“Effective Paraprofessional Supervision”

Educating Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Conference

August 19, 2011

Marriott Hotel, Farmington

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Overview

- This workshop involves the participants in developing an awareness of what components are necessary for the appropriate utilization of paraprofessionals. These components include knowledge of current state and federal legislation and regulations regarding paraprofessionals, the differing roles and responsibilities of teachers and paraprofessionals, joint planning and goal setting, and establishing and understanding expectations of the teacher and the paraprofessional.
Questions

What do you hope to get answered today?
Quotes

“My para doesn’t seem to be able to do anything right. It’s like having another kid in the room. I have to redo everything.”

“My teacher never explains how she wants anything done. Then she’s all over my back because it’s not done the way she wants.”

“The para in my room never comes back from lunch on time. We have several activities planned for that time and I need her, but she always has some lame excuse for being late.”
Quotes

- My teacher gives me only the boring work to do. I never get to work with the kids. I just run off papers and run errands. I have some skills that I sure would like to use if I just had the chance.”

- “My para gets so upset about doing playground duty. That’s his job, isn’t it.”

- “I know my job is to support the teacher, but five playground duties every week, no matter what the weather is like, a little too much. When I try to talk about it to the teacher, she just shrugs and says, “That’s your job.”
No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

- Signed into law, January 2002
- Mandated requirements for Title I Paraprofessionals
NCLB

- Paraprofessionals providing instructional support must work **under the direct supervision of a teacher**. A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) if the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher. As a result, a program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not permitted.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Part B, Section 612 State Eligibility
  Allows paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised in accordance with state law, regulation and policy in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.
IDEA

Each state will:

- Improve knowledge of special education, regular education teachers and principals and, in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, concerning effective instructional practices and provide necessary training.
Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Supervision of Paraprofessionals.

- Endorsed and published by the CT State Department of Education.
- Distributed to Special Education Directors and Paraprofessional District Contacts
The CT State Department of Education defines a paraprofessional as:

- An employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the teacher or other certified or licensed professional. The ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of student progress, is a collaborative effort of certified and licensed staff.

-CT Guidelines for the Training and Support of Paraprofessionals page 7.
Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation

- Sec. 10-155j. Development of paraprofessionals. The Department of Education, through the State Education Resource Center and within available appropriations for such purposes, shall promote and encourage professional development activities for school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. Such activities may include, but shall not be limited to, providing local and regional boards of education with training modules and curricula for professional development for paraprofessionals and assisting boards of education in the effective use of paraprofessionals and the development of strategies to improve communication between teachers and paraprofessionals in the provision of effective student instruction.
Sec. 10-155k. School Paraprofessional Advisory Council. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a School Paraprofessional Advisory Council consisting of one representative from each statewide bargaining representative organization that represents school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. The council, shall advise, at least quarterly, the Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner’s designee, of the needs for the training of such paraprofessionals. The council shall report, at least quarterly, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on the recommendations given to the commissioner, of the commissioner’s designee, pursuant to the provisions of this section, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education.
Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation

- Sec. 2008. Not later than December 1, 2008, the department shall report and make recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education concerning professional development for paraprofessionals and the status and future of school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities.
IEPs

In the case of paraprofessionals whose support includes students with disabilities, it is necessary for them to have an understanding of the IEP information that is pertinent to their role as an implementer.

Participation in Individualized Family Service Plan Meetings or Planning and Placement Team Meetings

- Paraprofessional attendance at placement team (PPT) meetings is an individual district and school-based decision. It is important that district or school personnel explain their policy on the attendance of paraprofessionals at PPTs to both parents and school staff. If a paraprofessional is required in the IEP and not attending a student’s PPT meeting, it is the responsibility of the student’s teacher and the paraprofessional’s supervisor to communicate in detail with the paraprofessional about the student, before the PPT.

CT Guidelines for the Training and Support of Paraprofessionals pg. 42
Supervisor: Role and Responsibility

- Teachers or other practitioners who are responsible for integrating paraprofessionals into the instructional team. This role has supervisory responsibilities that include planning, scheduling and assigning tasks for the paraprofessional(s) based on their experience and training.

(Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals, CTSDE, 2008)
Supervisor: Monitoring

- Supervision also requires directing and monitoring the day-to-day work of paraprofessionals, providing feedback, on-the-job coaching and sharing information with principals about paraprofessional strengths and needs.

(Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals, CTSDE, 2008)
Roles of Teachers in the Instructional Process

Teachers are responsible for the following:

- Developing lesson plans to meet curriculum requirements and education objectives for all learners.
- Adapting lessons, instructional methods, and curricula to meet the learning needs of individual students
- Developing behavior management and disciplinary plans
- Creating learner-centered, inclusive environments that respect the cultures, religions, lifestyles, and human rights of children, youth, parents, and staff
- Involving parents in all aspects of their child’s education
- Analyzing, with the assistance of other licensed (credentialed) professional personnel, results of standardized tests for assessing learner needs
- Developing functional (informal) assessment tools to document and evaluate learner progress and instructional needs.

Adapted from Strengthening and Support Teacher and Para educator Teams: Guidelines for Paraeducator Roles, Supervision, and Preparation by A.L. Pickett, 1999, New York: National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education, Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate Center, City University of New York.
Teachers provide instructional support

• Provide regular feedback regarding paraprofessional’s work performance,
• Support paraprofessionals in providing instruction to students, and
• Provide support and direction to paraprofessionals who work in independent capacities.
Teacher/Supervisory Checklist

- The teacher supervisory checklist is an informal assessment of the knowledge and skills competencies of the teacher as supervisor within a school or program. Prior to utilizing the TSC, the user should be very familiar with Connecticut’s Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessional; all of the standards come from the Guidelines.
Activity

- Let's look at the Teacher Supervisory Checklist
- How will you use this?
- How can it assist with communication?

What do you understand the word “collaboration” to mean?
Collaboration

- A process of joining together to work on tasks in a cooperative, respectful, and purposeful manner.
Famous Teams

- Bonnie and Clyde
- Laverne & Shirley
- Ginger Rogers & Fred Astaire
- Simon & Garfunkel
- Burns & Allen
What makes them a successful team?
Quote

“Something as simple as the way (the teacher) introduces me as her co-worker rather than as her ‘aide’ shows the level of respect she has for me and while on the surface it may not seem important, it says a lot about our relationship both in and outside of the classroom.”

-Madeline Casbading, Special Education Paraprofessional
The following are 10 examples of appropriate and effective utilization of paraprofessionals, taken from the model of roles, responsibilities and training of paraprofessionals identified in this guideline document

1. Participation in regularly scheduled meetings and sharing relevant information.
2. Implementation of proactive behavior and learning strategies.
3. Use of strategies that provide learner independence and positive self-esteem.
4. Assistance in accommodating and modifying learning strategies based on learning styles, ability levels and other individual differences.
5. Review and reinforcement of learning activities.
6. Assistance in engaging learners through an awareness of cognitive, physical, social, emotional and language development.
7. Use of developmentally and age-appropriate reinforcement and other learning activities.
8. Collection of data on learner activity.
9. Carry out functional (informal) assessment activities.
10. Participation in continuing professional development.

-Connecticut Guidelines for the Training and Support of Paraprofessionals, pg. 68
Planning

- What should paras and teachers talk about when they meet?
Survey

- Purpose of the survey is to help initiate a discussion.
- What would be the best way to use the survey?
Solutions: Engage in Dialogue

- Paraprofessionals who are having difficulty initiating conversation with teacher partners should consider the following suggestions:
  - Try to set a prearranged time.
  - Be aware of partner’s mood when initiating conversation.
  - Have something concrete, such as the survey, to refer to during conversation.
  - If all attempts to enter into a dialogue have failed, enlist the aid of a third party.
Solutions: Defined Expectations

- The teacher and paraprofessional should work together to develop a list of expectations for both the teacher and the paraprofessional. These expectations can be based on the survey form. Expectations must be clear to both people. The paraprofessional must make sure that he or she understands clearly what is to be expected of them in the classroom—both what is to be done and when and how it is to be done. The teacher must make sure that her/his expectations are based on realistic skills which the paraprofessional possesses.
Solutions: Shared Planning

Time

- If possible, both the paraprofessional and the teacher should plan together for a period of time, a day or a week. It is helpful if the paraprofessional as well as the teacher, has a written plan. If a plan book is not available for the paraprofessional, scheduling sheets like those in the guidelines document or a commercial planning guide can be used.
What Systems Can Teachers Use to Communicate with a Paraprofessional?

