Pittsylvania County Schools

Handbook for
Paraprofessional Staff

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Paraprofessionals: Who Are They?

A Paraprofessional is a school employee who works under the supervision of a licensed staff member to assist in providing instruction and other services to children, youth, and their families. The prefix "para" means "alongside of." Therefore, it is correct to assume that a paraprofessional works along side of an educator (teachers, related service providers, etc.). In the early 1960's, there were approximately 10,000 paraprofessionals working in schools, primarily in non-instructional areas. Currently, due to the increase in student population and diversity, the estimated number of paraprofessionals is between 500,000 and 700,000 nationwide performing a variety of instructional and non-instructional roles, from helping students in classrooms, supervising playgrounds, to performing as health assistants. These paraprofessionals work in several learning environments from infant care and family respite to adult vocational sites.

The provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA), which required schools to serve students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, also contributed to the rising use of paraprofessionals in schools today. Paraprofessionals are often utilized in educational settings to provide direct and indirect services to students with disabilities.

Paraprofessional Core Competencies & Related Examples

Paraprofessionals will demonstrate:

1. **Understanding the value of providing instructional and other direct services to all children and youth with disabilities;**
    - Encourages student effort
    - Enthusiastically works with students
    - Believes that all students with disabilities should be taught alongside their non-disabled peers
    - Believes that all students can learn
    - Works to meet student needs

2. **Understanding the roles and responsibilities of certificated/licensed staff and Paraprofessionals;**

    Certified staff:

    - To assess students
    - Write instructional objectives
    - Implement instructional programs
    - Evaluate programs
    - Involve parents

    Paraprofessionals:

    - Support teacher-directed instruction
    - Monitor independent work
    - Provide follow-up instruction
    - Train others (peer partners, peer tutors, volunteers, etc.)
    - Supervise activities

3. **Knowledge of (a) patterns of human development and milestones typically achieved at different ages, and (b) risk factors that may prohibit or impede typical development;**
    - Development occurs in predictable sequences
    - Development proceeds from general to specific
    - Development proceeds at different rates
    - Can identify different child development stages
    - Physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development is interrelated and affected by the interaction of heredity and environment

4. **Ability to practice ethical and professional standards of conduct, including the requirements of confidentiality;**
    - Maintains confidentiality

- Follows district's policies and procedures
- Follows the chain of command
- Participates in training

5. **Ability to communicate with colleagues, follow instructions, and use problem solving and other skills that will enable the Paraprofessional to work as an effective member of the instructional team;**
   - Is receptive to constructive criticism
   - Asks for clarification
   - Asks for assistance
   - Works to create a climate of cooperation, trust, and loyalty
   - Respects differences in teaching and discipline styles- a team player!

6. **Ability to provide positive behavioral support and management;**
   - Ignores behavior in some cases
   - Uses non-verbal communication- proximity, touch, eye contact, gestures
   - Redirects
   - Praises
   - Gives choices

7. **Knowledge of the legal issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities and their families;**
   - Understands Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
   - Understands Individualized Education Program (IEP)
   - Understands Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
   - Understands disciplinary procedures
   - Understands evaluation procedures

8. **Awareness of diversity among the children, youth, families, and colleagues with whom they work;**
   - Acts to reduce prejudices
   - Displays empathy toward students of different cultures, races, genders, religions, and abilities
   - Aware of family values
   - Aware of body language
   - Has high expectations for all
9. **Knowledge and application of the elements of effective instruction to assist teaching and learning as developed by the certificated/licensed staff in a variety of settings;**
   - Understands classroom management techniques
   - Understands principles of learning
   - Recognizes importance of engaged students
   - Uses appropriate questioning techniques

10. **Ability to utilize appropriate strategies and techniques to provide instructional support in teaching and learning as developed by the certificated/licensed staff;**
    - Can supervise students
    - Can manage behavior
    - Can motivate students
    - Can use effective questioning strategies
    - Can hold students accountable

11. **Ability to motivate and assist children and youth;**
    - Challenges students
    - Gives immediate feedback when appropriate
    - Motivates students to be active participants
    - Provides appropriate reinforcement
    - Relates lesson to student relevance

12. **Knowledge of and ability to follow health, safety, and emergency procedures of the agency where they are employed;**
    - Knows of medication procedures
    - Reminds students to work and play in a safe manner
    - Recognizes when a student isn't feeling well
    - Knows fire drill and lockdown procedures

13. **Awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning;**
    - Has basic computer skills
    - Can assist students with any technological devices
    - Can load and start computer programs for students
    - Can recognize when a student is working versus playing on the computer

14. **Awareness of personal care and/or health related support.**
    - Aware of the need to take care of self, both physically and emotionally
    - Presents self as a person others enjoy being around

Training Standards for Paraprofessionals Assigned to Work with a Teacher Who Has Primary Oversight of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

General Autism Standards	
1.	Lists and explains the defining characteristics of autism (communication, patterns of stereotypical behavior, socialization, and social skill development) and the impact on the individual as defined by the Virginia Department of Education.
2.	Lists and explains the associated characteristics commonly present in autism (e.g., difficulties in sensory processing, motor skills, theory of mind, and imitation) and the impact on the individual.
3.	Lists and explains the associated cognitive characteristics and learning styles commonly present in autism (e.g., difficulties in executive functioning, attending, planning, abstract thinking, problem solving) and the impact on the individual.
4.	Describes the continuum of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the range of characteristics, abilities and learning needs that may be present.

