

Paraeducator Practices

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A Newsletter for Paraeducators and Their
Teachers Educational Equity for All



March 2019

Paraeducator Symbol



*Just as the extra pair of wings
enables the dragonfly to
accomplish astounding
aeronautic gymnastics,
paraeducators have become the
extra pair of hands that allows
teachers to truly support and
MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR
EVERY STUDENT*

Ten Tips for Paraeducators

Classroom aides can support teaching, foster student independence, and discourage learned helplessness.

1) Facilitate peer relationships.

Remind others to communicate directly with the student. Let students choose their own seat or place in the classroom. Give students the space and freedom to socialize and develop friendships.

2) Multi-task in the classroom

Use class lectures as an opportunity to program a student's communication device, plan accommodations or modifications, and develop curriculum materials. Time away from the student's side promotes independence.

3) Ask for help.

You are not alone. Ask for direction in the classroom. Request assistance with disciplinary issues. Leave decisions about content and curriculum modifications or accommodations to the teacher.

4) Let students make mistakes and take risks.

Everyone learns from mistakes. Allow natural consequences to be part of the student's classroom experience.

5) Watch your voice and volume.

Discussions with other adults or students during instruction can be disruptive to the class. Save important discussions for after class.

6) Maintain student dignity!

Assume the student can do it! Be discreet about the student's physical needs. Schedule tube feedings, splint adjustments, stretching exercises and toileting for in between classes.

7) Communicate and consult with caregivers.

Listen to what families have to say and keep them informed. Learn the strategies that work at home and can work at school.

8) Give as few prompts as possible.

Foster independence. Fade out hand-over-hand assistance and use it to teach a task, not to complete a task. Resist the temptation to give verbal directions for every aspect of a task.

9) Help students create authentic work!

Students learn when they actively participate in assignments. Avoid completing assignments, taking tests, or answering questions for students. Show caregivers their child's genuine work and progress.

10) Let students to make choices.

Give students the ability to control their lives and interact with the environment. Offer choices to the student no matter how insignificant they may seem.

Project Participate© 2000, 2005 JFK Partners, UCDHSC
<http://www.projectparticipate.org/handouts/TipsParas.pdf>

FEATURED IDEA OF THE MONTH

Effective Teams: Sense Of Humor

Laughter Yoga on Discovery Channel

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahhN3Ryw4O4>

- Research proves that an absence of laughter in the workplace is a major contributor to workplace stress

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NoamivA4SY&feature=related>



Relieving stress through laughter

Studies show we need 12 laughs a day to stay healthy.

If our students can't move one part of their bodies: We change our language to show how using other parts of their bodies or even just their imaginations can make the skills work. For example, we have a one-handed Trash Can for waving away hurting words if a two-handed Trash Can won't work. If Mouth Closed Power won't work because a student cannot close her or his mouth, then we might change this to "Safe Mouth" Power.

If our students have difficulty understanding concepts: We keep our language very simple and consistent. We show them pictures or act out very concrete examples showing situations that are familiar to them.

If our students can't move or speak: We have the people who help them practice the skills for them, just as they help to meet their other needs.

<http://www.kidpower.org/library/article/unlimited-adaptability/>

kidpower™

**Kidpower Teenpower
Fullpower
International**

is a global non-profit leader in teaching positive, practical personal safety skills to protect people of all ages and abilities from bullying, molestation, abduction, and other violence.

Unlimited Adaptability

Teaching "People Safety" Skills to Individuals with Different Abilities

We can protect people with special needs and disabilities from most bullying, violence and abuse by understanding what they can do to protect their personal safety and adapting to meet their specific needs.

If our students can't see: We talk them through what they will be doing instead of showing them visually, or we get their permission to move their bodies to help them understand. We use language like, "show that you notice by turning your head" rather than telling them to "look." We focus on using their other senses to notice problems.

If our students have trouble talking: We work with whatever communication devices they have available. We practice using cards that explain what the problem is. We use the different ways of communicating which are available to them.

If our students are using a wheelchair: We say to "sit tall" instead of "stand tall" and practice skills sitting down. We show and practice Roll Away Power instead of Walk Away Power to leave potential safety problems. If we are teaching self-defense, we show Wheelchair Power, where they can use their wheelchair as a weapon to escape from an attack.

If our students have trouble hearing: We work with their sign language interpreters and focus on having them use their sight to notice trouble. We have them use sign language, written captions, drawings, or act out vividly without speaking.

WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

<https://www.gamesforthebrain.com/>

https://goanimate4schools.com/public_index

<http://www.utahparas.org/paralinx.htm>



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



AAC 101 for Paraeducators: Implementing AAC in the Classroom

from SETC

March 12, 2019 at 3:30pm Pacific, 6:30pm Eastern

<https://www.specialedtechcenter.org/training/webinars/>



Rewards and Privileges

A good alternative to discipline involves rewarding the students for behaving. The rewarding of tickets, for such behaviors is a good idea. Depending on the teacher, tickets may be handed out to students for raising their hand in class, helping out another student or a variety of good behaviors.

A modification of the ticket method allows the students to save their "tokens" and put them in the "bank". With this system, the tokens do not have to be cashed in every week. However, during recess and lunchtime, tickets can be issued out for misbehavior. When this happens, the students talk with the principal concerning how many tokens must be given up for the misdeed.



Specific Praise: How it Improves Learning

Lesson Objective: Using "specific praise" is a proven-to-work, must-do approach

Length: 3 min

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/positive-feedback-to-students>