



MANAGING PARAPROFESSIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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Paraprofessionals play an important and dynamic role in supporting educational opportunities for students and in helping to make the implementation of instructional activities more efficient and effective. As schools' improvement efforts continue to look for new ways to structure and provide services, the role of the paraprofessional can vary.

Least Restrictive Environment(LRE) instructional models such as the inclusion of students with special needs into the regular education classroom may require additional support from staff members. The utilization of paraprofessionals in the general education classroom allows for expanded learning opportunities for students as well as additional instruction time for teachers.

Paraprofessionals can help meet the students' needs through the use of intensive and individualized behavioral, safety, medical and instructional support. Paraprofessionals are experiencing expanded duties and expectations in a variety of educational settings.

Session Objectives

1. Participants will have a basic knowledge of the paraprofessional's role and responsibilities.
2. Participants will be able to differentiate and identify appropriate roles and responsibilities for paraprofessionals and teachers.
3. Participants will be able to effectively guide and support paraprofessionals as they perform their daily responsibilities.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW.....?

What are three questions you have about managing paraprofessional roles and responsibilities?

1.

2.

3.

Paraprofessional Responsibilities

A paraprofessional is an individual who serves under the direction of a teacher as an assistant in the educational process. Paraprofessionals are being employed as a means of extending services and supports to students both with and without disabilities. The impact of the paraprofessional is especially significant because of the primary role they play in delivering learning activities to students. Paraprofessionals are a viable means of enriching services to students if programs are systematically planned and personnel are properly trained.

While there is some concern regarding the potential harmful effects of paraprofessional support, such as over dependence, limited peer interaction, and stigmatization associated with a paraprofessional. Paraprofessionals provide a viable and powerful means of delivering services to students if they are properly prepared for their duties and provided with adequate support and supervision.

A paraprofessional can provide:

- additional positive role models for students,
- increased student learning opportunities,
- more individualized instruction,
- more individual attention to students,
- additional teacher time for planning, instruction, and evaluation,
- greater consistency in delivery of instruction, and
- better monitoring and evaluation of students' educational progress.

Additional benefits that may result from the use of paraprofessionals include:

- improved pupil self-concept,
- increased positive pupil attitudes toward learning and school,
- increased appropriate student behaviors in the classroom,
- improved teacher morale,
- improved parent-school relations,
- improved teacher and educator adult-to-adult interpersonal and management skills, and
- increased involvement and understanding of the community within the educational process.

Role Clarification:

The Paraprofessional and the Supervising Teacher

A clear delineation of roles of the teacher and the paraprofessional is an important element of a successful program. Identification of teacher and paraprofessional roles insures adherence to ethical and legal requirements and serves as a guide in supervision and evaluation. Actual delivery of instruction to the student may be carried out by the paraprofessional under supervision of the instructor.

Role of the Teacher

The teacher's responsibilities to the learner include:

- Assessing the student's entry level performance,
- Planning instruction for individual students,
- Implementing the goals and objectives of the individualized educational plan,
- Supervising and coordinating work of paraprofessional and other support staff,
- Evaluating and reporting student progress,
- Involving parents in their child's education, and
- Coordinating and managing information provided by other professionals.

The teacher also has a number of roles to fulfill in the proper utilization of the paraprofessionals in the classroom. Heller and Pickett (1983) have identified specific teacher responsibilities and roles involved in managing paraprofessionals:

- Set an example of professionalism in execution of teacher responsibilities;
- Establish the criteria for acceptable job performance of the paraprofessional at the beginning of the school year;
- Provide consistent feedback to assist the paraprofessional in refining skills;
- Communicate the needs of each student to the paraprofessional;
- Establish and communicate the paraprofessional's role in behavior management;
- Assign the paraprofessional responsibilities which facilitate the teacher's ability to provide more direct student instruction; and
- Assist the paraprofessional in defining his/her position as an authority figure.