Behavior Standards	
5.	Defines the term interfering behavior and identifies when interfering behavior is / is not present and when intervention is warranted.
6.	Explains the components of the behavior chain (setting event, antecedents, behavior, and consequences) and the impact on interfering behavior and identifies examples with students with ASD.
7.	Describes the relationship between communication and interfering behaviors and identifies examples with students with ASD.

8.	Lists the potential functions of interfering behaviors and identifies examples with students with ASD.
9.	Lists and describes the components of a positive behavior support plan and explains how each component can reduce interfering behavior while promoting the dignity and respect of the student.
10.	Implements proactive strategies designed to prevent the occurrence of interfering behaviors.
11.	Provides individualized positive reinforcement for demonstration of new skills designed to replace interfering behavior as well as the absence of interfering behaviors.
12.	Implements all components of a positive behavior support plan with consistency across all environments.
13.	Implements strategies to de-escalate a crisis situation to keep the student, self, and others safe as outlined by the student's intervention plan and division policies.
14.	Communicates any instances of crisis level interfering behaviors with the educational team immediately and reports the incident according to school and division policies.
15.	Provides the educational team with information regarding any areas of concern or changes in behavior.
16.	Observes behaviors and records data using objective measures and criteria to decrease the interfering behavior and increase the alternative and positive behaviors.

Communication Standards

17.	Implements evidence-based practices to teach receptive and expressive communication outlined in the student's goals and objectives.
18.	Provides numerous communication opportunities throughout the day to enable students to achieve communication goals through environmental arrangement, routines, peer interactions and motivational activities.
19.	Implements programs designed to enhance communication skills across all daily activities and with multiple communication partners to ensure generalization of skills.
20.	Implements evidence-based practices to teach and promote choice-making skills.
21.	Implements evidence-based practices to teach receptive communication skills which will enable a student to expand knowledge of vocabulary, follow directions and increase comprehension.
22.	Implements evidence-based practices to teach expressive communication skills which will enable a student to communicate effectively in his or her environment and increase positive interactions.
23.	Implements evidence-based practices to develop pragmatic communication skills.
24.	Implements appropriate augmentative communication interventions such as object or picture exchange systems, voice output communication devices, gestures, signs, and text, among others, to promote or enhance communication based on the student's goals and objectives.

25.	Uses evidence-based practices to teach social skills and to foster social interest and interactions outlined in the student's goals and objectives.
26.	Provides numerous opportunities throughout the day to work on social skills that enable students to achieve social goals.
27.	Implements programs designed to enhance social skills across all daily activities and with multiple social partners to ensure generalization of skills.
28.	Implements evidence-based practices to teach and promote the understanding and following of common social rules and norms.
29.	Implements evidence-based practices to teach and promote emotional development and emotional regulation as it relates to self as well as others.
30.	Supports interactions between peers and students with ASD providing relevant information and guidance to peers that will foster interactions and provide opportunities to learn social goals and objectives.

31.	Provides intervention through a full range of instructional formats (e.g., one-to-one, small group, school/community interactions, and peer-mediated instruction).
32.	Implements a wide variety of evidence-based practices that effectively address the individual's goals and objectives.
33.	Implements prompting strategies and hierarchies that promote high rates of successful performance.

34.	Identifies individualized reinforcement preferences using indirect and direct measures on an ongoing basis.
35.	Provides appropriate reinforcement contingent on behavior, emphasizes the use of naturally occurring reinforcement, and fades systematically to support student independence.
36.	Delivers instruction that is clear, concise and appropriate for the student and ensures student understanding.
37.	Implements task analysis by breaking skills into small teachable parts and chaining steps of a task for skill acquisition.
38.	Implements instruction that promotes active engagement and maximizes opportunities for learning.
39.	Implements evidence-based practices with fidelity across all settings to foster generalization and maintenance of skills.
40.	Implements accommodations and/or modifications of tasks that effectively address the individual's goals and objectives.
41.	Utilizes adaptive equipment and assistive technology options that effectively address the individual's goals and objectives.
42.	Respects the needs, desires, and interests of the individual and families when implementing evidence-based practices and providing support to the individual.
43.	Collaborates with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team as evidenced by regular communication and participation in scheduled team meetings and informs the team of any areas of concern or changes in behavior.

44.	Implements and follows-up on team decisions and communicates results to the team.
45.	Observes behaviors and records data using objective measures and criteria.

46.	Assists in implementing safe environments that are free of hazards.
47.	Assists in implementing a positive climate that promotes respect for the individual.
48.	Implements a variety of visual supports and strategies to communicate information and expectations and increase independence of the student (e.g., break cards, rule cards, narratives, and scripts).
49.	Implements a daily schedule of activities that is individualized by length (e.g., full day, part day) and type (e.g., objects, photos, icons, words).
50.	Implements mini-schedules to help the individual participate in the environment and complete activities and routines independently.
51.	Uses visual supports and strategies to help the individual prepare for and complete transitions.
52.	Uses evidence-based practices to teach the individual the purpose of visual supports and how to use the visual supports independently.

53.	Describes the basic function of the sensory system, impact that sensory processing has on learning and the potential differences for students with ASD.
54.	Implements sensory motor intervention plan with fidelity across all environments determined by the student's goals and the educational team.

55.	Implements a variety of evidence-based practices to increase an individual's short-term and long-term independence in functional and daily living skills as outlined in his/her goals and objectives.
56.	Implements a variety of evidence-based practices to increase an individual's cognitive and learning abilities outlined in his/her goals and objectives.
57.	Implements a variety of evidence-based practices to increase an individual's academic skills outlined in his/her goals and objectives.
58.	Provides numerous opportunities throughout the day to work on independence and aptitude skills to enable students to achieve goals and foster generalization and maintenance of skills.

