

Teachers and Paraprofessionals: Working Together: Roles and Responsibilities !



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Overview of the Session

Discuss the importance of the following for building instructional teams :

- Differentiation of roles and responsibilities:
- Interpersonal skills:
- Collaboration
- Administrative supports

Examine tools and strategies for team-building and effective communication will also be shared.

Definitions



Para means “alongside of”

A paraeducator provides instructional services to students
and
works under the supervision or direction of a certified or licensed professional who is ultimately responsible for the students and the program.

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Reasons To Employ Paraeducators

1. Complex student population
2. Need for instructional support
3. Need for individualized
4. Instructional effectiveness
5. Cost effectiveness
6. Community connections
7. Need to provide related services
8. Improved teacher-student ratio
9. Shortages of fully-qualified professionals
10. Legislation allows/ requires it



IDEA: Requirements for Paraprofessionals

The state/local educational agency establishes and maintains standards to ensure that paraprofessionals and assistants are appropriately and adequately trained and supervised.



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Gaps between Law and Reality

- Laws provide vague and limited descriptions of what paraprofessional supervision and training entails
- By and large - no clear policies or guidelines at state level around supervision and training
- Despite guidance from professional organization, teacher preparation programs do not address paraprofessional supervision to the extent it needs attention.
- As a result, teachers remain unprepared, at times reluctant, to supervise paraprofessionals, and are unprepared to work effectively with them.

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RESEARCH: CHALLENGES WITH THE USE OF PARAEDUCATORS

- Inappropriate roles
- Lack of Qualifications – a social justice issue
- Lack of Training and the "Training Trap"
- Insufficient Supervision
- Inadvertent Detrimental Effects
 - Unnecessary dependence
 - Interference with peer interactions
 - Interference with teacher engagement/decreased access to competent instruction
 - Unhelpful relationships with parents of students that interfere with constructive parent/teacher interactions,
 - Stigmatization and risk of teasing and bullying

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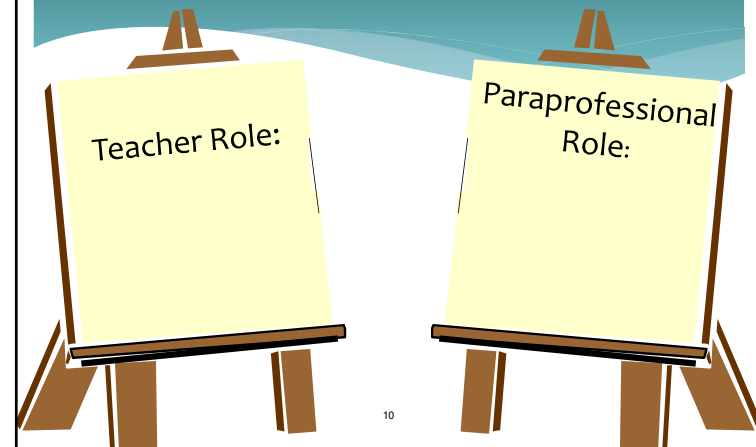
Effective
Paraeducator-Teacher Teams
are
the Bridge to
Student Success.



6 Rules for Creating Strong Teams: Beyond Common Mission and Good Intentions

- Rule # 1:** Understand your role in the team
- Rule #2:** Understand each team member’s work style
- Rule # 3:** Follow Team Approach to Instruction
- Rule # 4:** Recognize the characteristics of effective interpersonal team communication
- Rule # 5:** Understand the Role/Nature of Conflict in Teams
- Rule # 6:** Advocate for Administrative Support

Rule # 1: Understand Your Role in Team



Teacher/Professional Roles

- Overall program Planning (overseeing, IEP goals and objectives, addressing standards, lesson planning, prescribing, managing the instructional environment)
- **Instruction** (based on unit plans, lesson plans, IEPs, remedial literacy plans, 504 plans, other individualized plans)
- **Assessment** (Collecting, coordinating, and interpreting information about the student including current levels of functioning, determination of disability, reporting student progress)
- **Collaborating** (consulting with other professional personnel, meeting coordinating, communication)
- **Paraeducator Supervision** (seven components – which are the focus of this course)

Paraeducator Roles

- Implement instruction in various environments based on lesson plans provided by the teacher
- Reinforce learning with individuals or small groups
- Assist individual students- personal care, mobility
- Assist with observations/data recording/charting
- Assist with ongoing behavior management
- Participate in building level duties as assigned by building administrator
 - Score tests /papers & assist in data collection
- Perform clerical tasks
- Prepare, produce & maintain instructional materials
- Maintain and operate instructional equipment
- Help develop schedules
- Team participation

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Steps for Getting Clarification on the Roles of Team Members

1. Know the entire range of jobs that need to be done by someone on the team
2. Write down the specifics of what is expected of everyone on the team
3. Team uses the “Master List of Tasks & Duties” to make a complete listing of everything that needs to be done
4. Download the form from my website
<http://www.paracenter.org/library/k-12-paraprofessional-supervision-resources/>

Rule #2: Understand Each Team Member's Work Style

- Take the work style and preferences assessment yourself
- Give the corresponding assessments to your team mates
- Sit down together to enter your "scores" and discuss your findings
- Use the question: "Considering our similarities (differences) how will we work together?"

