

Considerations for Administrators in Supporting and Supervising Special Education Paraprofessionals

A Training Developed through
PDE's Special Education
Paraprofessional Initiative

www.pattan.net



Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

PaTTAN's Mission

The mission of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) is to support the efforts and initiatives of the Bureau of Special Education, and to build the capacity of local educational agencies to serve students who receive special education services.

PDE's Commitment to Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Our goal for each child is to ensure Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams begin with the general education setting with the use of Supplementary Aids and Services before considering a more restrictive environment.

Agenda

- Introduction
- Laws, Regulations and Standards Related to Paraprofessionals
- Supervision, Policies, Team Roles and Ethical Considerations
- When and How We Use Paraprofessionals

Outcomes

- Identify key laws and regulations related to employment and utilization of special education paraprofessionals in Pennsylvania
- Describe the role of school administrators in guiding classroom team members to build their skills, to understand their specific roles, and carry out their responsibilities in supporting students with disabilities
- Explore how paraprofessionals can be assigned and utilized in a manner that supports current best practice in the field.

Navigating the Training Materials

- Overview of Considerations for Administrators in Supporting and Supervising Special Education Paraprofessionals
- PowerPoint Slides
- Activities
- Resources

Interviews with Administrators

- Rebecca Chadwick

Educational Consultant, Berks County IU 14
Office of Professional Development and Curriculum

- Jennifer Peszek

Special Education Coordinator, Abington School District

- Cheryl Wise

Special Education Supervisor, Montgomery County IU

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- Susan Sams, Ph.D.

Program Director, DART Preschool Early Intervention
Allegheny IU 3

Introduction

- What is a Special Education Paraprofessional?
- Why This Training Matters

What is a Special Education Paraprofessional?

A school employee who works under the direction of a certified staff member to support and assist in providing services to children with disabilities or eligible young children.

Two Types in PA:

- Instructional Paraprofessionals
- Personal Care Assistants

Why This Training Matters

- The goals of education are the same for students with disabilities as for their non-disabled peers.
- We need to ensure that services our programs and personnel provide move students towards these goals.
- All educational team members must receive training and guidance to ensure delivery of quality services to students.

Laws, Regulations and Standards Related to Paraprofessionals



Paraprofessionals in PA

- Paraprofessional
 - AKA – Paraeducator, Aide, Teacher assistant, Job coach, Personal care aide, and many , many more!
- Special Education Personnel
 - 2003-2004
 - Special Education Teachers 21,317
 - Paraprofessionals: 14,022
 - 2009-2010
 - Special Education Teachers 22,248 **(+4%)**
 - Paraprofessionals: 21,440 **(+53%)**

Regulations Regarding Paraprofessionals

- NCLB (2001) required Title I paraprofessionals to be qualified.
- IDEA 2004 and implementing regulations of 2006 required special education paraprofessionals to meet state requirements.
- PA State Board of Education included standards for special education paraprofessionals in state regulations effective July 1, 2008.

Regulations – Federal

IDEA (2004)

- § 300.156 Personnel qualifications: The State must establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. The qualifications for paraprofessionals must be **consistent with any State recognized requirements.**

Regulations – State

- Chapter § 14.105 (2008) defines two types of special education paraprofessionals
 - Instructional
 - Personal Care Assistants
- Requirements
 - Instructional: Meet Qualifications & 20 hours annually of professional development
 - PCA's: 60 hours annually of professional

NCLB and Chapter 14

NCLB Section 1119 (c)

Chapter 14.105.a

Each LEA shall ensure that all paraprofessionals hired after 2002 and working in a program supported with Title I funds shall have —

Instructional paraprofessionals shall meet one of the following qualifications effective July 1, 2010:

(A) completed at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education;

(i) Have completed at least 2 years of postsecondary study.

(B) obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or

(ii) Possess an associate degree or higher.

(C) met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment.

(iii) Meet a rigorous standard of quality as demonstrated through a State or local assessment.

Early Intervention Considerations

- How the Paraprofessional is employed determines the qualifications required...
- Preschool Early Intervention Program
 - IU or District
- Childcare and Head Start Programs
 - PQAS – PA Quality Assurance System
 - Keystone Stars – 1- 4 star ratings

Instructional Paraprofessional

A school employee who works under the direction of a certified staff member to **support** and **assist** in providing **instructional** programs and services to children with disabilities or eligible young children.

Instructional Paraprofessional (cont.)

Such support and assistance includes one-to-one or group review of material taught by certificated staff, classroom management and implementation of positive behavior support plans.

Services may be provided in a special education class, regular education class, or other instructional setting as provided in the student's IEP.

Instructional Paraprofessionals

Effective July 1, 2010 must

I. Have completed at least two years of postsecondary study

OR

II. Possess an associate degree or higher

OR

III. Meet a rigorous standard of quality as demonstrated through a State or local assessment.

Continuing Staff Development

Beginning with the 08-09 school year, each school year, paraprofessionals must provide evidence of 20 hours of staff development activities related to their assignment.

