Tips for Special Education Paraprofessionals

Office of Special Services

Huron School District

Making a Difference

An old man walked up a shore littered with thousands of starfish,
beached and dying after a storm.
A young man was picking them up and flinging them back into the ocean.
"Why do you bother?" the old man scoffed.
"You are not saving enough to make a difference.
The young man picked up another starfish and sent it spinning back to the water.
"Made a difference to that one," he said.

Dear Paraprofessionals,

Thank you for your commitment to being a vital part of the special education team who supports and provides services to students with disabilities attending Huron School District.

This guide was designed to be a guide and resource to you. Hopefully, it will answer some of your questions about your role and how to meet the needs of students with disabilities. It is a general overview of your roles and responsibilities, special education, characteristics of disabilities, instructional and behavioral strategies, and resources for paraprofessionals. Information specific to the students you work with, and further direction will come from the administrators and teachers in your building. Continued professional development will assist you in refining your skills and knowledge related to academic and behavior strategies specific to the students you are supporting.

Our goal is to assist students in becoming as independent as possible and to prepare them for a bright future! We value your work and desire to serve our students and thank you for your dedication and professionalism. Please let us know how we may support you in your endeavor to grow professionally and be a valuable member of our team!

Office of Special Services

Table of Contents

Professionalism

- Present yourself as a positive role model for students.

- Represent the Huron School District in a positive manner.

- Be punctual and attend work regularly.

- Follow your schedule consistently.

- Share relevant information with supervising teacher to facilitate problem solving, program planning, and student progress.

- If you have questions, seek answers and/or input.

- Discuss a student's progress or educational program only with the teachers who are responsible for that student's instruction.

- Discuss confidential school and student issues only with appropriate school personnel.

- Maintain a positive attitude.

- Refrain from talking about a student in the community.

- Understand and follow school policies and procedures.

- Maintain appropriate dress as advised by your administration. Be mindful of wearing safe shoes to perform duties. (i.e. – for lifting students, supporting in physical education class)

- Communication with parents is the teacher's responsibility. Refer parent inquiries regarding student progress to the student's teacher.

- Maintain student dignity by being discreet about students' physical needs.

- Refrain from discussing information about students in front of students.

- Maintain a professional relationship with students at all times.

- Be flexible and willing to assist when and where needed.

- Seek opportunities for professional growth such as reading journal articles, attending available training sessions, and/or participating in staff development.

- Focus on what a student "CAN do", rather than what he/she cannot do.

General Ethical Considerations for Paraprofessionals

Accepting Responsibilities

- Engage only in instructional and non-instructional activities for which you are qualified or trained.
- Refer concerns expressed by parents, students or others to your supervising teacher.
- Recognize that the teacher has the ultimate responsibility for instruction and management and follow the prescribed directions.
- Help to see the best interests of individual students are met.
- Do not communicate progress or concerns about students to parents.
- Recognize that the supervisor has the ultimate responsibility for the instruction and behavior management of children and follow the directions prescribed by him/her.

Relationships with Students and Parents

- Discuss a child's progress, limitations and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in an appropriate setting.
- Express differences of opinion with your supervising teacher only when students are not present.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel.
- Respect the dignity, privacy and individuality of all students, parents and staff members.
- Be a positive role model.
- Do not engage in discriminatory practices based on a student's handicap, race, sex, cultural background or religion.
- Use behavior management strategies that are consistent with standards established by the local school district and classroom teacher.

Relationship with the Teacher

- Recognize the teacher as your supervisor.
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher.
- When problems cannot be resolved, utilize the school district's complaint/grievance procedures.
- Discuss concerns about the teacher or teaching methods directly with the teacher. Do not undermine the teacher(s), or their program(s) through gossip or side talking.
- Express differences of opinion only when students are not present.
- If issues are not resolved, then discuss concerns only with the teacher's supervisor.
- Do not discuss teacher problems with students, other teachers, paraprofessionals or parents.
- Follow the behavior management approach as established by the teacher.

Relationship with the School

- Engage in behavior management strategies that are consistent with standards established by the local school district.
- Accept responsibility for improving your skills.
- Become familiar with and follow school policies and procedures.
- Represent the school and its programs in a positive manner.

- When problems cannot be resolved utilize the grievance procedures outlined by the local school district.
- You should refrain from:
  - airing school problems and confidential matters, including personalities, outside of school circles;
  - discussing administrative, interdepartmental and interschool problems in the presence of pupils; and
  - gossiping about problems with those who cannot assist in the solution.