OR

- "What can we do to function as a good team even though we are similar (different)?"

<http://www.paracenter.org/library/k-12-paraprofessional-supervision-resources/>

Rule #3: Follow Team Approach to Instruction

- Teacher is responsible for planning instruction and providing instructional plans to paraeducator so that the latter can be effective in their role.
- A good plan for paraeducators includes:
 - Purpose of the lesson, adaptations, materials, sequence of actions, data structure
- Paraeducator implements the plan and provides feedback for future planning.
- Importance of planning time

Note: It is NOT the paraprofessional's ethical responsibility to plan or design modifications or adaptations – only to carry them out!

Rule #4: Recognize the Characteristics of Effective Interpersonal Team Communication

- Assertive Communication
- Active Listening
- Egalitarian
 - No one person in control
 - Thoughts , feelings , opinions and beliefs of all members heard
- Respect and Trust
- Professionalism
- Honesty

Rule # 5: Understand the Role/Nature of Conflict in Teams

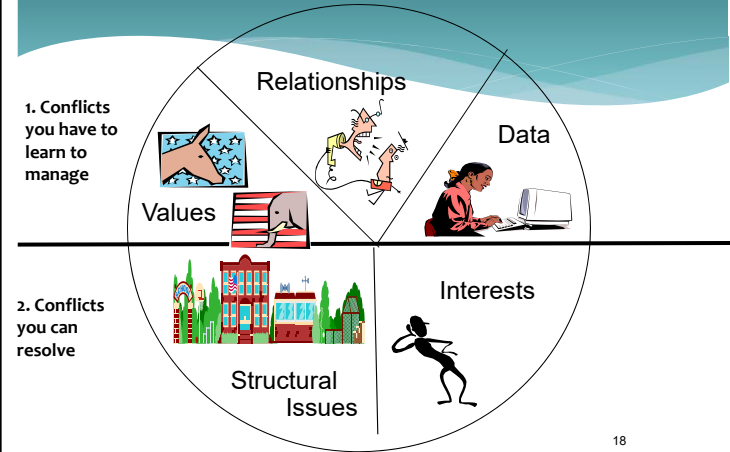
- Conflict is natural.
- Conflict is neither positive nor negative, it just is.
- Conflict is just an interference pattern of energies.
- Conflict is the primary catalyst for change.
- It's not whether you have conflict in your life, it's what you do with conflict when it arises that makes the difference.

Conflict is Beneficial...

Conflict is beneficial, if it results in:

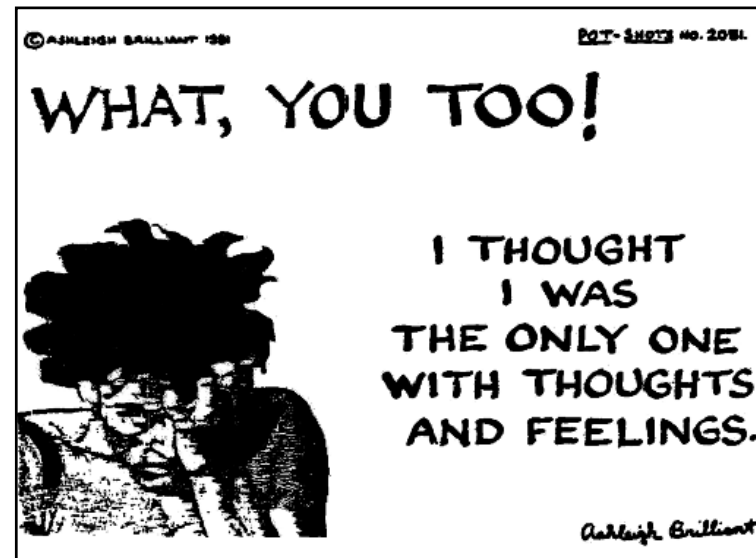
- * stronger relationships and improved interactions and teamwork
- * improved trust among all parties
- * satisfaction among all involved with the resolution of the conflict.
- * an improved ability to resolve future conflicts with each other.

Conflict – Two Categories of Conflicts



Steps to Resolving/Managing Conflict

- Step 1: Pause and take a deep breath.
- Step 2: Identify the problem and its source.
- Step 3: Determine your roles in the conflict.
- Step 4: Determine impact of the conflict.
- Step 5: Discuss options that will help you manage/resolve the conflict
- Step 6: Identify the best option for resolution/managing it
- Step 7: Develop a plan of action.
- Step 8: Follow the plan



Rule # 6: Advocate for Administrative Support



- * Absolute necessary for enforcing the other five rules!
- * Administrators need to provide necessary policies, and guidance
 - * Creating a collaborative culture
 - * Training of teachers to guide the work of the paraeducator
 - * Planning time and on-the-job training for paraeducators
 - Making appropriate resources available

Questions



Contact information

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Helpful Resources:

- <http://www.paracenter.org>
- <http://www.paracenter.org/PARACenter/library/>