INCLUSION IN TEXAS



Working With
PARAPROFESSIONALS

A Resource for Educators of Students with Disabilities

TEA
Texas Education Agency

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Texas Education Agency and the Inclusion in Texas Network would like to thank representatives from across the state for providing feedback that assisted in the development of this document. The comments and suggestions received were invaluable and greatly appreciated.

The **Statewide AGC Network**, including the Preschool LRE Specialists

Amy Adams, Special Education Teacher, Brownwood ISD
Deborah Badrak, General Education Teacher, Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City CISD
Kimberly Baumgardner, AGC Specialist, ESC-20
Jeanie Bell, AGC Specialist, ESC-5
Carolina Campos, Special Education Supervisor, Mission ISD
Shirley Carawan, Special Education Teacher, Taft ISD
Sherry Cragen, AGC Specialist, ESC-12
Jenice Dames, Preschool/PPCD Specialist, Preschool LRE State Lead, ESC-20
Azeneth DeLeon, Paraprofessional, Houston ISD
Julia Erwin, Parent/CAC Member
Kami Finger, Special Education Coordinator, Lubbock ISD
Sonja Harper, Paraprofessional, Lubbock ISD
Sonja Hollan, PLRE Specialist, ESC-4
Jonel Huggins, Program Specialist, TEA
Deborah Jones, AGC Specialist, ESC-2
Lisa Jones, AGC Specialist, ESC-6
Martha Jones, General Education Teacher, Brownwood ISD
Barbara Kaatz, Program Specialist, TEA
Erin Kelts, Project Manager, PGC State Lead, ESC-20
Lisa Kirby, AGC Specialist, ESC-20
Jacklyn Meyers, Paraprofessional, Leander ISD
Kirsten Omelan, AGC Specialist, ESC-4
Jane Penn, Special Education Director, Mason ISD
Nancy Perkins, Special Education Teacher, Leander ISD
Stacy Smith, Principal, Brownwood ISD
Norma Trevino, Paraprofessional, Taft ISD
Carolina Valtierra, AGC Specialist, ESC-11
Dawn White, Coordinator, ESC-20
Robin White, Preschool/PPCD Specialist, Preschool LRE State Lead, ESC-20
Amy Wilson, Special Education Coordinator/ Charter School Representative, San Antonio Special Programs Cooperative
Leslie Wilson, AGC Specialist, ESC-18
Kelly Woodiel, Inclusion Specialist, ESC-20

Acknowledgments reflect representatives' titles at the time of publication. Updates Courtesy of: 2018 - Cara Wyly, PGC Project Manager, ESC 20 and the PGC Network members 2020 – Cara Wyly, Inclusion in Texas Project Manager

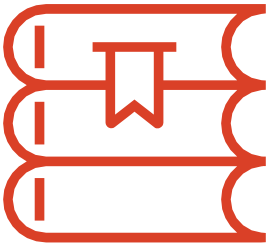
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to assist educators in taking full advantage of having a paraprofessional in their classroom. The information addresses both general and special education settings. It does not include non-instructional responsibilities such as assisting in diapering, positioning, feeding, etc. **This guide is a resource. It is not a strict set of "rules" that must be followed.** The appropriate state and federal laws are included throughout this document.

This document can serve as a starting point to spark conversations on a campus or within a district (LEA). During conversations, it is important to communicate that supports provided to students who receive special education services

- need to be individualized; and
- vary from student to student, setting-to- setting, and even within a class period, according to the type of instruction being delivered (whole group direct instruction, small group, re-teach, etc.).

FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS



LEA – Local Education Agency

PLAAFP – Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

IEP – Individualized Education Program

ARD – Admission, Review, and Dismissal

PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

School districts should pay careful attention to the type of certification a paraprofessional holds when determining their assignment on a campus. Be sure all duties assigned to paraprofessionals fall within their scope of certification. The information below is a summary of Texas Administrative Code (TAC), 19 TAC §230.61.

