



**SPECIAL SERVICES**  
**COOPERATIVE**

*Wamego - Rock Creek - Wabaunsee*

# Paraeducator Handbook

2021-2022

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Please read carefully and share all information with your classroom and/or supervising special education teacher.

# Chapter 1

## Roles, Responsibilities and Regulations

## CLASSIFIED STAFF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The goals of the personnel policies set forth in these handbooks are to create the best possible educational climate for the students of the Special Services Cooperative of Wamego, USD 320. These policies are designed to prevent misunderstanding by the personnel of the district about their duties and privileges.

The following policies have been approved by the Board of Education of USD 320 and shall serve as guidelines for your employment. This handbook is presented as a matter of information and direction regarding policy, benefits and other useful information.

Classified personnel are all employees who are not required to hold a Kansas State Educational Certificate. This group includes custodial, maintenance, food service, office, paraprofessional, aides and transportation personnel. Classified employees play an important role in the school district by helping provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment and by being the support group who assists the certified staff. The importance of your job should never be underestimated. Involvement with students, whether on the buses or in the hallways, often sets the tone for the student's day. Classified personnel are an important part of an "effective school".

Classified employees are employees' at-will and employment may be terminated at any time, with or without cause. Paraeducators are considered to be, **Full-time, 9 month employees** – working at least 30 hours per week during the school term.

### **Assignments, Work Day/Work Week**

The standard paraeducator work assignment will be established by the superintendent in consultation with the Director of Special Education Services. The work day will include an unpaid lunch break (typically 30 minutes). Exceptions to these standards must be authorized by the Director of Special Services and the Superintendent of USD 320. The **work week** begins at 12:00 a.m. on Sunday, and ends at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday of any given pay period. Employees are expected to report on time and work their assigned work schedule.

### **Time clocks/timecards**

All hourly employees are required to use the time clock system that is part of the Skyward Business Management system. A computer to be used for log-in purposes will be provided at all locations. Employees are to clock in and out each time they report to or depart from district duty. Employees must utilize Skyward system at all times (including lunch periods). Supervisors may approve other methods of documenting duty hours worked when the Skyward system is not available. Handwritten time cards should only be used in the event the Skyward system is not available to an employee.

Timecards are due at the District Office by the payroll deadline given by the human resources/payroll department. Payroll deadlines will be communicated each month via email from the payroll department. If any employee does not receive this communication for any reason, it is the responsibility of the employee to inquire of the deadline from their building office or the payroll department. Failure to turn in your timecard to the payroll department by the deadline date may result in a delay of up to 7 days in receiving your paycheck.

### **Breaks**

All classified personnel are allowed a break if their regular daily schedule calls for four hours or more of continuous work. Breaks are limited to 15 minutes in length and may not be accumulated or added to lunch or dinner hours. Lunch breaks are required, and should be a minimum of 30 minutes in length and will be unpaid.

### **Health Certifications**

Kansas Law 72-5213 requires that every person, whether employees of the school district or under the supervision thereof, who come in regular contact with the pupils of the school district to submit a certification of health signed

by a person licensed to practice medicine. The certification shall include a statement that there is no evidence of physical condition that would conflict with the health, safety, or welfare of the pupils; and that freedom from tuberculosis has been established by chest x-ray or negative tuberculin skin test.

As a condition of employment, all new employees hired by USD 320 are required to submit such a certification to the District Office on a district approved form. This initial certification (with negative TB) is valid until such time that there is reasonable cause to believe that the employee is suffering from an illness detrimental to the health of the students. If such determination is made, the Board of Education may require a new certification of health. Cost of the second required examination will be reimbursed by the BOE. In such instances where an employee has had a positive TB skin test, a chest x-ray will be required.

The required health certification must be on file at the District Office on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> of the current month for the employee to be eligible for a paycheck. Failure by the employee to provide the required health certification may result in suspension and an unpaid absence until such time the certification is provided to the district.

### **Inclement Weather**

If an hourly classified employee, other than custodial and maintenance staff, is not able to get to work due to inclement weather, but are still scheduled and expected to attend work that day, personal leave (if available) must be used. If personal leave is not available, the day will be taken as leave without pay. If school is cancelled due to inclement weather or other unforeseen school closure, personal leave may be used (if available) OR the day may be taken without pay. Beginning on the third full inclement weather day in a school year (July 1 – June 30), hourly classified employees will be allowed to use sick leave (if available) if they choose to be paid for the inclement weather day. Personal leave and leave without pay are still options for the 3<sup>rd</sup> inclement weather day and beyond.