Role of the Paraprofessional

Various factors influencing the specific responsibilities assigned to paraprofessionals include: characteristics and personalities of teachers, paraprofessionals and students; interpersonal skills of both teachers and paraprofessionals; the skill level of the paraprofessionals; and the physical environment of the classroom. The primary role of the paraprofessional hired to support students receiving special education services is to address the specific needs of those students. Teachers of general education students may vary the responsibilities of the paraprofessionals to focus on enhancing the program of instruction. The following are examples of individual student needs for specialized support:

- to move to areas of instruction, locate materials, put materials away, make decisions during choice time, follow classroom rules to participate, etc.
- to focus during direct instruction, follow directives given during instructional times
- to begin tasks, remain on task, complete task within time allotted

- extend practice/repetition to master specific instructional goals
- to access specialized materials or modifications – use adaptive equipment or assistive technology
- requires assistance in the washroom, feeding, and/or other personal care; assistance with equipment such as hearing aids, wheelchair or walker
- to provide continuous monitoring of individual health needs and or equipment use such as:
 - ✓ the need for frequent catheterization
 - ✓ the need for continual suctioning
 - ✓ the student has the diagnosis, 'Brittle diabetic'
 - ✓ the monitoring of ventilator dependent students
 - ✓ profound and multiple physical limitations (e.g. toileting, changing or maintaining positions, ambulation)
- advance preparation to transition from one activity to the next
- to provide continuous monitoring to control behaviors such as:
 - ✓ self-injurious behavior
 - ✓ injurious behavior toward other students
 - ✓ injurious behavior toward staff
 - ✓ suicidal threats or previous suicide attempts
 - ✓ chronic theft and/or fire starting
- requires prompts/cues to interact with peers

The following list illustrates instructional and administrative duties that could be assigned to paraprofessionals:

- Assist individual students in performing activities initiated by the teachers.
- Supervise children in the hallway, lunchroom, and playground.
- Assist in monitoring supplementary work and independent study.
- Reinforce learning in small groups or with individuals, while the teacher works with other students.
- Provide assistance with individualized programmed materials.
- Score objective tests and papers and maintain appropriate records for teachers.
- Perform clerical tasks, i.e., typing and duplicating.
- Assist the teacher in observing, recording, and charting behavior.
- Assist the teacher with crisis problems and behavior management.
- Assist in preparation/production of instructional materials.
- Carry out instructional programs designed by the teacher.
- Work with the teacher to develop classroom schedules.
- Carry out tutoring activities designed by the teacher.
- Operate and maintain classroom equipment including film projectors, overhead projectors, etc.

The paraprofessional may also perform these instructional duties:

1. Assist in organizing field trips.
2. Read aloud or listen to children read.
3. Assist students in performing activities that have been initiated by the teacher.
4. Hand out papers and collect paper work.
5. Assist with supplementary work for advanced pupils.

6. Provide special help such as drilling with flash cards, spelling, and play activities.
7. Assist in preparing instructional materials.
8. Reinforce learning with small groups.
9. Assist children in learning their names, addresses, telephone numbers, birthdays, and parents' names.
10. Supervise free play activities.
11. Prepare flash cards and charts.
12. Prepare art supplies and other materials.
13. Hear requests for help, observe learning difficulties of pupils, and report such matters to teachers.
14. Score objective tests and papers and keep appropriate records for teachers.

There are instructional and non-instructional duties the paraprofessional may not perform:

1. Be solely responsible for a classroom or a professional service.
2. Be responsible for the diagnostic functions of the classroom.
3. Be responsible for preparing lesson plans and initiating instruction.
4. Be responsible for assigning grades to students.
5. Be used as a substitute for certified teachers unless he or she possesses the appropriate substitute teacher certificate and is hired as a substitute.
6. Assume full responsibility for supervising assemblies or field trips.
7. Perform a duty that is primarily instructional in nature.
8. Be assigned to work with the most "difficult" students the majority of the day.
9. Assume full responsibility for supervising and planning activities.
10. Take children to clinic, dental, or medical appointments unless authorized personnel grant permission.
11. Prescribe educational activities and materials for children.
12. Grade subjective or essay tests.
13. Regulate pupil behavior by corporal punishment or similar means.

