5
 113. Attend parent-teacher conferences 1 2 3 4 5
 114. Communication with families (specify _____) 1 2 3 4 5
 115. Contribute unique skills and talents (specify _____) 1 2 3 4 5
 116. Attend after school activities (specify _____) 1 2 3 4 5

To begin, the paraeducator and the professional(s) fill out the worksheets individually using the appropriate form. Then, together, the professional(s) and the paraeducator fill in Work Style Score Comparison Sheet. The comparison sheet is intended to be a vehicle for communication about how the two (or the team) will work together. Items where the scores vary by only a point tend to be fairly easy to discuss. Items where the score differences are greater need to be discussed further. Knowing the preferences of a newly employed paraeducator and comparing them to the preferred work style of the professional team members enables the team to start off on the right foot. Remember that the scores are not absolutes. Everyone is capable of adapting their own preferences to those of their teammates.

Teacher Work Style and Preferences

Directions: Check the box with the number that indicates your level of agreement / disagreement with each statement.

| | Disagree | | Agree |
|--|----------|---|-------|
| 1. I supervise paraeducators closely. | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 2. I like a flexible work schedule. | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 3. I let paraeducators know exactly what is expected. | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 4. I provide (or at least determine) all the materials that will be used..... | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 5. I provide a written work schedule. | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 6. I expect the paraeducator to think ahead to the next task. | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 7. I determine the instructional methods that will be used | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 8. I encourage the paraeducator to try new activities independently. | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 9. I give explicit directions for each task..... | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 10. I always do several things at one time. | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 11. I like working with paraeducators that willingly take on new challenges..... | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 12. I like taking care of details. | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 13. I require the paraeducator to be very punctual..... | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 14. I like to get frequent feedback on how I can improve as a supervisor | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 15. I like to bring problems out in the open | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 16. I like to give frequent performance feedback to the paraeducator | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 17. I like to discuss activities that do not go well | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 18. I like working with other adults..... | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 19. I encourage paraeducators to think for themselves | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 20. I am a morning person..... | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 21. I speak slowly and softly | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 22. I work best alone with little immediate interaction | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 23. I need a quiet place to work without distractions | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 24. I prefer that no one else touches my things | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |
| 25. I prefer to work from a written plan | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 |

Paraeducator Work Style and Preferences

Directions: Check the box with the number that indicates your level of agreement / disagreement with each statement.

| | Disagree | | | Agree | |
|--|----------|---|---|-------|---|
| 1. I like to be supervised closely..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I like a flexible work schedule..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I like to know exactly what is expected..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I prefer to decide which materials to use..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I like having a written work schedule..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I need time to think ahead on the next task..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I like to determine the instructional methods I use..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I like to try new activities independently..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I like to be told how to do each task..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I like to do several things at one time..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I like to take on challenges and new situations..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I like taking care of details..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I like to be very punctual..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I like to give frequent feedback on how I prefer to be supervised..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I like to bring problems out in the open..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I like to get frequent feedback on my performance..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I like to discuss when activities do not go well..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I like working with other adults..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I like to think things through for myself..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I am a morning person..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. I like to speak slowly and softly..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I like to work alone with little immediate interaction..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. I need a quiet place to work without distractions..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. I prefer that no one else touches my things..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. I prefer to work from a written plan..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Work Style Score Comparison Sheet

Directions: You now need to transfer your individual preferences to this comparison sheet. Your combined profile is unique: there are no "correct" scores or combinations. Decide whether your combinations are okay or not. Have a conversation in which you strive to determine how you will proceed to work together in light of your areas of agreement and disagreement. Write out your decisions on each item that poses an area of difficulty for you.

| Disagree | | Agree | | <u>Item Content</u> | Disagree | | Agree | | | | | | |
|----------|---|-------|---|---------------------|----------|-----|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 1. | Closeness of supervision | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 2. | Flexibility of work schedule | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 3. | Preciseness of expectations | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 4. | Decisions on which materials to use | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 5. | Written work schedule | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 6. | Time to think ahead on the next task | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 7. | Decisions on instructional methods | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 8. | Trying new activities independently | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 9. | Specifying how to do each task | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 10. | Doing several things at one time | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 11. | Taking on challenges | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 12. | Taking care of details | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 13. | Punctuality | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 14. | Giving /getting feedback on supervision | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 15. | Dealing with problems out in the open | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 16. | Giving / getting frequent feedback | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 17. | Discussing activities that do not go well | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 18. | Working with other adults | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 19. | Thinking things through for myself | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 20. | I am a morning person | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 21. | Speak slowly and softly | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 22. | Working alone - little interaction | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ..... | 23. | Quiet place to work / no distractions | ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | 24. | Touching others' things | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | 25. | Working from a written plan | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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On-the-Job Training for Paraeducators

How do I know what the paraeducator's training needs are?

