

Working with Paraprofessionals

SPLASH
2014

SPLASH is a low incidence initiative of the OSEP funded Kentucky State Professional Development Grant hosted by the University of Louisville

Knowledge: Sally
Method: Kim
Purpose: Brandi
Form: Mandy

Session Outcomes

Knowledge: The learner will understand the roles and characteristics of the teachers and paraprofessionals.

- The learner will know the qualities of an effective classroom leader.

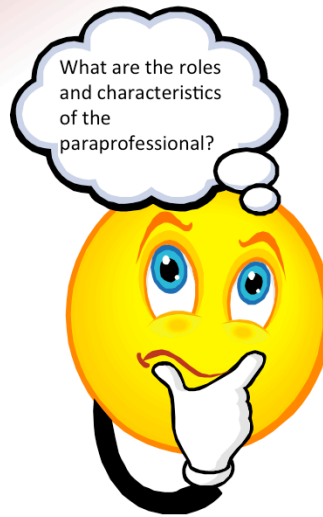
Purpose: The learner will understand why the Para/Teacher team must work cooperatively for successful outcomes for students.

Method: The learner will understand how to develop an ongoing training plan for paraprofessionals to meet the need of the classroom and students.

Forms: The learner will become acquainted with forms useful in effective adult leadership.



The learner will understand the roles and characteristics of the teachers and paraprofessionals



Knowledge: Sally

TEACHERS & PARA-EDUCATORS

**Working as a team to
best serve our students**

TEACHERS & PARA-EDUCATORS

Common Team Purpose

Serving Students



Qualities of a Good Team

- Communication
- Trust
- Valued membership
- Respect
- Flexibility
- Common goals
- Open-mindedness
- Initiators
- Empathy
- Cooperation
- Sense of humor
- Collaborative
- Dependable
- Independent workers
- Non-judgmental
- Listens



Defining Roles

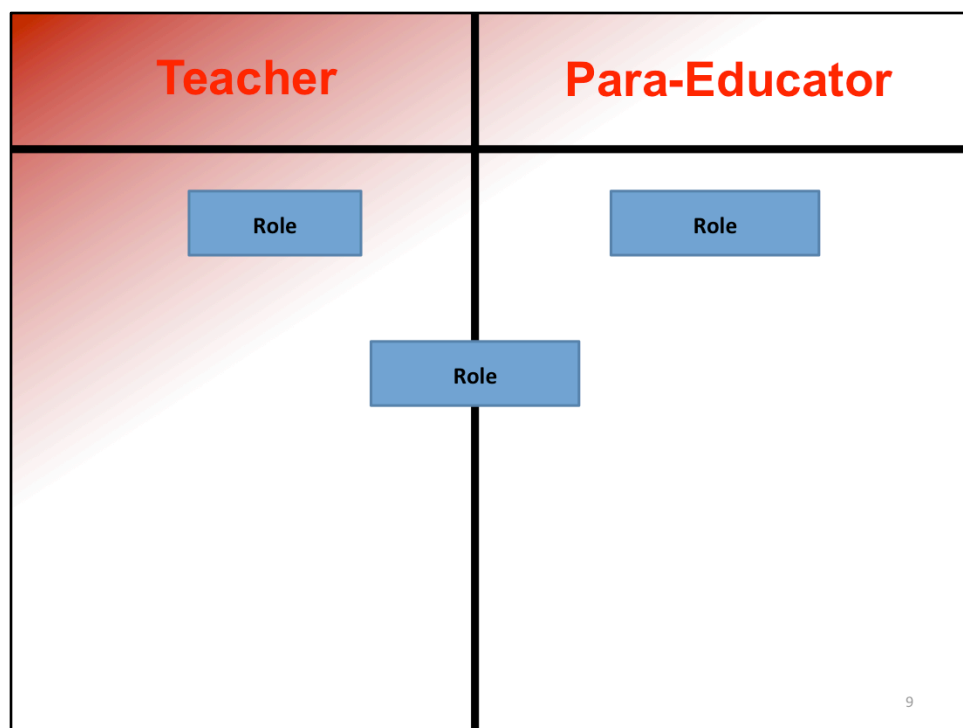
- What's my job?
- What's not my job?
- Whose job is it?



TEACHERS & PARA-EDUCATORS

**Some roles fit to a
T
but others are more like a
X**

So whose role is it to?



