

# **Braham Public Schools**

## **Special Education Paraprofessional Manual**



2017

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## **Welcome!**

As a special education paraprofessional you are in an important and challenging role within the school system. The role of paraprofessionals in educational environments has changed dramatically over the past several years. New educational priorities emphasize the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular classroom and community environments and increase the need for and use of paraprofessionals.

Along with the increased need for paraprofessionals comes the need for training and professional development. At Braham Public Schools, we have identified some core competencies, which form the basis of this handbook, and are designed to provide the special education paraprofessional with the basic skills and knowledge required to carry out this very important job.

In addition to the core competencies, each school has its own policies and procedures, which are outlined in the building's faculty/staff handbook. It is important to review your building's handbook and become familiar with the policies and procedures of your particular building in order to perform the job in an orderly, appropriate, and efficient manner. This handbook is intended to be a guide that serves as a basis for training. The Braham Schools will assist in providing ongoing training and support to paraprofessionals, which may be provided through a variety of mediums such as in-services and one-on-one support.

## **Definition of Paraprofessional and Special Education**

MN3525.0200 Definition  
Special Education

Subp.10a. Paraprofessional, “Paraprofessional” means a district employee who is primarily engaged indirect instruction with one or more pupils for instructional activities, physical or behavior management, or other purposes under the direction of a regular education or special education teacher or related services provider.

Legislation

MS125A.08 (b)

(b) For paraprofessionals employed to work in programs for students with disabilities, the school board in each district shall ensure that –

1. Before or immediately upon employment, each paraprofessional develops sufficient knowledge and skills in emergency procedures, building orientation, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, vulnerability, and reportability, among other things, to begin meeting the needs of the students with whom the paraprofessional works.
2. Annual training opportunities are available to enable the paraprofessional to continue to further develop the knowledge and skills that are specific to the students with whom the paraprofessional works, including understanding disabilities, following lesson plans and implementing follow up instructional procedures and activities.
3. A district wide process obligates each paraprofessional to work under the ongoing direction of a licensed teacher and where appropriate and possible, the supervision of a school nurse.

## **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

FAPE is Free and Appropriate Public Education; the education of each child with a disability must be “provided at public expense and without charge” to the child or the child’s parents. All specially designed instruction is provided without charge, but does not preclude incidental fees that are normally charged to non-disabled students or their parents as a part of the regular education program. What is an *appropriate* education differs for each child with a disability. The IDEA specifies in some detail how the school and parents are to plan the education that each child receives so that it is appropriate. Evaluations are conducted to identify the child’s individual needs so that the school and parents can design an education that responds to these needs. [Together school personnel and parents specify what this education will be and write the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).]

### **Individualized Programming**

The IEP/IFSP is a yearly written plan developed through a team process designed to meet the needs of the child with disabilities. It is confidential and should not be discussed outside of the school setting.

The intent of the Individualized Education Plan is to ensure that each child with a disability is able to take part in an educational program that will assist and support the child to learn to live, work, play and make friends in the community. An essential part of this plan must be to assist the child to participate in the same settings as are used by other children of the same age. This means that learning should occur in the "least restrictive environment" which is generally considered the community setting or regular classroom in which children of the same age are placed.

The IEP summarizes a child’s present level of performance in a variety of areas of functioning and identifies the child’s specific needs in each area. The team yearly identifies goals and specific objectives for meeting the identified needs. The plan will also describe changes, adaptation, or modification that will be necessary for accommodating a child with special needs in the school setting. The plan also describes how a student will be educated with peers. It will state the time, location and staff member who will provide the service. Paraprofessionals will most likely be involved in the observation and documentation of progress on plan objectives. Any parent questions or concerns about the services provided by the plan should be directed to the teacher.

## **Role Clarification: The Paraprofessional and the Supervising Teacher**

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Teachers and paraprofessionals are partners in education, working together to provide the best educational experience possible for each child. The special education paraprofessional's role is to assist the teacher and allow more effective utilization of the teacher's abilities and professional knowledge. The teacher must function in a leadership role. It is the teacher's responsibility to assure that the students are moving toward achievement of individualized goals and objectives. Paraprofessionals serve under the direction and supervision of the teacher to assist in carrying out the individualized education program. In order for paraprofessionals to provide direct instruction to the student, teachers must plan and prescribe the learning environment and instruction for the student. Teachers must train the paraprofessional in the specifics of the instruction, evaluate student progress and monitor the effectiveness of the paraprofessional's implementation of the instructional strategies.

A clear delineation of roles of the teacher and the paraprofessional is an important element of a successful program. Identification of teacher and paraprofessional roles insures adherence to ethical and legal requirements and serves as a guide in supervision and evaluation. Actual delivery of instruction to the student may be carried out by the paraprofessional under supervision of the teacher.

The teacher's responsibilities to the learner include:

- Assessing the student's entry level performance,
- Planning instruction for individual students,
- Implementing the goals and objectives of the individualized education plan,
- Supervising and coordinating work of paraprofessional and other support staff,
- Evaluating and reporting student progress,
- Involving parents in their child's education, and
- Coordinating and managing information provided by other professionals.

The teacher also has a number of roles to fulfill in the proper utilization of the paraprofessionals in the classroom:

- Set an example of professionalism in execution of teacher responsibilities;
- Establish the criteria for acceptable job performance of the paraprofessional at the beginning of the school year;
- Provide consistent feedback to assist the paraprofessional in refining skills;
- Communicate the needs of each student to the paraprofessional;
- Establish and communicate the paraprofessional's role in behavior management;
- Assign the paraprofessional responsibilities which facilitate the teacher's ability to provide more direct student instruction

### **Role of the Paraprofessional**

Various factors influencing the specific responsibilities assigned to the paraprofessionals include: Characteristics and personalities of teachers, paraprofessionals and students; interpersonal skills of both teachers and paraprofessionals; the skill level of the paraprofessionals; and the physical environment of the classroom. Individual teachers may vary the responsibilities of the paraprofessionals to enhance the program of instruction. The following list illustrates instructional and administrative duties that could be assigned to paraprofessionals:

- Assist individual students in performing activities initiated by the teachers.
- Assist in monitoring supplementary work and independent work.
- Reinforce learning in small groups or with individuals while the teacher works with other students.
- Provide assistance with individualized programmed materials.
- Assist the teacher in observing, recording, and charting behavior.
- Assist the teacher with crisis problems and behavior management.
- Assist in preparation/production of instructional materials for special education teachers.
- Carry out instructional programs designed by the teacher.
- Carry out tutoring activities designed by the teacher.
- Provide special help such as drilling with flash cards, spelling, and play activities.

Instructional duties the paraprofessional may not perform:

- Be solely responsible for a classroom or a professional service.
- Be responsible for the diagnostic functions of the classroom.
- Be responsible for preparing lesson plans and initiating instruction.
- Be responsible for assigning grades to students.
- Prescribe educational activities and materials for children.

The following chart highlights the differences in role of the teacher and paraprofessional in various aspects of an educational program:

	<b>TEACHER ROLE</b>	<b>PARAPROFESSIONAL ROLE</b>
<b>Classroom Organization</b>	Plans weekly schedule, lessons, room arrangements, learning centers, and activities for individuals and the entire class.	Implements plan as specified by the teacher.
<b>Assessment</b>	Administers and scores formal and informal tests.	Administers informal tests.
<b>Setting Objectives</b>	Determines appropriate objectives for groups and individual children.	Carries out activities to meet objectives.
<b>Teaching</b>	Teaches lessons for the entire class, small groups, and individual children.	Reinforces and supervises practice of skills with individual and small groups.
<b>Behavior Management</b>	Observes behavior, plans and implements behavior management strategies for entire class and for individual children.	Observes behavior, carries out behavior management activities.
<b>Working with Parents</b>	Meets with parents and initiates conferences concerning child's progress.	Participates in parent conferences when requested to do so.
<b>Building a Classroom Partnership</b>	Arranges schedule for conferences, shares goals, and philosophy with paraprofessional, organizes job duties for the paraprofessional.	Shares ideas and concerns during conferences and carries out duties as directed by a teacher when requested to do so.



## **Para Do's**

- Facilitate learning.
- Encourage students to do their own work. They are not learning if we do it for them or turn the other cheek when they copy.
- Have high expectations of all students.
- Motivate student to do his/her *personal* best.
- Be pleasant/smile.
- Use nonverbal cues.
- Arrive on time.
- Be flexible.
- Follow classroom routines.
- Be at scheduled location.
- Follow your schedule.
- Enforce classroom and school rules.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Observe confidentiality; please communicate your concerns to teachers and administrators, not to student's parents or friends.
- Refocus off task students.
- Write down assignments.
- Use the materials and activities along with the class; do not engage in personal activities of reading magazines, books, and text messages.
- Take notes.
- Relay information back to Case Manager/Resource Room Teacher.
- Treat all students with respect and dignity; sometimes students will "rub" us the wrong way –we need to keep our personal feelings out of it.
- Have a working knowledge of the assistive technology that your students have.
- Remember to use a lower volume when working with kids in small groups in the regular classroom setting.
- Support teacher decisions and instructions, even if you disagree. If you have a concern, please talk to the case manager.

## Questions to Ask the First Week on the Job

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1. Is there a required orientation to this position?
2. Who is my direct supervisor, or who are my supervisors?
3. If I will be working with more than one teacher, how will my time be divided? Who determines this?
4. What staff development (training opportunities) will be available to me? What additional training will be required of me in the future?
5. Who evaluates me? How often will I be evaluated?
6. How will I receive communication from my supervisors, school administration and the school district?
7. What are my assigned hours? What schedules am I responsible for following? Can I anticipate my schedule changing in any way?
8. When do the students arrive? When do they leave?
9. What will be my role in instructional duties? What will be my role in non-instructional duties?
10. What records will I be responsible for keeping?
11. What are the district's regulations regarding emergency provisions (fire drills, earthquake drills, etc.), reporting suspected child abuse concerns, etc.
12. What is expected of me in terms of student discipline?
13. What is the line of communication and authority I am expected to follow?
14. To whom should I direct questions regarding district policy?
15. What student records are available to me?
16. Where is my "spot"? In other words, where do I put my personal things and where do I keep the materials I will be using?
17. What should be my response when a parent raises a question regarding a child I am working with?
18. Is there anything I am expected to do that wasn't mentioned in the interview or on the job description?
19. Am I expected to go to staff meetings?
20. When the teacher is absent, will my role change in any way? If I am absent, will there be a substitute for me? Who do I call if I am ill and not able to come to work?
21. Are there any affiliations or organizations (for example, a union for paraprofessional) that I will be expected to join?