Roles of Teachers and Paraprofessionals

I. Instruction

Teacher's Role	Paraprofessional's Role	
*Determines appropriate objectives for groups and individual students.	*Follow schedule and implement plans designed by teacher.	*Provides assistance to individual students on completing follow-up or reinforcement activities.
*Develops and implements student Individual Education Plans (IEP) goals, accommodations and modifications.	*Implements student IEP goals, accommodations and modifications as directed by the teacher.	*Supports a student or small group of students during instruction.
*Plans weekly schedules, lessons, room arrangement, learning centers, and activities for the entire class, as well as modifications and accommodations for students with IEP's.	*Provides direct, individual assistance to student(s) so that they can participate, as independently as possible, in the least restrictive environment.	
*Teaches lessons to the entire class, small groups, and individual students.	*Implements student IEP goals, accommodations and modifications as directed by the teacher.	
*Administers and scores assessments.	*Administers informal assessments under the direction of the teacher.	
*Determine the appropriate use of assistive technology to meet the needs of students.	*Facilitates the use of assistive technology.	
*Develops data collection tools and collects data on student progress.	*Collects data on student progress as designated by the teacher.	

II. Behavior and Social Support

Teacher's Role	Paraprofessional's Role
*Observes behavior, plans and implements behavior intervention plans and strategies for the entire class and for individual students. *Facilitates appropriate social interactions between students. *Develops data collection tools and collects data on student behavior.	*Implements and supports behavior plans and strategies under teacher direction. *Facilitates appropriate social interactions between students. *Collects data on classroom behavior as designated by the teacher.

III. Communication

Teacher's Role	Paraprofessional's Role
*Communicates with administrators, related service providers, general educators, para's, and appropriate staff regarding student progress. *Communicates with parents regarding student progress.	*Communicates with case manager or teacher regarding student progress.

IV. Personal Care

Teacher's Role	Paraprofessional's Role
*Provide personal assistance to students, as needed, to address mobility, positioning, personal care, daily activities, and utilizing the restroom.	*Provide personal assistance to students, as needed, to address mobility, positioning, personal care, daily activities, and utilizing the restroom.

V. Clerical

Teacher's Role	Paraprofessional's Role
*Develop, model, and/or provide detailed instruction on preparing instructional materials. *Develop an organization system to manage student work samples and materials.	*Prepare instructional materials based on a model and/or detailed instructions provided by a teacher. *Assist with organization of student work samples and materials, as directed by the teacher.

These are intended only as examples of the various types of job duties to be performed. The omission of specific duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is a similar, related, or logical assignment to the position. Duties may be assigned by the building principal. These duties may vary from school to school.

Working with Students with Health and Physical Needs

Health and Safety Practices

- Seek training from school nurse on Universal Precautions.
- Practice universal precautions at all times to protect yourself and others.
- Wear gloves when coming into contact with bodily fluids. (changing diapers, feeding, wiping noses, etc.)
- Use proper hand washing techniques to protect yourself and others, before and after assisting with feeding, when coming in contact with bodily fluids. Wash with soap and water for at least 15 seconds.
- Seek input and training from the school nurse concerning the health procedures for specific students.
- Clean materials and items mouthed by students only with a safe cleaner.
- Call for a custodian to clean blood, vomit, urine and bowel spills.
- Follow the proper disposal of diapers recommended by your school nurse and custodians.
- Place soiled clothes in a double lined plastic bag and seal tightly.
- Alert nurse of any skin breakdown or rash noted during diapering.

Self Care Strategies

- Always be discreet when assisting with the self care needs of students. Carry diapers and supplies to the bathroom in a bag.
- Provide supervision of self care skills as needed, yet allow for privacy when appropriate.
- Discuss IEP goals related to self care skills with teacher and reinforce throughout the school day.
- Independence should be encouraged and taught while assisting a student with self care skills. Allow the student to do as much as possible while completing self care tasks. It will take longer in the beginning, but will pay off as the student becomes more independent!
- Occupational therapists may provide guidance on toileting, feeding and dressing strategies.

Mobility

- Seek training from the Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapists, and/or Special Education Teacher concerning lifting and positioning for specific students.
- Encourage independence of students.
- Be aware of evacuation plan for students using walkers/crutches or wheelchairs.

Medical Issues - Students with medical issues have an individualized health care plan. Discuss the specifics of the plan with the special educator and school nurse prior to working with the student. The protocols for specific students may vary.

