Working with Paraeducators

Da Fonte, M. A. (2011)
Building Successful Partnerships in the Classroom Setting

### Teacher

| If the paraeducator is new to the job, gradually phase her/him into the job’s responsibilities. |
| Discuss with the paraeducator the procedures and discipline techniques you use in your classroom. |
| When you are absent, let the substitute teacher know what the paraeducators responsibilities are. |
| Encourage initiative and recognize the paraeducator’s skills; keeping them in mind when assigning tasks. |
| Provide praise and constructive feedback. |
| Trust your paraeducator. |
| Provide guide practice and model when needed. |

### Paraeducator

| Become familiar with the teacher’s instructional methods for both individual and group activities. |
| Observe the student behavior and share your observations with the teacher. |
| Initiate. When you know what the teacher wants done, don’t wait to be told. |
| Take on new responsibilities with a positive attitude. |
| Be willing and open to learning. |
| Ask questions… |
| Be part of the team! |

(Adapted from: American Guidance Service)
Critical Considerations in the Classroom Setting:

- Understand the importance of collaboration
- Team-work within the classroom setting
- Create a positive work environment
- Value each individual as an important resource within the classroom setting
- Understand professional work styles
- Understand the steps for delegation
- Enhance your work ethics and general work skills
- Increase training opportunities
- Enhance your supervision skills
Collaboration

- **Collaboration**: is **working together** to achieve a goal

- **To achieve this one should …**
  - Involve all key personnel
  - Establish strong communication with those involved
  - Share important information
  - Share vision of goals and outcomes
  - Integrate opinions, experiences, and perspectives in the decision-making process
  - Delegate
  - Create a welcoming environment!
Successful Teamwork

1. Teams use their time and talents effectively (delegate)
2. Teams are committed to skill development
3. Members build morale by showing respect and recognition to one another
4. Members give one another feedback
5. Members cooperate rather than compete
6. Members maintain positive attitudes toward each other’s ideas
7. Teams communicate openly
8. Members mentor and learn from one another
9. Teams resolve conflicts effectively teams accept challenges

(From: Pickett & Gerlach, 2003, p. 214)
Delegating

- Analyze task
- Decide what to delegate
- Create a plan
- Select the person
- Direct the task
- Monitor and evaluate performance

(Adapted from: Pickett & Gerlach, 2003, p. 115)
Responsibilities

Teachers

1. Are leaders of program implementation teams with supervisory responsibilities for paraprofessionals.
2. Create and maintain learner-centered, supportive, inclusive environments.
3. Develop and plan learning experiences.
4. Engage students in learning experiences
5. Assess learners’ needs.
6. Practice standards of professional and ethical conduct.

(Pickett & Gerlach, 2003)
Responsibilities

Paraeducators

Assist teachers with:
1. building and maintaining effective teams.
2. maintaining learner-centered supportive environments.
3. organizing learning experiences.
4. engaging children and youth in learning experiences.
5. activities that assess learners’ achievement.

6. Meet standards of professional and ethical conduct.

(Pickett & Gerlach, 2003)
Roles and Responsibilities

• It is important to:
  – identify, clarify, and adapt to each person’s role and responsibilities

Teacher responsibility + Paraeducator responsibility + Shared responsibilities = Team
Work Styles Preference

- Scheduling
- Supervision
- Expectations
- Training
- Multi-task
- Work habits
- Discussion of challenges, concerns
- Organization
- Team-work
Setting the Stage…

• Positive work environment!!
• Clear guidelines for expectations for those involved in the classroom setting.
• Clear guidelines for role and responsibilities of staff members.
• Provide summary of students’ strengths and needs to staff members.
• Training!
Your First Meeting

• During your first meeting you should …
  • Have a clear and concise agenda
  • Discuss and describe roles and responsibilities
  • Discuss expectations
  • Describe work styles (think about doing an evaluation)
  • Discuss work ethics
  • Discuss training opportunities
  • Discuss supervision (frequency, duration)
  • Exchange numbers

Most important of all...

Create a welcome, open, and collaborative environment!
Making it Work!

• Things to keep in mind...
  – Introduce your paraeducator to other staff members and to your students.
  – Model instructional strategies, interactions (teacher-student), and classroom behaviors.
  – Guide instruction and interactions.
  – Provide suggestions on how to handle various situations.
  – Listen and respect others perspective!