## **Communication and Collaborative Partnerships**

### **Teaming/Collaborations**

Effective teaming is critical to the success of the delivery of services by both certified teachers and paraprofessionals. Effective teaming requires that team members share a common vision for achieving their mutual goal-delivering educational services to meet the need of all children. The beliefs they have about curriculum and instructional practice support this vision. If one member of the team's beliefs are consistent with an education model supporting conventional instruction and the other member of the team's beliefs are consistent with an educational model supporting reform instruction, it is going to be difficult for the team to work together.

Communication serves as the foundation for teaming. It involves the exchange of information between parties, and should help both parties assist the child in learning. Effective communicators reach out beyond themselves to the people with whom they are working. Good communication is "other-focused," not "self-centered". Much of the failure to communicate can be blamed on failure to understand and respect people's feelings, and unwillingness to cooperate, or a needless show of authority.

### **How You Act In Conflicts**

(10/26/82; Comstock Memorial Union, Moorhead State University, 1995)

The proverbs listed below can be thought of as descriptions of some of the different strategies for resolving conflicts. Proverbs state traditional wisdom, and these proverbs reflect traditional wisdom for resolving conflicts. Read each of the proverbs carefully. Using the following scale, indicate how typical each proverb is of your actions in a conflict.

- 5 = very typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 4 = frequently typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 3 = sometimes typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 2 = seldom typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 1 = never typical of the way I act in a conflict.

- \_\_\_ 1. It is easier to refrain than to retreat from a quarrel.
- \_\_\_ 2. If you cannot make a person think as you do, make him or her do as you think.
- \_\_\_ 3. Soft words win hard hearts.
- \_\_\_ 4. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.
- \_\_\_ 5. Come now and let us reason together.
- \_\_\_ 6. When two quarrel, the person who keeps silent first is the most praiseworthy.
- \_\_\_ 7. Might overcomes right.
- \_\_\_ 8. Smooth words make smooth ways.
- \_\_\_ 9. Better half a loaf than no bread at all.
- \_\_\_ 10. Truth lies in knowledge, not in majority opinion.
- \_\_\_ 11. He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day.
- \_\_\_ 12. He hath conquered well that hath made his enemies flee.
- \_\_\_ 13. Kill your enemies with kindness.
- \_\_\_ 14. A fair exchange brings no quarrel.
- \_\_\_ 15. No person has the final answer but every person has a piece to contribute.

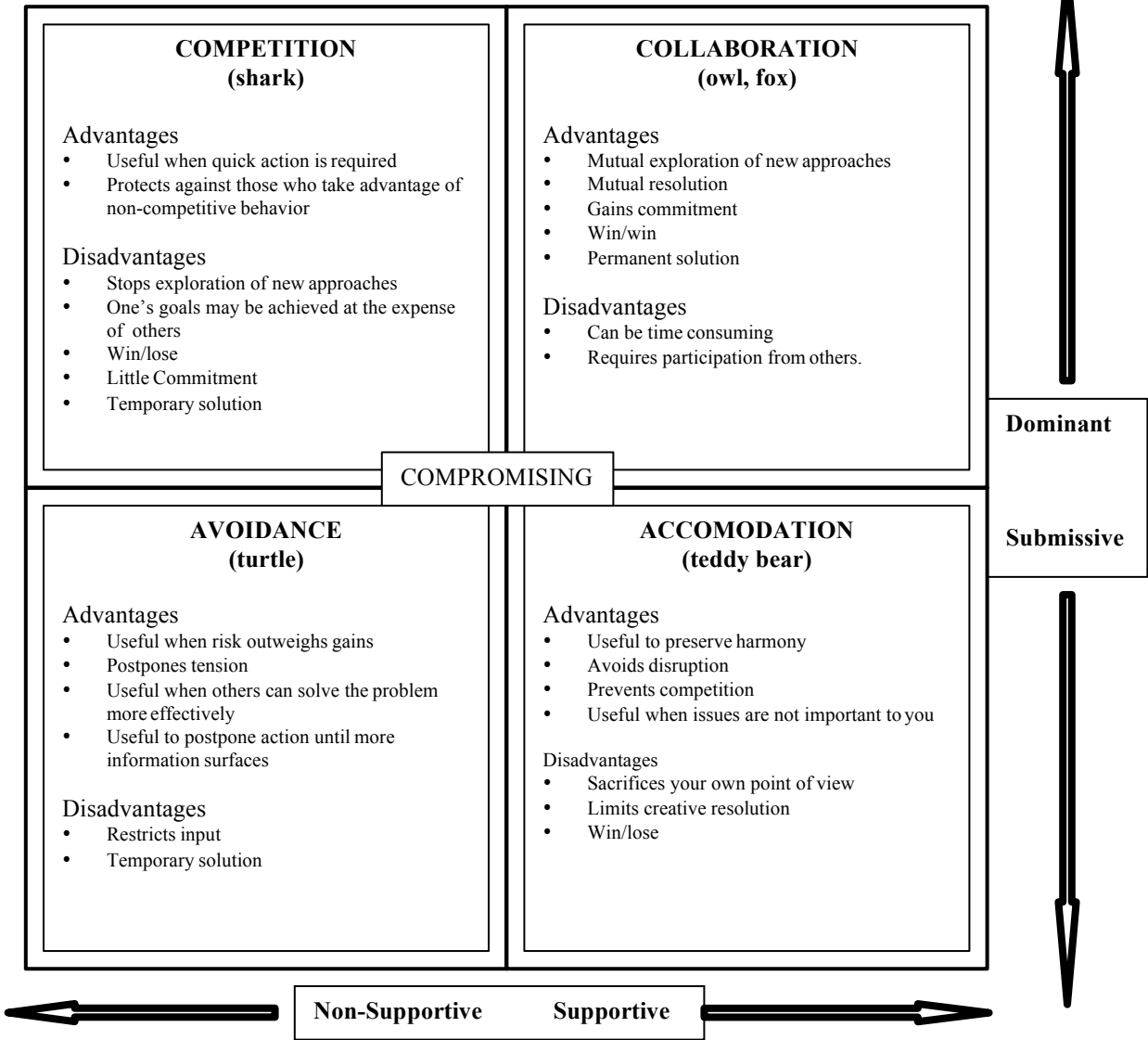
- \_\_\_ 16. Stay away from people who disagree with you.
- \_\_\_ 17. Fields are won by those who believe in winning.
- \_\_\_ 18. Kind words are worth much and cost little.
- \_\_\_ 19. Tit for tat is fair play.
- \_\_\_ 20. Only the person who is willing to give up her or his monopoly on truth can ever profit from the truths that others hold.
- \_\_\_ 21. Avoid quarrelsome people, as they will only make your life miserable.
- \_\_\_ 22. A person who will not flee will make others flee.
- \_\_\_ 23. Soft words ensure harmony.
- \_\_\_ 24. One gift for another makes good friends.
- \_\_\_ 25. Bring your conflicts into the open and face them directly; only then will the best solution be discovered.
- \_\_\_ 26. The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them.
- \_\_\_ 27. Put your foot down where you mean to stand.
- \_\_\_ 28. Gentleness will triumph over anger.
- \_\_\_ 29. Getting part of what you want is better than not getting anything at all.
- \_\_\_ 30. Frankness, honesty, and trust will move mountains.
- \_\_\_ 31. There is nothing so important you have to fight for it.
- \_\_\_ 32. There are two kinds of people in the world, the winners and the losers.
- \_\_\_ 33. When one hits you with a stone, hit her or him with a piece of cotton.
- \_\_\_ 34. When both give in halfway, a fair settlement is achieved.
- \_\_\_ 35. By digging and digging, the truth is discovered.

Scoring

Withdrawing	Forcing	Smoothing	Compromising	Confronting
___ 1.	___ 2.	___ 3.	___ 4.	___ -
___ 6.	___ 7.	___ 8.	___ 9.	___ 10
___ 11.	___ 12.	___ 13.	___ 14.	___ 15.
___ 16.	___ 17.	___ 18.	___ 19.	___ 20.
___ 21.	___ 22.	___ 23.	___ 24.	___ 25.
___ 26.	___ 17.	___ 28.	___ 29.	___ 30.
___ 31.	___ 32.	___ 33.	___ 34.	___ 35.
___ TOTAL	___ TOTAL	___ TOTAL	___ TOTAL	___ TOTAL

The higher the total score for each conflict strategy, the more frequently you tend to use that strategy. The lower the total score for each conflict strategy, the less frequently you tend to use that strategy.

# Managing Conflict Model



## **Conflict Strategies: What are you like?**

Different people use different strategies for managing conflicts. These strategies are learned, usually in childhood, and they seem to function automatically. Usually we are not aware of how we act in conflict situations. We just do whatever seems to come naturally. But we do have a personal strategy; and because it was learned, we can always change it by learning new and more effective ways of managing conflicts.

When you become engaged in a conflict, there are two major concerns you have to take into account:

1. Achieving your personal goals – you are in conflict because you have a goal that conflicts with another person’s goal. Your goal may be highly important to you, or it may be of little importance.
2. Keeping a good relationship with the other person – you may need to be able to interact effectively with the other person in the future. The relationship may be very important to you, or it may be of little importance.

How important your personal goals are to you and how important the relationship is to you affect how you act in a conflict. Given these two concerns, it is possible to identify five styles of managing conflicts:

**The turtle (withdrawing):** Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. They give up on their personal goals and relationships. They stay away from the issues over which the conflict is taking place and from the persons they are in conflict with. Turtles believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflicts. They feel helpless. They believe it is easier to withdraw (physically and psychologically) from a conflict than to face it.

**The shark (forcing):** Sharks try to overpower opponent by forcing them to accept their solution to the conflict. Their goals are highly important to them, and relationships are of minor importance. They seek to achieve their goals at all costs. They are not concerned with the needs of others. They do not care if others like or accept them. Sharks assume that conflicts are settled by one person winning and one person losing. They want to be the winner. Winning gives sharks a sense of pride and achievement. Losing gives them a sense of weakness, inadequacy, and failure. They try to win by attacking, overpowering, overwhelming, and intimidating others.

**The teddy bear (smoothing):** To teddy bears the relationship is of great importance while their own goals are of little importance. Teddy bears want to be accepted and liked by others. They think that conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony and that people cannot discuss conflicts without damaging relationships. They are afraid that if the conflict continues, someone will get hurt, and that would ruin the relationship. They give up their goals to preserve the relationship. Teddy bears say “I’ll give up my goals and let you have what you want, in order for you to like me”. Teddy bears try to smooth over the conflict out of fear of harming the relationship.