Materials

- Chart paper
- Index cards with roles
- Tape
- Blank index cards

Directions

- Have participants break into pairs
- Each group gets a set of index cards with roles
- As a group they categorize the roles on the T chart

Explain to them that we will come back and revisit their charts.

Teacher's Role

- Identify and meet learning needs of ALL students
- Plan lessons
- Modify curriculum or instructional methods
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction
- Communicate with parents
- Manage behavior
- Create a positive learning environment
- Model appropriate academic and social behavior



Teacher's Role

Teacher's Responsibilities to Para-Educators

- Make sure the Para-educator is trained in all areas necessary
- Planning Para-educator's assignments
- Directing, monitoring, and assessing Para-Educators day-to-day performance



Teacher's Role

Teacher's Responsibilities to Para-Educators

- Communicate the role of the Para-educator in general education settings
- Offer encouragement
- Answer questions



Teacher's Role


Teacher's Responsibilities to Para-Educators

- Providing on-the-job coaching to improve performance
- Share necessary student information
- Meeting periodically to build the strength of the team





- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKTQ6YP16rc>



Video on roles of para educator

Special Education Para-Educator's Role

- Para-Educators *assist* teachers in achieving the learning goals for students by carrying out tasks developed by and assigned to them by teachers.



Special Education Para-Educator's Role

- Accept and complete assigned tasks
- Respect and work collaboratively with others
- Maintain a positive and caring environment
- Communicate often with team members
- Follow policies concerning confidentiality, security, and safety
- Provide full attention to the class and students



Special Education Para-Educator's Role

- Model appropriate academic and social behaviors
- Praise student for correct behavior instead of critiquing incorrect behavior
- Promote independence of student
- Respect dignity of student
- Understand student's abilities



NOT Para-Educator's Role

- Be attached to the hip of a student (unless medically necessary)
- Not to communicate for the student
- Not to do the work for the student
- Not to run errands for someone
- Not to write an IEP
- Not to communicate with the parent
- Not to be on the phone or having other conversations during class time.



Special Education Para-Educator's Role

Para-Educator's responsibilities to the teacher

- Initiate
- Follow the teacher's lead
- Follow behavior plans created by the teacher
- Assist in collecting data
- Communicate challenges, opportunities, and experiences



Special Education Para-Educator's Role

Para-Educator's responsibilities to the teacher

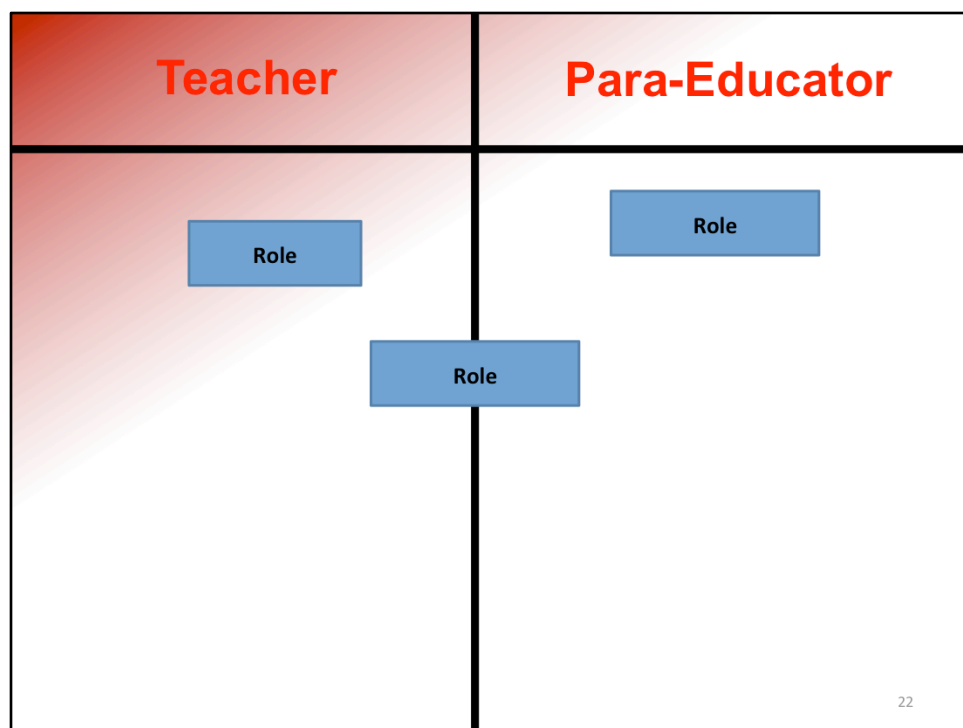
- Be flexible/go with the flow
- Engage learners in activities developed by the teacher
- Ask for clarification
- Ask for training



Who is on Your Extended Team?