Planning for paraeducator training occurs initially during orientation, while creating the personalized job description. The four step process for developing the Personalized Job Description includes a step where the paraeducator is asked to self-analyze her skills and confidence for performing each of the tasks. When the paraeducator indicates that she is not comfortable or skillful at a task that is required in the program, you will want to create a training plan.

What does a training plan look like?

The plan can take any form, but it should indicate the type of training needed for the task, the competency or skill desired, possible trainers, and when the training is needed. This initial plan reminds the teacher about the kinds of on-the-job training he or she will need to provide.

[Click here to see a sample training plan form.](#)

Do I have to provide all the training on the job?

The training plan should include other possibilities for training, such as having another, more experienced paraeducator provide the training to the newcomer, the use of videotaped material, Internet research, or written materials. It also identifies the need for more formal classroom-based training because not all training can or should occur on the job.

How do I train paraeducators?

Our students deserve to be instructed by paraeducators who have good training. Good training goes beyond the usual - "I-just-tell-them-what-to-do-and-they-do-it" model. There are five essential training components: theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching that should be used when you train paraeducators on the job. Although the training components are discreet, each component builds on the prior one. The Training Components Chart shows how the components relate to one another.

[Click here to view the training components chart.](#)

Component 1: Theory

Theory means that the skill, strategy, or concept is clearly explained or described. While paraeducators do not require significant amounts of learning, language, or behavioral theory, they do need honest, straightforward information about the basic concepts so they will have a context to understand why and when they will use certain instructional, behavioral, literacy, social, and language learning techniques. Presenting conceptual information is inadequate for paraeducators to be able to apply information to the job.

Teachers tend to receive much more theory in their preparation because the teaching role requires substantial decision making about instruction and behavioral approaches, curriculum planning, program design, and student assessment. Teachers sometimes say that they had too much theory and

too little of the other training components in their own preparation. If you have said this, take it as a healthy warning to not make the same mistake.

Component 2: Demonstration

Demonstration means that a skill, strategy, or concept is modeled or shown in some way, so the paraeducator sees, hears, or touches an example or sees how it works in real situations. For example, Jon uses video to show how to lift a child out of a wheelchair without sustaining back injuries. He tapes the video of himself, while he is working with the child.

Reza, on the other hand, models the use of prompts and cues while working with Aram, differentiating between the two as she uses them and showing the paraeducator how to systematically decrease levels of prompting at the same time. This component is essential if the paraeducator will have to perform the skill with students.

Component 3: Practice and Feedback

Practice means that the paraeducator tries out the skill, strategy, or concept in a controlled or safe place—probably not with students. Often that place is in the classroom where the training session is taking place. Practice can take many forms. When teaching conceptual information, it may mean discussion about how the concept applies in the real world. For example, if you were teaching the principle of normalization for students with disabilities, you can guide a discussion of how the basic principles translate into the use of age-appropriate instructional materials, instruction of social behaviors, students' schedules, and so on.

In another example, a quick lesson on how to help students read aloud fluently might include an activity where the paraeducators practice the techniques with each other. If they are given multiple practice opportunities they are more likely to be able to perform that way in a real classroom.

Feedback means that you provide information to the paraeducator about how well he or she performs the skill or strategy or understands the concept. For example, during a practice activity on a social skills instruction sequence, you might stop a paraeducator who forgets one step in the sequence and offer a cue that helps the paraeducator remember how to present information to students. You would then watch the complete instructional sequence a second time and point out how the paraeducator was able to complete the sequence independently. When added to the training session, practice with feedback substantially boosts the learning of participants and increases the likelihood that the paraeducator will be able to demonstrate the skill when asked.

Component 4: Coaching

Coaching is an essential part of the training, but typically occurs after the training session, on the job, while the paraeducator works with students. Coaching means that you watch the paraeducator perform the skill with students and you provide on the spot feedback (discretely, of course) so that the paraeducator can refine their use of the skill.

Coaching is the most powerful of all the training components, yet it tends to be the one that is least used. Why? Coaching takes time and skill. It does almost ensure, however, that the skill will actually be applied in the classroom. Without coaching, we have little assurance that training efforts will pay off in terms of student achievement or improved performance of paraeducators.