VCU Autism Training for Paraprofessionals

Autism Spectrum Disorder for Paraprofessionals: Providing Effective Instruction and Support

https://vcuautismcenter.org/te/courses/paraprofessionals.cfm

In response to the need for comprehensive training for individuals working with students with ASD in Virginia as well as House Bill 325 and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Training Standards for Paraprofessionals Assigned to Work with a Teacher Who Has Primary Oversight of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, VCU-ACE has developed online training opportunities for paraprofessionals.

This course is designed to provide paraprofessionals with skills and knowledge needed to support students with an ASD in the school setting. The course will provide an overview of the potential roles and responsibilities the paraprofessional may be asked to deliver. Participants will learn how to carry out their responsibilities while maintaining respect for the students and exhibiting sensitivity to beliefs, values, and cultures. Teaming and communication with professionals and parents will also be highlighted. The course will provide participants with an overview of ASD including primary and secondary characteristics. Information regarding the development and implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be discussed. Participants will gain knowledge of educational modifications, accommodations and educational strategies used to support students with ASD. A focus of the course will be on understanding interfering behaviors which students with ASD may demonstrate and effectively supporting the student to reduce these behaviors and increase positive skills.

A new section of the paraprofessional course runs monthly. Participants may register on the ACE website for any of the upcoming available sections. Participants have the entire month for which they registered to complete the online course. New sections open on the first week of the month and close on the last week of the month. You can register for the course any time for available sections, but you will not be able to access the course until the section for which you registered opens. For example, you may register in April for a section that begins in July. At the beginning of July, you would receive an e-mail with information about how to access the course. This course is estimated to require 20 contact hours to complete.

Course Information Contact: autismcenter@vcu.edu
Technical Support: Lucian Friel, 804-827-1434 or email: friell@vcu.edu

Models of Collaboration

Some teams use a **collaborative model**, in which the teacher devises instruction and the paraprofessional supports the teacher's instructions and plans. They may teach some lessons working together or teach small groups at the same time. *Remember, it is never the paraprofessional's responsibility to develop instructional plans or curriculum or provide direct instruction on teaching a new skill.* This model works well for a well-established team with a paraprofessional who already has a high skill level and extensive experience. Many teams work toward a collaborative model only after having worked together for a period of time. The key to successful implementation of this model is the scheduling of joint planning time.

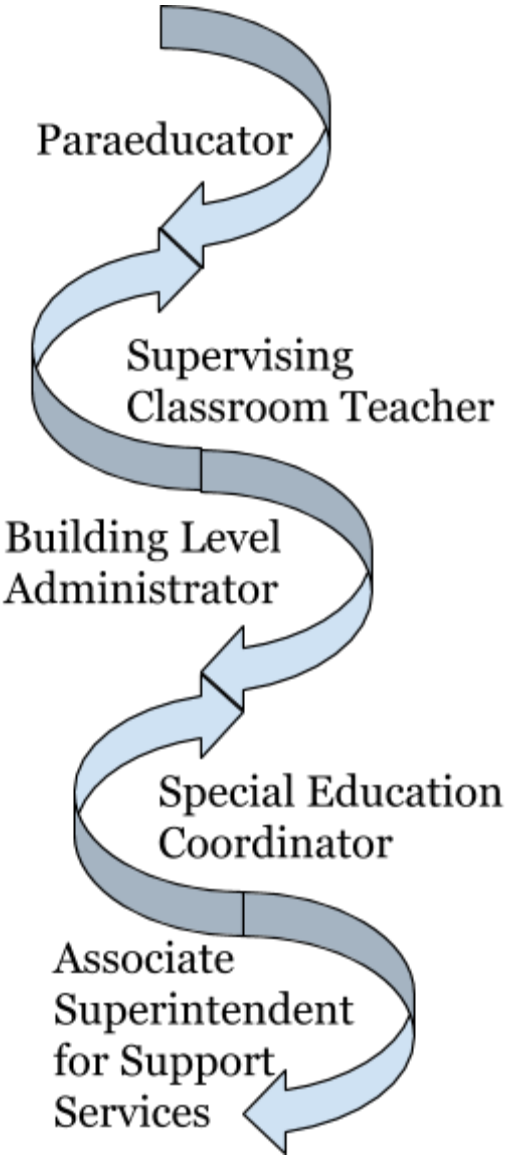
Other teams use a **teacher-assistant model** for classroom instruction. In this model, the teacher assumes responsibility for direct instruction of new material, while the paraprofessional provides supplementary instruction involving practice and feedback for individuals or small groups. When the teacher is instructing the whole group at one time, the paraprofessional under this model may be moving around the classroom, helping students to stay on task, or assisting a student whose IEP indicates an individual accommodation (e.g., a student who needs someone to help him follow along in a book).

A third model assumes a primarily **clerical or organizational role** in the classroom. Organizational duties, such as taking attendance and lunch count, charting behavior, marking and sorting papers, preparing materials, and creating classroom displays, can be performed by the paraprofessional while allowing more time for the teacher to engage in instructional planning and delivery.

Finally, a paraprofessional may be assigned to a particular student with responsibilities focused primarily on the student's needs. For some children to be successfully included in the general education classroom, it may be necessary to provide additional support. In such cases, which are becoming more and more common in special education placements, the paraprofessional may be responsible for implementing the instructional and management procedures that have been developed by the special education teacher and the general educator. This model works best when the special education teacher and the paraprofessional have pre-arranged daily contact since they may actually be working in separate classrooms throughout the day.