- **Seizures – General Guidelines -** The protocols for specific students may vary. Consult with the special educator and nurse prior to working with the students.

  o Discuss with the teacher and nurse the students who a history of seizures.
  o Discuss with nurse and special educator the typical nature, length of time of seizures and protocol to follow for particular students (see Health plans).
  o Stay calm
  o Take note of the time the seizure started
  o Clear area/Protect from injury
  o Do not leave student unattended
  o Do not try to restrict motor movements of the seizure
  o Do not place anything in student's mouth.
  o Call for the nurse if necessary
  o If student falls to the floor, position student on his side, when possible
  o Observe and be prepared to describe the pattern of the seizure, i.e. what part of the body was affected, type of movement, length of seizure
  o When the seizure is over, allow the student to rest when necessary
  o Document the nature and length of time of the seizure
  o Report to special educator and/or nurse as directed

- **Allergies- General Guidelines-** The symptoms and protocols for specific students may vary. Consult with the special educator and nurse prior to working with the students.

  o **Allergic Reactions**
    ▪ Become aware of symptoms of allergies such as respiratory problems, swelling of face, lips or tongue, rashes on the skin, hives, vomiting and report to the school nurse.
    ▪ Become aware of procedures for students in need of an Epi pen. The school nurse will provide instruction (follow emergency action plan).

  o **Food Allergies**
    ▪ Become aware of the food allergies of students you are feeding or are assisting with feeding. This information may be obtained from the school nurse.
    ▪ Become aware of symptoms of food allergies such as respiratory problems, swelling of face, lips or tongue, rashes on the skin, hives, vomiting and report to the school nurse immediately.
    ▪ Remain with student; do not send student alone to the health suite.

  o **Latex Allergies**
    ▪ Wear non-latex gloves for students with latex allergies.
    ▪ Be aware that latex may be in the following: Gloves, band aids, balloons, rubber bands, koosh balls, paint, rubber/foam puzzles, glue, and erasers. Check with the school nurse for a complete list of materials not to expose to students with latex allergies.

Characteristics and Instructional Strategies

for Specific Disabilities

Educational disabilities include: Autism, Deaf-blindness, Deafness, Developmental delay, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Loss, Cognitive Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other heath impairment, Specific learning disability, Speech or language impairment, Traumatic brain injury, or Visual impairment. This is a general list of characteristics and instructional strategies of the most common disabilities that may or may not apply to all students with each disability. Please seek input from the teachers you work with to discover additional information that will assist you in meeting the unique needs of our students.

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)
Categorized as Other Health Impairment

ADHD is a neurobiological disorder. Typically, children with ADHD have developmentally inappropriate behavior, including hyperactivity, inattention, and impulsivity and occur in several settings such as home, school and extra-curricular activities.

General Characteristics May Include:
- Hyperactivity
- Distractibility
- Inattention
- Impulsivity
- Social skills deficit
- Difficulty Focusing
- Poor organization of materials and thoughts
- Fails to give attention to detail and makes careless mistakes
- Varied perception of time (difficult tasks may seem like they take a very long time, preferred tasks maintain their attention for longer periods of time)
- Difficulty following through with directions and completing assignments
- Difficulty with problem solving

Instructional Strategies:
- Minimize distractions
- Provide uncluttered workspace
- Provide structure and routine
- Provide organizational tools and strategies
- Provide visual and graphic organizers
- Break tasks into smaller segments
- Highlight important ideas
- Color coding
- Use of timers and providing reminders of remaining time to complete an assignment
- Modified instruction
- Set behavioral expectations
- Provide structured breaks between assignments
- Allow for movement opportunities
- Active learning
- Use of fidget objects and wiggle cushions

Autism

A developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction.

General Characteristics May Include:
- Verbal and nonverbal communication deficit
- Narrow interests with stereotyped behaviors
- Resistance to environmental change and daily routines
- Engage in repetitive activities (repeating a phrase/story or performing same motor task over and over)
- Literal and concrete thinker
- Unusual responses to sensory experiences
- Varying levels of intelligence and ability
- Difficulty with social interaction skills
- Motor difficulties

Instructional Strategies:
- Obtain the student's attention before giving a direction or talking with the student.
- Provide structure, consistency and routine.
- Allow enough time for the student to respond.
- Reduce amount of talking to the student.
- Provide choices for students when possible.
- Use visual supports (objects, photos, picture, symbols, gestures, or sign language) to increase understanding.
- Prepare students for transitions and changes in schedule or routine (First, then chart, use of a picture schedule, visual timer).
- Avoid using idioms, words with double meanings and sarcasm.
- Allow the use of a "fidget" or sensory object when appropriate.

Developmental Delay

A student age three through six assessed and evaluated as having a disability or delay in development that needs special education and related services.

Since the characteristics and instructional strategies for individual students will vary, consult the teacher for recommendations for each student.

Emotional Disability (ED)

Characterized by one or more of the following: inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships; inappropriate types of behavior or feeling sunder normal circumstances; general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression or a tendency to develop physical symptoms of fear associated with personal or school problems.