University of Kansas

Special Education Paraprofessional Support Checklist

Student _____

Date: _____

| Student Issues / Needs Profile | Logistics | Who could assist? | Training Plan | Supervision |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| 1. Safety issues <input type="checkbox"/> Wanders off / runs away <input type="checkbox"/> Hurts self <input type="checkbox"/> Falls <input type="checkbox"/> Puts inedible items in mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Hurts others <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | Place: Time(s): Level: Low Medium High Duration: Permanent Temporary | <input type="checkbox"/> age-peer student <input type="checkbox"/> older student <input type="checkbox"/> general education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> class/program paraprofessional <input type="checkbox"/> 1:1 designated paraprofessional <input type="checkbox"/> parent volunteer | Indicate training needed / Who delivers <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ | Check all who share supervisory responsibility / Name lead person <input type="checkbox"/> general education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> OT / PT <input type="checkbox"/> SLP <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychologist <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse <input type="checkbox"/> Vision / hearing specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Other professional _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Lead _____ |
| 2. Physical needs <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom / diapers <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation / Mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Eating /feeding <input type="checkbox"/> Dressing <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing / respiration <input type="checkbox"/> Medication <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment (e.g. hearing aides, wheelchairs) <input type="checkbox"/> Posture, positioning, <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid-billable procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Has individualized Health Plan in place <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | Place: Time(s): Level: Low Medium High Duration: Permanent Temporary | <input type="checkbox"/> age-peer student <input type="checkbox"/> older student <input type="checkbox"/> general education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> class/program paraprofessional <input type="checkbox"/> 1:1 designated paraprofessional <input type="checkbox"/> parent volunteer | Indicate training needed / Who delivers <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ | Check all who share supervisory responsibility / Name lead person <input type="checkbox"/> general education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> OT / PT <input type="checkbox"/> SLP <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychologist <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse <input type="checkbox"/> Vision / hearing specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Other professional _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Lead _____ |

Source: French, N. K. (2003). *Managing paraeducators in your school: How to hire, train, and supervise non-certified staff*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc. To purchase this book click www.corwinpress.com

| Student Issues / Needs Profile | Logistics | Who could assist? | Training Plan | Supervision |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| <p>3. Communication Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Instruction in use of technology (including Braille, sign language) <input type="radio"/> Cues / prompts to use technology <input type="radio"/> Programming of device(s) <input type="radio"/> Cues / prompts to communicate with peers / adults <input type="radio"/> Interpretation <input type="radio"/> Cues/prompts to use articulation skills <input type="radio"/> Voice, breathing <input type="radio"/> Other _____ | <p>Place:</p> <p>Time(s):</p> <p>Level: Low Medium High</p> <p>Duration: Permanent Temporary</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> age-peer student <input type="radio"/> older student <input type="radio"/> general education teacher <input type="radio"/> special education teacher <input type="radio"/> class/program paraprofessional <input type="radio"/> 1:1 designated paraprofessional <input type="radio"/> parent volunteer | <p>Indicate training needed / Who delivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ | <p>Check all who share supervisory responsibility / Name lead person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> general education teacher <input type="radio"/> special education teacher <input type="radio"/> OT / PT <input type="radio"/> SLP <input type="radio"/> School Psychologist <input type="radio"/> Nurse <input type="radio"/> Vision / hearing specialist <input type="radio"/> Other professional _____ <input type="radio"/> Lead _____ |
| <p>4. Behavioral Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Disruptive behaviors (e.g, noises, hitting) <input type="radio"/> Self-stimulation <input type="radio"/> Resists changing activity <input type="radio"/> Refuses to follow directions <input type="radio"/> Takes others' things <input type="radio"/> Sits passively, doesn't engage in activity <input type="radio"/> Makes bad choices <input type="radio"/> Needs specifics of Individual Behavior Plan monitored, supported <input type="radio"/> Other _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ | <p>Place:</p> <p>Time(s):</p> <p>Level: Low Medium High</p> <p>Duration: Permanent Temporary</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> age-peer student <input type="radio"/> older student <input type="radio"/> general education teacher <input type="radio"/> special education teacher <input type="radio"/> class/program paraprofessional <input type="radio"/> 1:1 designated paraprofessional <input type="radio"/> parent volunteer | <p>Indicate training needed / Who delivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ | <p>Check all who share supervisory responsibility / Name lead person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> general education teacher <input type="radio"/> special education teacher <input type="radio"/> OT / PT <input type="radio"/> SLP <input type="radio"/> School Psychologist <input type="radio"/> Nurse <input type="radio"/> Vision / hearing specialist <input type="radio"/> Other professional _____ <input type="radio"/> Lead _____ |