The teacher and paraprofessional represent a differentiated team. The following comparison highlights the differences in the roles of the teacher and the paraprofessional in various aspects of the program.

Classroom Organization

Teacher Role	Paraprofessional Role
Plans weekly schedule, lessons, room arrangements, learning centers, and activities for individuals and the entire class.	Implements plan as specified by the teacher.

Assessment

Teacher Role	Paraprofessional Role
Administers and scores formal and informal tests.	Administers informal tests.

Setting Objectives

Teacher Role	Paraprofessional Role
Determines appropriate objectives for groups and individual children.	Carries out activities to meet objectives.

Teaching

Teacher Role	Paraprofessional Role
Teaches lessons for the entire class, small groups, and individual children.	Reinforces and supervises practice of skills with individual and small groups.

Behavior Management

Teacher Role	Paraprofessional Role
Observes behavior, plans and implements behavior management strategies for entire class and for individual children.	Observes behavior, carries out behavior management activities.

Working with Parents

Teacher Role	Paraprofessional Role
Meets with parents and initiates conferences concerning child's progress.	Participates in parent conferences when appropriate.

Building a Classroom Partnership

Teacher Role	Paraprofessional Role
Arranges schedule for conferences, shares goals and philosophy with paraprofessional, organizes job duties for paraprofessional.	Shares ideas and concerns during conferences and carries out duties as directed by a teacher.

Orientation

Activity: Getting to Know You

1. What do you like to do during your leisure time?
2. What was your favorite subject in school?
3. What are your unique talents and skills?
4. What is your favorite activity to do with children?
5. What do you know about the needs of the students in this classroom?
6. What do you need to know about your roles and responsibilities with the students?

Familiarizing the Paraprofessional with Your Classroom

(Gerlach, 2001)

1. Provide an initial orientation to your classroom, including:
 - o Daily routines
 - o Daily and weekly schedules
 - o Instructional procedures
 - o Classroom rules
 - o Lesson plan format
 - o Procedures for handling student assignments
2. Explain the activities that take place at the beginning of each class, such as:
 - o Attendance
 - o Warm-up routines
 - o Lunch counts
 - o Special services
3. Explain your class policies regarding:
 - o Classroom procedures (e.g., posting and handing in assignments)
 - o Room organization and clean-up
 - o Dismissing the class and small groups
 - o Student rules
 - o Bathroom rules
4. Explain your class policies regarding: *(continued)*
 - o Incomplete work, late or missing work, and make-up work
 - o Parent and family communication
 - o Other:
5. Discuss the plans of the students with whom the paraprofessional works
6. Provide a place for the paraprofessional to put his or her things try to get email access)

Reflect on Your Interaction

- ✓ Did I explain what task needs to be done and why, how and where it will be done?
- ✓ Did I explain how the paraprofessional will be observed and supervised?
- ✓ Did I discuss how feedback should be provided to me?
- ✓ Do I speak in team language, such as “It would be good for both of us if we...”
- ✓ Did I ask for a specific action or did I phrase my request in ambiguous terms?
- ✓ Did I provide a written plan?
- ✓ Did I set a mutually agreed-upon deadline when I delegated a task?
- ✓ Did I confirm important content in writing?
- ✓ Did I ask if the paraprofessional had any questions?

Planning and Scheduling

Scheduling should determine specific responsibilities for the paraprofessional. For students whose IEP requires paraprofessional support service, a paraprofessional daily schedule should be completed and continually updated to reflect scheduling changes. The schedule should identify for each student, the time (45-50 minute or shorter intervals), location and specific need(s) for paraprofessional support services.