Education Aide 1	Education Aide 2	Education Aide 3
Performs routine tasks under the direction and supervision of a certified teacher or teaching team	Performs tasks under the general supervision of a certified teacher or teaching team	Performs and assumes responsibility for tasks under the general guidance of a certified teacher or teaching team
Releases the teacher from routine tasks and participates in selecting, planning, organizing, and evaluating	Releases the teacher from routine tasks and participates in selecting, planning, organizing, and evaluating	Releases the teacher from routine tasks and participates in selecting, planning, organizing, and evaluating
Helps the teacher with clerical operations	Helps the teacher prepare and use instructional materials	Helps the teacher implement methodology and use instructional media to yield an educational environment for all students
Helps the teacher supervise students in routine movement from one recreational activity to another	Conducts drills and exercises as directed by the teacher	Assists the teacher with instructional activities
Helps supervise the playground, bus, and lunchroom	Helps administer and score objective measurement instruments	Works with individuals or groups of students in a variety of educational experiences
Helps the teacher prepare and use instructional media	Helps the teacher work with individual students and groups	Relieves the teacher of selected exercises and instructional drills with students

Education Aide 1	Education Aide 2	Education Aide 3
Duplicates instructional materials for teachers	Duplicates materials	Performs equivalent activities determined by the local school district
Performs classroom clerical operations under the supervision of a certified teacher	Records grades and attendance	
Performs equivalent activities determined by the local school district	Prepares instructional aids, including displays and mockups	
	Assists with play area activities	
	Helps operate and use educational media	
	Assists with testing routines	
	Works with individual students in drills and exercises	
	Conducts group drills and exercises	
	Assists students with programmed or precise units of instruction	
	Performs equivalent activities determined by the local school district	

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

When there is more than one adult present in a classroom, it is essential that roles and responsibilities must be clear. The classroom teacher is always the primary teacher for all students in the classroom.

All students should be involved in all parts of the classroom, including instruction and routines.
When students with disabilities are not fully included in a classroom setting, it can inadvertently send a message to the rest of the class "that some students are more or less worthy of teacher time than are others" (Broer, Doyle and Giangreco 2007, 427).

The tasks the paraprofessional performs should be in addition to, not instead of what the classroom teacher does (Giangreco, and Doyle 2004).
"The paraprofessional's role is not to plan or design classroom instruction, but rather to make important contributions to classroom instruction by effectively implementing important delegated tasks for which they are specially trained" (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle and Vadasy 2007, 56).

Sometimes, paraprofessionals have a role required by the IEP.
A paraprofessional assigned to a classroom can help with routines and assist all students in that classroom. A paraprofessional, who is required by the student's IEP to provide 1:1 support for that student, should not have responsibilities outside of working with that individual student.

Support student independence, autonomy, and peer relationships.
It is important that a student with a 1:1 aide not be isolated physically or socially from the rest of the classroom. Studies have shown that in many instances, a 1:1 paraprofessional hindered a student's participation in a general education classroom. This happened because the paraprofessional, rather than peers, became the student's primary social contact during their school years. The paraprofessional should work to facilitate academic and social interaction between the student with a disability and his or her peers. Giangreco and Broer (2015, 14-15) completed a study that looked at the interaction between paraprofessionals and their students:

- Almost 37% of the paraprofessionals who participated in the study were concerned that students with disabilities were unnecessarily dependent on paraprofessionals.
- More than 46% of paraprofessionals reported that some of their students with disabilities communicated that they found paraprofessional supports unwanted.
- More than 36% reported that students with disabilities spent more than half of their social time at school (e.g. lunch, playground, free-time) with paraprofessionals.

"There is [...] a fine line between support that facilitates participation and support that restrains child interaction and the development of autonomy.
Too much assistance can result in limited use of the children's skills and potential, and possibly create unnecessary or unhealthy dependencies and helplessness" (Egilson and Traustadottir 2009, 28).

Include students in the decisions that affect the supports they need from a paraprofessional.
A study found that students who were not asked for their input on what support helped them the most said they received unnecessary supports from the paraprofessional and did not get supports they felt they needed (Egilson and Traustadottir 2009).

Fade supports appropriately.
In another study, when fading of supports was successfully achieved, students with intellectual disabilities spoke about the experience with excitement and pride in their voices (Broer, Doyle and Giangreco 2007).

NON-NEGOTIABLES

Paraprofessionals ***may not*** engage in the following activities (19 TAC §230.61):

- develop lesson plans
- introduce new material/content
- provide the direct teach portion of the lesson
- select materials for the implementation of the lesson
- assign final grades
- be responsible for any IEP-related responsibilities without the supervision of a certified special educator
- develop IEP goals and objectives
- design the classroom management system
- be responsible for determining or reporting student progress (general class progress or IEP-goal progress)

When paraprofessionals provide services required by a student's IEP, they must do so under the supervision of a certified special education teacher.



GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SETTINGS

The following tables compare activities that are appropriate for individuals in designated roles. The roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional will be very fluid and will vary across situations. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, nor is it meant to represent what must be a part of a job description.

It is meant to spark conversation within an LEA or campus about how to effectively utilize paraprofessionals within a classroom or non-traditional setting in assisting students with disabilities in accessing and progressing in the general curriculum. It is recommended that each LEA or campus create its own specific list of duties for a paraprofessional. This list should link to the classroom schedule and provide the paraprofessional guidance on what to do during particular points in a lesson.

In the following tables, duties written in **black** are ones that are performed in the general education settings, duties in **orange** are performed in the special education settings, and duties in **blue** are performed in both settings.

Paraprofessionals should spend the majority of their time on instructional duties, not on administrative duties.

IEP Development			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Provide information regarding weaknesses for the ARD committee to use in the development of the PLAAFP and IEP goals and/or objectives.	Provide information on the current strengths and weaknesses for the ARD committee to use in the development of the PLAAFP, IEP goals, and/or objectives.	Provide any information requested by the teacher or administrator for development of the IEP.	Provide any information requested by the teacher or administrator for development of the IEP.

IEP Development			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Provide information regarding content standards for the student's assigned course or class for ARD committees to use in the development of the PLAAFP, IEP goals, and/or objectives.	Provide information regarding specially designed instruction for the ARD committee to use in the development of the PLAAFP, IEP goals, and/or objectives.		
Attend ARD meetings when invited.	Attend ARD meetings when invited.		
Give input into the development of the IEP.	Give input into the development of the IEP.		



Lesson Planning			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Collaborate with the special educator when designing lesson plans.	Collaborate with the general educator to assist with designing lesson plans. Design lesson plans.	Assist in the preparation of teacher-designed materials that are required in the lesson plan (i.e. prepare centers for the classroom, etc.).	Assist in the preparation of IEP-required materials needed for the lesson (i.e. prepare accommodated materials for the student, etc.).
	Ensure general educator is aware of any individual student IEP-directed accommodations and/or modifications, including goals and/or objectives related to the content or course.		
Include any required accommodations and/or modifications.	Collaborate in lesson planning to integrating IEP-required accommodations and/or modifications. Integrate IEP required accommodations and/or modifications into the lesson plans.		

Lesson Implementation			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Provide the direct teach portion of the lesson to the entire class.	Collaborate with the general educator to implement the direct teach portion of lesson. Provide the direct teach portion of the lesson to the entire class (per 19 TAC §230.61).	Implement the supports directed by the teacher during the direct teach portion of the lesson.*	Implement IEP-required supports during all portions of the lesson as directed by the teacher.
Know and understand individual student IEP-directed accommodations and/or modifications, including goals and/or objectives related to the content or course.	Implement IEP goals and/or objectives, including specially designed instruction required by the IEP.		
Direct classroom paraprofessionals in their role during the direct teach portion of the lesson.	Supervise the implementation of the IEP goals and/or objectives by a paraprofessional, including specially designed instruction required by the IEP. Direct classroom paraprofessionals in their role during the direct teach portion of the lesson.	Assist individual students, as directed by the teacher.*	

Lesson Implementation			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Design necessary re-teach pieces.	Design necessary re-teach pieces.		
Re-teach as necessary or provide direction to the classroom paraprofessional on who, what, and how to re- teach.	Re-teach content in small groups. Re-teach as necessary or provide direction to the classroom paraprofessional on who, what, and how to re-teach.	Work with small groups for re-teach, as directed by the teacher.*	
Assist students as needed with individual work.	Assist students as needed with individual work.		
	Pull individual students out of the general education classroom **only if required by IEP.**	Pull individual students out of the general education classroom **only if required by IEP.***	Pull student out of the general education classroom **only if required by IEP.**

* Educational Aides 2 and 3 only (per 19 TAC §230.61)

Evaluation of Student Learning			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Determine final grades for both assignments and overall course or class.	Assist in the final grade determination for both assignments and overall course or class, as determined by the student's IEP. Determine final grades for both assignments and overall course or class.	Assist in grading objective assignment or tests (i.e. multiple choice, fill in the blank, etc.). *	
Collaborate with the special educator to determine mastery for students who receive special education services, as directed by IEP.	Design the process or forms for the collection of data on student progress on IEP goals and/or objectives.		
Report on all students' progress and grades in class periodically, as directed by local policy.	Report on all students' progress and grades in class periodically, as directed by local policy.	Assist in clerical recording of grades (Note: Some LEAs allow only the classroom teacher to enter grades in a grade book or online grading system.). *	

Evaluation of Student Learning			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Ask for a review of the IEP if concerns or questions exist regarding the student's IEP or any lack of expected progress.	Ask for a review of the IEP if concerns or questions exist regarding the student's IEP or any lack of expected progress.		
Collect data on student mastery of the IEP goals and/or objectives.	Collect data on student mastery of the IEP goals and/or objectives.	Assist in the collection of data on student mastery of material using criteria developed by special educator.	Assist in the collection of data on student mastery of IEP goals and objectives using criteria developed by special educator.

