

Special Education Paraprofessionals

Special education paraprofessionals, also known as teacher's aides or instructional assistants, play an essential role in supporting students with disabilities in various educational settings. Their responsibilities vary depending on the needs of the students, the nature of the classroom, and the specific tasks assigned by the lead teacher or school. Below is a breakdown of the roles and responsibilities of a special education paraprofessional under the direct supervision and guidance of the case manager and/or district administration:

Instructional Support

- ☐ Assist in implementing individualized education programs (IEPs) by working with students on specific goals.
- ☐ Support teachers in delivering lessons and activities adapted to the students' needs.
- ☐ Reinforce learning concepts through small group or one-on-one instruction.
- ☐ Provide assistance with classwork, assignments, and special projects.

Behavioral Support

- ☐ Help manage and support positive behaviors in the classroom.
- ☐ Implement behavior intervention plans (BIPs) designed by special education teams.
- ☐ Assist with conflict resolution and use techniques to de-escalate challenging behaviors.
- ☐ Monitor and document students' behavior, tracking both progress and challenges.

Personal Care Assistance

- ☐ Provide personal care assistance for students with physical or medical needs (e.g., feeding, toileting, mobility).
- ☐ Support students who may need help with daily living activities like dressing or hygiene.
- ☐ Ensure the safety of students with physical disabilities, including helping with equipment like wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

Communication Support

- ☐ Assist students who have communication difficulties by using alternative communication methods, such as sign language, visual aids, or communication devices.
- ☐ Encourage and support social interactions between students with disabilities and their peers.
- ☐ Facilitate communication between students and teachers when necessary.

Supervision and Monitoring

- ☐ Supervise students during transitions (e.g., from classroom to lunchroom, recess, etc.).
- ☐ Monitor students during non-classroom activities such as recess, lunch, field trips, and assemblies.
- ☐ Ensure the safety of students in various environments, especially those who need close supervision.

Documentation and Record-Keeping

- ☐ Track student progress and collect data on academic, social, and behavioral goals as outlined in the IEP under the supervision of the case manager.
- ☐ Record observations and assist in maintaining documentation that may be required for evaluations or meetings with parents.

- ☐ Communicate effectively with the special education teacher, providing feedback on the student's daily performance and needs.

Collaboration with Staff and Parents

- ☐ Collaborate with the lead special education teacher, general education teachers, therapists, and other school staff to provide coordinated support under direct supervision of the case manager.
- ☐ Participate in team meetings or IEP meetings to discuss the student's progress, needs, and future goals (if requested and/or applicable).

Adaptation of Materials

- ☐ Help modify and adapt instructional materials to meet the individual needs of students.
- ☐ Assist in the creation and preparation of visual aids, manipulatives, or other teaching tools designed for special education students.

Physical and Emotional Support

- ☐ Provide emotional support and encouragement to students to boost their confidence and engagement in learning.
- ☐ Foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment for students with disabilities.
- ☐ Assist students in building self-esteem and developing social skills necessary for classroom participation and peer interactions.

Crisis Intervention

- ☐ Assist in responding to crisis situations or emergencies, including following protocols for medical emergencies, behavior issues, or evacuations.
- ☐ Support the implementation of crisis intervention strategies to ensure student safety.

Key Skills and Attributes of a Special Education Paraprofessional

Patience: Working with students who have diverse needs requires patience and understanding.

Adaptability: Ability to modify approaches and materials based on individual student needs.

Communication: Clear and effective communication with teachers, students, and parents.

Empathy: Sensitivity to the emotional and physical challenges students face.

Organization: Strong record-keeping and attention to detail when tracking student progress.

Overall, special education paraprofessionals work closely with teachers to ensure that students with disabilities receive the appropriate support needed to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.