The teacher should:

1. Establish goals and detailed plans around which activities of paraprofessionals are coordinated.
2. Organize and manage schedules that allow for cooperation, planning and information sharing.
3. Consider the strengths, interests and needs of paraprofessionals when managing schedules.
4. Manage smooth transitions brought on by changes to the daily schedules of paraprofessionals.
5. Organize and provide materials and resources that are necessary to carry out the objectives of each paraprofessional's activity.

Student Schedule

	Adrian	
7:30-7:45	breakfast	
7:45-8:45	specials: MTu music, WTh gym, F computer	if v
8:45-9:15	morning group	
9:15 -9:30	break	we
9:30 - 9:45	reading	
9:45 - 10:00	break	to
10:00 - 10:15	Factory	
10:15 - 10:30	break	
10:30 -10:45	Language	
10:45 - 11:00	break	be
11:00 - 11:20	recess	re
11:20 - 11:45	lunch	tu
11:45 - 12:00		be
12:00 - 12:15		li
12:15 - 12:30		li
12:30 - 12:45	life skills	we
12:45 - 1:00		we
1:00 - 1:15	table time	
1:15 - 1:30	break	be
1:30 - 1:45	work station	
1:45 - 2:00	break	se
2:00 - 2:15	social studies	

Paraprofessional Responsibilities

Adrian's Detailed Schedule

	Duties
7:30-7:45	breakfast: monitor Adrian at breakfast and transition to morning special
7:45-8:45	special: monitor Adrian at special (M & T = music, W & Th = gym and F = computer)
8:45-9:15	morning group: work with Adrian and Ms. H on morning group activities, training on new IEP goals
9:15 -9:30	monitor Adrian break: Adrian may take break in break area or at teacher desk, you do not need to sit near him but keep a watchful eye, make sure Adrian is not aggressive with other students , prompt to wear headphones while on iPad, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get ready materials & data sheets for reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bin with orange matching piece • put in 5-7 activities from Adrian's work bin (different activities each day) • put on table time table
9:30 - 9:45	reading bin: prompt Adrian to transition using the star chart, give him one star if he gives you the iPad quickly, he must had the iPad to you, prompt him to check his schedule, work with him on the tasks in the bin, provide praise for good work, and give a star for every 1-2 tasks, when finished with entire bin of work he may have iPad
9:45 - 10:00	monitor Adrian break: same as above <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get ready materials & data sheets for language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get flashcards, data binder, and timer
10:00 - 10:15	language: same transition procedures, conduct fluency timings, practice incorrect responses, give star for every set or two of timings
10:15 - 10:30	monitor Adrian break: same as above <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get ready materials & data sheets for factory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data binder

	Duties
10:30 -10:45	factory: same transition procedures, work on IEP goals listed in data binder, give stars for correct response, once finished with goals, prompt Adrian to a factory work task (he can do 1 or 2 depending on time and/or how many stars he still needs) sit behind Adrian at table time, give star when work is finished, once finished - take him to the bathroom (he is independent in the bathroom but needs to be prompted to go), he can then have iPad
10:45 - 11:00	monitor Adrian break: same as above
11:00 - 11:20	recess: watch Adrian at recess
11:20 - 11:45	lunch: watch Adrian at lunch, when lunch is finished walk with Ms. O and group of students to life skills, once he is in life skills - you may leave to take your lunch
11:45 - 12:45	lunch and break time, return to 411 at 12:45
12:45 - 1:15	table time: watch Adrian at table time; work should be mostly independent; give stars for good working
1:15 - 1:30	monitor Adrian break: same as above
1:30 - 1:45	work station: same transition procedures as above, sit nearby at language table, work should be independent, only interact to give stars for correct work or redirect
1:45 - 2:00	monitor Adrian break: same as above <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get ready materials & data sheets for social studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get folder, worksheets, and any materials needed
2:00 - 2:15	social studies: same transition procedures as above, take him to the bathroom , complete 1-3 worksheets in packet and complete a related adapted book, give stars as needed
2:15 - 2:30	monitor Adrian break: same as above; set up tomorrow's schedule
2:30 - 2:45	transition home: walk Adrian to auditorium, he must sit and wait for bus, assist bus aide walking Adrian to his bus at the designated time

<http://theautismhelper.com/paraprofessional-schedule/screen-shot-2013-04-28-at-5-25-54-pm/>

Although this schedule reflects support for one child as the needs of each individual student should be addressed in their own schedule; the cumulative responsibilities for all students identified to be supported by the paraprofessional should be combined and included in his/her schedule.

