

Paraeducator Practices

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A Newsletter for Paraeducators and Their Teachers Educational Equity for All

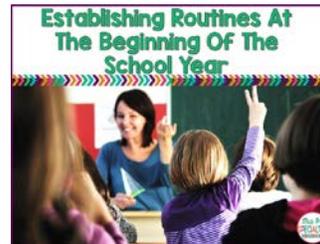


October 2018

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



ESTABLISHING ROUTINES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

While it doesn't always look like it, our students crave structure. To make the back to school weeks go smoothly, it is important to establish structure and routines from the first day of school. Not only will this set the class up for success, it will help students become more independent.

- Routines Of The Schedule
- Behavior Management System Routines
- Arrival & Dismissal Routines

<https://www.mrspspecialties.com/2018/08/establishing-routines-at-beginning-of.html>

Complexities of Instructional Support

Contributed By [Kim Davis](#)

Can there be a downside to a student receiving one on one support? How could it hurt the student's learning or impede gaining independent skills if there is a person constantly with a student with an autism spectrum disorder? If the paraeducator is not utilized properly or if their role is not fully explained and understood, the relationship between the student and the paraeducator may impede future goals, especially the goals that will facilitate future success of the individual when he becomes an adult. Too much support may not be as wonderful as it sounds.

In her book, *How to be a Para Pro* (2000), Diane Twachtman-Cullen aptly describes the roles and responsibilities of a paraprofessional and also created the 10 Commandments of Paraprofessional Support; #5 and #6 are particularly noteworthy.

5. Thou shalt master the art of rendering the appropriate degree of support for your student's level of skill development and behavior.

6. Thou shalt exercise vigilance in fading back prompts and promoting competence and independence in your student (p. 176).

<https://goo.gl/UfWaAQ>

THE 7 BEST QUALITIES OF PARAPROFESSIONALS

- Patience
- Love for ALL children
- Understanding
- Flexibility
- Communication
- Creativity
- Unflappable nature

<https://goo.gl/BQTdPY>

FEATURED IDEA OF THE MONTH



United Federation of Teachers
A Union of Professionals

The ABCs of Safety and Health

Guidelines
for Paraprofessionals

Presented by
UFT Safety and Health Department

52 Broadway, New York, NY 10004 p. 212.777.7500 www.uft.org

Officers: Michael Magraw President, Michael Mendel Secretary, Robert Adkisson Assistant Secretary, Mia Antonson Treasurer, Mona Roman Assistant Treasurer
Hon. Patricia Caruso At-Large, Karen Minkoff, Lou Green, Richard Farber, Christine Farkas, Sheryl Robinson

<http://www.uft.org/files/attachments/abcs-of-safety-and-health-for-paraprofessionals.pdf>

Tips for Success as a Paraeducator

In preparation for the new school year, here are some tips for success, excerpted from [*Paraprofessionals and Teachers Working Together*](#), by Susan Fitzell

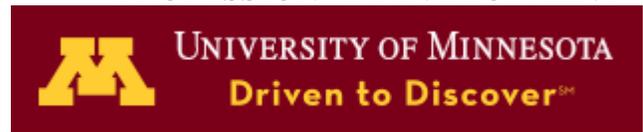
- Encourage students to make friendships in the classroom so they feel empowered and learn to be more independent.
- Position yourself so that the teacher communicates directly with the student, enabling them to develop a rapport.
- Encourage other students to interact with students with special needs.
- Ensure that students own their behavior by using strategies and language that takes the responsibility off you and keeps it where it belongs – on the child.
- Ask questions. It is helpful to the teacher and to other students in class.
- Feel free to offer suggestions. At times, you may want to offer them to the teacher privately; however, offering suggestions appropriately in the classroom is a wonderful advantage to the class as a whole.
- Get help when you need it. Everyone needs help at times.
- Encourage students to do anything and everything they can and should do for themselves. If we fall into the trap of doing too much for the child, we encourage learned helplessness.
- Be flexible.
- Consider yourself a helper to all students in the classroom. This benefits the teacher, reduces stigma on the student with special needs, and supports all students in the room.
- Move around the room. At times, it will be necessary and critical to be near your assigned student(s). However, it is just as critical for the student(s) to be on their own in order to develop independence.
- Try to remember that no matter what the cognitive age of the child, it is important to treat him or her socially

WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ967108.pdf>
<https://ici.umn.edu/para/teachers/Modeling/ModActivities.htm>
<https://www.nprinc.com/content/free-resources/Lets-Team-Up-Gerlach-Nov-2016.pdf>



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Paraprofessional and teacher development

The Institute addresses the importance of (and/or offers) training for paraprofessionals and teachers to help them acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes to help them better educate students with disabilities.

<https://ici.umn.edu/index.php?topics/view/89/publications/all#details>



Continuation of Tips For Success as a Paraeducator

in accordance with his or her chronological age. The more we expect, the more they will deliver, within reason.

- Expect and encourage age-appropriate social behavior.
- Feel comfortable explaining any child's disability to other children in terms they will understand as appropriate in the classroom. Consult confidentiality laws to determine appropriateness. Identify and rally your strengths. You have expertise that benefits the child and the teacher in the classroom. Use it.
- Ask yourself, "How would I feel if I had an adult right next to me all day long?" Have the courage to give students personal space to interact with the classroom teacher, other students, and to work independently.
- When you must make quick, on-the-spot decisions or adaptations while providing instructions, it is critical to discuss these decisions with the general and/or special education teacher as soon as possible so they can provide necessary feedback.

<https://susanfitzell.com/tips-for-success-as-a-paraeducator/>



Paraprofessionals and Teachers Working Together: Highly Effective Strategies for Inclusive Classrooms

by [Susan Gingras Fitzell M.Ed](#)

The book provides practical solutions for confusing or opposing teaching strategies that paraprofessionals and teachers experience during collaboration.