

***Roles, Responsibilities and
Relationships of Paraprofessionals in
Supporting Student Learning and
Achievement***

**Mount Carmel Area School District
August 5-6, 2010
Larry Potash and Kristin Takach**

Workshop Agenda

Thursday, August 5, 2010

8:00-8:30 AM Registration and continental breakfast

8:30-11:30 AM **Session 1: Overview: Roles,
Responsibilities and Relationships**

- Welcome and introductions
- Legal requirements for paraprofessionals
- Types of paraprofessionals
- Personal qualities and professional responsibilities of paraprofessionals
- Roles and relationships with staff, students, parents

Workshop Agenda

Thursday, August 5, 2010

11:30 AM-12:30 PM Lunch

12:30-3:30 PM **Session 2: Paraprofessional
Roles in Supporting Classroom Instruction**

- Inclusive practices for students with disabilities
- Paraprofessional roles in supporting literacy instruction

Workshop Agenda

Friday, August 6, 2010

8:00-8:30 AM Registration and continental breakfast

8:30-11:30 AM **Session 3: Video Case Studies:
“Best Practices” for Paraprofessionals**

- Interview responses
- Classroom lessons

11:30 AM-12:15 PM Lunch

Workshop Agenda

Friday, August 6, 2010

12:30 – 3:15 PM Session 4: Other Roles and Responsibilities

- Working with parents
- Job-embedded professional development
- Professional development portfolios
- Recommended follow-up training
- Online resources for paraprofessionals
- Workshop evaluation

...a rose by any other name...

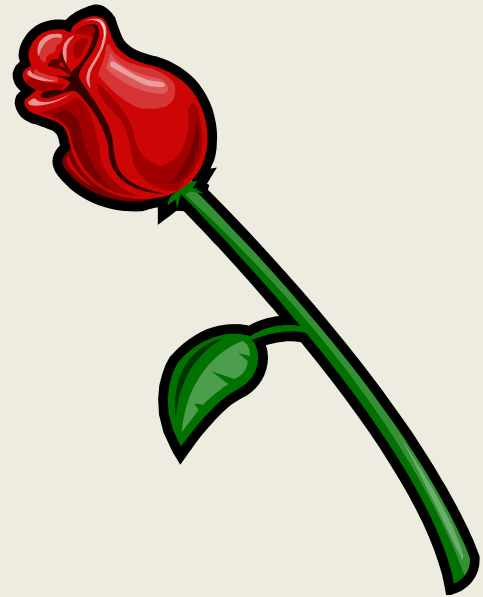
Paraeducator

Paraprofessional

Teacher Assistant

Teacher Aide

Para



There are 21 titles for “paraprofessionals”

What is a Paraprofessional?



The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NCRP) defines paraprofessionals as follows:

PARAPROFESSIONALS are school or agency employees:

- whose positions are either instructional in nature or who provide other direct services to children and youth and/or their families.
- who assist and support teacher directed instruction.

A teacher named Tami recounts an experience from her first year of teaching:

“My kids continued to grow and develop as learners in a happy and caring classroom community.

I cannot however, take credit for all their success. I had a para educator who was in my classroom most of the day, specifically for 3 of my special needs kiddos.

*Her name is Mrs. M. She was **my right hand gal**. She was my **sounding board, keeper of the peace**, and most importantly **my friend**. It sounds silly, but **I couldn't have one it without her!** (And until you encounter the title of teacher in a multi-age class with 27 (and soon 29) kids... you don't know the full truth of that statement!)”*

Professional Development Requirements for Paraprofessionals

Phase 1 – Highly Qualified Status

- Completion of at least two years of postsecondary study (45 credits or more)
- Earned Associates degree or higher
- Meet a rigorous standard of quality through state or local assessments (Intermediate Units, PaTTAN)

Phase 2 – Continuing Staff Development

➤ The second phase is the **annual** accumulation of **20 professional development hours**. The accumulation of these hours can usually be fulfilled in two ways:

1. **Participation in professional development workshops (such as this one) as per the direction of your school district/supervisor.**
2. **Completing the ten video sessions for the Credential of Competency for Special Education Paraeducators, provided you have not previously completed this series.**

The video sessions can be viewed on-line through the PaTTAN website at:

<http://www.pattan.net/TrainingMaterials.aspx?ContentLocation=/supportingstudents/paraeducators.aspx>

PARAPROFESSIONAL ROLES



Paraprofessional Roles

The work performed by paraprofessionals will vary depending upon teachers' expectations, paraeducators' skills and experience, and job assignment.

Paraeducators are primarily responsible for assisting and supporting teachers or other certified or licensed staff.

Major Responsibilities

- Work cooperatively with school personnel
- Build and maintain effective communication
- Maintain student-centered supportive environments
- Assist with Implement lessons/assignments initiated by the teacher or related-service personnel
- Assess student needs and progress under teacher direction and supervision

Other important responsibilities

- Learn school policies and procedures
- Perform assigned tasks
- Support curriculum and instruction
- Deal with student behavior
- Assist students with disabilities
- Obtain training and professional development
- Maintain ethics and professionalism

Major Responsibilities of Teachers in Supervising Paraprofessionals

- Plan the tasks that paraprofessionals will perform
- Develop schedules for paraprofessionals
- Appropriately delegate responsibilities
- Monitor day-to-day performance
- Provide feedback and on-the-job training
- Share relevant information about the paraprofessional's strengths and training needs to supervisors and principals

Other important responsibilities

- Introduce the paraprofessional to the teacher's classroom
- Provide clear instructions and complete information
- Assign and delegate tasks
- Review/discuss curriculum and instruction
- Discuss strategies for managing student behavior
- Promote training and professional development
- Provide feedback and recognition

Determining the need for paraprofessional support services: Questions to ponder

- Is it acceptable for students with disabilities to be educated by paraprofessionals whereas students without disabilities receive their instruction from certified teachers?
- Are we willing to acknowledge that the challenges we face may have less to do with individual student characteristics and perhaps as much to do with our own attitudes and practices?

Conclusion

Paraprofessionals play a major role in the education of students. They are an integral part of a collaborative team where their role is clearly defined and their work is appropriately planned and supported.

Selected Online Professional Development Resources for Paraprofessionals

- BLaST IU 17 (www.iu17.org) : “Best Practices” Project
- PaTTAN (www.pattan.net) : 10 lesson online course and other resources

<http://www.pattan.net/resources/request.aspx?PageNumber=0&MaterialType=Training+Materials&InterestArea=37>

- National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals:
<http://www.nrcpara.org/>