General Characteristics May Include:
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings
- Uncooperative

- Withdrawn
- Low self esteem
- Difficulty with social skills and interacting with peers and adults
- Resists authority
- Poor coping skills
- Poor social skills
- Poor self control
- Aggressive behavior
- Anxiety

Instructional Strategies:
- Set clear rules, boundaries and expectations
- Learn what might trigger a student's behavior and work with the student to prevent or de-escalate the behaviors.
- Avoid power struggles.
- Provide choices of two things you want them to do.
- Encourage the use of self control strategies (deep breathing, counting backwards)
- Consistently follow the behavior plan or behavior strategies recommended by the teacher.
- NEVER use physical restraint unless you have completed Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training.
- Refrain from "rehashing past behavior".

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Impairment

Students have a wide range of hearing loss. The term deaf implies that a person has a very severe hearing loss and relies primarily on lip reading or sign language for communication.

General Characteristics May Include:
- Language and speech delay
- Different voice characteristics
- May misunderstand information presented
- Difficulty understanding concepts that are not concrete
- Takes things literally

Instructional Strategies:
- Use of visuals
- Gain the student's attention before speaking
- Face the student when talking
- Speak clearly and at a normal pace
- Be sure the student is seated close to the speaker
- Allow time for the student to respond

Cognitive Disability

A significant overall delay in thinking, communicating and performing daily life skills.

General Characteristics May Include:
- Require more time and repetition to learn things
- May have difficulties with fine and gross motor

- Delayed academic skills
- May have delayed speech and language
- Adult assistance or supervision for activities of daily living (toileting, dressing, feeding)

Instructional Strategies:
- Multi-sensory approach (sandpaper letters, gross motor activities, hear it and say it and write it)
- Use of visual supports (objects, photos, picture, symbols, gestures, or sign language) to increase understanding
- Scaffolding (Identify what they know and build on previously learned skills)
- Provide structure and establish routines
- Modeling (showing them how to complete a task, providing model of completed task)
- Allow extra time for response
- Break tasks/assignments into down into smaller segments
- Need assistance or supervision for activities of daily living
- Use redirection and frequent positive reinforcement
- Modified and/or alternative curriculum

Orthopedic Impairment

Physical (motor) difficulties in mobility, writing, and or sitting.

General Characteristics May Include:
- Limited movement and functioning of arms and/or legs
- Involuntary movements (cannot control)
- May need assistance with activities of daily living (toileting, dressing, feeding)

Instructional Strategies:
- Remove or accommodate barriers for student
- Allow students to be as independent as possible
- Speak to the person on their level (sit down if they are in a wheelchair)
- Allow enough time for student to respond, complete activities
- Ensure proper positioning for access and comfort prior to instruction

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
A disorder in one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself ability to listen, think, speak, read, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

General Characteristics May Include:
- Have difficulty in one or more academic area, yet may be strong in other areas
- Difficulty processing information either visually or through spoken language
- Average or above average intelligence
- Distractible
- Easily frustrated
- Inattention
- Social skills deficit

Instructional Strategies:
- Use the student's strengths to work on difficult areas.

- Chunking (Breaking assignments down into smaller, more manageable tasks)
- Allow extra time for response
- Graphic organizers
- Visual organizers
- Use of strategies (Example: COPS Capitalization, Overall Appearance, Punctuation, Spelling)
- Multi-sensory approach (sandpaper letters, gross motor activities, hear it and say it and write it)
- Scaffolding (Identify what they know and build on previously learned skills)
- Color coding
- Use of timers and providing reminders of remaining time to complete an assignment
- Modified instruction

Speech/Language Impairment

Difficulty in understanding or expressing language, stuttering or unusual voice characteristics.

General Characteristics May Include:
- Delay in language concepts (sentence length, vocabulary)
- Poor pragmatic (social language)
- Difficulty understanding when speaking

Instructional Strategies:
- Model good speech and language
- Allow students to communicate as independently as possible utilizing their mode(s) of communication (verbal, sign language, picture symbols, augmentative communication device/voice output device, computer)
- Ask student to repeat if you did not understand or express in a different way (show me, point to)
- Allow enough time for student to respond
- Use visual supports (objects, photos, picture, symbols, gestures, or sign language) to increase understanding

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

An injury to the brain that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

General Characteristics May Include:
- Impairment may be in one or more of the following areas: cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, motor abilities, processing and speech
- May need assistance with activities of daily living (toileting, dressing, feeding)
- Anxiety of coping with the loss of skills prior to injury

Instructional Strategies:
- Use simple and concrete language, but maintain high expectations
- Repetition of skills
- Modeling
- Break tasks/assignments into down into smaller segments

Visual Impairment

Impairment in vision which, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. Visual Impairment includes partial sight and blindness.

