Supporting Paraprofessionals to Support Students with IEPs

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• Definition and Qualifications of a Paraprofessional
• Comparison of Teacher vs Paraprofessional
• Comparison of Intervener vs Paraprofessional
• Paraprofessional in Speech and Language
• Training of a Paraprofessional
• Roles of a Paraprofessional
Definition

PI 34.01 Definitions. (4) "Aide" means a school employee who works under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher in a school or district whose responsibilities include, but are not limited to, supporting the lesson plan of the licensed teacher, providing technical assistance to the teacher, helping with classroom control or management, and other duties as assigned.

Wisconsin Special Education Paraprofessionals
Any person employed by a school district as a special education program aide shall hold a license under this subsection. A license as a special education program aide may be issued to an applicant who is at least 18 years of age and is recommended by the district administrator of the employing school district, the administrator of a CESA or his or her designated official to receive a license under this section.
Effective August 1, 2018, all applicants for a Special Education Program Aide license must hold a high school diploma or an equivalent degree. It will be the responsibility of the employing school district to attest on the PI-1622-Aide form that the applicant holds a high school diploma or an equivalent degree.
A paraprofessional who is assigned to support the provision of special education services pursuant to an individualized education program (IEP) must hold the Special Education Program Aide license (#0070), unless the individual holds any valid Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI) license.
Who needs that license cont.?

A paraprofessional hired to provide support to students with IEPs during transportation to and from school is also required to have a SPED Paraprofessional license.
# Teacher vs Paraprofessional Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Role</th>
<th>Paraprofessional Role</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and delivering instruction</td>
<td>Supporting lesson plan of teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosing learning needs</td>
<td>Providing technical assistance to teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescribing content delivery via classroom activities</td>
<td>Helping with classroom management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing student learning and evaluating the effects of instruction</td>
<td>Paraprofessionals <strong>CANNOT</strong> be assigned teacher duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting outcomes to administrators and parents</td>
<td>Collect data and report on students’ progress</td>
</tr>
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### Comparison of Interveners and Paraprofessionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervener</th>
<th>Paraprofessional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works under the direction of the classroom teacher (regardless of supervisory funding source)</td>
<td>Works under the direction of the classroom teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adheres by district or agency policies</td>
<td>Adheres by district or agency policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned to work one-to-one with a student who is deafblind to facilitate the process of intervention</td>
<td>Usually works with groups of students but can work one-to-one when assigned by the teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Must have comprehensive specialized training in deafblindness</td>
<td>Typically does not receive disability specific training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has skills in deafblind intervention including communication methods, environmental access, sensory loss, deafblind instructional strategies, and how to create independence rather than dependence</td>
<td>Has varying levels of skills dependent on assignment, experience, and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepares materials for the one student who is deafblind with whom he/she works in coordination with the teacher</td>
<td>Responsible for materials preparation for entire class as assigned by the teacher (e.g., copying, cutting, activity preparation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not assigned to do classroom maintenance because of the continuous one-to-one time required by the student with deafblindness</td>
<td>Responsible for classroom maintenance as assigned by the teacher (e.g., bulletin boards, setting up and cleaning up materials)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually attends regularly scheduled planning and feedback meetings with the teacher and other team members</td>
<td>Typically does not attend planning meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participates as an active member of the student’s team including attendance at IEP meetings in order to contribute valuable day-to-day knowledge of the student</td>
<td>Generally does not attend IEP meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not generally assigned to additional school duties because of one-to-one time required by the student</td>
<td>May be assigned to additional school duties such as lunchroom, buses, playground, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates the student’s connection to others by explaining and modeling the student’s specific communication system, acting as a bridge to the world, and creating a safe and supportive environment that encourages successful interactions</td>
<td>Typically is not required to facilitate communication connections between students and others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paraprofessionals in Speech and Language

- Maintaining and programming communication equipment
- Providing clerical and scheduling support
- Assisting the SLP with supporting student behavior and social engagement
- Collecting data for SLP
- Reviewing & reinforcing skills introduced by SLP

The Use of Paraprofessionals to Support Speech-Language Pathologists
Training for Paraprofessionals

- Paraprofessionals must be supported by teachers and administrators in how communication channels and systems of communication are set up with families.
- Not only should paraprofessionals have clear “how” and “what” communication channels established, but schools should also establish protocols in communicating with families to clearly outline the roles of the teachers compared to the roles of paraprofessionals.
- In addition, they may need training to better understand and build empathy for families of students with more significant needs so that they are able to understand and support individual family hopes, dreams, fears, and concerns.
• Paraprofessionals need systems in place to receive updates and to be able to communicate information and data to other educators about individual students.

• Paraprofessionals must be kept up to date on IEP related changes that might impact the supports they provide to individual students.

Parker, 2018
How do I find out how my child is doing?
Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) national standard that protects sensitive patient health information.
Roles of a Paraprofessional

- Collaborate with members of the instructional team
- Assist with supporting student behavior and social engagement.
- Support the lesson plan through review and reinforcement of skills
- Provide technical assistance to the teacher and/or student
- Assist with monitoring student progress and data collection as directed by the teacher
- Provide supports, modifications and adapted materials (e.g., visual schedules, checklists or directions, opportunities for choice, physical assistance, communication supports) as directed by the teacher or related service provider
Roles of a Paraprofessional

Understanding the Role of Paraprofessionals in Your Child’s Education in Inclusive Classrooms (TIES Center Brief #7)
Levels of Support

**Low:** always available, but not needed on a regular basis by the student

**Medium:** necessary on a regular basis

**High:** support is absolutely necessary for the student to learn and must be provided consistently; most intrusive in nature.
What paraprofessionals shouldn’t do:

- Provide initial instruction
- Make decisions about which activities, lessons, content, or environments a student can access (especially when assigned to one student on a regular basis)

Parker, 2018
Additional Considerations

- Limiting close proximity when possible
- Supporting Independence
- Planning for natural supports
- Determining when Paraprofessionals are not needed
Natural supports refer to the support and assistance that naturally flows from the associations and relationships typically developed in natural environments such as the family, school, work and community. These relationships and the support and assistance they offer, maintain and enhance the quality and security of life for people with disabilities.
Why are we talking about independence?

Research has shown that some students that receive direct one-on-one support from a paraprofessional have fewer social relationships with peers and less independence than students who do not receive one-on-one support. Ensuring paraprofessional “skills” focus on improving the independence of students in social and academic settings is a critical component to an effective system of support.

Parker, 2018
Questions?
Resources

Wisconsin Special Education Paraprofessionals
https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/educators/initiatives/paraprofessionals

Requirements for Special Education Program Aides

FAQs About Special Education Paraprofessionals, Information Update Bulletin 10.5
https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/laws-procedures-bulletins/bulletins/10-05
Supporting Paraprofessionals to Support Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) (Parker, 2018) https://awsa.memberclicks.net/update-article--supporting-paraprofessionals-to-support-students-with-individualized-education-programs--iep-s

Understanding the Role of Paraprofessionals in Your Child’s Education in Inclusive Classrooms

The Use of Paraprofessionals in Speech and Language Programs
For More Information

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