A combination of these models may be used to create the most effective team. It is essential that the teacher and paraprofessional clarify from the start what their expectations are concerning the team's functioning. This includes clearly defining each team member's role and contributions to the team. The line of authority needs to be established from the start; although the paraprofessional's ideas and input are needed and valued, the teacher is responsible for making the final decisions that affect the operating classroom and service delivery to students.

Paraprofessional Communication Flow Chart



Supervising Teacher and Paraprofessional
Role Differentiation

Area	Supervising Teacher Role	Paraprofessional Role
Classroom Organization	Plans weekly schedule Plans lessons/activities for entire class, individuals, and para Plans room arrangement and centers Supervises all paras in the classroom	Follows schedule Follows plans designed by teacher Assists in arranging room and centers Asks questions to gain knowledge of expectations
Setting Objectives	Determines appropriate objectives for class and individuals and shares objectives with para	Assist teacher in accomplishing the objectives for the class and students
Teaching	Teaches lessons for entire class, small groups, individuals	Organize materials Assist in instruction according to teacher directions
Behavior Management	Plans behavior management strategies for entire class and individual students and share information with para	Follows the behavior management plan chosen by the teacher or described in child's BIP, reports to teacher
Assessment	Assesses individual students and administers tests to entire class Collects data as needed	Assist teacher as directed in assessment Collect data if trained
Working with Parents	Meets with parents Initiates conferences with parents concerning progress	All confidential information should be shared by teacher Attend meetings when appropriate
Building Classroom Partnership	Arranges schedule for conferences, organizes job duties for paras, gives feedback	Works alongside teacher to accomplish goals for class and individual students
Classroom Duties	Clerical duties Organization of materials	Clerical duties may be assigned to Paraprofessional, can assist in organizing materials
Individual Education Planning (IEP)	Develops and implements IEP	Carries out teacher's plans for child as outlined in IEP. Reports progress/concerns to teacher

Enhancing the Role of the Paraprofessional

Directions: Indicate by a 3 the appropriate person(s) to complete the responsibilities listed in the left column.

Responsibilities	Para	Teacher	Shared
Preparing daily/weekly lesson plans			
Developing student and paraprofessional schedules			
Delineating specific paraprofessional tasks			
Determining support staff assignments			
Evaluating students			
Scheduling volunteers			
Developing data sheets			
Developing classroom behavior			
Planning with general education teachers			
Planning with paraprofessionals			
Coordinating related services			
Documenting student performance on report card			
Modifying student assignments/tests			
Planning with grade level teams			
Observing in the classroom			
Providing support in classroom			
Providing testing support			
Providing co-teaching instruction			
Providing behavioral intervention			
Providing personal assistance			
Modifying materials			
Selecting technology			
Providing faculty training			
Providing training to peer students			
Providing training to paraprofessionals			
Supervising peer supports			
Supervising paraprofessionals			
Supervising volunteers			
Conducting parent conferences			
Conducting evaluations			
Planning for ARD/IEPs			
Attending ARD meetings			

Paraprofessional Code of Ethics

- Practice the standards of professional and ethical conduct approved by PCS.
- Recognize and respect the roles of teachers as supervisors and team leaders.
- Recognize and respect the differences in the roles of teachers, other professional practitioners, and paraprofessionals.
- Recognize the teacher's responsibilities for planning learning programs, modifying curriculum and instruction, assessing learner progress, and developing behavior management programs.
- Perform tasks that are within an identified scope of responsibility for paraprofessionals.
- Refer concerns expressed by learners or others to the supervising teacher or other professional practitioner.
- Share appropriate information about learner's performance, behavior, progress, and all confidential issues only with the supervising teacher or designated personnel in the appropriate setting.
- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all learners, families, and staff members.
- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a learner's disability, race, sex, cultural background or religion.
- Follow the guidelines established by the district to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all learners and staff.
- Represent the school district in a positive manner.
- Follow the chain of command established by the district.
- Familiarize yourself with and follow all school policies and procedures.

Dress Code

Pittsylvania County School System employees and volunteers serve as role models for the students and as representatives of Pittsylvania County Schools. Consistent with these roles, all employees and volunteers shall dress professionally and appropriately relative to their specific job duties and responsibilities.

Administrators and administrative support employees are expected to project a professional image and should dress appropriately for an office/business environment.

Teachers, volunteers and teacher support personnel are expected to project a professional image that sets positive dress and grooming examples for students and shall adhere to standards of dress and appearance that are compatible with an effective learning environment. Presenting a bodily appearance or wearing clothing which is disruptive, provocative, revealing, profane, vulgar, offensive, obscene, or which endangers the health or safety of the students or others is prohibited. This same standard will apply to visible tattoos.

School based personnel shall follow this Policy on all days students are in attendance. Principals may designate when reasonable modifications to this Policy may be made. Principals may also determine the appropriate dress to be worn on workdays students are not in attendance. All other personnel shall follow the policy on all workdays unless directed differently by their supervisor.

Physical education teachers, coaches and athletic volunteers should wear the appropriate athletic attire necessary to meet the requirements of their job responsibilities and a sweat or warm-up suit when not actively teaching physical education classes or coaching.

Appropriate dress is also expected of cafeteria, maintenance, and transportation personnel and may include the wearing of uniforms or other apparel approved by their principal or supervisor. Vocational teachers must wear OSHA approved clothing when teaching Career and Technical Education classes.