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| Student Issues / Needs Profile | Logistics | Who could assist? | Training Plan | Supervision |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <p>5. Social Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Prompts /cues to interact with peers <input type="radio"/> Social instruction <input type="radio"/> Protection from peers <input type="radio"/> Peer instruction how to interact with student <input type="radio"/> Adult instruction how to interact with student <input type="radio"/> Other _____ | <p>Place:</p> <p>Time(s):</p> <p>Level: Low Medium High</p> <p>Duration: Permanent Temporary</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> age-peer student <input type="radio"/> older student <input type="radio"/> general education teacher <input type="radio"/> special education teacher <input type="radio"/> class/program paraprofessional <input type="radio"/> 1:1 designated paraprofessional <input type="radio"/> parent volunteer | <p>Indicate training needed / Who delivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ | <p>Check all who share supervisory responsibility / Name lead person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> general education teacher <input type="radio"/> special education teacher <input type="radio"/> OT / PT <input type="radio"/> SLP <input type="radio"/> School Psychologist <input type="radio"/> Nurse <input type="radio"/> Vision / hearing specialist <input type="radio"/> Other professional _____ <input type="radio"/> Lead _____ |
| <p>6. Academic Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Cues to attend to teachers <input type="radio"/> Cues to begin tasks <input type="radio"/> Cues to remain on task <input type="radio"/> Physical use of instructional materials <input type="radio"/> Modification of instructions / directions <input type="radio"/> Modification of materials, tasks (including Braille) <input type="radio"/> Adaptive equipment <input type="radio"/> Community-based activities <input type="radio"/> Job shadow, exploration <input type="radio"/> Work / job skill development <input type="radio"/> Other _____ | <p>Place:</p> <p>Time(s):</p> <p>Level: Low Medium High</p> <p>Duration: Permanent Temporary</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> age-peer student <input type="radio"/> older student <input type="radio"/> general education teacher <input type="radio"/> special education teacher <input type="radio"/> class/program paraprofessional <input type="radio"/> 1:1 designated paraprofessional <input type="radio"/> parent volunteer | <p>Indicate training needed / Who delivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ <input type="radio"/> _____ / _____ | <p>Check all who share supervisory responsibility / Name lead person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> general education teacher <input type="radio"/> special education teacher <input type="radio"/> OT / PT <input type="radio"/> SLP <input type="radio"/> School Psychologist <input type="radio"/> Nurse <input type="radio"/> Vision / hearing specialist <input type="radio"/> Other professional _____ <input type="radio"/> Lead _____ |

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Special Education Paraprofessional Assistance Checklist Directions:

Column 1: Student Needs

Check all boxes that apply. Specify other needs that are not listed.

Column 2: Logistics

Place: Describe the location where the assistance will be provided (e.g. gym, hallway, lunchroom, classroom).

Time: Indicate times of the school day when assistance is needed by hour or period (e.g. 9:15 - 10:00 am or Art class).

Level: For each student, circle the level of support needed using the following descriptions of levels:

Low - support person checks on student periodically, or engages with the student for short periods of time, and provides cues, prompts, instruction, related services or supervision that permits the student to engage in or continue with tasks reasonably independently.

Medium - support person spends approximately one-half of the school day providing cues, prompts, instruction, related services, or supervision that permits the student to engage in or continue with tasks for which partial participation is acceptable and independence is not the short-term objective.

High - support person spends a majority of the school day with the student providing cues, prompts, instruction, related services, or supervision that permits the student to engage in or continue with tasks for which partial participation, rather than independence is the eventual goal.

Duration: Circle the anticipated duration of the support necessary, using the following descriptions:

Permanent - The amount of support, whether low, medium, or high, is provided on a long-term, no-end-in-sight basis to assist a student to engage in or continue with tasks for which he/she is unlikely to gain independence before the next meeting.

Temporary - Indicate the amount of support, whether low, medium, or high, is provided temporarily to assist a student in gaining independence in new environments, activities, acquisition of new concepts, and /or English as a second language. The assumption here is that the student will gain some level of independence during the designated time period and will need less support in future time periods.

Column 3: Who Could Assist

Indicate possible persons who could provide the necessary assistance to the student, considering what other adults and student supports are already in place in each environment. Providing assistance through people who are already in the environment reduces the chance that the student will become overly reliant on adult attention, increases the likelihood that he/she will learn to rely on natural supports in the environment, and reduces the chance that the student will be inadvertently isolated from peers and general education curriculum and instruction.

Column 4: Training

For each student need, time, place of assistance, and for each person who provides assistance, indicate the type of training that will be provided including the person who holds responsibility for assuring the delivery of training.