Personal Care Assistant

Provides **one-to-one support and assistance** to a student, including support and assistance in the use of **medical** equipment (e.g. augmentative **communication** devices; activities of **daily living**; and monitoring **health** and **behavior**).

May provide support to more than one student, but not at the same time.

PCA Staff Development

Beginning with the 08-09 school year, each school year, PCA's must provide evidence of 20 hours of staff development activities related to their assignment.

This may include training required by the school-based ACCESS program.

Credential of Competency

One way for LEAs to help
paraprofessionals become
qualified

PA Credential of Competency

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

- Promulgated performance-based standards for special education paraeducators in 2000.
- List of basic Knowledge and Skills needed to work successfully in educational environments.

Bureau of Special Education

- Endorsed use of these CEC standards for the initial preparation and practice of special education paraeducators.
- Checklist format adapted from Twin Falls School District #411, Idaho, Paraeducator Portfolio Plan & Competency Checklist, 2002.

CEC will shortly release updated and expanded standards

PA Credential of Competency

Standards:

- # 1: Foundations of Special Education
- # 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners
- # 3: Individual Learning Differences
- # 4: Instructional Strategies
- # 5: Learning Environments & Social Interactions
- # 6: Language
- # 7: Instructional Planning
- # 8: Assessment
- # 9: Professional & Ethical Practice
- # 10: Collaboration

PA Credential of Competency Checklist

Standard # 1 – Foundations of Special Education

Employee Name: Ms. Mary Smith Work Location: Smart Elementary
 Job Title: Paraeducator

Verification: C=Class I=Interview D=Demonstration P=Portfolio				
Date Competency Achieved:				
Achievement Level: E=Entry I=Intermediate A=Advanced				
1. Foundations of Special Education		E-I-A	Date Achieved	C-I-D-P
<i>Essential knowledge:</i>				
<u>K1</u>	<u>Purposes of programs for individuals with exceptional learning needs</u>	<u>I</u>	8/24/2003	C
<u>K2</u>	<u>Basic educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities</u>	<u>I</u>	8/24/2003	P

Documented by:

Joseph Reynolds

Signature of Supervisor

Joseph Reynolds, Principal

(Type or print supervisor's name and title)

9/2/2003

Date

Credential Approval

Submit just the checklist and the coversheet.

- Certificates of attendance, portfolios, essays etc. not needed.

It takes 6-8 weeks to process applications.

Any application that has only classes listed for all standards will be rejected.

- Skill entries that begin with action verbs are best documented with D, I or P.

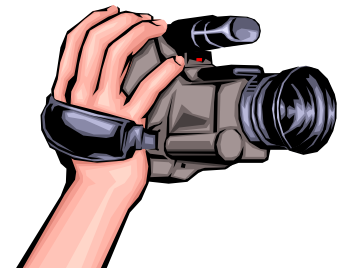
What is wrong with this picture?

- A stack of applications was received from a district where, all applicants had completed all the standards in the same manner, on the same day, at the same achievement level.

Options for Staff Development

Paraprofessionals must work with their supervisors to ensure that courses are acceptable

- PaTTAN
 - after-school series, online- courses, summer training
- IUs
 - courses, summer academies, year-long series
- Districts
 - PD Days, book study, CPR, etc./
- Community College or University



Training Materials For Your Use

Training materials from most training sessions available for use by IU's and Districts to train paraprofessionals in-house

- PPT slides
- PPT with notes for trainers
- Activity Packets

Visit www.pattan.net , click *resources*, then browse *instructional materials*

Resources

- Credential of Competency for Special Education Paraeducators: Documentation of Special Education Paraeducators' Competence in Standards-Based Knowledge and Skills
- FAQs Chapter 14 Regulations: Excerpts from Q&A's about 22 *PA Code Chapter 14.105: Personnel*

- Certification and Staffing Policies and Guidelines: CSPG 101—Utilization of Paraprofessional Staff

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/certification_staffing_policies_%28cspgs%29/8626/ancillary_staffing_information/507118

Supervision, Policies, Team Roles and Ethical Considerations



As School Leaders...

- Do we know what skills paraprofessionals need to be effective in supporting students?
- Do our schools or programs have the supports in place to ensure that paraprofessionals are able to be effective?
- More is needed than minimum Chapter 14 requirements



As School Leaders...

- Are we communicating to paraprofessionals the skills they need in order to support students?
- How do we tell if they have those skills?
- How are we monitoring whether the tasks that paraprofessionals are asked to do are appropriate for their position?

Administrator Review of Systems and Supports for Paraprofessionals

This tool has been designed to assist school administrators in identifying the systems, processes, and procedures that are in place to support and guide the work of paraprofessionals.