General Characteristics May Include:
- May tire easily visually
- Sensitivity to light
- May have difficulty finding materials
- Difficulty with mobility
- Poor depth perception

Instructional Strategies:

- Close proximity to teacher and instructional materials
- Enlarged print
- Multi sensory (hearing, touch)
- Assistive Tech devices (talking calculators, dome magnifier)
- Light boards
- Organized workspace
- Reduce glare
- Use pens or markers vs. pencil
- Slant boards
- Contrast of color/use of contrasting backgrounds

Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations and modifications are types of adaptations that are made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment practices in order for students with disabilities to be successful learners and to participate actively with other students in the general education classroom and in school-wide activities. Specific accommodations and modifications are identified and approved for students by the IEP (Individual Education Plan) Team. The special education teacher will share the specific accommodations and modifications for each student to be successful. As a paraprofessional you will assist in providing the appropriate accommodations and modifications in academic settings.

Accommodations vs. Modifications

Accommodations

- Changes **HOW** a student accesses or demonstrates learning

  o Setting
    - Small group
    - Seating in from of the room
    - Limited distractions
    - Study carrel

  o Presentation
    - Chunking –breaking up tasks/assignments into smaller pieces
    - Outline/highlight key points/concept

  o Scheduling
    - Occasional Breaks
    - Use of timers
    - Visual schedule

  o Response Mode
    - Dictated response
    - Picture Symbols
    - Extended time for written response

  Examples of Accommodations:

  ✓ test taken orally

- ✓ large print textbooks
- ✓ additional time to take test
- ✓ locker with an adapted lock
- ✓ weekly home-school communication tool, such as a notebook or daily log book
- ✓ peer support for note taking
- ✓ lab sheets with highlighted instructions
- ✓ graph paper to assist in organizing and lining up math problems
- ✓ tape record lectures
- ✓ use of a computer for writing

Modifications

- Changes **WHAT** a student is expected to learn

  - o Requiring a student to learn less material or content
  - o Revising assignments to reduce expectations
  - o Reducing test content

  Examples of Modifications:

  - ✓ outline in place of essay for major project
  - ✓ picture/ symbols choices on tests
  - ✓ alternative books or materials on the same theme or topic
  - ✓ spelling support from a computerized spell check program
  - ✓ word bank of choices for answers to test questions
  - ✓ use of a calculator on a math test
  - ✓ film or video supplements in place of text
  - ✓ questions re-worded using simpler language
  - ✓ projects substituted for written reports
  - ✓ important words and phrases highlighted

"In learning you will teach, and in teaching you will learn."

Phil Collins

Student Communication

Types of Communication	Strategies	Materials and Resources
Verbal *This student communicates through oral language independently.*	*Provide simple, clear, directions.	
Verbal with Prompting *This student communicates in simple words or short phrases. The child will need prompts to generate language.*	*Use visuals, gestures, or sign language. *Provide simple and concise language.	
Sign Language *This student may use sign language expressively and/or receptively to assist with comprehension.*	*Consult with the special educator, speech therapist or deaf educator for direction to assist student. *Sign language is sometimes used as a strategy to increase receptive language (understanding).	www.aslpro.com *This website provides video tutorials on how to create specific signs.*
PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) *This student may have minimal or no verbal language. He/she communicates through pictures expressively and/or receptively to assist with comprehension.*	*Once student provides symbol, read the symbol to indicate your understanding, and then respond to the request; encourage, but do not require verbal participation in the exchange.	Boardmaker, Writing with Symbols PECS
Augmentative Communication (Voice Output Devices) *This student has limited, unintelligible, or no verbal communication. The student utilizes the voice output devices for expressive communication.*	*Model use of the device in the beginning. *Provide opportunities for the students to use the device for responding. *Make sure the device is available to the student at all appropriate times.	

Keys to Effective Communication

- Maintain close proximity and use a low volume when communicating with students.

- Provide clear and simply stated directions of what you expect the child to do instead of telling them what you don't want them to do.

- Repeat back to the student what you think they are saying to clarify what the student means.

- Some children may require a model, picture, or sign of the action paired with the verbal direction.

- Use age appropriate language when speaking with students. (Refrain from using "baby talk"). Encourage students to use age appropriate language.

- Allow students time to communicate independently using their mode(s) of communication.

- Allow for extra processing and response time.

For example:

Instead of saying:	Say/Model	Reinforce
"No yelling!"	• "Use a calm voice." • "Use an inside voice."	• "Speak in a low voice while saying… Now I can listen, you are using a quiet voice." • "Nice job using your inside voice."
"Don't run!"	• "We walk in the hallway." • "Use walking feet." • "Walk please."	• "I like the way you're walking." • "Thanks for walking!"
"Stop calling out!"	• "Raise your hand." • "When you raise your hand, the teacher will answer your question."	• "Thank you for raising your hand." • "I like the way you raised your hand to share your ideas."

"When people talk, listen completely."

Ernest Hemingway

Positive Behavioral Strategies and Supports

- Behavior is a means of communication. Consider what the student is trying to tell you with the behavior. Is she hungry? Is he frustrated? Is he trying to get attention? Is she trying to escape the demand? Is he sick?