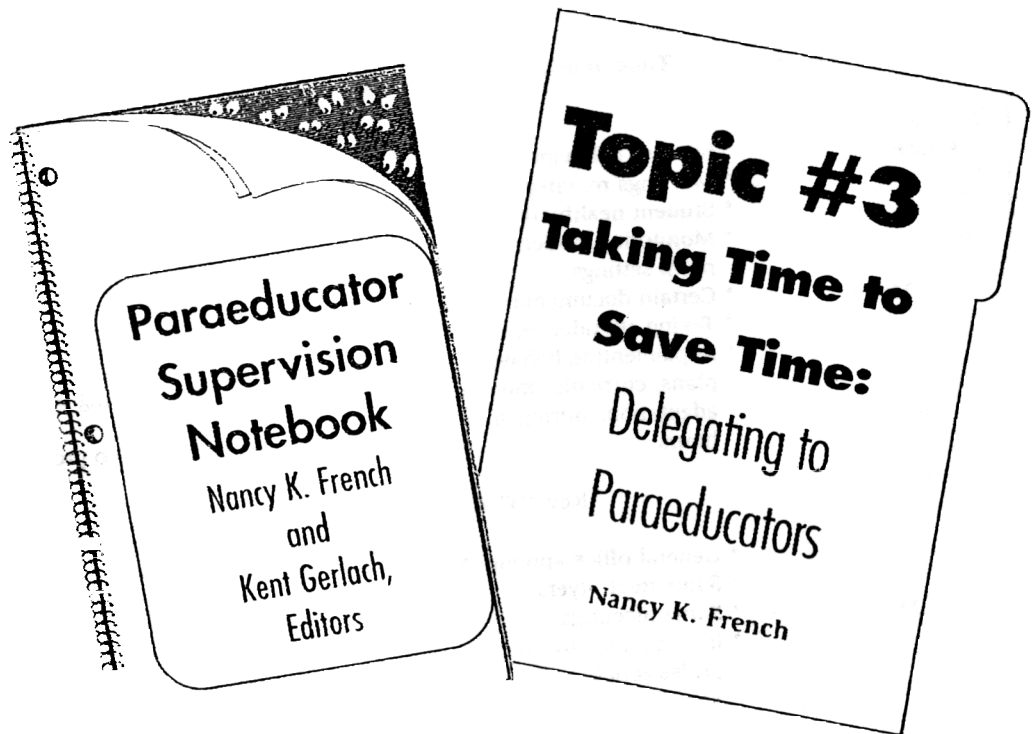
Column 5: Supervision

Indicate the person(s) who will supervise the assisting person(s). You may specify which of the seven supervisory functions each supervisor will perform. The seven supervisory functions are:

1. orientation to the job
2. delegation / direction of daily tasks
3. planning (based on IEP objectives)
4. scheduling
5. on-the-job training
6. performance monitoring and feedback
7. managing the work environment (including conflict management, communications, problem solving)

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Delegation means getting things done through others who have been trained to handle them. When you delegate to a paraeducator you give that person the authority to get the task done without giving up your responsibility. Maintaining responsibility while delegating is the key to your effectiveness as a school professional. Responsibility means that you take time to save time.



This third installation of the *Paraeducator Supervision Notebook* focuses on practical ways you can make decisions about which classroom tasks to delegate to a paraeducator. Sometimes these decisions can be complex, as several examples in this article show.

Effective Delegators Are Effective Time Managers

Delegation requires effective time management. To manage your time well, you need to consider every task in terms of two factors: how time sensitive it is and the consequences of doing or not doing the task.

First, a task is *time sensitive* if you are being pushed to attend to it or to complete it immediately. It may be your policy to avoid interrupting your instructional time, but if an upset parent comes to your door, you will probably make an exception and respond to the urgency of the situation.

Second, you can measure the *consequences* of a task by how much the task contributes to your overall purposes. Consequences may be major or minor. You decide whether doing a particular job yourself, or doing it now, helps you get what you want in the end.

Do Soon

Considering those two factors, you may then place tasks into one of four quad-

Communication

How do you communicate with a paraeducator about your delegation plans? Unless the plan is communicated in a format that both parties understand in the same way, it is difficult to know that students are achieving their outcomes. Good planning formats are easy to use and user-friendly. If you take the time to create a planning form or format that is handy, simple, but has all the major topics on it, you will improve your communication and minimize the amount of time you spend doing it. How can you be sure the paraeducator knows how to carry out the plan? You may also need to check for understanding about the plan. Asking, "What questions do you have?" is one way to open the opportunity for clarification.

Hints? Focus on results, not necessarily the methods, and allow for mistakes. Thus, you provide guidance without being overbearing. Specify the outcomes you expect, the time-frame, and how much authority you'll support, but realize that the paraeducator may not do things in exactly the same way you would.

Table 1. "D"elegation "D"ecision Matrix for School Professionals

| Time → | Time Sensitive | Not Time Sensitive |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Consequences ↓ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Student behavior crises * Meetings re: crises * Student health crises * Monitoring students in nonclassroom settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Designing individual behavior plans/health plans/curricular modifications/adaptations * Assessment of students' progress * Assessment of students for program eligibility * Long-range planning of instruction * Curriculum development/revision * Building relationships among professionals, paraeducators * Co-planning of behavioral interventions/instruction * Meeting to provide supervision to paraeducators |
| Major | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Certain documentation/paperwork * Taking attendance, lunch counts * Implementing behavior plans, health plans, curricular modifications and adaptations during student contact hours | |
| | Key "D" Word: Do Now | Key "D" Word: Do Soon |
| Minor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * General office announcements * Some mail, flyers * Some meetings * Interruptions by students, other professionals * Some parent visits * Grading some daily student work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Some copy work, filing * Some mail * Some phone calls * Some teachers' lounge conversations * Some classroom decorating activities * Some recordkeeping/filing/cleaning up |
| | Key "D" Words: Delegate/Defer | Key "D" Words: Defer/Discard |

rants on the "D"elegation "D"ecision table (French, 1997) (see Table 1). Notice that the tasks located in the upper right-hand quadrant, such as designing individual behavior plans and long-range planning of instruction, are tasks you probably want to do yourself. Tasks in the "Do" quadrant are not appropriately delegated to a paraeducator. You may find that these tasks are difficult to get to because they are not so pressing. Yet each of these tasks makes a major contribution to your overall effectiveness as a teacher. Deferring and delegating these tasks are both bad choices if you want to be effective.