Directions: Rate each of the following statements using the rubric. You may include documentation that supports your rating.

	Documentation Used for Decision Making	In Place	In Process	Not In Place
A. Hiring and Assigning Paraprofessionals				
1. District policy exists regarding paraprofessional qualifications.				
2. Procedures and practices are in place to recruit, hire, and retain paraprofessionals.				
3. Process and criteria for determining the need for paraprofessional support for students with disabilities to receive an appropriate education are in place.				
4. Paraprofessionals have job descriptions that outline their roles and responsibilities.				
5. Where paraprofessional support is indicated in the IEP, written plans exist to clarify the nature and extent of that support (i.e. specially designed instruction, accommodations, IEP goals, individual /classroom support).				
6. In cases when a paraprofessional is needed for an individual student, efforts are made to ensure that paraprofessionals provide supportive rather than primary or exclusive services.				
7. When administrators make work assignments and reassignments to meet students' needs, input is solicited from paraprofessionals, teachers and other team members to understand factors that may influence job performance.				
8. Substitute paraprofessionals are recruited and trained to ensure that a student's access to education and participation in his/her educational program is not unduly disrupted when the regular paraprofessional is unavailable.				

Preparing to Use Paraprofessionals

Job Descriptions

A: 4—Separate job descriptions for each type of paraprofessional used by the organization

D: 14-20—Teacher job description addresses role in providing day to day guidance to paraprofessionals

A: 2,3,7—Administrator job description(s) define role in hiring, placing, supervising and evaluating paraprofessionals

Preparing to Use Paraprofessionals



Considerations used to
match
paraprofessionals with
students/classrooms

Preparing to Use Paraprofessionals

A: 8 Recruitment and training of substitute paraprofessionals

Preparing to Use Paraprofessionals

Plan for clear lines of communication regarding expectations and/or need for guidance



Day to Day Management

MBWA— Management by Walking Around

Go to: Managing by Walking
Around by Olivier Serrat
from handout list



Clarifying Roles



The Distinction in Roles of Paraeducators and Teachers
<http://www.nrcpara.org/paranews/hot-topic-%E2%80%93-distinction-roles-paraeducators-and-teacher>

Performance Evaluation

Who contributes to the paraprofessional's performance evaluation?

- Administrator
- Teacher(s)?
- Parent(s)?
- Students(s)?
- Permanent products such as data records, etc.
- Others?

Resources

- Certification and Staffing Policies and Guidelines: CSPG 101—Utilization of Paraprofessional Staff

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/certification_staffing_policies_%28cspgs%29/8626/ancillary_staffing_information/507118

Resources

- Administrator Review of Systems and Supports for Paraprofessionals. (2012) Adapted from Giangreco, Edelman, and Broer, *Schoolwide Planning to Improve Paraeducator Supports*. University of Vermont, Burlington; Wallace, Shin, Bartholomay, and Stahl, *Knowledge and Skills for Teachers Supervising the Work of Paraprofessionals*; and Gerlich, K., Pacific Training Associates, *District and/or Building Assessment of Paraeducator Issues*

Resources

- Paraprofessional Training Needs Tool. Adapted from *Report on the Needs Assessment of Title I Paraprofessionals*, October 2003, Department of Public Instruction, Madison, WI; Council for Exceptional Children. (2008). *What Every Special Educator Must Know: Ethics, Standards, and Guidelines* (6th ed.). Arlington, VA

Resources

- Van Oort, D., The Distinction in Roles of Paraeducators and Teachers, National Resource Center for Paraeducators, Hot Topic 12/12/2011 <http://www.nrcpara.org/paranews/hot-topic-%E2%80%93-distinction-roles-paraeducators-and-teacher>
- Serrat, O., Managing by Walking Around, Knowledge Solutions, Asian Development Bank. April, 2009
<http://www.adb.org/publications/managing-walking-around?ref=site/knowledge-management/publications>

When and How We Use Paraprofessionals



Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

IDEA 2004 allows for

“...paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised...to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities” (34 CFR 300.156.iii)

Who Decides When a Paraprofessional Is Needed?