An employee's or volunteer's dress may not be so unusual, inappropriate or lacking in cleanliness that it disrupts the educational environment. Examples of attire considered inappropriate for school system employees include but are not limited to:

- Jewelry affixed to an employee's or volunteer's nose, tongue, cheek, lip or eyebrow;
- Clothing or lack of clothing that is disruptive, provocative, revealing, indecent, vulgar, or obscene;
- Revealing necklines, bare midriffs, sagging clothing and excessively tight or loose clothing;
- Clothing which promotes alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or the use of controlled substances by words or symbols;

- Clothing which contains profanity, nudity, depicts violence, or is sexual in nature by words or symbols;
- Flip flops (beach style) or bedroom shoes/slippers;
- Tank tops of no less than 2" straps or spaghetti strap tops unless covered by a jacket or top;
- Undergarments worn as an outer garment or any see-through clothing that reveals an undergarment;
- Hats, visors, sunglasses, sweatbands, and bandannas (may be worn outside but must be removed when inside the workplace);
- T-shirts (other than school affiliated shirts), denim jeans, shorts, or athletic wear as approved by the principal; and
- Dresses or skirts cannot be more than 3" above the knee even with wearing leggings.

Supervisors and school-level administrators are authorized to interpret and enforce this Policy. Reasonable accommodations shall be made as approved in writing by the appropriate supervisor for those employees or volunteers who, because of a sincerely held religious belief, cultural heritage, or medical reason, request a waiver of a particular part of this Policy for dress or appearance.

In compliance with federal laws, Pittsylvania County Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Pittsylvania County Schools

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

It shall be the philosophy of the Pittsylvania County School Board to provide equal opportunity for every student to achieve maximum intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth, to ensure that each individual be equipped to communicate effectively with other people, to be competent both in the work place and in higher education, and to feel confident of the ability to make creative and constructive decisions in his/her life.

The Pittsylvania County School Division seeks to provide an education that will prepare the young people of the communities that it serves to become productive, collaborative members within our society. Learning is the primary purpose of the Pittsylvania County Schools. This occurs through the mastery of basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies and other disciplines. The educational program is also designed to develop in the individual student practical knowledge and attitudes, to instill values that enrich life now and in the future, to develop positive control over one's thoughts and actions, to foster attitudes of justice and democracy, to emphasize interest in community and world problems, to develop a healthy body, and to develop cultural and aesthetic appreciation. The philosophy is in agreement with the Standards of Quality, Standards of School Accreditation, Standards of Learning, No Child Left Behind legislation and other state and federal guidelines. The division accepts the responsibility of accountability and continuous evaluation of programs and personnel. The principles of this philosophy are a guide for improving the total educational program.

Statement of Philosophy

We believe that schools serve communities. We encourage the community and home to become involved and share in the development and operation of a functional educational program for all citizens. It is our responsibility to assist in discovering, developing and channeling the students' talents and abilities for the welfare and benefit of the individual and society. We believe that each student is an individual with worth,

rights, dignity and needs, and each should have the opportunity to develop his/her potential under the supervision of academically competent, professional and dedicated personnel.

The purpose of the school division is to provide a curriculum that is based on research which reflects student needs and economics and social trends. We believe in instruction that is continuous and coordinated from one level to another and enables students to read and to use all areas of language arts correctly and fluently. The curriculum should assist students to develop problem-solving abilities and use mathematical operations and concepts with meaning and accuracy, to gain satisfaction from drawing conclusions based on analytical thinking, to understand social studies and science in relation to positive and realistic self-concept and to acquire habits for sound health and safe living. The curriculum should incorporate the teaching of democracy and human relations and provide a model for citizenship, responsibilities and purposeful living. The responsibility of all educational personnel is to provide a sound education that develops academic, career and technical, creative and technological skills which foster respect for learning, a desire for knowledge and the development of collaborative contributors in a culturally diverse world. The educational program should be designed to prepare each student for advanced study and employment. The success and value of the school's program is determined by its worth to the students and the society it serves.

The Pittsylvania County School Division is committed to providing a safe and secure learning and working environment for all students and staff. To fulfill that commitment to safety, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop and implement a comprehensive school safety and crisis management plan which shall comply with and enforce all applicable State and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

Objectives

- To provide an innovative, challenging and exemplary educational program
- To facilitate full accreditation of all Pittsylvania County Schools and achieve recognition as a highly distinguished school division;
- To provide a comprehensive educational program based on the interests, abilities, needs and goals of the students;
- To involve the home and community in the total educational program;
- To emphasize and provide for student mastery of the basic skills of language arts and mathematics;
- To develop students' skills of rational and critical thinking;
- To develop students' abilities to apply and transfer knowledge;
- To enhance student acquisition of knowledge and process skills of science and technology, social studies, literature and language;
- To develop in students the attitudes and skills for enhancing the quality of the environment;
- To teach skills and instill knowledge in students needed for education and/or employment beyond high school;
- To provide an educational program where students progress on the basis of achievement;

- To provide a program of continuing education based on professional, vocational and vocational needs of adults;
- To provide for students' development of habits of good sportsmanship, personal standards of ethical behavior and moral choice, sound mental and physical health and safe living;
- To instill cultural competency and foster respect for diversity;
- To develop students' basic understanding and appreciation of country, the democratic process and respect for authority;
- To facilitate student participation in society as responsible family members and citizens;
- To stimulate students' creativity and the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes for the fine arts;
- To help each student develop a positive and realistic concept of self and others, a recognition and acceptance of potentials and limitations and self-discipline;
- To encourage research and innovations for continuous improvement in curriculum and instructional methods that provides a thorough educational program;
- To provide ongoing evaluation and revision of educational philosophy and objectives;
- To involve business, industry and government in the total educational program;
- To develop effective leadership and group skills which foster and sustain relationships with others in culturally diverse work, community and family settings; and
- To instill within community stakeholders the value of quality education