.....
 Consider every task in terms of how time sensitive it is and the consequences of doing or not doing it.

Do Now

Although school professionals may also choose to do the tasks that fall into the upper left-hand quadrant themselves, such as tending to a student's behavior crisis or implementing a curriculum modification, many of these tasks are appropriate for delegation to a paraeducator. School professionals who delegate tasks appropriately take these factors into account along with the skills, preferences, program needs, and the job description of the paraeducator.

Delegate/Defer

The lower left-hand quadrant contains tasks that are appropriately delegated to a paraeducator, such as making general announcements and going on some parent visits, but may also be deferred until more pressing issues are completed.

You may want to keep two in-baskets for the paraeducator, labeled "Deadlines" and "No Deadlines." A paraeducator first finishes the tasks in the dead-

lines basket, but when unexpected "down" times occur, or when he or she has an odd moment, tasks from the "No deadline" basket can be addressed.

Defer/Discard

The lower right-hand quadrant contains tasks that are not particularly pressing nor do they result in consequences of major significance. Those tasks may be delegated to a paraeducator, but for the most part, they are tasks that should simply be discarded—not done by anyone. The key words for the lower right-hand quadrant are "Defer" and "Discard."

Be Kind to Yourself

Have you ever failed to delegate when you might have? Take a moment to ask yourself why you have failed to delegate when you could have? First, jot your thoughts down, then compare them to the reasons listed in Figure 1 (French, 1997). Once you understand your own reasons—such as not being able to tol-

erate less-than-perfect results—you can begin to think about how you can use your time more wisely through delegation.

Figure 1. Some Reasons School Professionals Fail to Delegate

They:

- * Believe they can do the job faster and are unwilling to wait.
- * Recognize that it takes time to train the paraeducator.
- * Lack confidence in the paraeducator's work.
- * Cannot tolerate less than perfect results.
- * Fear being disliked by someone who may expect them to do the task themselves, or by the person to whom they delegate an unpleasant task.
- * Fear that they will lose control.
- * Think it is easier to do it themselves than to tell others how to do it.
- * Are convinced that delegation burdens the other person more than it benefits him or her.
- * Lack the skill to delegate well.
- * Lack the skills to work well with adults.
- * Fear that delegation reveals incompetence or feel insecure when depending on others.
- * Want to account only for themselves and do not want to be indebted to others.
- * Believe that "teaching is for teachers" and are unwilling to give the necessary authority.

But be kind to yourself. Few of us were prepared to supervise other adults (French & Pickett, 1997). You may have never thought of yourself as a manager of other adults. You probably began your career believing that you, and you alone, would have to do it all. You are not alone. For years, other school professionals, like you, have had little preparation to manage a schedule that includes collaborative planning, co-teaching, and supervision of paraeducators despite the fact that paraeducators have been working in schools since the 1950s (Gartner, 1971; Pickett, 1986, 1994).

Six Steps to Delegation

Delegation works best if you take it step by step. Figure 2 provides a list of steps

.....
 If you decide to delegate the task, break it apart and identify the smaller steps.

that you can follow as you decide what and how to delegate to paraeducators.

1. *Analyze the Task*. This step has three parts. The first is time management. Consider the task in terms of time sensitivity and consequences. If you decide to delegate the task, break it apart and identify the smaller steps. Consider the skills of the person who will perform the task while you do this task analysis. Your breakdown may be more or less detailed depending on the skills of the person with whom you work.

Figure 2. Steps for Delegation to Paraeducators

1. Analyze the Task

- * Assess task in terms of urgency and importance.
- * Decide whether you have to do it or whether it could be performed by someone else.
- * Identify component parts of the larger task.

2. Decide What to Delegate

- * Consider programmatic and student needs, preferences of professionals and paraeducators, and paraeducator skills.
- * Decide what training/coaching the paraeducator needs to perform the tasks.

3. Create the Plan

- * Review all essential components of the task.
- * Clarify appropriate limits of authority.
- * Establish performance standards.
- * Determine how you will direct and monitor.
- * Determine when/how you will train/coach.

4. Select the Right Person

- * Consider interests, preferences, and abilities.
- * Consider the degree of challenge it presents.
- * Balance and rotate unpleasant tasks.

5. Direct the Task

- * Clarify the objectives and purposes.
- * Clarify degree of authority.
- * Clarify the importance/urgency of the task.
- * Communicate effectively.

6. Monitor Performance

- * Create system for ongoing/timely feedback.
- * Act promptly/appropriately on feedback.
- * Insist on achievement of objectives, but not perfection.
- * Encourage independence.
- * Tolerate/manage style differences.
- * Don't short-circuit paraeducator effort by taking tasks back prematurely.
- * Document and reward good performance.

Peer or Paraeducator Delegation?