- Content area teachers
- Special subject teacher (music, art, etc.)
- Cafeteria workers
- Bus driver
- School nurse
- Related services provider
- Others?





Let's re-visit the roles. Do you want to change any roles?

Provide blank index cards for pairs to add more roles.

Have them share with another pair.

Have a large group discussion as to where each of the cards fit and what they added.

Teaming Scenario One

A teacher asks the Para-educator to develop and teach a writing lesson to a student. The Para-educator asks the teacher for some information and guidance.

The teacher responds, "Oh, it doesn't make a difference how you do it, but I know you'll do a great job."

Identify the ineffective teaming practices in this scenario and describe possible solutions.



Teaming Scenario Two

Steve's, a student in your classroom, mom asks the Para-educator about another student in the classroom. The Para-educator explains some of the behaviors of the other student. The parent then calls the you to discuss that she does not want Steve around this other student.

How would you, as the teacher, respond to this situation to ensure confidentiality and to honor the team relationship?



Teaming Scenario Three

A Para-educator has been assigned to work as a 1:1 Para-educator for a student with complex needs in the third grade class.

What information should be shared before the first day to effectively serve the student.



Teaming Scenario Four

The teacher is showing the students double-digit addition on the board. The Para-educator notices that a student is talking with a classmate, distracting them from listening to the teacher.

- How should both the teacher and the Para-educator respond in this situation?
- How could the team be proactive in keeping this problem from occurring in the first place?

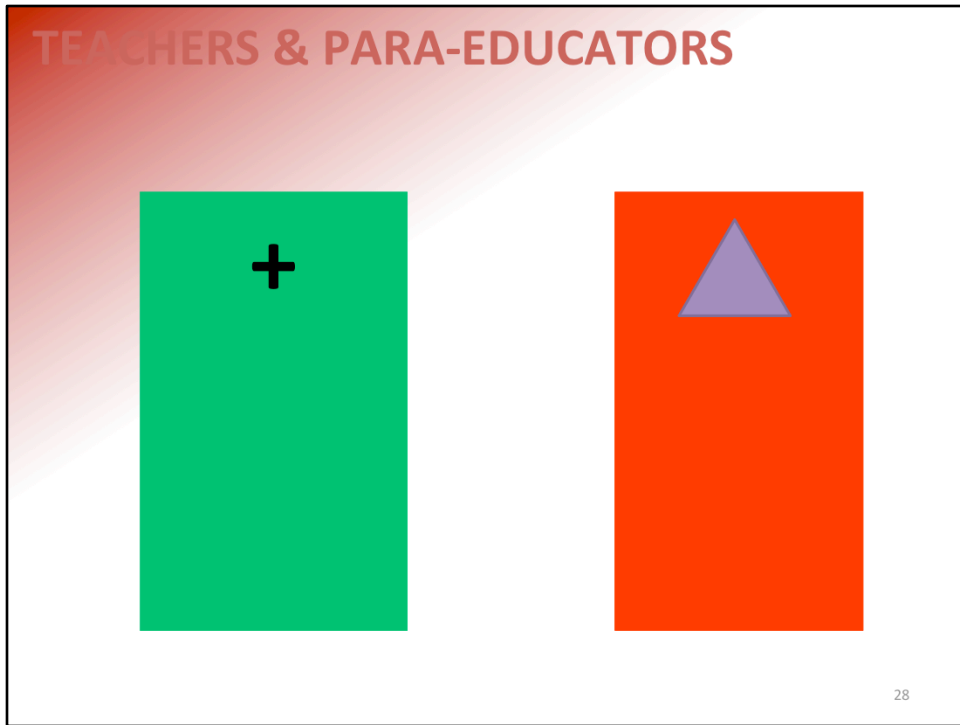


Teaming Scenario Five

As the teacher, you have noticed a Para-educator getting frustrated when working with a specific student.

- What would you do?