Commitment

The Pittsylvania County School Division is committed to providing an educational program appropriate to meet the needs of all students according to their capabilities and interests. To accomplish this goal, the school division shall maintain highly qualified staff and provide balanced educational opportunities to help all students grow intellectually, physically, socially and morally.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the most critical and important aspect of the paraprofessional's job. It is a legal responsibility to observe both the rights of students with disabilities and parents in regard to data privacy. Like teachers and administrators, paraprofessionals have access to personal information about children and their families including these examples:

- The results of formal and informal tests;
- Behavior in classrooms and other education settings;
- Academic progress;
- Family circumstances and family relationships;

Both the children and the family have the absolute right to expect that all information will be kept confidential, and made available only to personnel in school or another agency who require it to ensure that the rights, health, safety, and physical well being of the children are safeguarded. Confidentiality must be maintained and protected, and the rights of students to due process, dignity, privacy, and respect must be promoted.

Always ask yourself .....

- What information would you want discussed with others regarding your child?
- What would you like said about yourself as a parent?
- What would you like said about your family, your values, your lifestyle?

Confidentiality Pointers

- Avoid using names if you are asked about your job.
- Suggest that questions about a student are best directed to the special education teacher.
- Do not share other student's names or information regarding their programs with parents during IEP meetings, conferences or informal conversations.
- Information regarding specific students and programs should not be shared in the lunchroom, staff room, office areas, out in the community or any other setting.
- When conferencing or writing information regarding a student or family that contains confidential information, be aware of those around you who may be within hearing distance. Look for a more private place within the school building.
- No matter who asks you a question about a student, if you are unsure whether you should answer, DON'T. You can do this gently and politely. Remember only staff that has a need to know should be given information about a student.
- For consistency of program as well as confidentiality, paraprofessionals must support teacher techniques, materials and methods, especially in the presence of students, parents and other staff. Questions should be directed to the specific teacher privately.

Why Must Confidentiality Be Maintained?

Federal laws, state laws, and local policies require it. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is the main federal law pertaining to confidentiality of student records (students with and without disabilities). Even conversations shared with non-school personnel or school personnel without an educational involvement with a specific child can be a violation of federal law.

Who May Access Written or Oral Information About Children and Youth or Their Families?

Only personnel who are responsible for the design, preparation, and delivery of education and related services (i.e. supervising teacher, speech therapist, school nurse). The personnel responsible for protecting the safety and welfare of a child or youth also may access such information.
Paraprofessionals may be included in this group if closely supervised.

Who Should Not Have Access to Information About the Performance Level, Behavior, Program Goals, and Objectives or Progress of a Child or Youth?

Teachers, therapists, or other school personnel and staff who are not responsible for planning or providing services to children, youth, or their families. In short, anyone who is not included on the child's IEP does not have access to such information.

What Information Do Children/Youth and Their Families Have the Right to Expect Will Be Kept Confidential?

The results of formal and informal assessments; social and behavioral actions; performance levels and progress; program goals and objectives; all information about family relationships, financial status and other personal matters.

Schedule for Paraeducator Staff

School: _____ Date Prepared: _____ Schedule for: _____

Remember to make best use of instructional paraprofessionals, eliminate or significantly limit the amount of time spent on duties outside the classroom.

Time	Class/ Subject	Student(s)	Supervising Teacher	Details re: Support Accommodations, Modifications, Behavioral, Other	Skills Required from Paraeducator	Teacher Observation Schedule	√
7:30							
8:00							
8:30							
9:00							
9:30							
10:00							
10:30							
11:00							
11:30							
12:00							
12:30							
1:00							
1:30							
2:00							
2:30							
3:00							
3:30							
4:00							

Time/Days per Week	Duty	Responsible for	Skills Required from Paraeducator	Observation Schedule	√

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WEEKLY LOG OF INCLUSIVE SERVICES

SAMPLE

STUDENT: _____ **GE TEACHER:** _____ **SE PARA:** _____

SUBJECT: _____ **PERIOD/TIME:** _____ **WEEK OF:** _____

DAY	TIME	ACCOMMODATIONS/MODIFICATIONS	TYPE OF SUPPORT NEEDED	TEACHER INITIALS
MONDAY	IN:			
	OUT:			
TUESDAY	IN:			
	OUT:			
WEDNESDAY	IN:			
	OUT:			
THURSDAY	IN:			
	OUT:			
FRIDAY	IN:			
	OUT:			

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INCLUSIVE SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION LOG

STUDENT NAME: _____

DATE	TIME	SUBJECT	CLASSROOM ACTIVITY	ACCOM/MODS	SUPPORT NEEDED	TEACHER INITIALS

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Student Engagement & Building Authentic Relationships

HOW DO YOU RATE YOURSELF ON . . .	IN PLACE	IMPROVEMENT NEEDED
Projecting an image that tells students you are here to build rather than destroy them as people?		
Letting students know that you are aware of and interested in them as individuals?		
Conveying your experiences and confidence that each student can meet well-defined standards of values and demands for competence and can follow guidance toward solutions or problems?		
Enhancing the academic expectations and evaluations that parents or guardians hold for their children's ability?		
Serving as a model of sensitivity and high ideals for each student?		
Taking every opportunity to establish effective private or semi-private communications with students?		
Encouraging students to express their opinions and ideas?		
Conveying to students concern and interest for their needs?		
Making certain the classroom climate is inviting physically and emotionally?		
Exhibiting enthusiasm for learning tasks and for the students?		
Interjecting humor into the school?		
Making a concerted effort to interact with each student?		
Encouraging student to praise their peers?		
Setting realistic but challenging expectations for students?		
Showing a desire to learn more about the various cultures represented in your school?		
Providing opportunities for all students to shine?		
Working with each student to establish goals, develop strengths, and overcome weaknesses?		
Listening actively. Recognizing each response and question?		
Using self-disclosure appropriately. Carefully considering what you post.		
Letting your students interview you at the beginning of the year.		