* Educational Aides 2 and 3 only (per 19 TAC §230.61)

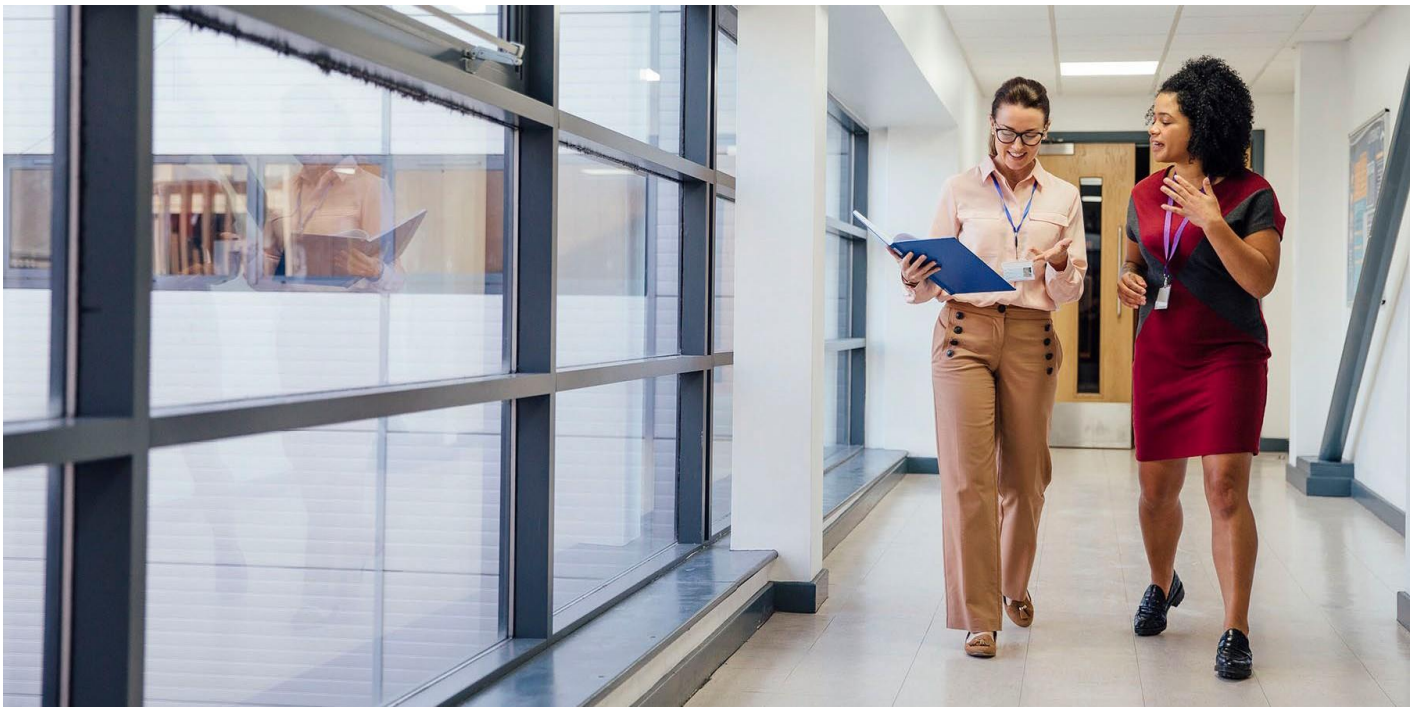


Behavior Management			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Design and implement the classroom management system for all students in the class.	Assist in the design and implementation of the classroom management system for all students in the class. Design and implement the classroom management system for all students in the class.	Assist the teacher in the implementation of the classroom management system, including established classroom routines, as directed by the teacher.	Assist the teacher in the implementation of the classroom management system with the individual student, including reinforcing and re-teaching established classroom routines, as directed by the teacher.
	Ensure the general educator is aware of any individual student IEP goals and/or objectives related to behavior or the individual.		
Implement individual student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), as required by the IEP.	Implement individual student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), as required by the IEP.	Assist in the implementation of the BIP.*	Assist in the implementation of the BIP.*
	Provide or supervise any specially designed instruction related to behavior.		