**The fox (compromising):** Foxes are moderately concerned with their own goals and their relationships with others. Foxes seek a compromise: they give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of her/his goals. They seek a conflict solution in which both sides gain something – the middle ground between two extreme positions. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals and relationships in order to find agreement for the common good.

**The owl (confronting):** Owls highly value their own goals and relationships. They view conflicts as problems to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their own goals and the goals of the other person. Owls see conflicts as a means of improving relationships by reducing the tension between two persons. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the conflict as a problem. By seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person, owls maintain the relationship. Owls are not satisfied until a solution is found that achieves their own goals and the other person’s goals. And they are not satisfied until the tensions and negative feelings have been fully resolved.

## **Suggested Code of Ethics for Paraprofessionals**

A code of ethics defines and describes acceptable practices. A code for paraprofessionals would examine specific responsibilities of the paraprofessionals, as well as the relationships that are maintained with students, parents, teachers, school and

### **Accepting Responsibilities**

- Recognize that the supervisor has the ultimate responsibility for the instruction and management, and follow the directions prescribed by him/her.
- Engage only in activities for which you are qualified or trained.
- Do not communicate progress or concerns about students to parents.
- Refer concerns expressed by parents, students, or others to the supervising teacher.

### **Relationships with Students and Parents**

- Discuss a child's progress, limitations and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in the appropriate setting.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel.
- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a student's disability, race, sex, cultural background or religion.
- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents, and staff members.
- Present yourself as a positive adult role model.
- Maintain a professional relationship between home and school.

### **Relationship with the Teacher (Supervisor)**

- Recognize the teacher as a supervisor and team leader.
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher.
- When problems cannot be resolved, discuss with building Principal/Dean of Students.
- Discuss concerns about the teacher or teaching methods directly with the teacher.

### **Relationship with the School**

- Accept responsibility for improving skills.
- Know school policies and procedures.
- Represent the school district in a positive manner.

## **It's the "Person First" -- Then the Disability**

What do you see first?

- The wheelchair?
- The physical problem?
- The person?

If you saw a person in a wheelchair unable to get up the stairs into a building, would you say, "There is a handicapped person unable to find a ramp"? Or would you say, "There is a person with a disability who is handicapped by an inaccessible building"?

What is the proper way to speak to or about someone with a disability?

Consider how you would introduce someone -- Jane Doe-- who doesn't have a disability. You would give her name, where she lives, what she does or what she is interested in -- she likes swimming, or eating Mexican food, or watching movies.

Why say it differently for a person with disabilities? Every person is made up of many characteristics--mental as well as physical -- and few want to be identified only by their ability to play tennis or by their love for fried onions or by the mole that's on their face. Those are just parts of us.

In speaking or writing, remember that children or adults with disabilities are like everyone else -- except they happen to have a disability. Therefore, here are a few tips for improving your language related to disabilities and handicaps.

1. Speak of the person first, then the disability—(ie: a student with ED)
2. Emphasize abilities, not limitations.
3. Do not label people as part of a disability group –don't say "the disabled." Instead, say, "People with disabilities."
4. Don't give excessive praise or attention to a person with a disability; don't patronize them.
5. Choice and independence are important; let the person do or speak for him/herself as much as possible.
6. A disability is a functional limitation that interferes with a person's ability to walk, hear, talk, learn, etc. Use "handicap" to describe a situation or barrier imposed by society, the environment or oneself.



## **Say...**

child with a disability  
person with cerebral palsy  
person who is deaf or hard of hearing  
person with cognitive disabilities  
person with epilepsy or person with seizure disorder  
person who has...  
without speech, nonverbal  
developmental delay  
emotional disorder, or mental illness  
uses a wheelchair  
with Down Syndrome  
has a learning disability  
nondisabled  
has a physical disability  
congenital disability  
condition  
seizures  
cleft lip  
mobility impaired  
medically involved, or has chronic illness  
paralyzed  
has hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body)  
has quadriplegia (paralysis of both arms and legs)  
has paraplegia (loss of function in lower body only)  
of short stature  
accessible parking

## **Instead of...**

disabled or handicapped child  
palsied, or C.P., or spastic  
deaf and dumb  
retarded  
epileptic  
afflicted, suffers from, victim  
mute or dumb  
slow  
crazy or insane  
confined to a wheelchair  
mongoloid, retarded  
is learning disabled  
normal, healthy  
crippled  
birth defect  
disease (unless it is a disease)  
fit  
hare lip  
lame, crippled  
sickly  
invalid or paralytic  
hemiplegic  
quadriplegic  
paraplegic  
dwarf or midget  
handicapped parking

## **Special Health Care Guidelines**

### **Some Assumptions**

- Delegation, training and supervision are required when special health care tasks are performed by a paraprofessional.
- Certificated/licensed staff, such as nurses, occupational and physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, and special education teachers are responsible and accountable for the management of programs and the care of students with special health care needs.

### **Guidelines and Information**

School health services are considered a related service and may be performed or, if appropriate, delegated by a qualified school nurse. Examples include gastrostomy (GT) feeding, oral suctioning, and oral medications. State licensure laws or practice acts are statutes that describe and regulate the practice of nursing, medical, and other health professions, such as licensed physical or occupational therapists.

These acts provide for sanctions against unlicensed individuals who practice nursing or medicine for pay. This means that teachers or paraprofessionals who perform nursing, medical, or health procedures without legally delegated authority from appropriate health care professionals may face criminal charges and/or be liable for civil damages. Only nurses may delegate nursing care or nursing services, such as administration of Clean Intermittent Catheterization (CIC).

The nurse or other health professional determines which tasks may appropriately be delegated and is accountable for the performance of these tasks. Inappropriate delegation by the nurse and/or unauthorized performance of nursing or other health tasks by unlicensed personnel may lead to legal action against the licensed nurse and/or unlicensed personnel. Parents may not delegate nursing care to unlicensed school staff.

When a paraprofessional has been delegated by a nurse or other health professional to perform a health related task required for a student or students in the school setting, it is inappropriate for the paraprofessional to train another unlicensed person, i.e. another paraprofessional, in the performance of the task.

Finally, for your personal safety and that of students, always consult your school health official and/or school or district procedures and policies when you have questions or concerns.

## Confidentiality and Its Application

Confidentiality is one of 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 safe guarded. 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.
- Questions about a student will be directed to the special education teacher.
- Do **not** share other student's names or information regarding their programs with parents during informal conversations.
- Information regarding specific students and programs will not be shared in the lunchroom, staff room, office areas, out in the community or any other setting.
- When conferencing 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 need to be directed to the specific teacher privately.

## Confidentiality

- C** Control information about the students.
  - O** Only share information with those who have a need to know and who have proper authorization
  - N** Never discuss school information regarding students with those who don't have a need to know.
  - F** Forward inquiries regarding students to the student's IEP manager or administrators if you are approached about confidential information.
  - I** Interact with those who inquire in a manner keeping with your responsibilities.
  - D** Don't discuss student situations in the faculty room.
  - E** Explanations for not discussing a student are easier than explanations for breaching confidential information.
  - N** Not sharing is caring.
  - T** Think about privacy and what you may lose if you breach a student or family's confidentiality.
  - I** It's important that things that happen at school stay at school.
  - A** Access to student information carries with it responsibility.
  - L** Learn how to handle uncomfortable inquiries in positive and courteous but confidential ways.
  - I** Identify acceptable ways that people who need to know can access information.
  - T** Treat confidential information as if your job depended on it – it does.
  - Y** You are part of professional community. Confidentiality is a cornerstone. Protect it.
- Any breach of confidentiality is unacceptable.

## Characteristics of Learners

Paraprofessionals will need to understand the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social characteristics that are generally associated with children identified as in need of special education services. Children may exhibit one or more characteristics to varying degrees. The following are the definitions and descriptions of the state of Minnesota eligibility criteria for special education services.

### **Autism**

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) means a range of pervasive developmental disorders, with onset in childhood, that adversely affect a pupil's functioning and result in the need for special education instruction and related services. ASD is a disability category characterized by an uneven developmental profile and a pattern of qualitative impairments in several areas of development, including social interaction, communication, or the presence of restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities. These core features may present themselves in a wide variety of combinations that range from mild to severe, and the number of behavioral indicators present may vary. ASD may include Autistic Disorder, Childhood Autism, Atypical Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, Asperger's Disorder, or other related pervasive developmental disorders. (M.R. 3525.1325)

### **Deaf/Blindness**

"Deaf-blind" means medically verified visual loss coupled with medically verified hearing loss that, together interfere with acquiring information or interacting in the environment. Both conditions need to be present simultaneously and the pupil must meet the criteria for both visually impaired and deaf and hard of hearing to be eligible for special education and services under this category. (M.R.3525.1327)

### **Deaf/Hard of Hearing**

"Deaf and hard of hearing" means a diminished sensitivity to sound, or hearing loss, that is expressed in terms of standard audiological measures. Hearing loss has the potential to affect educational, communicative, or social functioning that may result in the need for special education instruction and related services. (M.R. 3525.1331, Subp 1)

### **Developmental Delay**

Early childhood special education must be available to children from birth to seven years of age who have a substantial delay or disorder in development or have an identifiable sensory, physical, mental, or social/emotional condition or impairment known to hinder normal development and need special education. (M. R. 3425.1350, Subp. 1)

## **Developmentally Adapted Physical Education: Special Education**

"Developmental adapted physical education: special education" means specially designed physical education instruction and services for pupils with disabilities who have a substantial delay or disorder in physical development. Developmental adapted physical education: special education instruction for pupils age three through 21 may include development of physical fitness, motor fitness, fundamental motor skills and patterns, skills in aquatics, dance, individual and group games, and sports.

Students with conditions such as obesity, temporary injuries, and short-term or temporary illnesses or disabilities are termed special needs students. Special needs students are not eligible for developmental adapted physical education: special education. Provisions and modifications for these students must be made within regular physical education. (M.R. 3525.1352, Subp. 1)

### **Emotional Behavioral Disorders**

"Emotional or behavioral disorders" means an established pattern of one or more of the following emotional or behavior responses:

- A. withdrawal or anxiety, depression, problems with mood, or feelings of self-worth;
- B. disordered thought processes with unusual behavior patterns and atypical communication styles; or
- C. aggression, hyperactivity, or impulsivity.