Have teachers self reflect on their own classroom

Make 2 columns + and delta = what are they doing great with and what do they need to work on

EVERYONE NEEDS SUPPORT



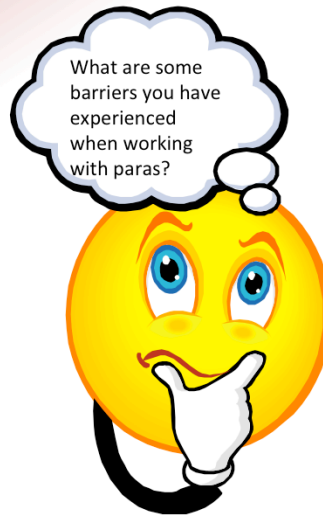
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DEVELOP A CONTACT SUPPORT LIST

Gather contact info for the following
(name, school/district, phone, email)

- 1. Teacher at the same level as you**
- 2. Teacher at a different level as you**
- 3. Coop Consultant**
- 4. One additional person in the room**

The learner will demonstrate qualities of an effective classroom leader.



Method: KIM

The learner will demonstrate qualities of an effective classroom leader.

Illustration of Classroom Leadership Characteristics:

- ❖ Let go of things others can do
- ❖ Encourage initiative, ideas, and risk taking
- ❖ Ensure people have goals and receive feedback
- ❖ Delegate to challenge, develop, and empower
- ❖ Coach to ensure success
- ❖ Reinforce good work and good attempts
- ❖ Share information, knowledge, and skills
- ❖ Value, trust, and respect each individual
- ❖ Provide support without taking over



The learner will demonstrate qualities of an effective classroom leader.

Practice and Evaluate:

1. As a group, read the scenario.
2. List 2-3 potential ideas for next steps.
3. Evaluate your “next step” and Identify the leadership characteristic that matches.
4. Rotate groups.
5. Repeat steps 1-3.
6. Share scenario and response with the group.



The learner will demonstrate qualities of an effective classroom leader.

Reflection

- ❖ On your t-chart, identify the leadership characteristics that you see are your strengths and identify the characteristics that are potential areas for growth.



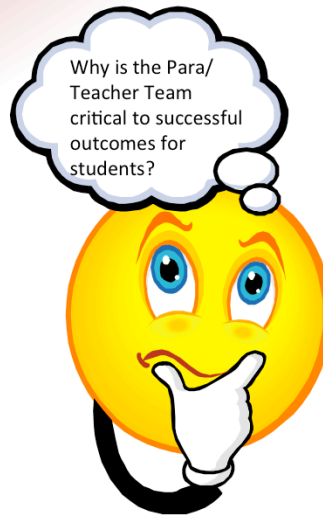
The learner will demonstrate qualities of an effective classroom leader.

Mastery

- ❖ Generate a list of peers/mentors in your school or district who have effective leadership characteristics.
- ❖ What “actions” do you observe that make them effective?



The learner will understand why the Para/Teacher team must work cooperatively for successful outcomes for students.



Purpose: BRANDI

Jigsaw Activity- CEC Article

Divide into groups of 4-5.

Each group will become the "expert" on their portion of the article.

After 10 minutes, one "expert" from each group will become a part of a second group.

The mixed groups will then have 10 minutes to share their information with the group.

The learner will understand why the Para/Teacher team must work cooperatively for successful outcomes for students.

Illustration of Paras and Teachers Working as a Team:

- Communication
- Valued membership
- Respect
- Common goal
- Open-mindedness
- Cooperation
- Sense of humor



First, we will discuss what it takes to make a good team a great team. There are several aspects of team dynamics that have been shown to create respect, cohesiveness, comfort and success in a team.

These include:

- Communication of ideas, concerns, issues, observations, frustrations, and praise;
- an understanding among all members that we are valued each serving a different purpose within the team; the team does need someone to take the role of leader. This role is usually the classroom teacher, administrator, or chosen group leader.
- we speak with respect to each other when we are face to face and especially when we aren't t;
- we share in a common goal which is educating students in a safe environment;
- we remain open-minded in our willingness to listen to others' ideas and opinions without criticism or bias, but are willing to try new things and new methods— thinking outside our status quo
- We remain cooperative and willing to assist, to step up and lend a hand when needed. All team members are held accountable for their part of the team efforts
- Sense of humor-how sad is a day without a smile? Find light-hearted humor in situations that arise, life happenings. Just make sure that the humor is not at the expense of others or intended to harm.