Behavior Management			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Collect data on student mastery of behavior- related IEP goals and/or objectives.	Collect data on student mastery of behavior-related IEP goals and/or objectives.	Assist in the collection of data on the student's mastery of behavior goals and/or objectives using criteria developed by the special educator. *	Assist in the collection of data on student mastery of behavior-related IEP goals and/or objectives using criteria developed by the special educator.
Ask for a review of the IEP if the student is not making adequate progress on the behavior-related IEP goals and/or objectives or if the BIP is not effective.	Ask for a review of the IEP if the student is not making adequate progress on behavior-related IEP goals and/or objectives or if the BIP is not effective.		
	Report on student mastery of behavior-related IEP goals and/or objectives periodically, as required by the IEP.		

* Educational Aides 2 and 3 only (per 19 TAC §230.61)

Fading of Supports			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Collaborate with the special educator in determining how and when to fade supports to individual student.	Collaborate with the general educator in determining how and when to fade supports to individual student.	Fade supports to individual students, as appropriate.	Fade supports to individual students, as appropriate.
Assist the paraprofessional with understanding how and when to fade supports to students, as appropriate.	Assist the paraprofessional with understanding how and when to fade supports to students, as appropriate.	Document the fading of supports per the student's IEP, as directed by the teacher.	Document the fading of supports per student's IEP, as directed by the teacher.
Document the fading of supports as directed by the student's IEP.	Document the fading of supports per the student's IEP.		



Paraprofessionals should spend the majority of the time on instructional duties, not on administrative duties.

Classroom Duties			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Report accurate attendance information.	Assist with reporting attendance information. Report accurate attendance information.	Assist in collecting and recording attendance information. *	Because paraprofessionals with this responsibility are required by a student's IEP, they should not have administrative duties that take them away from providing the services dictated by the student's IEP.
Ensure accurate reporting of grades.	Assist with reporting grades. Ensure accurate reporting of grades.	Assist in clerical recording of grades (Note: Some LEAs allow only the classroom teacher to enter grades in a grade book or online grading system.). *	
Report on individual student mastery of IEP goals and/ or objectives periodically, as required by the IEP.	Report on individual student mastery of IEP goals and/ or objectives periodically, as required by the IEP.	Assist with other clerical duties in the classroom (i.e. organization of materials, making copies, etc.) as directed by the teacher.	

* Educational Aides 2 and 3 only (per 19 TAC §230.61)

Duties Outside of Classroom			
General Educator	**Special Educator**	**Classroom Paraprofessional** (Not assigned to a specific student)	**Student-Specific (1:1) Paraprofessional** (Required by Student's IEP) Educational Aides 2 and 3 (per 19 TAC §230.61)
Supervise hallways, play areas, etc. as directed by the administration.	Supervise hallways, play areas, etc. as directed by the administration.	Supervise hallways, play areas, etc. as directed by the administration.	Supervise or assist the individual student in hallways, play areas, etc. as required by IEP.



COMMUNICATION

Clear communication between the educators working together is key to a successful teaching team. In addition to communicating the expected roles and responsibilities, it is also helpful to define the specific responsibilities related to communication. **The certified teacher should always be the primary communicator to the parent regarding a student's academic and behavioral progress.** Anytime student-specific information is communicated, whether verbally or in writing, confidentiality must be maintained.

It is imperative that paraprofessionals must have both general information about their duties and specific information about the students with who m they will be working. If they are to work with any portion of the child's IEP, not only must a certified special educator directly supervise the paraprofessionals, the paraprofessionals must also have access to that portion of the IEP. The teacher will need to explain
what the IEP means and what the paraprofessional's role is in assisting with its implementation.

All adults in the classroom must be "on the same page" for students to receive a consistent message. Expectations must not vary from person to person. Students recognize when there is a lack of communication between two (or more) adults in the classroom. Because of the need for clear communication, and the lack of time during the school day, it might be necessary for the LEA or campus to consider non-traditional ways to build in time for communication between the teacher and paraprofessionals. This is especially important when a new student is introduced, IEPs are updated, and/or roles and responsibilities change.