This established pattern of emotional or behavioral responses must adversely affect educational or developmental performance, including intra-personal, academic, vocational, or social skills; be significantly different from appropriate age, cultural, or ethnic norms; and be more than temporary, expected responses to stressful events in the environment. The emotional or behavioral responses must be consistently exhibited in at least three different settings, two of which must be educational settings, and one other setting in either the home, child care, or community. The responses must not be primarily the result of intellectual, sensory, or acute or chronic physical health conditions. (M.R. 3525.1329)

### **Developmental Cognitive Delay (DCD)**

"Developmental Cognitive Delay" (DCD) means a condition resulting in significantly below average intellectual functioning and concurrent deficits in adaptive behavior that adversely affects educational performance and requires special education and related services. DCD does not include conditions primarily due to a sensory or physical impairment, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorders, severe multiple impairments, cultural influences, or inconsistent educational programming. (M.R. 3525.1333)

### **Other Health Impaired**

"Other health impaired" means having limited strength, endurance, vitality or alertness, including a heightened or diminished alertness to environmental stimuli, with respect to the educational environment that is due to a broad range of medically diagnosed chronic or acute health conditions that adversely affect a pupil's educational performance. (M.R. 3525.1335)

### **Physically Impaired**

"Physically impaired" means a medically diagnosed chronic, physical impairment, either congenital or acquired, that may adversely affect physical or academic functioning and result in the need for special education and related services. (M.R. 3525.1337.)

### **Severely Multiply Impaired**

"Severely Multiply disabilities" means concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness. (34CFR 300.7(c)(7))

"Severely Multiply Impaired" means a pupil who has severe learning and developmental problems resulting from two or more disability conditions determined by assessment under part 3525.2500. (M.R. 3525.1339)

## **Specific Learning Disability**

"Specific learning disability" means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

This disorder is:

- A. manifested by interference with the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval, manipulation, or expression of information so that the child does not learn at an adequate rate for the child's age or to meet state-approved grade-level standards when provided with the usual developmental opportunities and instruction from a regular school environment; and
- B. demonstrated primarily in academic functioning, but may also affect other developmental, functional, and life adjustment skill areas; and may occur with, but cannot be primarily the result of: visual, hearing, or motor impairment; cognitive impairment; emotional disorders; or environmental, cultural, economic influences, limited English proficiency or a lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math.

## **Speech or Language Impairment**

### **Fluency disorder**

"Fluency disorder" means the intrusion or repetition of sounds, syllables, and words; prolongations of sound; avoidance of words; silent blocks; or inappropriate inhalation, exhalation, or phonation patterns. These patterns may also be accompanied by facial and body movements associated with effort to speak. Fluency patterns that are attributed only to dialectical, cultural, or ethnic differences or to the influence of a foreign language must not be identified as a disorder. (M.R. 3525.1343, Subp.1)

### **Voice Disorder**

"Voice disorder" means the absence of voice or presence of abnormal quality, pitch, resonance, loudness, or duration. Voice patterns that can be attributed only to dialectical, cultural, or ethnic differences or to the influence of a foreign language must not be identified as a disorder. (M.R. 3525.1343, Subp.2)

### **Articulation disorder**

"Articulation disorder" means the absence of or incorrect production of speech sounds or phonological processes that are developmentally appropriate. For the purposes of this subpart, phonological process means a regularly occurring simplification or deviation in an individual's speech as compared to the adult standard, usually one that simplifies the adult phonological pattern. Articulation patterns that are attributed only to dialectical, cultural, or ethnic differences or to the influence of a foreign language must not be identified as a disorder.

### **Language disorder**

"Language disorder" means a breakdown in communication as characterized by problems in expressing needs, ideas, or information that may be accompanied by problems in understanding. Language patterns that are attributed only to dialectical, cultural, or ethnic differences or to the influence of a foreign language must not be identified as a disorder. (M.R. 3525.1343, Subp.4)

### **Traumatic Brain Injury**

"Traumatic brain injury" means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that may adversely affect a pupil's education performance and result in the need for special education and related services. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as: cognition, speech/language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem-solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, and information processing. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma. (M.R. 3525.1348)

### **Visually Impaired**

"Visually impaired" means a medically verified visual impairment accompanied by limitations in sight that interfere with acquiring information or interaction with the environment to the extent that special education instruction and related services may be needed. (M.R. 3525.1345)

## **Assessment and Evaluation**

Assessment is the process of collecting and interpreting information relating to a child with a disability for the purpose of determining the child's present skills to form a base on which new learning experiences can be planned. Before a child can receive special education services a thorough evaluation is carried out. Depending on the areas of concern, it would include a comprehensive look at the child's physical, cognitive, academic, social, emotional and language development. Generally teachers and other professional staff members are responsible for conducting the assessment activities. Often, however, paraprofessionals are asked to help identify the child's functional capabilities or provide specific observations regarding the child.

Based on the evaluation data the team, made up of professionals and the parents, determine if the child meets criteria in one or more of the disability areas identified by the state of Minnesota. After a child is placed in special education, a re-evaluation is conducted at least every three years to determine if special education continues to be needed.

Paraprofessionals are often asked to provide data regarding a student they work with during the evaluation as a means of documenting progress and determining areas of need. This documentation may be in the form of anecdotal reports, checklists or formal and informal observations.

### **Observing and Keeping Good Data**

Acquiring and using objective skills of observation and keeping data are important to all paraprofessionals. Much of the information needed by the team to determine whether or not children are gaining new skills is acquired by careful observation and good record keeping. In addition, observation will keep the team posted on whether or not the individuals are learning and using the functional skills necessary to let them achieve the objectives and long-term goals that are outlined in the IEP.

The written information as to what has been observed is called "data". It serves as a more permanent record of what is seen or heard and, when done well, is an objective account of the individual's activities and skills. It is important to keep written data on all the observation activities. If this is not done, there is a risk of reporting inaccurately what has happened.

Carrying out observations and keeping data must be done with an objective point of view. Sometimes, we may be tempted to let our biases or prejudices get in the way. We may like one student better than another and tend to look more favorably on his/her activities. It is very important to guard against these inclinations and to put down precisely what is seen or heard and to avoid anything that is stigmatized by personal perceptions of a child or a specific behavior.

## Observation Is:

Systematically watching what a person does and says and recording the behaviors in order to make instructional decisions. Observation should:

- Be done for a specific reason;
- Provide samples of a child's/student's behavior over a period of time, in a variety of settings; and
- Be objective.

## Objective Observation Means:

- Watching events without being affected by personal biases/prejudices;
- Watching what is happening without guessing at the reasons that cause the action;
- Watching the activity without judging whether it is good or bad, and
- Producing an objective record that states exactly what an observer sees and hears.

Through observation, we can learn what the child can do, what the child likes or dislikes, how the child behaves under various circumstances and how the child interacts with people.

## Observing Objectively

There are two points to remember when making observations:

- A behavior must be **observable** and
- A behavior must be **measurable**.

In other words we must be able to see or hear a behavior and we must be able to count or time how often a behavior occurs.

## Keeping Data

There are several ways to keep data. They include:

**Checklists**-These may be in the form of standardized checklists that include specific skills and behaviors based on developmental levels, or a list of behaviors compiled by the teacher. When paraprofessionals work with a checklist, they simply watch the child and record whether or not the behavior described is observed.

**Anecdotal Records**-These usually consist of a sentence or two written in a notebook that describe what the child is doing at a specific moment. When making an anecdotal record, only behaviors that can be **seen or heard** and behaviors that **can be counted** should be recorded.

**Interviewing**- This is a specific kind of record keeping, one in which the team is trying to determine what the child likes or dislikes, what the child's interests are, or other feelings or beliefs that cannot be observed. When interviewing, it is extremely important to record precisely what the child says. There is no room for editorializing in this kind of record.

**Frequency or Duration Notes**-Sometimes the information that is to be collected refers to how often or how long a behavior is occurring. For example, the team may want to know how many times a child talked to or communicated with playmates or how often a child initiated a conversation with peers. For this kind of record keeping, paraprofessionals will count the frequency of the behavior occurring, to observe how long or frequent behaviors are.



## Motivating Students

Students who are motivated cause fewer discipline problems because they care about what they are learning. When students are actively learning content that has personal meaning for them, they have neither the time nor the energy to create discipline problems. Conversely, when students feel that they are not actively involved, they become bored, turned off, and find satisfaction in acting out.

Characteristics of a classroom with a motivational environment include the following:

- Trust is established and fear is minimized.
- Students understand the benefits of learning and understand that changing behavior is part of learning.
- Students are aware of different learning options and are able to make choices that are real, meaningful, and significant.
- Students are actively engaged in learning.
- Learning is relevant and meaningful and is related to real-life.
- Feelings and thoughts are incorporated for learning to have personal and lasting usefulness.

Researchers have examined motivation from the perspective of a student's self-concept, a student's motivation to achieve, and a student's perceived ability to control his learning. Strategies for increasing motivation based on these three aspects include the following:

- Increase student response. Ask more open-ended questions.
- Ensure that all students are called on equally as often, regardless of perceived capability.
- Encourage students to persist with difficult problems and to finish projects.
- Foster excitement about new ideas.
- Involve students in directing their own learning.
- Exhibit high expectations for all students.
- Increase students' readiness to learn.
- Increase involvement and interest.
- Cooperative assignments increase motivation.
- Integrate all domains of learning; engage the cognitive, affective, and motor domains in many tasks.
- Stress accomplishments rather than winning.

How students feel about themselves often gives them the determination and strength to pursue learning and pursue challenging tasks. Teachers and paraprofessionals can help instill the will to want to learn with just a few words of encouragement. Of course there will always be students who are seemingly "un-motivate-able". In these cases, perseverance in motivation tactics can greatly improve the chances of success with such students.

## **Classroom Accommodations**

### **Modifying Classroom Materials**

Children with disabilities assigned to a regular classroom should have every opportunity to participate in all activities that are appropriate. A goal of adaptation is to provide all students with the opportunity to participate to the maximum extent possible in the typical activities of the classroom. Ensuring that children with disabilities are active learners, in contrast to passive observers or parallel learners (with a whole different educational experience), is a primary concern.

To ensure continuity, it works well for students to receive group instruction in the regular classroom whenever possible rather than experiencing the disruption of leaving the classroom for another location. The special education teacher needs to consider what students can do independently, what they can do with adapted or modified curriculum, what they could do with peer assistance, and what they can do with paraprofessional assistance inside the regular classroom setting. At times, due to a student's distractibility, functional academic skills, social skills, and/or frustration level, students may need to have special services delivered outside of the regular classroom.

A paraprofessional may be assigned to modify or adapt curriculum inside the regular classroom to assure success for children with disabilities and is one way of providing a least restrictive environment. This is a good opportunity for paraprofessionals to be creative. Modifying curriculum to help students find success is challenging, but the rewards are exciting. Ideas for curriculum modification can come from the classroom teacher, special education teacher, school psychologist and other consultants. Adaptations are most effective when they are simple, easy to develop and implement, and based on typical assignments and activities. ASEC also has several books with curriculum modifications for check out.

