

Working with
Paraprofessionals
A Resource for
Teachers of Students
with Disabilities

Guiding Questions and Processing Activities

Developed by:
Stephanie Aldridge | Consultant, Progress in the General Curriculum
Education Service Center, Region 10
2019



Working with Paraprofessionals

A Resource for Educators of Students with Disabilities

Guiding Questions



Roles and Responsibilities

1. Are all paraprofessional staff assigned to roles in alignment with their certification classification and designed to maximize the progress in the general curriculum for the student(s) they serve?
2. How intentionally are supports faded in order to increase student independence and reduce learned helplessness?
3. How long should a one to one paraprofessional serve the same student? Under what circumstances should staff be reassigned/rotated?
4. What are the consequences of removing a paraprofessional from assigned students in order to cover another classroom and/or to serve as a substitute teacher?
5. What professional development is offered to paraprofessionals to increase their efficacy?

Communication and Confidentiality

1. How are paraprofessionals being equipped with specific protocols and/or language to redirect a parent back to the teacher?
2. What methods of documenting communications between teachers and paraprofessional are in place to maintain consistency of expectations?
3. What specific teacher actions communicate to parents trust and respect for the paraprofessional supporting their child?
4. What specific teacher actions communicate to students trust and respect for the paraprofessional in the classroom?
5. What are our communication norms in regard to confidentiality?
6. When is it appropriate to discuss a student?

Documentation

1. Do our systems of documentation adequately serve our needs or do they need revision?
2. How frequently is feedback provided to paraprofessional staff?
3. How do paraprofessionals provide feedback about students?
4. How does ongoing feedback between staff enhance the progress of students?
5. Under what circumstances should a mediator be sought out to help resolve conflicts between staff?

Activity Title: Roles and Responsibility Scavenger Hunt

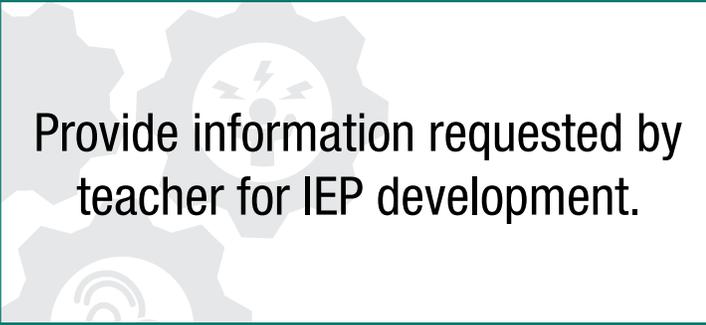
Purpose of Activity	Staff will analyze statements based on the roles and are responsibilities of paraprofessionals and determine whether the statement is accurate.
Suggested Time	20 minutes
Materials	Working with Paraprofessionals A Resource for Educators of Students with Disabilities (a copy for each person), Template with phrases
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tape the “Yes” and “No” cards on opposite sides of the room.2. Ask everyone to skim page 11 of the document.3. Assign each table/group one or more of the statement cards.4. Participants will use pages 12-29 of the document to determine if their statement(s) is a “Yes” or “No” for a paraprofessional.5. Ask groups to tape their statement(s) on the appropriate “Yes” or “No” card.6. Groups visit each side of the room and discuss the statements posted there.<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Are there any with which you disagree?– Are there any that we need to discuss?– Are there any that might be “on the fence” depending on how it is interpreted?

A decorative graphic of a gear with a scalloped edge, rendered in white with a light gray shadow, positioned behind the word 'YES'.

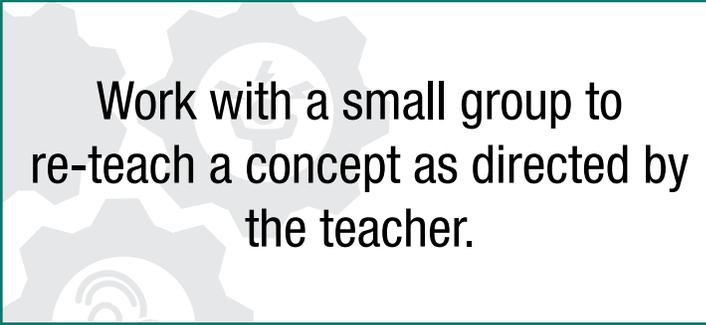
YES

A decorative graphic of a gear with a scalloped edge, rendered in white with a light gray shadow, positioned behind the word 'NO'.