Mr. Wright, the special education teacher, makes decisions regarding whether he will delegate a particular task to a peer or to a paraeducator. A situation that developed in music class exemplifies this type of decision. Laura, a special education student, had become infatuated with one of her classmates and insisted on standing next to him in the choir. Ms. Myers, the vocal music teacher, had her hands full with the 105 students in her choir and requested help from the special education team. Mr. Wright came to the choir room to assess the situation. Once he understood the problem Laura was having, he decided that he should assign a paraeducator to the situation on a temporary basis (3 weeks) rather than trying to employ the services of a peer. He had to instruct the paraeducator as to how she should help the student stay in her place and attend to the teacher. He also specifically told her how to begin to "fade" her help as soon as Laura began to do what she was asked.

2. *Decide What to Delegate.* Think about the skills as well as the preferences of the people involved, and consider whether it is ethical and legal for the paraprofessional to do the task (Heller, 1997).

3. *Create the Plan.* Good plans are brief, easy to read at a glance, and easy to write. They also contain certain key components. A good plan tells how to do the task, the purposes of the task or lesson, the specific student needs to be

.....
 Don't forget: Even if a person is very good at an unpleasant duty, that duty should be rotated and shared by others.

addressed, and the criteria for successful completion. It also helps when the paraeducator understands how the task fits into the broader goals and outcomes for the student. For example, Eric, a student with severe and multiple disabilities, has been learning to raise and lower his left arm. If Maizy, the paraeducator who works with him, understands that Eric is preparing for a communication device that depends on this skill, she will be sure that he practices many times a day and that he practices correctly.

4. *Select the Right Person.* This step is useful if more than one paraeducator works with you or if you have other human resources (e.g., volunteers, peer tutors, peer coaches). At Mason High School, for example, a schoolwide peer support program prepares students without disabilities to assist special education students. Sometimes a student may take notes for another student. Sometimes a peer may redirect a student who has difficulty attending to tasks. Sometimes peers can be seen helping a student regain composure during a stressful moment.

The corollary to selecting the right person is using the skills or talents one person has to their best advantage. If a paraeducator is particularly skillful in a particular area, it may make sense to delegate those tasks to the person regularly. For example, Ivory, an experienced paraeducator, is a particularly gifted storyteller. The school professionals with whom she works all recognize and value her accomplishments in storytelling. They frequently find opportunities to take advantage of this unique contribution that Ivory makes to their school.

On the other hand, paraeducators grow and develop as they are assigned challenging work and they learn to do it. Edee was reluctant at first to use the computer in the special education program, but when the team urged her to gradually take on some computer-based recordkeeping, she found that her fear of the technology dissipated as her skills grew.

You may also recognize that some tasks are more unpleasant than others. Even if a person is very good at an

.....
 You may want to keep two in-baskets for the paraeducator, labeled "Deadlines" and "No Deadlines."

unpleasant duty, that duty should be rotated and shared by others. For example, diaper changing is sometimes necessary. It is a task that no one really likes to do. Yet it is important and often time sensitive. It also has a tremendous effect on the student. The student's privacy is at stake, and his or her dignity must be preserved during such an intimate procedure. You will want to ensure student privacy and dignity while fairly rotating unpleasant tasks. Suzanna, a third-grade teacher at Thatcher Elementary School, works with Vada, a paraeducator assigned to her classroom. Vada is assigned to the third-grade classroom on behalf of Melinda, a child with significant support needs. Melinda needs "freshening" (as they like to call it) every few hours. Sometimes Suzanna takes Melinda to the "private corner" to do the "freshening" while Vada continues working with students on math skills. At most other times, Vada takes Melinda while Suzanna continues with the class. Neither one likes diaper changing, but Suzanna understands the fairness of sharing the task.

5. *Direct the Task.* This step is an extension of good planning. If you have made the purposes of the task or lesson clear and have specified the amount of authority the paraeducator needs to make on-the-spot decisions, directing is easy. For example, Barbara, a paraeducator at Porter Elementary School, was

.....
 Maintaining responsibility while delegating is the key to your effectiveness as a school professional.

.....
 Educators who delegate tasks appropriately consider many factors, such as urgency of the task; program needs; and the skills, preferences, and the job description of the paraeducator.

given a plan to work one-to-one with Javier to reinforce the two-digit multiplication his class had been working on but he didn't seem to understand yet. Barbara unexpectedly finds that Javier remembers exactly how to perform the function and is able to complete all the assigned problems in a few minutes. The teacher who supervises Barbara is not in the room, and Barbara has to decide what to do next. Does she have the authority to determine whether she should go on with a more advanced skill, make Javier continue to practice the same skill, or stop and reward him with a pleasant but unrelated activity?

Like the teacher with whom Barbara works, you may not be around when your plans are carried out. Your direction often happens at a distance. So what do you do? You consider the possibilities and direct the paraeducator to make certain kinds of on-the-spot decisions in certain situations. Your communication skills are important here.