The learner will understand why the Para/Teacher team must work cooperatively for successful outcomes for students.

Illustration of Paras and Teachers Working as a Team:

- Promote a positive learning environment for all!
- Special education paraprofessionals support teachers' efforts in maintaining a positive, proactive environment. This is one of the most important things you can do for students.
- A positive, supportive learning environment encourages learning. Students must feel safe to inquire, participate, collaborate, and study.

(Utah Paraeducator Handbook)



Adults enjoy their work when the environment is positive and engaging. Students enjoy their learning experiences when the environment is positive and engaging. One of our roles as colleagues and educators is to work collaboratively to create a positive environment in which to spend our days working and learning together.

Teachers and special education paraprofessionals must be supportive and respectful, communicative, and patient with each other as well as with students. Building a strong rapport among the adults serve as a model for expectations for students.

Students who feel free to take a risk, comfortable learning new things, working with peers, and facing challenging tasks are those that will be more engaged. Being more engaged reduces off-task behaviors.

The learner will understand why the Para/Teacher team must work cooperatively for successful outcomes for students.

Illustration of Paras and Teachers Working as a Team:

- The team interacts often to ensure that all on the team are “kept in the loop.”
- Adults confer and plan with the common goal of advancing learning of students.
- Adults speak to students, and each other, in kind and respectful ways, never yelling or being unkind.
- Paraprofessionals follow the guidance of teachers.
- Disagreements are not displayed in front of students.



The actions listed on this slide reinforce the need for a positive working environment between teacher and paraprofessional and other team members who may be in the learning environment.

Students can feel negative energy between the adults in the room.

The focus is to create a positive working environment as well as a positive learning environment.

Review the following bulleted items.

If time, consider offering examples of each.

For example, “disagreements are not displayed in front of students” may include discussion around how body language, eye rolls, or sighs may give students the impression that the adults aren't getting along. This creates an uncomfortable learning environment. Respectful interactions, use of manners, and other behaviors are models of how people treat each other in various situations, sometimes difficult situations. Students learn a lot by watching. Therefore, be a model of calm and respect.

The learner will understand why the Para/Teacher team must work cooperatively for successful outcomes for students.

Practice & Evaluate: *Shared Philosophy*

- ❖ Think about your classroom.
- ❖ Develop 4-6 statements that describe your beliefs and commitments to your students.
- ❖ Think about how you will ensure your belief statements are maintained throughout the school year.
- ❖ Develop statements/procedures to support your belief statements.



I'll have a handout the teachers can use to outline their "Shared Philosophy"

The learner will understand why the Para/Teacher team must work cooperatively for successful outcomes for students.

Reflection

- ❖ On your t-chart, identify the characteristics of effective teacher/para teams that you see are strengths and identify the characteristics that are potential areas for growth.



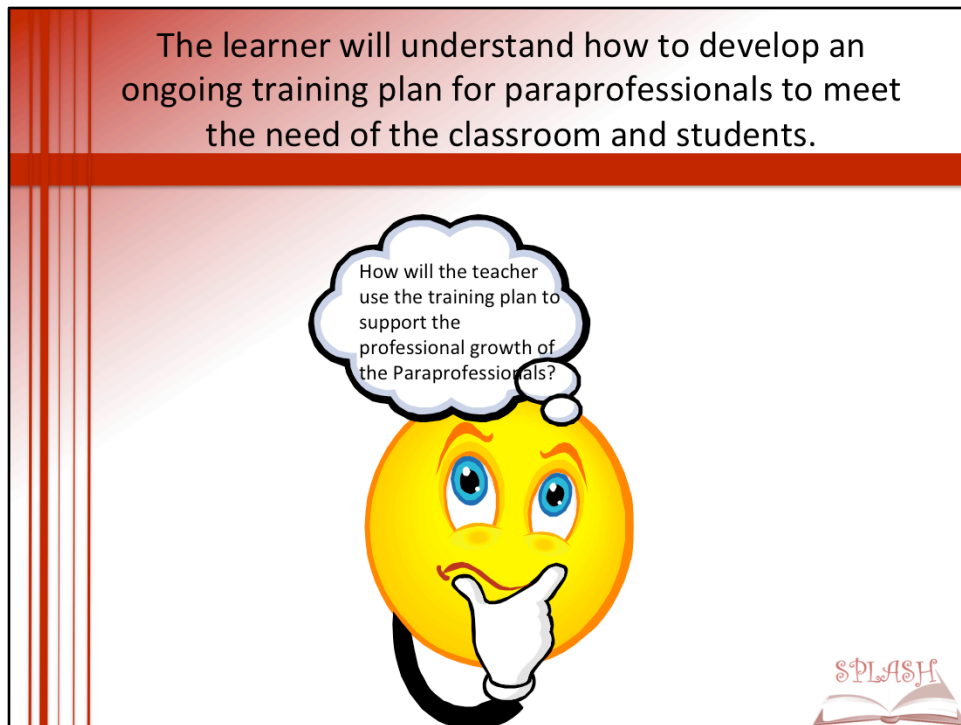
The learner will understand why the Para/Teacher team must work cooperatively for successful outcomes for students.