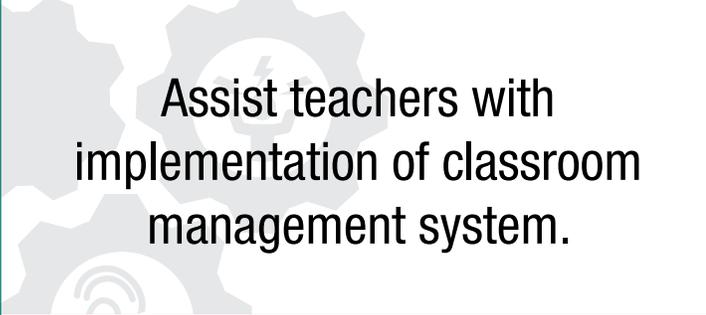
NO



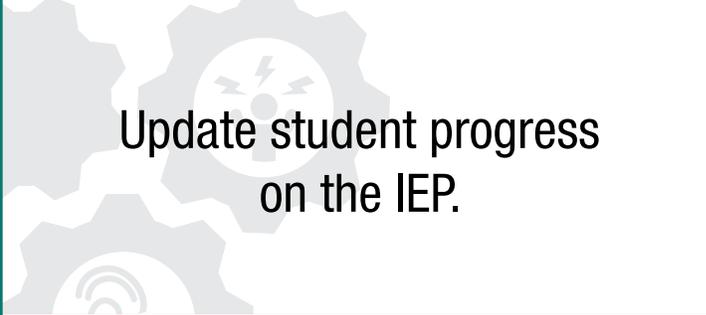
Provide information requested by teacher for IEP development.



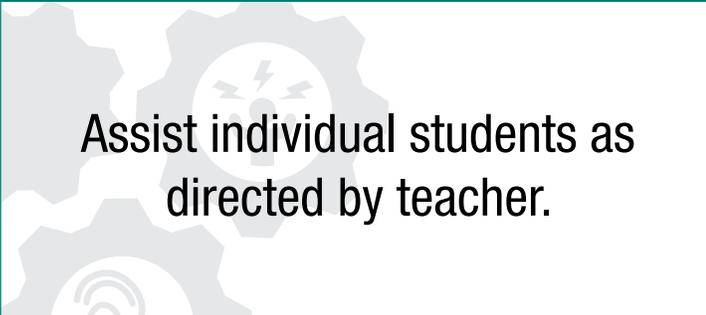
Work with a small group to re-teach a concept as directed by the teacher.



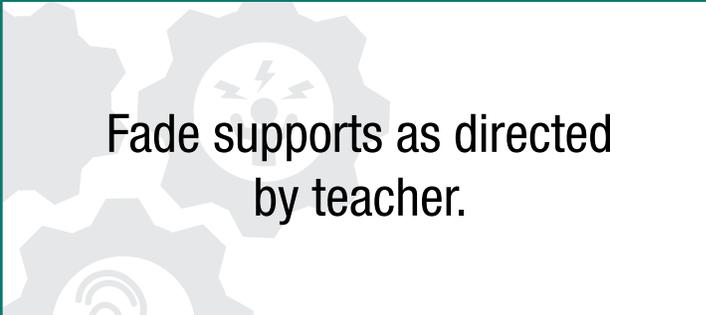
Assist teachers with implementation of classroom management system.



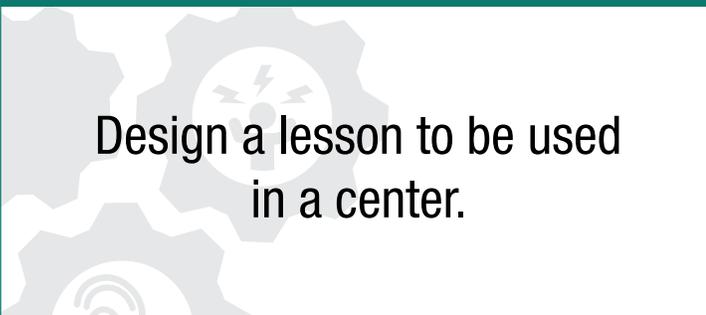
Update student progress on the IEP.



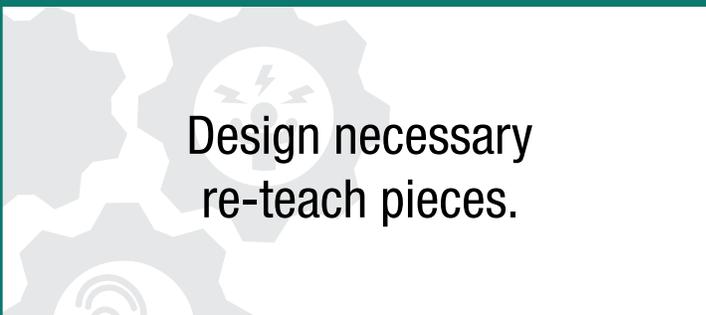
Assist individual students as directed by teacher.