6. *Monitor Performance.* Monitoring is essential to ensure that all is going well. Of course, the amount and intensity of monitoring depend on the history of the working relationship. The longer you have known the paraeducator and the more skillful that person is, the less direct monitoring you'll do. Shorter histories or fewer skills mean that more intensive, direct observation is neces-

.....
 Paraeducators grow and develop as they are assigned challenging work and they learn to do it.

sary. Managing your time well means that you have built time into your schedule for monitoring and feedback to paraeducators. The general rule of thumb in monitoring is to focus on the objectives, rather than the perfect execution of prescribed actions. At times, however, *precise execution of a technique is necessary.* Identifying such times is easier when precision and perfection are not constant demands.

Although monitoring the paraeducator's work is necessary for ethical practice, it is not necessary to hover over the paraeducator during every instructional episode (Heller, 1997). In fact, this would be a waste of everybody's time. In addition, many paraeducators lose self-confidence if you monitor too closely. Communication style and work style differences sometimes result in tasks being performed differently from the way the planner had envisioned. The professional who delegates tasks should clearly differentiate between idiosyncrasies of style and incorrect performance of a task.

Sometimes professionals who are concerned with perfection err by taking a task from a paraeducator too soon. It is a mistake to short-circuit paraeducator effort before the paraeducator has a chance to improve his or her skills. If you've chosen the right person and are clear about your expectations, then remind yourself to be patient enough to allow the paraeducator to reach your standards. In the end, this will save time because the paraeducator will be able to do the task alone.

Finally, you will want to document and reward good performance. Everyone enjoys a bit of praise now and then, but the issue of documenting and rewarding good performance goes beyond the level of "niceness." Documentation of performance should be specific to the objectives of the task and the specifications of the plan. Even when paraeducator performance is not yet perfect, recognizing improvement gives the motivation to continue to grow and improve.

Final Thoughts

Delegation is a time-taker and a time-saver. It takes organization, time, and

skill to delegate well. The investment of time and energy into effective delegation pays off on a day-to-day basis, however, because it frees you to do the things that only a professional can and should do. Your effectiveness grows as your delegation skills grow. Your efficiency at delegation allows you to be the highly ethical, effective professional you want to be.

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Possible Paraeducator Roles in the Classroom

Lesson Planning

| Teacher | v | Collaborative Team | v | Paraeducator | v |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| Develops lesson plans | | Discuss lesson plan before implementation of activities | | Assists coordinating and managing activities | |
| Determines needed materials | | Discuss specific instructional strategies, student groupings, and activities | | Obtains needed material | |
| Aligns lesson with standards, IEPs, and/or student needs | | Delineate who will prepare needed materials | | Assists coordinating and managing activities | |

Instructional Accommodations and Curriculum Modifications

| Teacher | v | Collaborative Team | v | Paraeducator | v |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Include instructional accommodations and curricular modifications in design of lesson plan | | Discuss any accommodations and modifications needed for students and how they will be implemented | | Prepare accommodations per teacher direction | |
| Monitor proper use of accommodations and modifications | | Delineate who will facilitate student instructional accommodations needed for lesson | | Facilitate and monitor instructional accommodations under teacher supervision | |
| | | | | Provide instructional supports per teacher-determined curricular modifications | |

Instruction

| Teacher | v | Collaborative Team | v | Paraeducator | v |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Plan all instructional activities and student groupings | | Teachers gives direction to paraeducator regarding activities, materials and student groupings related to lesson plans | | Reinforce and review initial teacher instruction as planned by teacher | |
| Deliver all initial instruction | | Discuss method for student progress data collection and plan for sharing findings and observations | | Provide struggling learners with prompts and cues related to teacher instruction | |
| | | | | Collect data on student progress as defined by teacher | |

Classroom Management

| Teacher | v | Collaborative Team | v | Paraeducator | v |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Define, teach and monitor class management plan | | Discuss class management plan and model supporting strategies | | Assist and reinforce class management plan | |
| Define, teach and monitor student specific behavior management plans | | Discuss student specific behavior management plan and model supporting strategies | | Assist and reinforce student specific behavior management plan | |
| | | | | Monitor plans with teacher direction | |

Schedule for Paraeducator Staff

School: _____ Date Prepared: _____ Schedule for: _____
 Remember to make best use of instructional paraprofessionals, eliminate or significantly limit the amount of time spent on duties outside the classroom.

| Time | Class/ Subject | Student(s) | Supervising Teacher | Details re: Support Accommodations, Modifications, Behavioral, Other | Skills Required from Paraeducator | Teacher Observation Schedule | √ |
|-------|-------------------|------------|---------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 7:30 | | | | | | | |
| 8:00 | | | | | | | |
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| 3:00 | | | | | | | |
| 3:30 | | | | | | | |
| 4:00 | | | | | | | |

| Time/Days per Week | Duty | Responsible for | Skills Required from Paraeducator | Observation Schedule | √ |
|--------------------|------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

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