- Establish a firm 15-minute meeting time for each day.
- Set aside a longer (45-minute to 60-minute) meeting time for each week.
- Determine a monthly meeting to discuss progress of individual students.
- Meet when students do not need supports (such as during lunch, recess, or special-areas classes).
- Establish a communication notebook to be used by the teacher and paraprofessional.
Keep in mind..

- When making plans or setting goals, the team needs to be aware of any laws, district policies, or negotiated agreements which affects students or employees. Can you give me some examples of some laws, policies or negotiated agreement language which would affect you or the way you work with students?
## Classroom Activity Analysis Worksheet

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

### Form 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Information</th>
<th>Accommodations or Modifications?</th>
<th>Personal Assistance?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Class/Sub</strong></td>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
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### Notes


**Accommodation:** A change made to HOW content is taught and/or learning is assessed in order to provide a student with access to information and to create an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills.

**Modification:** A change in what the student is expected to learn and/or demonstrate.

**Co-Teacher (CT):** A formal, year-long or semester-long commitment between a general education teacher and a special populations teacher to jointly plan, deliver, and assess instruction for all students in the general education class. (WHO? Certified and/or licensed personnel partnered with the general education teachers)

**Support Facilitator (SF):** An individual who provides a variety of supports, either to students and/or to the general education teacher, which meets the needs identified through collaborative planning. (WHO? Certified special populations teachers; licensed personnel, such as OT, PT, speech, etc.; paraprofessionals)

**Behavior Interventions** that apply across the school day (if any).
Table 2: Sample Teacher-Paraeducator Planning Tool

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<th>Wednesday</th>
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<td>Period 1/History 200</td>
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<td>Prior to 8 am class</td>
<td>All – 4, 3</td>
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<td>All – 4</td>
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<td>(group work) All – 4</td>
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<td>8:30-8:45</td>
<td>(ind. work) All – 5</td>
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<td>(lecture) C. John – 2</td>
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<td>(ind. work) All – 5</td>
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<td>8:45-9</td>
<td>P. Rich &amp; M. Barnes – 6</td>
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<td>All – 5</td>
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<td>A. Smith, D. Jones, &amp; L. Lee – 6</td>
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<td>Period 4/History 1</td>
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<td>7:55-8 am</td>
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<td>Period 6</td>
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Task Key

1 - Work with student(s) to re-teach longitude/latitude, use text pp. 54-55
3 - Enlarge print on longitude/latitude worksheet – make 5 copies
5 - Monitor student(s) – provide help/answer questions as needed
6 - Supervise student work on Excel spreadsheet project
7 - Sit with student, assist on ind. work

Paraprofessionals and Teachers: Collaboration in the Classroom
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**Task Key**

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“Teachers and paraprofessionals need to develop a rapport that allows the para to know what a teacher needs without having to be told. The teacher, in turn, should be appreciative of what the para does.”

-Gwen Small, Paraprofessional, Detroit
Scenario

- You are a brand new teacher. Mrs. Clark, a veteran paraprofessional with sixteen years of experience has been assigned to work with you. Problems arise in the classroom with Mrs. Clark constantly taking over, with little regard for you. How can you tactfully handle this situation?
“Keep the lines of communication open. Teachers should include paraprofessionals in everything that goes on in the building. We should let them know they have a voice, as well as makes them feel they are a part of the team.”

-Carol Pachelo, Teacher, Boston, MA
Additional Resources

- CREC Paraprofessional Page: [www.crec.org/paraprofessional](http://www.crec.org/paraprofessional)