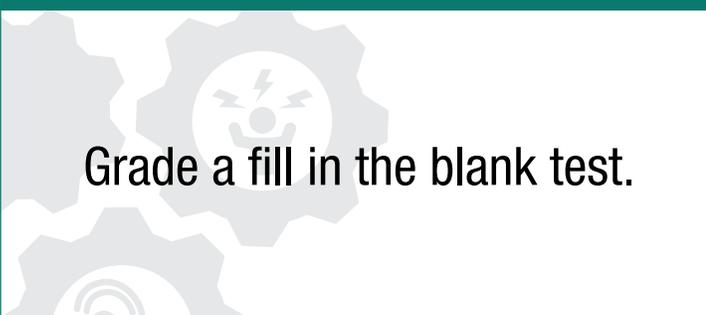
Fade supports as directed by teacher.



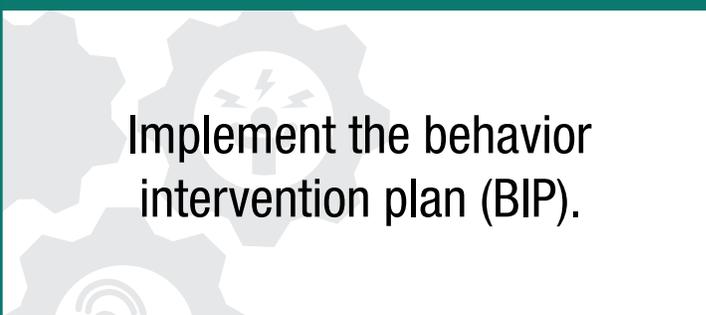
Design a lesson to be used in a center.



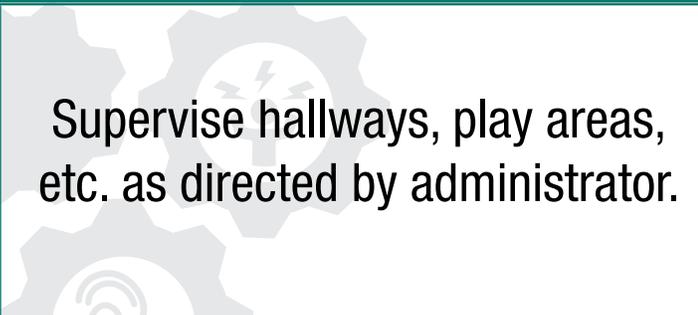
Design necessary re-teach pieces.



Grade a fill in the blank test.



Implement the behavior intervention plan (BIP).



Supervise hallways, play areas,
etc. as directed by administrator.



Implement IEP required supports
(accommodations).



Attend ARD meetings.



Design lesson plans.

Scavenger Hunt Answer Key

Provide information requested by teacher for IEP development.	Yes (pages 14, 20, 25)
Design a lesson to be used in a center.	No (pages 14, 21, 26) - but could implement the plan in a center
Work with a small group to re-teach a concept as directed by the teacher.	Yes (pages 15, 21, 26)
Design necessary re-teach pieces.	No (pages 15, 21, 26) – can't design but could implement a reteach piece
Grade a fill in the blank test.	Yes (pages 16, 22, 27)
Update student progress on the IEP.	No (pages 16, 22, 27) – they may provide data for the teacher, however
Assist teachers with implementation of classroom management system.	Yes (pages 17, 23, 28)
Implement the behavior intervention plan (BIP).	No (pages 17, 23, 28)- May assist in implementation
Supervise hallways, play areas, etc. as directed by administrator.	Yes (pages 19 & 24)
Implement IEP required supports (accommodations).	Yes (pages 15, 21, 26)
Assist individual students as directed by teacher.	Yes (pages 15, 21, 26)
Fade supports as directed by teacher.	Yes (pages 18, 23, 28)
Attend ARD meeting.	No (pages 14, 20, 25) -this is role of the special ed teacher (or gen ed teacher)
Design lesson plans.	No (pages 14, 21, 26) - this is the role of a classroom teacher to design a lesson.

Activity Title: One the Same Page, Teachers and Paraprofessionals Working Together

Purpose of Activity	Participants will complete a self-assessment as they reflect on their teacher/paraprofessional relationship. <i>Note: Teacher-paraprofessional teams should participate in this activity together.</i>
Suggested Time	30 minutes
Materials	Article by Susan Fitzell: On the Same Page, Teachers and Paraprofessionals Working Together, Self-Assessment
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants read the article.2. Each person independently completes the self-assessment.3. Teacher-paraprofessional teams meet to discuss similarities and differences in their answers.

On the Same Page: Paraprofessionals and Teachers Working Together

Have you ever worked with another adult in the classroom and felt as if you were both on different planets? Possibly, your approach to working with students was completely at odds. Or maybe you held certain expectations about what the other adult should do and those expectations weren't met. In order to have a more harmonious and effective working relationship in the classroom, it is important to be on the same page with matters of concern.