As with all communication, whether verbal or written, the confidentiality of student information must always be maintained.

Teacher Communication to Paraprofessional

In All Education Settings

Roles

- Define the roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional (see p.8).
  The local education agency determines the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals as long as the assigned duties fall within the scope of their certification level.
- Explain to the paraprofessionals who will provide the information on their roles and responsibilities.

Teacher Communication to Paraprofessional

In All Education Settings

Communication

- Describe and clarify all areas and implications of confidentiality. Paraprofessional may not discuss other students with parents.
- Explain that the teacher will be the primary communicator with the parent regarding student progress, behavior, etc.
- Explain to the paraprofessional how to redirect a parent to contact the teacher – by e-mail, phone, parent meeting, etc.

Rapport

- Describe how the paraprofessional is there as a support in the classroom and should receive the same respect as the teacher.
- Describe how the paraprofessional is an important part of the learning community and is there to help with student success.
- Identify where materials or supplies are located that he/she may need for instructional purposes.

IEPs

- Explain the legal obligations of the IEP as they relate to the paraprofessional's role with the student, including:
  - confidentiality
  - necessary accommodations and modifications
  - time (frequency, duration, and location of IEP- required services)
  - data collection
  - documentation requirements

Grades/Progress

- Explain that the teacher has the ultimate responsibility for communicating progress and/or concerns.
- Explain that the paraprofessional should discuss the student's grades, relationships with other students, and discipline with the appropriate teacher.
- Explain that the paraprofessional should direct all questions to the general or special education teacher.
- Explain that the teacher will be the one to share specific results of the student's academic and behavioral progress. The paraprofessional may share general information and refer parents to the teacher for specifics.
- Explain that the information about the student's performance should be objective, not personal opinions.

Teacher Communication to Paraprofessional

In All Education Settings



Classroom Management

- Clarify how the paraprofessional will assist with general classroom management as determined by the classroom teacher.
- Explain that both the paraprofessional and teacher will share the same expectations of the students, as well as the same consequences, whether positive or negative.



Academic Assistance

- Explain that the paraprofessional is in the classroom to assist the student's completion of work independently. (Instructional Aide 2 and 3).
- Explain that the paraprofessional is there primarily to support the students receiving special education services. However, he/she may assist general education students (i.e. inclusive classrooms where both special education and general education students are present).



Training

- Describe what training is available (both in district/on campus and externally) and how to request training.



Planning

- Describe how the paraprofessional will be included in the planning process.

Teacher Communication to Students and Parents about Paraprofessionals

In All Education Settings



Roles

- Define the role of paraprofessionals to the students and parents.



Communication

- Explain that paraprofessionals cannot discuss other students.
- Describe to students how the teacher and paraprofessionals will work together to communicate with their parents.
- Explain to the parent that all communication must come from the teacher. Direct all questions or concerns to the teacher.
- Explain to the parent how to contact the teacher by e-mail, phone call, or parent meeting.

Teacher Communication to Students and Parents about Paraprofessionals

In All Education Settings



Rapport

- Explain that paraprofessionals are available as support and will receive the same respect as a teacher.
- Explain that paraprofessionals are an important part of the learning community and describe how they will help the student be successful.



IEPs

- Explain to students the age-appropriate information regarding their IEP and describe the necessary supports the paraprofessionals will provide as outlined in their IEP.
- Explain to parents the legal obligations of the IEP, all the components of the IEP, and subsequent documentation.
- Encourage the student to provide feedback on what supports are working and what supports should be added or eliminated.



Classroom Management

- Explain that the paraprofessional will assist with general classroom management.
- Describe how the paraprofessional's role regarding expectations and consequences will mirror those of the classroom teacher.



Academic Assistance

- Explain that the paraprofessional is there to assist with work completion, but the student should strive to do so as independently as possible.
- Clarify that paraprofessionals are there primarily to support the students
- receiving special education services. Also, if their role permits, paraprofessionals may assist all students in the classroom.



Training

- Describe the training the paraprofessional may receive in to assist the student in the classroom.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All LEA staff should complete confidentiality training and understand laws regarding how to protect confidential student information. It is important that paraprofessionals must understand that any communication outside of the LEA-established norms could violate student confidentiality laws.