- Behind most behaviors exists a skill deficit.

    o Language and social difficulties
    o Sensory processing difficulties
    o Academic and writing skill deficits
    o Difficulties managing stress and anxiety
    o Attention difficulties
    o Difficulties handling transition and change
    o Difficulties with self esteem
    o Organizational difficulties

- Implement classroom and individual student behavior plans created by the teacher and/or IEP team consistently.

- Remind students of expectations prior to the transitions of an activity.

- Be cognizant of triggers/antecedents (what happens prior to the behavior occurring) that may lead to inappropriate behavior.

- Communicate with the teacher regarding student behaviors within a reasonable time frame.

- Encourage, expect and reinforce age appropriate behavior, even with students with lower cognitive abilities.

- Be proactive when assisting with behavior management. Provide structure and routine in an environment that is conducive to learning.

- When communicating with students, state directions and expectations in a simple, explicit, and positive manner. Tell the students what they are supposed to do. For instance, instead of saying "Don't run", say "Please walk in the halls".

- Offer students choices to avoid a power struggle.   Rather than say "Don't tap your pencil", state "Would you rather put your pencil in your pencil case or in your desk."

- Provide and encourage association with appropriate peer role models.

- Avoid overreacting to inappropriate behavior.   Some students may be reinforced by negative attention, which may increase inappropriate behaviors.

- When possible, ignore attention seeking behaviors that are not disruptive to the classroom.

- Diffuse stressful situations for students through redirection and distraction when appropriate.

- Provide positive reinforcement. Avoid focusing on punitive consequences or loss of privileges.

- When offering positive reinforcement, state what you like about the behavior. Rather than just saying say "good job", state "I like the way you raised your hand to participate."

- Avoid discussing incidents of behavior that occurred in the past.

- Physical intervention is used as a last resort. This intervention is utilized only by those trained in Crisis Prevention Intervention. Must complete documentation if physical intervention is used.

- Avoid personalizing student behavior and language.

- Focus on the positive!

"Tell me and I'll forget;
show me and I may remember;
involve me and I'll understand."

Chinese Proverb

Ways to Positively Reinforce Students

- ✓ Remarkable!

- ✓ I knew you could do it!

- ✓ What a great idea!

- ✓ You are so smart!

- ✓ You brighten my day!

- ✓ Outstanding answer!

- ✓ Thanks for volunteering.

- ✓ What a good listener!

- ✓ I like the way… (you are working quietly, sitting nicely in your seat, working with your partner, etc)

- ✓ How creative!

- ✓ Can you share your great idea with the class?

- ✓ Matthew is the first one who is ready to work!

- ✓ Now you've got it!

- ✓ I can tell you worked hard on this.

- ✓ You must be so proud of your project!

- ✓ Hooray for you!

- ✓ Let's cheer for Michael

- ✓ Super job!

- ✓ Does everyone see how nicely Erin is standing in line?

- ✓ You figured it out all by yourself!

- ✓ I like the way you are sitting nicely in your seat.

- ✓ That's a good point!

- ✓ Excellent work!

- ✓ Congratulations!

- ✓ I'll bet your mom and dad would be proud to see the job you did on this.

- ✓ You did well on the test because you studied hard!

- ✓ Good thinking!

- ✓ Much better!

- ✓ Your classmates look up to you.

- ✓ I am so glad I get to work with you today.

- ✓ I appreciate your help.

- ✓ Justin, you are the best!

- ✓ That is the coolest picture I have ever seen!

- ✓ You have put a lot of thought into the answer to the question!

- ✓ It is amazing how much you have learned this year!

- ✓ Way to go, Ryan!

- ✓ How does it feel to know all of your multiplication facts?

- ✓ I learned something new from you.

- ✓ Good thinking!

Strategies for Facilitating Student Independence

- Increasing learner independence is the instructional goal for every student! Encourage students to be independent rather than dependent.

- Encourage and allow students to make choices and decisions.

- Encourage students to complete activity as independently as possible prior to offering support.

- Allow student work to be authentic, rather than completed by the paraprofessional or inclusion helper.

- Allow students to make mistakes and experience natural consequences, unless there is a safety issue.
- When appropriate, sit or stand at a distance from the student who requires additional adult support.

Break larger tasks into smaller steps to allow student to independently perform parts of task/assignment.

Functional Example	When learning to use a phone. Encourage the student to push the first and last digit. Slowly encourage them to increase the number of digits.
Academic Example	A student is expected to write a paragraph. This task could be divided into smaller sections such as formulating ideas, creating a topic sentence, developing supporting sentences, and formulating a conclusion. The student may only complete one or two of these tasks during the class time.

Utilize peer support when possible.