### **Questions about Adapting Curriculum and Instruction**

Taken from "Adapting Curriculum & Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms"

#### **Q: Are adaptations just for students with identified disabilities?**

**A:** Adaptations are necessary and appropriate for any student who is not experiencing success, regardless of whether that student has a disability. Research and educational values tell us that all children can learn what is important to them to learn, and that the teacher's role is to assist all students to succeed.

#### **Q: What areas of the curriculum or aspects of instruction can be adapted?**

**A:** The three areas that teachers typically adapt are curriculum materials (e.g., textbook assignments, workbook or worksheet pages, and tests), instruction (e.g., grouping strategies, learning centers, audio visuals, and cooperative learning), and classroom organization and behavior management (e.g., daily schedule and routines,

classroom rules, seating arrangements, and individualized behavior plans). When planning adaptations, consider all possible areas and, if necessary, adapt in more than one area at a time.

**Q: How intrusive should adaptations be?**

**A:** As adaptations are generated, a continuum of intrusiveness will become apparent. Some adaptations will closely resemble the activities of classmates, while others will be less similar and require alternate materials, supports, or types of instruction. To create "least intrusive curriculum and instruction", it is often beneficial to begin with less intrusive adaptations and work up as necessary. In addition, when adaptations are necessary, it is important to minimize rather than highlight student differences. For example a communication notebook that hangs around a student's neck will be stigmatizing. By contrast, a small billfold-sized notebook will meet the same goal without calling unnecessary attention to the differences between students. Progress monitoring is also important so that adaptations can be made less intrusive as students gain skills and competencies.

**Q: Won't adapting curriculum and instruction create lowered expectations and watered down curriculum for all?**

**A:** There is no evidence that students in classrooms where adaptations regularly occur score differently than their peers on achievement or other benchmark tests. In contrast, many teachers observe higher levels of mastery for nondisabled students when adaptations are common practice. Since adaptations are made for students at the high end of the achievement continuum as well as the lower end, there is no need to make significant adjustments in the typical pace of instruction for the majority of students. As teachers make adaptations, they evaluate each student's abilities and determine the minimal amount of adaptation needed in order for that student to succeed. In many cases this means increased rather than lowered expectations

**Q: Is it really fair and equitable to adapt for individual students? Won't students resent their classmates who have adaptations made for them?**

**A:** Though a common concern for many teachers, the problem of fairness appears to be more of an issue for adults than for students. In a recent interview in an elementary school where adaptation is the norm, a group of nondisabled students were asked if they felt it was fair for classmates to receive adapted assignments and tests. Overall students responded that it was fair because everyone is different. Student comments include: "It's okay because they're getting better," "Shorter assignments don't bother me because they need more help than I do," and "It makes me feel good that the teacher helps them." Making adaptations available to any student who needs them, and creating a classroom climate of acceptance, often minimizes the problem.

## Types of Adaptations

1. **Size**-Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or complete.
2. **Time**-Adapt the time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing.
3. **Level of Support**-Increase the amount of personal assistance with a specific learner (e.g., assign peer buddies, paraprofessionals, peer tutors, or cross-age tutors).
4. **Input**-Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner (e.g., Use different visual aids, plan more concrete examples, provide hand-on activities, place students in cooperative groups).
5. **Difficulty**-Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work (e.g., Allow the use of a calculator to figure math problems; simplify task directions; change rules to accommodate learner needs).
6. **Output**-Adapt how the student can respond to instruction (e.g., Instead of answering questions in writing, allow a verbal response, use a communication book, allow students to show knowledge with hands on materials).
7. **Participation**-Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task (e.g., In geography, have a student hold the globe, while others point out locations).
8. **Alternate Goals**-Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same material (e.g., In social studies, expect a student to be able to locate just the states while others learn to locate capitals as well).
9. **Substitute Curriculum**-Provide different instruction and materials to meet a student's individual goals (e.g., During a language test one student is learning computer skills in the computer lab).

## Effective Instructional Strategies

The teacher has the responsibility for designing instruction and management programs for students. The paraprofessional is often called upon to help carry out and monitor these programs. It is also the responsibility of the teacher to introduce and model instructional programs for paraprofessionals.

### Parts of a Lesson

#### Opening

- **Attention** Gain students' attention.
- **Review** Review necessary pre-skills.
- **Goal** State goal of the lesson. "Today we are going to..."

#### Body

- **Model** *I Do it.* Demonstrate each step in the strategy. Proceed step by step. Tell students what you are doing and thinking.
- **Prompt** *We Do it.* Guide students in performing the strategy. Have students perform each step after you. Prompt by asking a question or giving a directive. Continue until proficiency is demonstrated.
- **Check** *You Do it.* Have students perform the strategy independently. Carefully monitor their performance and give them feedback.

#### Close

- **Review** Have students review the critical lesson content.
- **Preview** State the content of the next lesson.
- **Independent** Seatwork or homework

# Facilitating Positive Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills

Paraprofessionals will want to observe a child's emotional, social, and behavioral skills to:

- assist in developing their peer and adult relationships;
- to reinforce a positive self-concept in the student;
- to encourage understanding of the student's own and other's feelings and perspectives;
- to demonstrate and reinforce on task behavior;
- to encourage problem solving and planning for pro-social behaviors, and
- to watch for things that promote or interfere with the students learning.

Children are most likely to succeed if they feel good about themselves and their abilities. How a person feels on the inside is how he will act on the outside. A student with high self-esteem is going to demonstrate motivation, self-confidence, security, eagerness to learn, happiness, cooperation, risk taking, friendliness, responsibility, independence, and creativeness. A child with low self-esteem is going to have difficulty making decisions, taking initiative, sharing, being kind to friends, building relationships, and demonstrating self-control.

Paraprofessionals will often work directly with students who have low self-esteem. Children with and without disabilities struggle with these issues of self-esteem; however, students with disabilities face greater frustration and failure when compared to peers. By building a trusting relationship in a positive and caring environment, the paraprofessional can assist the student in feeling secure. By building an awareness of the students unique qualities and assisting them to identify and express emotions and attitudes, the paraprofessional can help the student define a sense of who they are. Promoting group acceptance and support will increase the student's skill at making friends. When the paraprofessional enhances the student's ability to make decisions, seek alternatives and identify consequences, they increase the child's academic and behavioral performance.

Children with disabilities will be working to develop skills in all of the personal, social, and functional areas. Paraprofessionals are key in assisting children to develop independent functioning skills. It is important that teachers and paraprofessionals allow children to practice these skills daily. These are the skills that will help children function independently in school, home and the community. Paraprofessionals and teachers need to allow enough time for children to complete these activities with minimal assistance. Often, adults assist too quickly. After giving a child a direction to complete a task, it is important to leave enough wait-time to discover what the child already knows how to do. Only with practice can the child learn to complete these activities efficiently. The paraprofessional may need to assist a child in such personal care activities as eating, maintaining a proper diet, table manners, proper social skills, dressing, undressing, toileting, grooming and hygiene, reminding them to take medication, and/or monitor medical conditions.

Some students are included in the regular classroom for socialization purposes. Just as the typical developing child learns from observing and participating in activities with other typical developing children; so do special needs children. Research has shown that children with disabilities, who generally interact only with other children with disabilities, do not develop the appropriate social skills that will allow them to become a contributing part of the community as adults. In addition to the benefits to the child with a disability, the typical child in the classroom learns lessons in acceptance of human differences, becomes more aware of others' needs, and more comfortable with people who have disabilities.

The goal of the paraprofessional is to provide support to the child with a disability with the least intrusion. Paraprofessionals and regular classroom educators should treat a child with disabilities like a child who does not have special needs. A child will feel connected to peers and the classroom teacher if the paraprofessional attempts to be discreet in delivering assistance. Continually sitting beside or hovering over the child when support is not needed only serves to reinforce that the child is different and tends to discourage interaction with the student and peers. On the other hand, some students need total hand over hand guidance with activities. With the classroom teacher's approval, the paraprofessional should be able to move about the room and help all students that need assistance.

# Behavior Management

When working with students, the paraprofessional will be expected to support the behavior management plan of the teacher. It is important to discuss with each teacher the behavior expectations and interventions which s/he has established, and to define the role of the paraeducator in carrying out that plan.

The use of proactive management strategies often helps paraprofessional avoid possible management difficulties. Proactive means planning ahead to avoid problems. Following is a list of proactive management strategies which have proven successful in the classroom. It is preferable to spend the majority of our behavior management energies here.

## Proactive Management Strategies

Strategy	Example
• Avoid the void	•Plan an abundance of activities, each session. When a natural void occurs, give students a specific behavior. (“I need to locate our word list. You may talk quietly.”)
• Establish clear expectations for desired behavior	•Establish and post no more than five rules for group instruction. Rules should be positively stated with the most important listed first.
• Use non-verbal cues	•Smile, nod, make eye contact with student, give a “thumbs up” sign.
• Use proximity	•Move closer to a student who is off task.
• Show respect/regard for all students	•Say “thank you” when student complies with a request. Use calm voice and manner, even when student becomes agitated.
• Address students by name	•“Good morning, Nadia.”
• Use students’ names in examples during instruction	•“Gary, that’s a good start.” •“If Gary had eight packs of baseball cards and there were 20 cards in each pack, how many cards would Gary have?”
• Provide praise to students as a group	•“You are doing an excellent job of practicing spelling words in pairs.”
• Provide praise to individual students	•“That is an excellent topic sentence.”
• Provide non-contingent acknowledgment to all students	•“That’s a great, new hair-do.” •“I enjoyed talking with you.”
• State your expectations before each activity	•“We’ll be reviewing fractions. After I give you a problem, you will work it out on your paper. When I give the signal you will compare your answer to your partner’s.”
• Restate the task or the rule for the group	•“We’re answering the first question on page 12.” •“Thank you for finding your seats before the bell rings.”

Source: Adapted from PSESD Level II Class, *Instructional Role of the Paraeducator* by Anita Archer, 1996.

## **WAYS TO SAY “GOOD JOB”**

Nice going.

That’s great.

That’s clever.

Very creative.

Excellent Work.

Very interesting.

What neat work.

You’ve got it now.

That’s a good point.

Thank you very much.

I appreciate your help.

You made it look easy.

Ann is paying attention.

Keep up the good work.

That’s the right answer.

Now you’ve figured it out.

That’s coming along nicely.

Everyone’s working so hard.