The following tips on confidentiality, from Giangreco and Doyle (2004, 192), might be helpful to share with the paraprofessional:

Tip 1	Never discuss a student's educational plans in public places (e.g., faculty room, playground, hallway, community park, grocery store).
Tip 2	When meeting to discuss a student's educational plan, only discuss information that is directly relevant to the issues at hand.
Tip 3	If someone approaches you and begins to breach the confidentiality of a student, provide a kind but clear response. For example, "I'm not on that student's educational team, so I don't think it is appropriate for me to be involved in discussing his educational program."
Tip 4	When you or the paraprofessional are no longer on the student's team, you must continue to maintain confidentiality about any information that you have learned about the student and/or family.
Tip 5	When in doubt, put yourself in the shoes of the parent or student and ask yourself: "Would it be okay for people to be talking about me or my family in this manner, in this same location, and for the same purpose?"

DOCUMENTATION

Paraprofessionals require ongoing supervision and regular performance evaluations. The evaluations are based on their job descriptions and clearly defined LEA processes and procedures. While the teacher may not be responsible for the formal performance evaluations of the paraprofessional, the teacher is responsible for day-to-day supervision. Both federal regulations (34 CFR §200.59(c)(1)) of the Title I Regulations and state rules (19 TAC §230.61) require that paraprofessionals must be directly supervised by a certified teacher. Supervision should be by a certified special educator when the paraprofessional is responsible for IEP implementation. The LEA will need to determine what documentation to keep related to supervision.

DOCUMENTING COMMUNICATION

While the previous section of this document spoke about communication, the information below provides examples for encouraging and documenting communication between the supervising teacher and the paraprofessional. This is not a comprehensive list, but a guide to stimulate conversations.

- **Create a system of communication** that ensures student information remains confidential. This might include email, phone calls, messages, notes, and meetings before or after the school day.
- **Schedule adequate planning and communication** time on a regularly basis.
- **Monitor and provide feedback** on the working relationship between staff members.
- **Provide mediation** between staff if conflicts arise.
- **Establish a "chain of command"** so the supervising teacher and paraprofessional know who to contact when problems arise.
- **Document meetings** that discuss the student's characteristics, needs, and educational goals such as team meetings; discussions and decisions; daily check-in; and the team logbook.
- **Provide the paraprofessional a schedule** to outline duties each day, week, grading period, or semester; to include grade level and content area meetings and planning time.
- **Create norms and expectations for formal meetings**, such as read reports in advance, follow an agenda, ensure both parties have time to talk and time to listen, maintain timelines, review data associated with the student's IEP, and discuss a student's IEP before and after the ARD committee meeting.
- **Document constructive and corrective feedback** on instructional and non-instructional activities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing professional development is important for all educators, including paraprofessionals. Both teachers and paraprofessionals should request training if they do not feel prepared to implement any portion of a student's IEP. The information below lists examples of possible professional development activities.

- **Provide professional development for the supervising teachers** on how to effectively supervise paraprofessionals, including:
  - regularly scheduled planning time and communication with paraprofessional
  - managing paraprofessionals' schedules
  - delegating tasks and responsibilities
  - orientation of a new paraprofessional
  - informing the paraprofessional of professional development opportunities
  - modeling academic and functional activities, instructional supports, skill sets, and fading supports
  - evaluating paraprofessionals' job performance
  - managing the work environment
  - maintaining student confidentiality
  - providing constructive and corrective feedback based on objective rather than subjective evidence of instructional and non-instructional activities
- **Schedule continuous professional development opportunities** that align to the paraprofessionals' job descriptions and tasks they will perform in the educational setting, (i.e., webinars, trainings, etc.)
- **Provide ongoing on-the-job training for paraprofessionals**, such as:
  - orienting a new paraprofessional to a new LEA, educational setting, or situation such as one-on-one assistance
  - providing refreshers/continuous professional development on providing supports in academic and functional settings, confidentiality, skill sets, and fading supports
  - implementing students' IEP goals and, where appropriate, objectives or benchmarks
- **Train, coach, and model** academic and functional activities, instructional supports, skill sets, and fading supports for the paraprofessional.

INSTRUCTION

The teacher will always have the primary responsibility for instruction of all students. The teacher will delegate appropriate instructional tasks to paraprofessionals and document the paraprofessional's implementation of these tasks. The following lists includes suggestions for supporting the implementation of effective instruction:

- **Evaluate the impact of paraprofessional services** on students in a variety of academic and functional activities, settings, and skill sets in accordance with the students' IEPs.
- **Develop written plans** that provide the content and level of information required for the paraprofessional to effectively implement the plan.
- **Create a plan and an associated evaluation,** based on the student's IEP, to fade paraprofessional-student supports by increasing student independence or replacing with more naturally occurring supports (e.g., classroom and visual cues, written directions, and/or peers).
- **Scaffold the learning process** for the paraprofessional.
- **Teach the paraprofessional how to document student progress** that is a result of implementing academic and functional strategies.