Time	Duties (Adrian)	Duties (Jaylen)	Duties (Kira)
7:30 - 7:45	Breakfast: Monitor Adrian at breakfast and transition to morning special	Breakfast: Monitor Jaylen at breakfast and transition to morning special	Breakfast: Monitor Kira at breakfast and transition to morning special
7:45 - 8:45	Special: Monitor Adrian at special (M&T=music, W&Th=gym, F-computer)	Special: Monitor Jaylen at special (M&T=music, W&Th=gym (provide verbal guidance & prompts during exercises), F-computer)	Special: Monitor Kira at special (M&T=music, W&Th=gym, F-computer (provide hand over hand support to initiate task)

Delegating Tasks to Paraprofessionals

(French, 2003)

1. Analyze the task

- ✓ What are the student needs? Program needs?
- ✓ What are the paraprofessional's interests and skills?
- ✓ What skills, coaching or training would be needed for the paraprofessional to complete the task?

2. Decide what to delegate

- ✓ Identify the components of the task, limits of authority, & performance standards.
- ✓ Determine how to direct and monitor the paraprofessional and when/how to provide needed training.

3. Create the plan

- ✓ Outline task expectations of the student.
- ✓ Clarify objectives and purposes.
- ✓ Clarify paraprofessional responsibilities.

4. Direct the task

- ✓ Consider the degree of challenge the task presents
- ✓ Communicate effectively.
- ✓ Set timelines.

5. Monitor performance

- ✓ Create a system for feedback and provide it.
- ✓ Tolerate and manage style differences.
- ✓ Let the paraprofessional do the task.
- ✓ Strengthen and reinforce good performance with positive feedback.

Quiz: Roles and Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals

This posttest is designed to assess the knowledge you have gained from this workshop after we have completed all of the activities.

1. Why is it important for a paraprofessional to have a clear idea of the roles and responsibilities of her/his job? List two reasons.

2. List four responsibilities that the teacher has toward students?

3. The teacher's responsibilities in supervising paraprofessionals include: (Check all that apply)
 - Setting an example of professionalism.
 - Providing feedback to paraprofessionals.
 - Communicating student needs to the paraprofessional.
 - Establishing expectations for acceptable job performance.

4. List four instructional and administrative duties that a paraprofessional may NOT perform?

5. A paraprofessional may perform these instructional duties: (Check all that apply)
 - Assist in organizing field trips.
 - Be solely responsible for a classroom.
 - Assist with activities that have been initiated by the teacher.
 - Be responsible for preparing lesson plans.
 - Hand out papers and collect student work.
 - Supervise free play activities.
 - Assign grades to students.
 - Assist in preparing instructional materials.

- Substitute in the classroom without a teaching contract.
- Grade objective tests and keep records.

1. For each of the statements below indicate whether the task is the responsibility of the teacher or of the paraprofessional.

Only Teacher	Paraprofessional or Teacher	Task
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plans schedules for individual students
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plans lessons for the entire class.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practices skills with small groups.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Documents student responses to behavioral strategies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Helps carry out IEP objectives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teaches lessons for individual students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Implements behavior management strategies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participates in parent conferences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Observes and designs behavior management strategies for students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Administers and scores formal tests.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shares ideas and concerns about classroom procedures.

2. List two reasons why it would be important for the paraprofessional to use the same methods of instruction and behavior management as the teacher.

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