That’s quite an improvement.

Now you’ve got the hang of it.

I like the way Tom is working.

You’re on the right track now.

That’s a very good observation.

That’s an interesting way to look at it.

This kind of work pleases me very much.

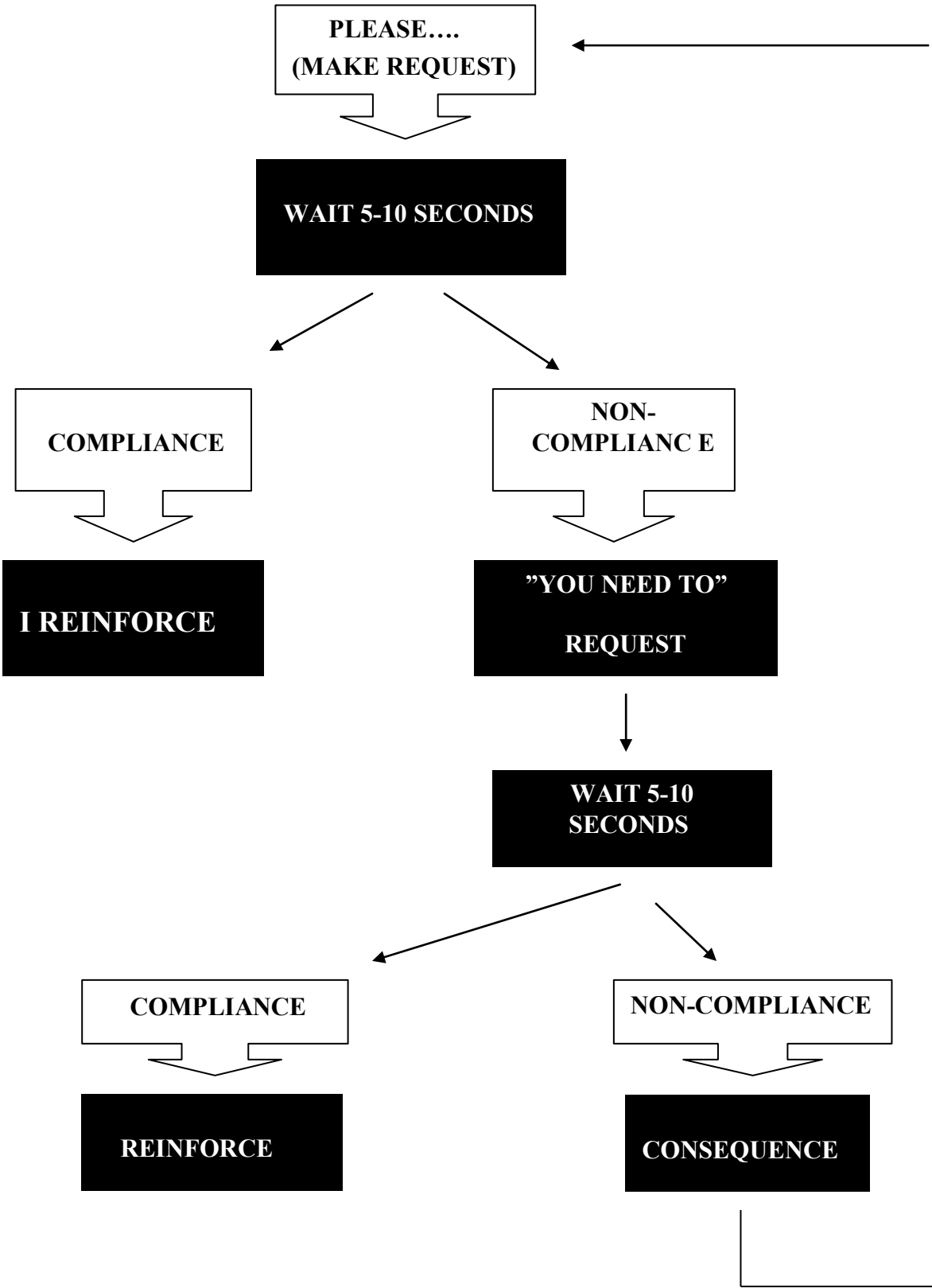
Congratulations! You got \_\_\_\_\_ right.

It looks like you put a lot of hard work into this.

Thank you for raising your hand, Charles. What is it?

Thank you for (sitting down, being quiet, getting right to work, etc.) I bet your mom and dad would be proud to see the job you did on this.

# PRECISION REQUEST SEQUENCE





## **VARIABLES THAT AFFECT COMPLIANCE**

Compliance can be increased simply by the way a request is made. Below are several general guidelines and non-examples of effective techniques for increasing compliance. A positive behavior intervention plan would supersede these guidelines.

**Distance** - Get close to a student when giving a command/direction.

**Effective:** Three feet (one desk distance)

**Ineffective:** Across the classroom; from behind your desk

**Eye Contact** - Look students in the eye. Request eye contact when giving a command.

**Voice Tone** - Make your request in a soft, but firm voice, with eye contact. Yelling a request to get a student's attention is not effective.

**Non-emotional vs. Emotional** - Be calm, not emotional. Yelling, threatening gestures, ugly faces, guilt-inducing statements, rough handling, negative comments about the student or his/her family only reduce compliance.

**Descriptive Requests** - Describe the behavior you want. Requests that are positive and descriptive are better than general requests.

**Effective:** Sit in your chair with your feet on the floor, hands on your desk, facing the front of the room  
The expectation is to sit in your chair with your feet on the floor, hands on your desk, facing the front of the room.

**Ineffective:** Pay attention.

**Question Format** - Direct requests increase compliance. Questions reduce compliance.

**Effective:** Please start your work.  
I need you to stop teasing.

**Ineffective:** Isn't it time to do your work?  
Wouldn't you like to do your work now? Would you please stop teasing?

**Make more "Start" requests than "Stop" requests** - It is better to make more positive requests for a child to start an appropriate behavior and to make fewer negative requests for a child to stop misbehavior.

**Effective:** Please start your math assignment.

**Ineffective:** Please stop arguing with me.

**Time** - When giving a command or request, give the student 5 seconds before repeating the request. During this short interval, do not converse with the child (arguing, excuse making). Simply look the child in the eyes and wait for a response. Then, restate the request.

**Limit to Two Requests** - Don't nag. Issue a request only twice following the Precision Request Sequence. Then follow through with the preplanned consequence. The more times you request the less likely you are to gain compliance.

**Verbal Praise** - It is easy to request a behavior from a child and then ignore the positive result. If you do not acknowledge that the student complied, then overall compliance will decrease.

## **OBSERVABLE PROBLEM BEHAVIOR**

### **INATTENTION**

- Off-task
- Daydreaming
- Excessive talking
- Out of seat
- Playing with things
- Not completing work

### **IMMATURE BEHAVIOR**

- Thumb sucking
- Baby talking
- Excessive crying
- Temper tantrums
- Talking back (poor turn taking)
- Needing to be the focus of attention
- Interrupting conversation
- Preoccupation with personal interests

### **LEARNING AND REASONING SKILLS**

- Not following verbal directions
- Not following written directions
- Illogical answers
- Rarely indicates that he or she does not understand
- Poor handwriting coordination, direction of letter formation
- Difficulty remembering, long-term
- Difficulty remembering, short-term

From: School Based Interventions for Students with Behavior Problems: Julie Bowen, William Jenson, Elaine Clark, 2004)

### **ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**

- Messy desk, desk top, work space
- Forgetting objects, paper, homework
- Lack of sequencing (forgetting steps in an activity)
- Forgetting coat, lunch, homework, etc.
- Needing a lot of prompts
- Hyperactivity

### **LOW SELF-CONCEPT**

- Underachieving
- Negative self-talk (I'm so stupid, I can't do anything right)
- Poor eye contact
- Lying
- Excessive excuses to get out of classroom to avoid completing work
- Talking back, talking out of turn

**DEALING WITH PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOR**

1. Find what a student does well and build on it.
2. Build rapport.
3. Accent the positive.
4. Be consistent.
5. Keep calm; maintain your poise. Tension can agitate poor behavior.
6. Lower your voice.
7. Slow your rate of speech.
8. Give the person space-stand at arm length from person acting out.
9. Allow verbal venting to a point.
10. Ignore irrelevant comments and redirect back to problem at hand.
11. Remind the student of the consequences of the behavior.
12. Provide choices within limits.
13. Have a good sense of humor.
14. When the student is calm, use the incident to teach alternative behaviors.
15. Use unique ways to quiet a room. For example, turn off the lights, talk softly, play soft music, etc.
16. Admit your mistakes.
17. If possible, correct the student away from other students. Take away the audience.

**AVOID THE FOLLOWING**

1. Taking the pupil's misbehavior personally.
2. Forcing an issue with difficult student in front of a group.
3. Making a threat that you cannot or will not carry out.
4. Using sarcasm.
5. Labeling a child as "bad".
6. Ridiculing behavior.
7. Forcing a student to admit an error.
8. Demanding a confession.
9. Asking a student why he/she acts out.
10. Comparing a student's behavior with another student's.
11. Taking away excessive points or privileges.
12. Pleading with a student.
13. Making unsubstantiated accusations.
14. Drawing unrelated persons into a conflict.
15. Saying "I'm the boss".
16. Insisting on the last word.
17. Making generalizations about a student.
18. Mocking a student.
19. Holding a grudge.
20. Staying in a situation if you are feeling very frustrated or angry.

## Fostering Student Independence

Paraprofessionals have a major role in defining what independence means for each student. You are assigned to a student or group of students because they require support or assistance in accomplishing common school tasks. Remember, your role is to facilitate the student's independence in accomplishing tasks by supporting the student not by doing for the student.

Ideas for promoting independence in students:

1. Ask questions in response to the student's question. For example, when a student asks what to do, ask "What do you think is the next step?" Other common questions you can use to help a student reflect or discover the answer to his/her question:
  - a. "Do you remember what the teacher said about this?"
  - b. "Can you see what the other students are doing?"
  - c. "How do you think it is spelled?"
2. Wait for a response. Become the champion of the waiting game. Do not feel that you have to fill a silence or that the student needs to answer immediately. Give the student time to reflect and time to realize that you expect him or her to respond.
3. Keep control. Keep responses on the topic and don't allow the student to engage you in an argument or off task discussion.
4. Give recognition and reinforcement. As frequently as you can, reinforce the student with discrete comments or signals. Let him or her know that you recognize and appreciate his or her appropriate behavior and work.
5. Help the student use peers. Help the student ask a friend. Help the student sit next to students who are good role models. Work with the teacher to facilitate the student's participation in groups with supportive students.