Adapted from: Kuykendall, C. (2004) *From rage to hope: Strategies for reclaiming Black and Hispanic students.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Straight from the Heart

When asking a group of racially and culturally diverse high school students to name the teachers in their school who:

- Really cared about them: Respected them: Enjoyed getting to know them as people. . .

A group of 40 students pooling their answers could only name 10 of 120 faculty members in their high school.

Ten Tips for Paraeducators

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

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.

Let students make mistakes and take risks.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Help students create authentic work!

Student's 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.

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.

Multi-task in the classroom

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

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.

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EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

BY KATHIE SNOW; VISIT WWW.DISABILITYISNATURAL.COM TO SEE THE COMPLETE ARTICLE

Remember: a disability descriptor is simply a medical diagnosis.
People First Language respectfully puts the person before the disability.
A person with a disability is more *like* people without disabilities than different.

SAY:	INSTEAD OF:
People with disabilities.	The handicapped or disabled.
He has a cognitive disability/diagnosis.	He's mentally retarded.
She has autism (or a diagnosis of...).	She's autistic.
He has Down syndrome (or a diagnosis of...).	He's Down's; a mongoloid.
She has a learning disability (diagnosis).	She's learning disabled.
He has a physical disability (diagnosis).	He's a quadriplegic/is crippled.
She has a mental health condition/diagnosis.	She's emotionally disturbed/mentally ill.
He uses a wheelchair/mobility chair.	He's confined to/is wheelchair bound.
She receives special ed services.	She's in special ed; a SPED kid.
He has a developmental delay.	He's developmentally delayed.
Children without disabilities.	Normal or healthy kids.
Communicates with her eyes/device/etc.	Is non-verbal.
People we serve	Client, consumer, recipient, etc.
Congenital disability	Birth defect
Brain injury	Brain damaged
Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.	Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc.
She needs... or she uses...	She has problems with/has special needs.

Keep thinking—there are many other descriptors we need to change!

Excerpted from Kathie's People First Language article, available at www.disabilityisnatural.com.

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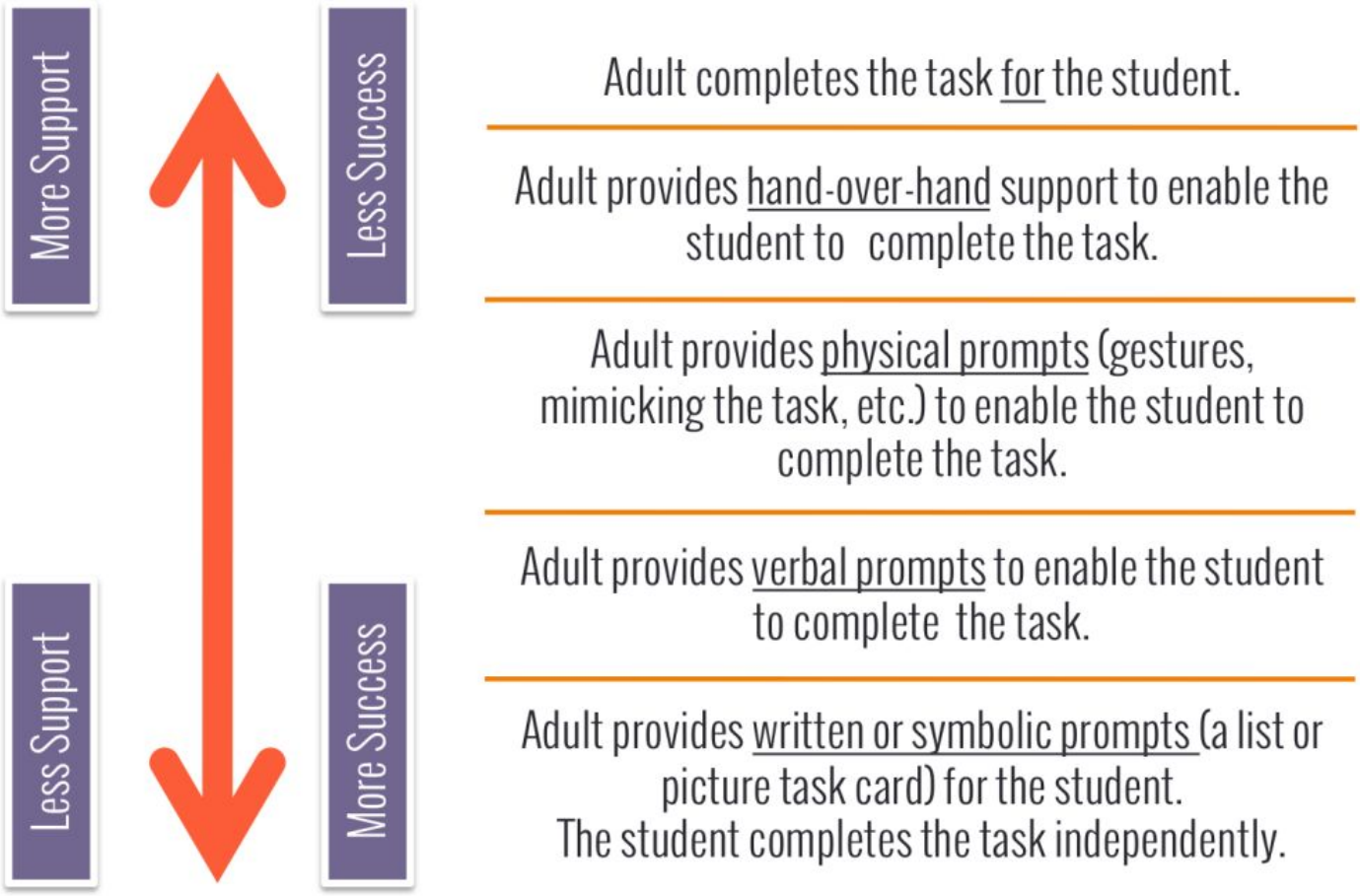
Less is (Generally) More!