Functional Example	A student is unable to tie his/her shoe. Rather than the paraprofessional tying the student's shoe, a peer could do this instead. Students may benefit from having a packing up/locker buddy at the end of the day rather than depending on adult support for this task.
Academic Example	During math class, pairs of students work on an activity sheet together. Instead of the paraprofessional scribing for a student with a fine motor disability, the student's partner can write for her/him. A student with a reading disability participates in a play during Integrated Language Arts. This student could be paired with a peer to help him/her learn the lines.

Utilizing the Prompt Hierarchy to Facilitate Student Independence

- A prompt hierarchy refers to different levels of support provided to assist a student who is learning or demonstrating a task.

- This is a suggested prompt hierarchy begins with least intrusive and moving through most intrusive. The goal is to begin with the least intrusive prompts. The most intrusive prompts should be used minimally and gradually faded as appropriate under the direction of the teacher.

- Some students may have individualized prompt hierarchies. For example, you would not utilize gesture prompts for a student who is blind or has a severe vision disability.

- Seek direction from the teacher concerning the appropriate prompts to be used with students.

- It is important to provide sufficient wait time between prompts. Students may need 3-8 seconds of wait time to respond to a direction.

Definitions of Prompt Types

Verbal Prompt	This level of prompt requires the teacher to give a specific verbal direction in addition to the task direction. Given a task direction, the student is unable to perform correctly until another; more specific, verbal prompt is provided (e.g., After the teacher gives the task direction and allows for wait time, the teacher then says, "Push the button to turn on the scanner.")
Gesture Prompt	This level of prompt requires the teacher to move his/her finger, hand, arm, or make a facial expression that communicates to the student specific information (e.g. Teacher taps scanner switch button).
Model Prompt	This level of prompt requires the teacher to demonstrate the correct response for the student, and the student imitates the teacher's model (e.g., The teacher demonstrates how to push the switch and then asks the student to repeat).
Partial Physical Prompt	This level of prompt requires the teacher to touch the student to elicit a response (e.g., Teacher touches the student's hand closest to the scanner switch button).
Full Physical Prompt	This level of prompt requires the teacher to place his/her hand over the student's hand and move it toward the response (e.g., teacher places hand over student's hand and places it on the scanner switch button).

Inclusion Solutions

Research supports students with disabilities learn best with their typical peers in the general classroom with accommodations and modifications. Our goal, in alignment with federal and state law, is for students to be included in the general education classroom to the fullest extent possible.

Tips for Supporting Students in the General Education Classroom

- Implement the appropriate accommodations, modifications, and lesson plans provided by the special education teacher for specific students.
- Become familiar with the content of the unit/course. Ask the teacher for clarification about the material, when needed.
- Provide students with opportunities to ask questions and respond utilizing their mode(s) of communication (verbal, sign language, picture symbols, and augmentative communication/voice output device).
- Implement the classroom and/or individual behavior plan when the student is in the general education setting.
- Provide feedback and data to the teachers related to academic progress, work habits and behavior.
- Encourage students to become as independent as possible when following classroom routines.
- Avoid hovering over the student you are supporting. Facilitate student independence by varying the amount of support, monitoring, and prompting based on the need and independence level of the student.
- Assist with other students who need help, on occasion, not singling out the students who receive special education services.
- Be mindful of the volume of your voice in the general education classroom so as you provide direction; it does not distract other students.
- Communicate with teachers about a plan to remove the student from the general education classroom if he is distracting students or needs a break. Discuss ahead of time with the teacher the expectations if a student needs to be removed from the classroom. Where should we go? What alternative activity should the student engage in? How long the student should be removed from the classroom? What are the criteria for the student to return to the classroom? Who do I call for help?
- Encourage students to interact with peers and develop peer relationships.
  - When working with students with limited cognition, social skills or verbal ability, get to know the interests of your student and classmates to share common interests with each other.
  - Select appropriate peer role models to work with or assist a student with a task, when appropriate.

Suggested Questions about Your Job Responsiblities

- Who are the students I will be supporting?

- What are the schedules of students I am supporting?

- What is my schedule?

- Are there student medical issues that I need to know prior to working with individual students?

- What are the school wide and classroom behavior systems?

- Does a student I am working with have an individual behavior plan? If so, what are the target behaviors, rewards and consequences?

- What are the safety considerations for individual students?

- How does the student communicate? What strategies are effective in communicating with the student?

- Can we discuss the snapshot IEP (summary of IEP goals, objectives, accommodations and modifications)?

- How will we communicate about instructional plans for the students I support?

- How will we communicate about student progress?

- When will we meet to discuss student successes and concerns?

- What strategies and techniques are effective when working with particular students?

- What level of prompting does a student need to complete assignments?

- What can I do to help facilitate student independence?