How do you and others know when you are doing a good job!

### ***The less you are doing for the student, the better you are at your job!***

Your job is to help the student learn how to do his/her work without the help of a paraprofessional. This is very hard at times. Some students will want you to be their personal assistant. Some students are afraid to try it on their own. Some students have learned to become dependent on others. Some students are obstinate and just don't want to do it. Your job is to help them learn how to do more by themselves. This is very hard at times. Sometimes you will just want the student to be able to hand in the work with the other students or before the deadline has passed. Sometimes it feels awful to let the student "fail" to get the work done. Remember, it does not help the student in the long term if you have done it for him or her. Remember, if you are doing it for the student, no one know he/she cannot do it on his or her own and the student will not get the support he needs to learn how to do it on his/her own.

### ***The more you are moving away from the student, the better you are at your job!***

Research shows that the closer a paraprofessional is to a student in the class, in the halls, in the lunch room, the more dependent and socially isolated a student becomes. Close proximity of paraprofessionals to students contributes to:

- The less the teacher takes ownership for the student,
- The more separated the student becomes from his/her peers,
- The more dependent the student becomes on adults,
- The less the student initiates interactions with his/her peers,

- The less peers initiate interactions with the student,
- The less attention the student receives from the classroom teacher,
- The less the student feels in control of his learning,
- The less the student takes responsibility for him/herself,
- The less the student develops socially and emotionally.

***The lower level of prompts you are using, the better you are at your job!*** Students can become very dependent on prompts from adults. While your job is to prompt the student to do his/her best work, you should always be moving to lower levels of prompts. Here is a prompt hierarchy, always use the lowest level prompt the student needs to be successful.

- Level 0: Natural prompts: any ordinary clue for all the students. E.g., the teacher says, “take out your book,” the bell rings to change classes, all the students start to move to the front of the room.
- Level 1: Gestural prompts: pointing to the schedule, pointing to the place on the page where everyone is reading, pointing to the rules posted in the classroom, pointing to the teacher who is giving directions to the class.
- Level 2: Indirect verbal prompts: a verbal statement that prompts the student to attend to a natural cue: “what are the other students doing?” “what did you forget?” “What is next on your schedule?”
- Level 3: Direct verbal prompts: giving specific verbal directions: “Write down your assignment.” “Start your work.” “Pay attention to the teacher.”
- Level 4: Modeling prompts: demonstrating what the student is supposed to be doing: starting a graphic organizer by putting in the first item, spelling a word for the student, demonstrating how to do something.
- Level 5: Partial physical prompts: providing physical assistance for a portion of an activity: putting the pencil in the student’s hand, putting the assignment binder on the desk for the student to open and write his assignment.
- Level 6: Full physical prompts: providing physical assistance throughout the task: hand over hand assistance with cutting.

Verbal prompts are easy for students and adults to become dependent on, and they are the hardest to fade. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, they are the easiest to give. It’s hard for us to sit back and watch learners struggle to put it together. It’s so easy for us to give them hints, guides, or outright tell them how to do it. The other reason is that some students have become very passive learners. They have learned to wait to be told how to do it and they have learned not to trust their own responses. Remember, you can wait. Wait and give the student plenty of time to respond. At first, provide the lowest level prompt you think will help the student. Gestural/visual prompts are easier to fade, so if you can get an appropriate response with using a gesture, picture, or sign, use it in preference to verbal prompting. Wait, give them time to respond.

It is important to monitor your use of prompts. You want to make sure that the student is learning the desired skill and not just learning to respond to prompts. Can the student complete the task without prompts? That is the goal.

***The more the student understands his/her strengths and limitations and can ask for help when needed, the better you are at your job.*** The most important area of development for children is that of self determination. Research has shown that students with disabilities who have developed skills of self determination are more successful in college at working world,

no matter how significant their disability and their limited skills in other areas. What do we mean by self determination? Children with skills of self determination:

- Understand that all individuals have certain strengths and limitations and they can describe their own strengths and limitations (self awareness),
- Know when they need help and can ask for help from adults or peers (self advocacy);
- Know that sometimes it is hard but when they focus and work hard they can accomplish much (self efficacy);
- Know that all choices have consequences, can think about the consequences of choices they might consider, and make choices in their best interest (choice and decision making);
- Have goals and know that it takes planning and follow through on plans to achieve goals (goal setting and attainment).

While actualization of full self determination is not usually achieved until adulthood, children actually start developing self determination as early as kindergarten. Sometimes you might be inclined to hide the student's limitations from others and even from the student to spare his/her feelings. This hinders the student's development of self determination. You can help the student develop self determination by helping him/her:

- Talk about his/her limitations and his/her strengths,
- Ask for help when needed (rather than waiting for help),
- Develop an 'I can do it' attitude,
- Think about choices and what the natural consequences are for choices made,
- Make plans on how to accomplish tasks and self monitor following through on those plans.

***The more of your students who graduate from needing paraprofessional support, the better job you are doing.*** Remember your job is to help your students develop the skills they need to become more independent.

# Child Development

Children develop in predictable stages of cognitive, physical/sensory, social/emotional and language development. This development does not necessarily proceed evenly and is affected by such factors as heredity and the environment. The following chart describes some general characteristics of developing children:

## 5 Year Old

- |                      |  |   |   |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Physically:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has good general motor control</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• girls usually about a year ahead of boys in physical development</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• handedness is established</li> <li>• eye-hand coordination improving but limited</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Emotionally:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• affectionate with others</li> <li>• fluctuates between dependency and growing independence</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• anger may be displayed in temper tantrums</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• become anxious and shows unreasonable fears at times</li> </ul>  |
| <b>As a Learner:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has short attention span</li> <li>• language is growing more complex</li> <li>• displays some infantile articulation in speech</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very curious</li> <li>• purposeful and constructive; decides on actions before beginning them</li> <li>• creative and imaginative</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enjoys experimenting with new materials</li> <li>• talks freely; may have difficulty listening to others because of eagerness to share own experience</li> </ul> |
| <b>With Others:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capable of having, keeping friends</li> <li>• is mainly a family member; likes to help parents</li> <li>• impatient for turns</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aware of rivalry with others for attention</li> <li>• tends to be poor group member because of tendency to be a tattletale</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can be demanding in groups</li> <li>• has difficulty recognizing ownership; pulls, grabs or takes from others</li> </ul>   |

## 6 Year Old

- |                      |   |   |  |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Physically:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• easily fatigued, needs up to eleven hours sleep</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lacks development of small muscles</li> <li>• very active</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• difficulty sitting still; has limited eye-hand coordination</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Emotionally:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• craves praise; rejects correction</li> <li>• easily discouraged</li> <li>• wants to feel secure</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greatly stirred up by excitement</li> <li>• has sense of humor</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cries, has tantrums</li> <li>• fears being late to school</li> </ul>  |
| <b>As a Learner:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full of curiosity</li> <li>• interested primarily in self</li> <li>• lives in the present</li> <li>• has difficulty making decisions</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• little concept of time</li> <li>• has short attention span</li> <li>• wants to learn many new skills</li> <li>• learns through active participation</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enjoys listening to stories, poems</li> <li>• reaching reading readiness stage; reads pictures, printed symbols</li> </ul>  |
| <b>With Others:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wants to play with other children</li> <li>• likes some group play, but may have difficulty accepting adult direction</li> <li>• wants to be first</li> <li>• likes variety in play, work</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• likes responsibility</li> <li>• likes to imitate, dramatize</li> <li>• is very talkative</li> <li>• is at times angelic, generous, companionable; at other times, self-centered and demanding</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is sometimes quarrelsome, rude, rebellious</li> <li>• likes family outings</li> <li>• is beginning to be aware of own race</li> <li>• is eager to win adult approval</li> </ul> |

## 7 Year Old

- |                      |   |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Physically:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in a period of slow, steady growth</li> <li>• has uneven, incomplete muscle development</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has more control of large muscles than small</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved in eye-hand coordination, but not yet ready for close, fine work</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Emotionally:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confused by sudden changes: needs time to adjust to new situations</li> <li>• easily over stimulated</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sets unrealistic goals, then feels frustrated</li> <li>• moody</li> <li>• pretends not to hear when too much guidance is offered</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concerned about treatment received from others</li> <li>• has sense of humor</li> </ul>  |
| <b>As a Learner:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inquisitive and curious</li> <li>• has short attention span</li> <li>• has established speech habits; enjoys talking</li> <li>• ability to think clearly exceeds ability to express thoughts</li> <li>• developing ability to express</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can share personal experiences with small groups</li> <li>• learns most readily through concrete experiences, active participation</li> <li>• draws upon experience to solve problems</li> <li>• understands some words without direct experience</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing independence in thinking, working</li> <li>• likes to demonstrate ability to make choices</li> <li>• can help plan simple, immediate activities</li> <li>• has increased ability to generalize, organize, classify, reason</li> </ul> |
| <b>With Others:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wants group involvement, yet individualist and self-centered</li> <li>• competitive; likes to be first</li> <li>• likes to imitate peers, adults</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• careless of others' property, but protective of own things</li> <li>• wants approval and assurance of adults and peers, but also wants to feel independent</li> <li>• begins to join playground games</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appreciates contributions of others</li> <li>• shows race and group consciousness</li> <li>• eager to please</li> </ul>  |

## 8 Year Old

- |                     |   |  |  |
|---------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Physically:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• growing slowly, steadily; arms are lengthening, hands are enlarging</li> <li>• sometimes awkward because of uneven growth</li> <li>• restless and fidgety</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved muscular coordination, but still has better control over large muscles than small</li> <li>• developmentally ready to see both near and far</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows much interest in developing eye-hand coordination skills</li> <li>• energetic, but tires easily</li> <li>• has high accident rate due to tendency to be daring thinking</li> <li>• likes variety in school day</li> </ul> |
| <b>Emotionally:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when angry or tired, acts careless and noisy</li> <li>• very eager; has more enthusiasm than wisdom</li> <li>• self-critical; is maturing in capacity for self-evaluation</li> <li>• wants to be good</li> <li>• needs much praise, encouragement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eager to be considered grown up</li> <li>• wants prestige; may seek it through boasting</li> <li>• more dependent on parent(s) and less so on teacher</li> <li>• likes to giggle; does so without much provocation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may have many fears, such as fear of being alone or of dark</li> <li>• needs to be protected from overstimulation in environment</li> <li>• can initiate, plan activities</li> </ul>  |

