

Role of a Paraprofessional Framework



Paraprofessionals play a crucial role in ensuring that the students under their care have the greatest access to the general education setting across their day. While their responsibilities can vary widely depending on the specific needs of a student and the school and/or district policies, this guide offers an overview of key support areas and related guidance that can be used flexibly in any community.

KEY SUPPORT AREAS¹

INSTRUCTIONAL

The paraprofessional assists with educational services, instructional methods, or school resources for individual students, specific student populations, or all students in a class.

- Assist processing needs by reading or restating questions or sentences aloud.
- Work 1:1 or in a small group to review concepts taught or support completion of the guided practice.
- Work with a teacher to review data to determine which students need additional instruction on particular concepts.
- Can we schedule time to review learning targets for students I am supporting?
- What are my responsibilities for gathering and sharing data on student progress?
- What's the best way for me to share observations as I get to know our students?
- Can you share resources with me to support my understanding of concepts from the curriculum?

LANGUAGE

The paraprofessional assists with the execution of communication and language acquisition.

- Monitor assistive technology or use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices.
- Implement communication strategies during the instructional day.
- Provide language support to Multilingual Learners
- Where can I learn more about the technology or other devices the student I support utilizes?
- Does the student have an Individualized Accommodation Plan (IAP) or communication goals we can review together?

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

The paraprofessional assists with adaptive skills such as planning ahead, exhibiting self-control, and following multiple-step directions.

- Prompt with reminders or to use tools to keep track of deadlines, materials, or assignments.
- Support students in identifying challenges they are facing and how to communicate them.
- Monitor performance, share trends and observations to help make decisions on additional supports (e.g. who might need a checklist).
- Get to know student strengths and needs and share relevant information with teachers and other staff
- What is your preferred method to document and share student performance observations?
- What visual aids or guides can I help create to support the student's progress?
- What class-wide systems can we put in place to support students with organization?
- Is there a place in the classroom where we can keep a set of spare materials/handouts/notes for students who need them?



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

The paraprofessional assists students with communication and interpersonal skills needed to achieve individual goals. These can be outlined in a Behavior Intervention Plan, 504 Plan or in an IEP.

- Serve as a guide in instructing students on expectations for classroom behavior
- Support students and teachers in and after moments of crisis
- Review and track individual goals aligned to a BIP
- Offer positive reinforcements, support in creating a conducive environment, and ensure that individual sensory requirements in a BIP are met

- Can we review the BIP and discuss the impact of an exceptionality on the student's behavior.
- How can I support tracking the student's behavior?
- How can I support in communicating a behavior report with guardians?
- What sensory objects are available and appropriate for the student to use?

MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL

The paraprofessional collaborates with the nurse to support students with medical and toileting needs.

- Seek medical training, as needed
- Review and track individual goals aligned to the student's Individual Health Plan
- Support student with mobility toileting, if applicable
- Support students in accessing and using fine and gross motor accommodations (e.g. Pencil Grip, using a locker combination).

- How do the student's health needs impact their ability to participate in the classroom?
- How are we communicating progress and concerns with guardians and other IEP team members?
- What other tools and supports do students with medical and/or physical needs require in order to be successful while at school?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Making a “Paraprofessional Movement” in New York City

Use this resource to understand the history and evolution of the role of a paraprofessional in New York City Public Schools. Click [here](#) to access this resource.

How to Get a 1:1 Aide/Para Added to an IEP

Use this resource when advocating for 1:1 aide or paraprofessional services on a student's IEP. Click [here](#) to access this resource.

Paraprofessionals: What You Need to Know

Use this resource to understand the basic role and requirements of paraprofessionals. Click [here](#) to access this resource.

Paraprofessional Gen. Ed Goals and Outcomes

Use this resource as an evaluation tool to observe and improve collaboration between paraprofessionals and teachers. Click [here](#) to access this resource.