- IEP Team Decision
- No specific regulatory guidance
- Paraprofessional should not be the ‘Go-To’ support option
- Need to consider the array of potential Supplementary Aids and Services (SaS) that may meet a student’s needs

Supplementary Aids and Services

Collaborative	Adults working together to support students.
Instructional	Development and delivery of instruction that addresses diverse learning needs.
Physical	Adaptations and modifications to the physical environment.
Social-Behavioral	Supports and services to increase appropriate behavior and reduce disruptive or interfering

SaS: Collaborative Examples

- Professional development related to collaboration
- Scheduled time for co-planning and team meetings
- Co-teaching; classroom consultation
- Scheduled opportunities for parental collaboration
- Mentor teachers



SaS: Instructional Examples

- Using a keyboard/word prediction software
- Providing text-to-speech or other digital alternatives for accessing text
- Providing guided notes
- Using scaffolding to plan for written work
- Providing visual cues
- Modifying curricular goals



SaS: Physical Examples



- Arrange furniture differently or provide specialized furniture
- Adjust sensory characteristics of environment (e.g., temperature, sound)
- Provide access to specific areas of classroom or other settings outside of classroom
- Allow for water bottle or sensory object during instruction

SaS: Social-Behavioral Examples

- Modify rules or expectations
- Use of peer supports
- Individualized behavioral support plan
- Social skills training
- Counseling supports



When Paraprofessional Support is Indicated...

- Support should be determined based on student needs not disability category
- Have a clear plan for when and how paraprofessional support is to be provided
- Ensure student's main source of instruction is the teacher
- Have a plan to fade paraprofessional supports over time

When Paraprofessional Support is Indicated...

Be aware of unintended negative effects

- Over-dependence on the paraprofessional
- Separation from classmates
- Interference with peer interaction
- Feelings of stigmatization
- Interference with teacher engagement with the student
- Loss of personal control
- Problem behavior
- Risk of being bullied

When Paraprofessional Support is Indicated...

Jigsaw Activity

The Golden Rule of Providing Support in
Inclusive Classrooms: Support Others as
You Would Wish to be Supported

Julie N. Causton-Theoharis

Consider for a moment that the school system paid someone to be with you – supporting you 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. Now, imagine that you had no say over who that support person was or how she or he supported you. Or imagine that someone regularly stopped into your place of employment to provide you with one-on-one support. This person was present for all your interactions, escorted you to the restroom, and at times supported you by touching your back or shoulder or manipulating your hands, head or other parts of your body. This support person might also give you oral directions for upcoming tasks.

- *Would you become more independent or more dependent?*
- *How would this support change your relationships with your peers?*
- *Would you notice a loss of privacy or freedom?*
- *Would this person's presence affect your creativity?*
- *At times, would you feel self-conscious about having someone supporting you?*
- *What would happen if you didn't want him or her to touch you?*
- *Do you think you might develop negative behaviors?*

Everyone reads the first page and the scenarios

- Rationale for Fading Support
- How to Fade Adult Support
- Alternatives to Side-by-Side Support
- Plan to Fade
- Tables 1 and 2

As School Leaders...

Do we provide support to our paraprofessionals to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to:

- follow plans that are developed by the educational team (behavioral, instructional, etc.)?
- carry out instructional tasks, data recording, etc.?
- collaborate with educational team members?

As School Leaders...

Do we provide support to our paraprofessionals to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to:

- allow students to be as independent as possible?
- provide support, but fade support over time?
- use the types of cues and prompts that the specific student needs?
- support the use of special equipment, devices and communication systems?

Considerations

- How do we use paraprofessionals in our school?
- How does the school leadership promote use of paraprofessional supports throughout the school?
- What skills do general and special education teachers need to guide paraprofessionals in their classes?
- What skills do paraprofessionals need to

Considerations

- What are the similarities/differences in paraprofessional supports across educational placements?
 - Self-contained class, general education class, Career Technical Education setting, etc.
- Can a paraprofessional be used as a support to the entire classroom? What does that look like?

Summary

- Special Education Paraprofessionals can be an invaluable resource as part of the educational team.
- The role of paraprofessional in the classroom continues to evolve.
- School leaders can be proactive in ensuring structures that support student achievement through the effective use of paraprofessionals.

Resources

- Causton-Theoharis, J.N. (2009) The Golden Rule for Providing Support in Inclusive Classrooms: Support Others as You Would Wish to Be Supported. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 36-43.
- Giangreco, M.F. (Feb. 2010) One-to-One Paraprofessionals for Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms: Is Conventional Wisdom Wrong? *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 48 (1), 1-13.

Resources

- Giangreco, M.F. (Oct, 2003) Working with Paraprofessionals. *Educational Leadership*, 61(2),50-53.
- PEAL Center. (Fall, 2011) Piece by Piece: Building Educational Success in Pennsylvania. *Special Education Paraprofessionals*, Fall 2011.
- Pennsylvania Department of Education. *Supplementary Aids and Services*, <http://tinyurl.com/sastoolkit>

Resources

- Administrator Review of Systems and Supports for Paraprofessionals. (2012) Adapted from Giangreco, Edelman, and Broer, *Schoolwide Planning to Improve Paraeducator Supports*. University of Vermont, Burlington; Wallace, Shin, Bartholomay, and Stahl, *Knowledge and Skills for Teachers Supervising the Work of Paraprofessionals*; and Gerlich, K., Pacific Training Associates, *District and/or Building Assessment of Paraeducator Issues*,

Resources

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