Teachers might discuss with their paraprofessionals how they will plan for their work in the classroom. Paraprofessionals might ask their collaborating teachers about their expectations and discuss how those expectations will be dealt with. Other items to reflect upon include: "How will the paraprofessional meet instructional goals?" "What are the teacher's expectations for participation in classroom management?" and "How will the classroom teacher and paraprofessional communicate with each other?" The following questions include many possibilities for consideration. Not all of the following items are applicable to every person, school, or situation. Rather, this is a launching pad for discussion.

Lesson Planning:

- Will the paraprofessional provide input into the planning process for either specific students or the class in general? If so, how will the classroom teacher gain that input?
- Will the paraprofessional have input into lesson planning, or planning for re-teaching?
- When and how should the paraprofessional's experience in the classroom contribute to interventions used with non-responders or students with special needs?

Instruction:

- With whom will the paraprofessional work: students with special needs, non-responders, students-at-risk, or the general student population?
- Will the paraprofessional reteach material?
- When and how will need for reteaching be decided?
- How will the paraprofessional help implement lesson plans or provide re-teaching? What will this look like?
- If specific interventions or programs are being utilized, who will train the paraprofessional in these methods?
- When will student assessment take place? How will gains be recorded? Who will be responsible for collecting this data?

Student Behavior:

- What are the behavioral expectations and rules for students in the classroom?
- What methods are used to gain student understanding of classroom expectations and rules?
- How will students perceive those expectations and rules in regards to the paraprofessional's authority? Who clarifies the paraprofessional's level of authority?
- How should the paraprofessional deal with misbehavior, disruptions, or problems that occur in the classroom?
- Who will provide the paraprofessional with positive behavior management training when necessary?

Communication:

- How and when will professionals and paraprofessionals communicate about concerns, student updates, intervention progress, etc.?
- Who will be responsible for communicating with parents?
- Will communication with parents be verbal or written? What parameters should the paraprofessional work within? Are there times when communication should be deferred to the classroom teacher, special educator, or administrator?

- When should conversations with parents be documented? When should they not be documented? If documented, what form should that documentation take?
- Exactly who should the paraprofessional report to if any conversation with a parent occurs that might cause concerns, or where student issues need to be related?

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Susan Fitzell, M. Ed, CSP, is a nationally recognized presenter, author of nine books for teachers, trainers, and parents, an educational consultant, and CEO of Aim Hi Educational Programs, LLC. As an independent consultant and coach, Susan offers the personalization, continuity, and consistency necessary for true change in any organization. She works side by side with teachers, school administrators, and business leaders as a coach and trainer, employing Brain Power strategies that take learning to the next level.

For more information, visit Susan's website at www.susanfitzell.com.

Self-Assessment

Accompanies Susan Fitzell Reading

Directions: Rate each topic with your level of confidence that each of you are On the Same Page

The daily schedule is providing the optimum support for all students.

1
Strongly
Agree

2
Agree

3
Neutral

4
Disagree

5
Strongly
Disagree

Contribution and observations by the paraprofessional are considered when lesson planning.

1
Strongly
Agree

2
Agree

3
Neutral

4
Disagree

5
Strongly
Disagree

When and how to reteach lessons are explicitly understood.

1
Strongly
Agree

2
Agree

3
Neutral

4
Disagree

5
Strongly
Disagree

Behavior expectations are clearly established and routinely discussed.

1
Strongly
Agree

2
Agree

3
Neutral

4
Disagree

5
Strongly
Disagree

Students understand the level of authority of the paraprofessional.

1
Strongly
Agree

2
Agree

3
Neutral

4
Disagree

5
Strongly
Disagree

Communication about student concerns and progress is ongoing and routine.

1
Strongly
Agree

2
Agree

3
Neutral

4
Disagree

5
Strongly
Disagree

Activity Title: Creating an Effective Documentation System

Purpose of Activity	Staff will review the current documentation system in place at their campus.
Suggested Time	45-60 minutes
Materials	Copy of current forms/systems in place at your campus
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review the systems currently in place at your campus/district (hint: if there isn't one, then create one now) Evaluate the documents and systems in place for the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Do all parties understand the purpose of documentation?– Is the system user-friendly and time effective?– Is academic progress recorded consistently?– Are behavior progress and needs represented?– Do all relevant parties have access to the documentation?– Are accommodations and modifications adequately recorded and representative of the student's IEP?– Are events recorded factually, without emotion?– Are the guidelines for what to document clear and understood?– If student support is in question, can we back it up?– Is it clear to all parties (teachers, parents, advocates, etc.) what services were provided?