Mastery

- ❖ Generate a list of skills you hope to strengthen as teacher/para teams.
- ❖ What will you do to determine if your team is effective?



The learner will understand how to develop an ongoing training plan for paraprofessionals to meet the need of the classroom and students.



Form: MANDY

Discuss: Now that we've identified the roles and responsibilities of the teacher and the paraprofessional, discussed how you can be an effective leader in the classroom, and developed an understanding of the importance of teamwork in order to promote successful outcomes for students; let's consider how we identify the training needs of the paraprofessionals we work with and how we might address those needs. The goal of this section is to answer the question of how you as the teacher will use the training plan to support the professional growth of the paraprofessionals?

The learner will understand how to develop an ongoing training plan for paraprofessionals to meet the need of the classroom and students.

- How are you currently assessing paraprofessionals' strengths and needs?
- How are you providing training on identified needs?
- Do you and your paraprofessionals develop a written training plan to address his/her needs?



Paraprofessionals come to the classroom with varying backgrounds and experiences. Each classroom and the unique needs of the students within the classroom can present a new set of skills that may need to be explicitly taught to the paraprofessional in order for him/her to accurately carry out the specified job duties. These may include such things as; positive behavior support strategies, instructional practices, assisting with personal care routines, providing supports in the general education settings, and so on.

As the classroom leader you will need to work with each paraprofessional to identify his/her strengths and to develop a training plan to address areas of need.

Ask:

- How are you currently assessing paraprofessionals' strengths and needs?
- How are you providing training on identified needs?
- Do you and your paraprofessionals develop a written training plan to address his/her needs?

Participants may generate a list of current activities and methods for training paraprofessionals as they answer the questions

The learner will understand how to develop an ongoing training plan for paraprofessionals to meet the need of the classroom and students.

What are tasks that need to be performed daily that will require training and support?

Task for Which Skills are Needed	Name the Skill or Competency	Who could possibly provide the training	Training Date	Follow-up (3-6 points over time)



Handout: provide a copy of the Training Plan handout

Teachers who supervise paraprofessionals should develop written training plans for those paraprofessionals. This important for two main reasons. First, it helps the teacher remember to provide and arrange for all the necessary training a particular para's needs. Teachers are busy people, and without a written reminder, it could be easy to forget to train a person on a given task. Second, it helps to establish the importance of training in the culture of the team. Like everyone else in schools, paraprofessionals should be treated as lifelong learners.

This is one example of a training plan. This form allows you to consider;

- The tasks for which the skills are needed
- To operationally define the desired skill
- Who could provide the training
- the training date and
- Opportunities for follow-up

Not only is it important to plan for and provide paraeducator training, but it is also important to document that the paraeducator received the training. Why is it important?

- In the case of a paraprofessional who is unable or unwilling to perform their

The learner will understand how to develop an ongoing training plan for paraprofessionals to meet the need of the classroom and students.