CONCLUSION

Certified teachers are always responsible for effective, meaningful instruction for all students in their class, whether or not they are students with disabilities and regardless of the paraprofessional supports provided for them. It is the teacher's responsibility to remain actively involved with paraprofessionals in delegating and assigning tasks to them, monitoring their implementation of those tasks, and providing timely feedback on their implementation of those tasks. It is critical that the certified teacher ensures that the paraprofessionals' roles and responsibilities, including those related to communication, are clearly outlined and that the paraprofessionals have an understanding of how to implement the tasks assigned to them.

McGrath and Johns offer an acronym for helping teachers remember their responsibilities when it comes to paraprofessionals (McGrath, Johns and Mathur 2010).

PREPARE paraprofessionals from the beginning on their role.

ASSERT your expectations in a helpful manner.

REVIEW frequently how things are going.

AGREE to work out any problems and support each other.

PLAN carefully the activities you wish paraprofessionals to conduct.

REINFORCE paraprofessionals for their contributions and successes.

OBSERVE paraprofessionals frequently to ensure all is going well and that your plans are being implemented and give constructive feedback based on your observation.

Giangreco and Doyle summarize it very well when they state, "It is the responsibility of the teacher and special educator to assess students' educational needs and progress; make decisions about curriculum; develop lesson plans that reflect individually determined adaptations, instructional methods, and data collection systems; and to be the primary liaison with the family. These are responsibilities that many paraprofessionals are not trained in or qualified to undertake. In cases where they are qualified (e.g., a certified teacher hired in a paraprofessional role), they are not compensated to do teacher-level work and as a paraprofessional are not accountable for the educational program in the same way as you are as an educator" (2004, 195).

REFERENCES

Broer, Stephen M, Mary Beth Doyle, and Michael F Giangreco. "Perspectives of Students with Intellectual Disabilities about Their Experiences with Paraprofessional Support." Council of Exceptional Children 71, no. 4 (2005): 415–30. https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Center-on-Disability-and-Community-Inclusion/GiangrecoEC05714415-430.pdf

Causton-Theoharis, Julie N, Michael F Giangreco, Mary Beth Doyle, and Patricia R Vadasy. "Paraprofessionals: The 'Sous-Chefs' of Literacy Instruction." Teaching Exceptional Children 40, no. 1 (2007): 56–62. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/004005990704000107.

Egilson, Snaefridur Thora, and Rannveig Traustadottir. "Assistance to Pupils with Physical Disabilities in Regular Schools: Promoting Inclusion or Creating Dependency?" European Journal of Special Needs Education 24, no. 1 (2009): 21–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250802596766.

Giangreco, Michael F., Susan W. Edelman, and Stephen M. Broer. "Respect, Appreciation, and Acknowledgment of Paraprofessionals Who Support Students with Disabilities." Exceptional Children 67, no. 4 (2001): 485–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290106700404.

Giangreco, Michael F., and Stephen M. Broer. "Questionable Utilization of Paraprofessionals in Inclusive Schools." Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities 20, no. 1 (2005): 10– 26. https://doi.org/10.1177/10883576050200010201.

Kennedy, Craig H., and Eva M. Horn. Including Students with Severe Disabilities. Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 2004.

McGrath, Mary Z, Beverley H Johns, and Sarup R Mathur. "Empowered or Overpowered? Strategies for Working Effectively with Paraprofessionals. ." Beyond Behavior 19, no. 2 (2010): 2–6.

A collaborative project of the Texas Education Agency and the Inclusion in Texas Network

TEA COPYRIGHT NOTICE AND USE TERMS:

Copyright © 2020. Texas Education Agency. All Rights Reserved.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the right to reproduce the copyrighted work is granted to Texas public school districts, Texas charter schools, and Texas education service centers for non-profit educational use within the state of Texas, and to residents of the state of Texas for their own personal, non-profit educational use, and provided further that no charge is made for such reproduced materials other than to cover the out-of-pocket cost of reproduction and distribution. No other rights, express or implied, are granted hereby.

For more information, please contact Copyrights@tea.texas.gov.

Texas Education Agency

INCLUSION IN TEXAS