When we look at the hierarchy of supports that are often described for individual students with disabilities, the list looks like this:



Being able to fade supports over time signifies a greater degree of success. It is understood that the level of support needed is entirely dependent on the needs of the student at any point in time. **It is always hoped that every student who requires some level of personal support will be able to be successful with less or no support within a reasonable timeframe.**

IEP at a Glance

This information is CONFIDENTIAL

Student Name	Grade	Student #	School Year	Eligibility	Case Manager

An *IEP at a glance* is an abbreviated document that provides a quick reference to a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is the full document that a special education team in collaboration with the parents meets to create each year.

Student's Strengths	Areas of Specially Designed Instruction

Accommodations/ Modifications for the Gen. Ed. Classroom	Testing Accommodations

Motivators/ Reinforcement	Areas of difficulty

Student's Goals/ Objectives

Additional Relevant Information (safety Protocols, behavior support plans, medical needs, etc)

This is a working document and should be changed and modified as the student's needs change

Commonly Used Abbreviations

- **ADHD** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- **CP** Cerebral Palsy
- **DD** Developmentally Delayed
- **ECSE** Early Childhood Special Education
- **ED** Emotional Disability
- **ESL** English as a Second Language
- **HI** Hearing Impaired
- **FAPT** Family Assessment Planning Team
- **IEP** Individualized Education Plan
- **IFSP** Individual Family Service Plan
- **IQ** Intelligence Quotient
- **ITP** Individualized Transition Plan
- **LRE** Least Restrictive Environment
- **SLD** Specific Learning Disability
- **MD** Multiple Disabilities
- **OHI** Other Health Impairment
- **OT** Occupational Therapy
- **PT** Physical Therapy
- **SLI** Speech and Language Impairment
- **Spec.Ed**. Special Education
- **TBI** Traumatic Brain Injury
- **PBIS** Positive Behavior Intervention Systems
- **VTSS** Virginia Tiered Systems of Support
- **FBA** Functional Behavior Assessment
- **BIP** Behavior Intervention Plan
- **MDR** Manifestation Determination Review

Disability Characteristics 101

The following information is meant only as an overall introduction to categories of disability. It is not all inclusive. Each student is first an individual with individual needs. Not all students fit all the descriptors of their disability category, nor will they be educated in the same way. Talk in depth with your supervising teacher to learn the best way to work with each student.

Always remember:
- Treat each child as an individual
- Be kind, consistent, and firm
- Be positive

Autism
Autism is a developmental disability which significantly affects verbal or non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before the age of three, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

General characteristics include:
- Difficulty with social interactions
- Engaging in repetitive activities
- Resistance to changes in routine
- Unusual responses to the environment
- Varying levels of intelligence

General strategies may include:
- Highly structured, predictable routines
- Consistency
- Visuals
- Social stories
- Task analysis
- Sensory integration
- Social skills training
- Generalize instruction to all environments

Emotional Disability (ED)
This refers to a condition in which a student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects their educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors, an inability to maintain interpersonal relationships, inappropriate behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances, a general pervasive mood of depression, and a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or social problems.

General characteristics include:

● Inappropriate types of behavior and feelings
● May seek attention through aggression
● Non-compliance
● Trouble getting or keeping friends
● Resistant to authority

General teaching strategies may include:
● Consistency
● Don't take it personally, they student may not be able to voluntarily control his/her behavior
● Teach appropriate behavior
● Show respect to the student

Other Health Impairment (OHI) This terms means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to educational environment. It must be due to chronic or acute medical problems such as asthma or attention deficit disorder.

General characteristics include:
● Medical condition
● Comprehensive evaluation from a licensed individual
● Condition results in limited strength, vitality or alertness

General teaching strategies may include:
● Sensory integration
● Shortening assignments/work periods
● Breaks
● Organizational systems

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
This refers to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do math. The term includes such conditions as dyslexia. It does not include learning problems that are the result of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

General characteristics include:
● Average to above average intelligence
● Distractibility
● Low self-esteem
● Easily frustrated

General teaching strategies may include:
● Teach compensation strategies
● Allow extra time
● Teach from student strengths
● Concrete instruction

Intellectual Disability (ID) This term refers to a significant deficit in general intellectual functioning that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior that adversely affects the child's educational performance.

General characteristics include:
- Take more time and repetition to learn
- Delay in adaptive skills

General teaching strategies may include:
- Concrete instruction
- Extended practice opportunities
- Visual modeling