Printed from <http://www.parcater.org>

Special Education Paraprofessional Support Checklist

Student _____ Date: _____

Student Issues / Needs Profile	Logistics	Who could assist?	Training Plan	Supervision
1. Safety issues <input type="checkbox"/> Wanders off / runs away <input type="checkbox"/> Hurts self <input type="checkbox"/> Falls <input type="checkbox"/> Puts inedible items in mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Hurts others <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Place: _____ Time(s): _____ Level: Low Medium High Duration: Permanent Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/> age-peer student <input type="checkbox"/> older student <input type="checkbox"/> general education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> class/program paraprofessional <input type="checkbox"/> 1:1 designated paraprofessional <input type="checkbox"/> parent volunteer	Indicate training needed / Who delivers <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____	Check all who share supervisory responsibility / Name lead person <input type="checkbox"/> general education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> OT / PT <input type="checkbox"/> SLP <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychologist <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse <input type="checkbox"/> Vision / hearing specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Other professional _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Lead _____
2. Physical needs <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom / diapers <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation / Mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Eating / Feeding <input type="checkbox"/> Dressing <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing / respiration <input type="checkbox"/> Medication <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment (e.g. hearing aides, wheelchairs) <input type="checkbox"/> Posture, positioning <input type="checkbox"/> Medical-illible procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Has individualized Health Plan in place <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Place: _____ Time(s): _____ Level: Low Medium High Duration: Permanent Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/> age-peer student <input type="checkbox"/> older student <input type="checkbox"/> general education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> class/program paraprofessional <input type="checkbox"/> 1:1 designated paraprofessional <input type="checkbox"/> parent volunteer	Indicate training needed / Who delivers <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ / _____	Check all who share supervisory responsibility / Name lead person <input type="checkbox"/> general education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> OT / PT <input type="checkbox"/> SLP <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychologist <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse <input type="checkbox"/> Vision / hearing specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Other professional _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Lead _____

HANDOUT: Special Education Paraprofessional Support Checklist

This is another example of a paraprofessional support checklist form The PARACenter at the University of Colorado Denver’s School of Education and Human Development.

Trainer:

Review the components of the support checklist with the participants

The learner will understand how to develop an ongoing training plan for paraprofessionals to meet the need of the classroom and students.

What are some types of training and support the para will need to be safe and successful with this medically fragile student?



SPLASH

Let's use the Para Support Checklist to discuss possible training needs related to this particular student.

Lilly is a 20 year old female with severe multiple mental and physical disabilities. She receives specially designed instruction with an alternate curriculum in a separate school setting.

She receives the following related services: physical therapy and nursing care. Lilly's medical

needs require the assistance of a nurse daily. She suffers from chronic digestive tract problems,

requiring a colostomy, as well as a severe cardio-pulmonary condition, which have resulted in

dependence on computer monitors and medication requiring 24 hour supervision.

Eye and

neurological exams have also concluded that Lilly has no sight, but her hearing is thought to be

within the normal range.

Lilly is awake for approximately six hours in a 24 hour period. She seems to enjoy receiving verbal and tactile attention from her family members and caregivers. She responds

positively to music and voices. She has become increasingly tolerant of position

The learner will understand how to develop an ongoing training plan for paraprofessionals to meet the need of the classroom and students.

PRACTICE complete the checklist for one of your paraprofessionals for the second section, Physical Needs, related to Lilly's described needs

Activity: PRACTICE Allow participants to practice completing the checklist for one of their paraprofessionals for the second section, Physical Needs, related to Lilly's described needs

Allow 5 minutes for the participants to complete this section of the checklist

Discuss:

- Will this checklist help you to consider your student needs and the needs of each paraprofessional for training?

Application and Follow-up: After you've assessed the needs of the paraprofessional(s) in your classroom you will design a training plan for each. Your coach will provide support if needed once you return to the classroom and check for documentation.

The learner will understand how to develop an ongoing training plan for paraprofessionals to meet the need of the classroom and students.

Training should include:

- Theory/explanation of the skill or task
- Demonstration or modeling of how to perform the skill
- Opportunity for practice
- Feedback on the practice attempts
- Coaching for application



Much of paraprofessional training can be done on the job by the supervising teacher. Other knowledge and skills require a more formal setting. The teacher can work with school administrators to arrange for the paraprofessional to attend workshops, courses, or seminars. Several options for online training are now available as well. To be most effective, all training should include these five components:

- Theory/explanation of the skill/task
- Demonstration or modeling of how to do the task or preform the skill
- Opportunity for the paraprofessional to practice performing the skill
- Feedback on the para's practice attempts (feedback should be descriptive, specific, and considerate)
- Coaching for application (on the job encouragement/support/refinement of the new skill/task performance)

Remember the training plan is an on-going support document that should be updated regularly once training is provided and as other needs arise.

To Review...

- Effectively working with paraprofessionals requires:
 - An understanding of the roles and characteristics of the teacher and paraprofessional
 - Effective classroom leadership skills
 - The ability to facilitate a productive TEAM
 - Development and implementation of training plans to meet the needs of the classroom and students