- What can I do to assist with facilitating peer relationships?

- What level of supervision/support does the student need for the activity?

- Where are school supplies and how are they obtained?

Common Question/Concerns	Who do I ask?
What accommodations does the student have?	Special educator/Case manager
Questions about specific subject matter (math algorithms, science vocabulary, comprehension strategies)	General Education teacher
Which days and hours do I work?	Administrator/Supervisor
Questions about sick and personal days	Administrator and refer to negotiated agreement

Additional questions I would like to ask:

"Know the person, not the disability, in fact look past the disability and you will see a person, a person who has the same thoughts and feelings as anyone else."
...... Author Unknown

Common Terms and Definitions

Adapted Physical Education (APE) – A related service for children who exhibit delays in motor development in addition to or in place of physical education including modifications of activities so students may participate more fully in physical education class.

Assistive Technology (AT) – Any item, piece of equipment, or product, which is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of students with disabilities.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) – A plan including target behaviors, behavioral strategies, positive reinforcement, and consequences for student behaviors. The plan is designed to teach students to demonstrate appropriate behavior and social skills.

Extended School Year Services (ESY) – Special education and related services during the summer. The purpose of ESY is to prevent a child with a disability from losing previously learned skills. The IEP team approves ESY goals for the student to work on. Not all students receiving special education services receive ESY.

Fine Motor – Motor skills related to the small muscle groups such as handwriting, using both hands to complete tasks, and buttoning.

Gross Motor – Motor skills related to the large muscle groups such as walking, sitting, and jumping.

Individual Education Program (IEP) – An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the educational program that has been designed to meet that child's unique needs. Each child who receives special education and related services has an IEP. The IEP is developed by teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when age appropriate) It includes educational goals and objectives, modifications and accommodations, documents progress and defines the services and placement of the student.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – The educational placement that is close as possible to the general education environment that permits a child to receive the most educational benefit while participating in a regular educational environment to the maximum extent appropriate.

Occupational Therapist (OT) – Works with students to improve fine motor skills and meaningful activities of daily life such as self-care skills, education, recreation, or work.

Physical Therapist (PT) – Works with students to improve gross motor skills (large muscle groups) and mobility.

Special Education – Specialized instruction to fit the unique learning strengths and needs of students with disabilities. A major goal of special education is to teach the skills and knowledge the child needs to be as independent as possible. Special education programs focus on academics and include therapies and related services.

Speech and Language Therapist – Provides therapy to help a student develop or improve articulation (pronunciation), communication skills, pragmatics (social skills) and oral-motor skills.

Special Education Acronyms

ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorders

AT - Assistive Technology

APE - Adaptive Physical Education

ASL - American Sign Language

BIP - Behavior Intervention Plan

CBI - Community Based Instruction

CP - Cerebral Palsy

ED - Emotional Disability

ESL - English as a Second Language

ESY - Extended School Year

FBA- Functional Behavior Assessment

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP - Individual Education Program

LRE - Least Restrictive Environment

NCLB - No Child Left Behind Act

OT - Occupational Therapy

PECS - Picture Exchange Communication System

PDD - Pervasive Developmental Disorder

PT - Physical Therapy

RT I - Response to Interventions

SLP - Speech and Language Pathologist

SLD - Specific Learning Disability

VSC - Voluntary State Curriculum

Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access.

   Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

   Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

   One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

   Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Huron School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

> Family Policy Compliance Office
> U.S. Department of Education
> 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
> Washington, DC 20202

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice for Directory Information

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that the Huron School District, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, the Huron School District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Huron School District to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;

- The annual yearbook;

- Honor roll or other recognition lists;

- Graduation programs; and

- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. [1]

If you do not want the Huron School District to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing. The Huron School District has designated the following information as directory information: [**Note: an LEA may, but does not have to, include all the information listed below.**]

-**Student's name**	-**Participation in officially**
-**Address**	**recognized activities and sports**
-**Telephone listing**	-**Weight and height of members of**
-**Electronic mail address**	**athletic teams**
-**Photograph**	-**Degrees, honors, and awards**

---

[1] These laws are: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).

-Date and place of birth   received
-Major field of study   -The most recent educational agency or
-Dates of attendance   institution attended
-Grade level
-Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student's SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)
See the list below of the disclosures that elementary and secondary schools may make without consent.

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in §99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(*1*) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(*2*) are met. (§99.31(a)(1))

- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of §99.34. (§99.31(a)(2))

- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of §99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)

- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§99.31(a)(4))

- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to §99.38. (§99.31(a)(5))

- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction. (§99.31(a)(6))

- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§99.31(a)(7))

- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§99.31(a)(8))

- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (§99.31(a)(9))

- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36. (§99.31(a)(10)

- Information the school has designated as "directory information" under §99.37. (§99.31(a)(11))