*{continued on following page}*



## 8 Year Old *(continued)*

- As a Learner:**
- inquisitive and curious
  - has short attention span
  - has established speech habits; enjoys talking
  - ability to think clearly exceeds ability to express thoughts
  - developing ability to express
  - can share personal experiences with small groups
  - learns most readily through concrete experiences, active participation
  - draws upon experience to solve problems
  - understands some words without direct experience
  - developing independence in thinking, working
  - likes to demonstrate ability to make choices
  - can help plan simple, immediate activities
  - has increased ability to generalize, organize, classify, reason adventure stories, fairy tales, singing, rhythms, collections of all kinds
- With Others:**
- likes to talk
  - likes to be with people
  - desires approval of peers, adults
  - prefers to work, play with those of own sex
  - chooses own friends; tends to have a best friend
  - likes to take part in same activities that friends do
  - wants to look like others
  - has increased ability to work, play in groups
  - likes school
  - alert, friendly, interested in people
  - desires to be part of the group
  - enjoys dressing up, playacting with friends
  - behaves in contradictory ways, such as fighting with best friend
  - likes to argue
  - very sensitive to criticism from adults
  - dislikes being told what to do; prefers subtle hint
  - able to accept some responsibility

## 9 Year Old

- Physically:**
- eyes are now ready for close, detailed work
  - has good eye-hand coordination; is ready for crafts, shopwork, maps, other detailed work
  - uses both large and small body muscles
  - tends to assume awkward body postures
- Emotionally:**
- becomes irritable, exhausted from working or playing too hard
  - strives to improve skills; has spirit of competition
  - makes extreme, quick emotional shifts; can swing from fair play to aggression, from humor to hostility
  - worries about health, schoolwork, report cards, failure
  - embarrasses easily
  - annoyed by small details of living, such as keeping track of belongings, being neat
  - thinks own things are best; family, class, teacher, school
- As a Learner:**
- desires to build body of knowledge about such things as social studies, science, sports records, television
  - notices life sequence, studies people for evidence of change
  - observes, thinks critically of self and world
  - finds homework interesting if allowed to offer own thoughts
  - objects to interruption of favorite school activities
  - finds pleasure in using own skills; reading for information, writing to communicate own ideas, organizing to improve own work
  - discriminates between meanings of words
  - becoming more creative in thought, written language
  - plans activities in detail
  - enjoys written work
  - compares grades with classmates; blames own poor scholarship on outside factors
  - prefers reading silently for pleasure, orally for information
  - often forgets to bring books, supplies from home
  - likes music, wants to take instrumental lessons
  - prefers individual instruction from teacher

**9 Year Old** *(continued)*

- With Others:**
- likes most activities of school day
  - identifies self as part of group
  - periodically practices good manners
  - desires information about family background
  - stresses fair play within competition; judges teachers, friends accordingly
  - shows more interest in activity than in people doing the activity
  - supports importance of group over individual
  - strives to live by own group's goals
  - is likely to pick on others or be picked on by peers
  - doesn't stay long with any activity
  - engages in more giggling, whispering, secretive conversations than before
  - likes to help friends
  - is rowdy one moment, polite the next
  - evaluates self, others by own standards; ignores adult opinions
  - enjoys frightening, spying on, hiding from, scuffling with friends
  - can enjoy games as spectator as well as participant

**10 Year Old**

- Physically:**
- has boundless energy
  - shows increased skill in use of hands
  - displays eye-hand coordination far beyond that of earlier childhood
  - displays uneven growth of different body parts
  - likes games requiring a variety of skills
  - often has poor posture
  - tires easily and is awkward and restless, due to rapid, uneven growth
- Emotionally:**
- responds very positively to praise
  - sometimes overcritical, unchangeable, uncooperative
  - resents being nagged, condemned, talked down to
  - wants security that comes from adult approval
  - often rebels against practice of personal hygiene
  - gains much satisfaction from increased ability to achieve
  - growing in ability to accept consequences of own mistakes, if not too serious
  - more interested, concerned about ideas and beliefs of others than of self
- As a Learner:**
- has broadening interests
  - curious about how things work
  - eager to explore; enjoys attacking problems
  - likes to read
  - willing to read extensively to solve problems
  - wants to improve own ability, master skills
  - has increasing attention span
  - enjoys realistic and factual materials in books
  - likes to take part in discussions
  - is beginning to understand sequencing in historical events
  - understands some geography
  - collects stamps, models, stray pets
  - shows increasing interest in community, nation, world
  - begins to understand that there are problems in outside world
  - develops realistic sense of own strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes
  - begins to realize importance of expressing own ideas in clear, comprehensive way
  - likes adventure
- With Others:**
- becoming increasingly independent
  - has strong sense of justice and honor
  - is fundamentally honest
  - likes group activities in work, play
  - willing to abide by group decisions
  - has best friends of same sex
  - likes games in which girls play against boys
  - desires admiration, approval of own age group
  - interested in gangs or clubs with secret words, codes
  - will join in a discussion of an individual club member's shortcomings
  - engages in roughhousing, pointless laughter, practical jokes, silly antics
  - tends to rebel at suggestions from adults
  - responds readily to affection and humor from adults
  - tends toward hero worship

**11 Year****Old****Physically:**

- possesses much energy; is restless
- grows rapidly in weight, height (especially girls)
- is less fearful than before of physically demanding games
- experiences growth plateaus followed by uneven development of body parts, often causing awkwardness
- takes shorter rest periods than before
- develops pimples; perspires profusely
- shows evidence of physical maturity (physically, girls are often a full year ahead of boys)

**Emotionally:**

- experiences fulfillment from succeeding in risk-taking play
- is curious about personal relationships
- wants to express affection; can find an outlet for this in caring for pets
- is growing in development of feelings and judgements that are more stable, less self-serving

**As a Learner:**

- interested in books on adventure, mystery, science, nature
- shows progress in generalizing, making deductions
- shows increased skill in problem solving
- interested in other people's ideas
- has greater understanding of concepts of time, place
- has highly developed sense of rhythm, sound discrimination, associative memory
- shows interest in and works effectively with concrete materials such as clay, paints, wood

**With Others:**

- is eager to get along in peer groups
- considers peer approval more important than adult approval
- wants prestige in own group
- wants to dress like friends; adopts fads
- wants to belong to clubs with rules
- reacts favorably to understandable authority
- interested in rivalry, competition
- likes team games
- respects good sportsmanship
- interested in earning money for special wants
- is beginning to understand interdependence of people

Characteristics of the twelve and thirteen-year-old as a learner are not given below since, generally speaking, changes in this area after age eleven are not nearly as rapid as before. Children between the ages of eleven and fifteen share certain mental characteristics. They think more logically. They can make deductions. They develop higher math skills. They combine ideas and see contradictions more easily. Children in this age range do continue, however, to experience changes physically, emotionally, and socially.

### *12 Year Old*

- |                     |   |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Physically:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fatigues more easily than in past few years</li> <li>• sleeps less deeply than before</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is able to sit quietly for increasingly longer periods of time</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows definite signs of the beginning of puberty</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>Emotionally:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restricts showing affection for parents</li> <li>• worries about schoolwork, exams</li> <li>• expresses anger verbally more often than before</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cries less often</li> <li>• conceals hurt feelings</li> <li>• shows less jealousy, except toward siblings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows maturing sense of humor</li> <li>• growing cautious about expressing emotions</li> </ul> |
| <b>With Others:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• likes team aspect of games</li> <li>• gets along better with friends and parents than in past few years</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows increasing tact with siblings</li> <li>• likes teachers</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more critical of self than before</li> <li>• finds role model of same sex</li> </ul>           |

### *13 Year Old*

- |                     |   |   |  |
|---------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Physically:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experiencing full-blown puberty</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more likely to be overweight than underweight</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• often has tremendous appetite</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Emotionally:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spends much time in daydreaming, fantasy</li> <li>• very concerned with physical appearance</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accepts self less than during previous year</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tends to worry about health</li> </ul>  |
| <b>With Others:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• takes risks that may include minor delinquency</li> <li>• has difficulty balancing demands of peers, adults</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has conflicts with parents more than ever before</li> <li>• girl changes friends often; seeks to belong to peer group</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boy seeks best friends of same sex</li> <li>• shows disapproval of nonconforming peers</li> </ul> |

## *Twenty Ways to “Be the Best That You Can Be”*

With Student:	With Teacher:	With Environment:	With Self:
Learn names of students immediately.	Consult often with the teacher as to how you can help.	Become familiar with the school building, grounds, personnel.	Be mature in your conduct and demonstrate that you are a responsible person.
Learn as much about each student as quickly as possible.	Inform the teachers with whom you work of any special talents, interests, or special experiences you have had.	Learn the routine of the school day.	Ask for clarification when you do not understand an assignment or suggestion.
Lend personal assistance to students wherever possible.	Practice observing in a meaningful way every chance you get.	Become acquainted immediately with emergency procedures.	Be on time and leave at an appropriate time.
Give encouragement to students whenever and wherever possible.	Watch carefully how the teacher deals with and directs students.	Learn the location of and how to use equipment.	
Praise students' efforts and successes.	Exchange telephone numbers with your teacher(s).	Become acquainted with school policy as it applies to you and your work.	
Be patient in dealing with students.	Get acquainted with other staff members.		

Source: Adapted from the Parapro Training Packet, Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education, .

# Abbreviations/Acronyms

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ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act Attention Deficit	LEA	Local Educational Agency
ADHD	Hyperactivity Disorder	LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
CPS	Child Protective Services	LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
DAPE	Developmental Adaptive Physical Education	NA	Not Applicable
DCD: MM	Developmental Cognitive Disability - Mild to Moderate	OT	Occupational Therapy (or Occupational Therapist)
DCD: SP	Developmental Cognitive Disability - Severe to Profound	PE	Physical Education
DD	Developmentally Disabled	PI	Physically Impaired
DOB	Date of Birth	PT	Physical Therapy (or Physical Therapist)
ECSE	Early Childhood Special Education	PLAAFP	Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance
EBD	Emotional Behavioral Disorder	RN	Registered Nurse
ELL	English Language Learner	RTI	Response to Intervention
ESY	Extended School Year	RRSEC	Rum River Special Education Cooperative
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education	SPED	Special Education, more commonly Sp. Ed. when abbreviated Section 504 Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
FAS	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome		
GIA	General Intellectual Ability		
GPA	Grade Point Average (Dept. of )	SLD	Specific Learning Disability
DHH	Deaf Hard of Hearing Impaired (Dept. of )	SLP	Speech-Language Pathologist
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	SS	Standard Score
IEP	Individualized Education Program	TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
IHP	Individualized Health Plan	TDD	Telephone Device for the Deaf
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan	VI	Visually Impaired
ISP	Individualized Service Plan		