### **Jury Duty**

All employees of the district shall be excused for jury duty with no jeopardy to their employment. Advance notice shall be given to the employee's supervisor, including completion of request for leave on Skyward.

### **Leave and Leave Conditions**

An employee on leave from duty shall be compensated at his/her regular rate of pay while absent, if the following conditions are met:

1. Employee has completed six months of employment
2. Applicable leave is earned and/or available to the employee
3. The supervisor and/or building administrator is notified of the need for leave and the reason prior to the beginning of each work day, or 48 hours in advance of use of personal leave
4. A request for leave is to be submitted to the supervisor through Skyward in advance when possible, or at the earliest opportunity upon return to work. The request must be made by the payroll cut-off date (as specified on handout). **It is the employee's responsibility to complete the necessary request on the Skyward system.**
5. If extended sick leave is used for personal illness, the employee may be asked to provide the Director a certificate from a licensed physician verifying the employee's illness or physical disability.

Leave allowances will be prorated for new employees at the completion of their first six months of employment. Maximum leave allowances will be granted on July 1. Leave balances will be shown on the employee's paycheck stub on Skyward. No leave benefits will be given during seasonal summer employment. Earned / available leave must be used before "Leave without pay". Hourly employees shall not work extra hours as a means of taking time off later without utilizing leave.

## Sick Leave

On July 1 of each year, sick days are granted to classified employees with at least four (4) months of service. Sick leave may be taken in one-hour increments. Sick leave covers the employee and his/her immediate family. A member of the immediate family includes mother, father, wife, husband, son, daughter, brother, sister, or other extended family at the discretion of the superintendent. The above shall include the father, mother, sister or brother of the employee's spouse with a limitation of 5 days for each cause. Sick leave may be used to attend the funeral of any person. Unused sick leave will not be paid upon termination of employment.

Employee Category	Sick Leave **	Max Sick Leave ++	Personal Leave	Max Personal Leave +
SpEd Para - Full Time	9 days	120 days *	3 days	6 days
SpEd Para (working < 30 hrs/wk)	-----	30 days	5 days of leave per year to be used for Sick or Personal leave. Unused days at the end of the year will be converted to Sick Leave.	

+ Personal leave must be used by June 30.

\* Sick leave over 120 days will be reimbursed at the rate of \$10 per day in June of each year.

\*\* Sick leave may be used to attend the funeral of any person.

++ The category of maximum sick leave has been established to help support employees should a serious illness or accident occur. These days are provided as a benefit to be used in a legitimate manner by employees. These days are not to be used as personal leave or vacation leave when an employee is planning to leave USD 320 due to retirement or job termination. Should this be suspected, employees will be required to provide certification of illness or physical disability from a licensed physician.

## Dress Code

Dress appropriately for the job: all staff are expected to project a professional image that sets positive dress and grooming examples for students. Clothing must be neat, clean, in good repair, and appropriate for on the job appearances at all times. Employees should not wear see-through clothing, torn clothing, short or very tight-fitting clothing, sweat suits or shorts. Liquor, tobacco, drugs, drug paraphernalia, profanity, or sexually suggestive statements, pictures, and or implied references are not allowed on clothing. You will probably find collared shirts or blouse/pants, blouse/skirt or dresses appropriate for most programs. There may be designated jeans days in your building, check with your supervising teacher or building principal.

## Cell Phones/Social Media

Cell phones are to be turned to "silent" during student contact time. Staff will not talk on cell phones, send text messages, play games, or access social media during student contact time. Personal calls should be made and text messages should be sent during scheduled breaks. Staff should not post work-related information on social media/the internet.

## Email

Employees are expected to check district email daily. Employees shall have no expectation of privacy when using district e-mail or other official communication systems. E-mail messages shall be used to conduct approved and official district business. All employees must use appropriate language in all messages. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to use the system according to these guidelines or other guidelines published by the administration.

## Outside Employment

Employment in addition to that as a paraeducator (e.g. bus driver, coach or custodian) with any district in the Special Services Cooperative (USDs 320, 323, 329) must be reported to the Human Resources office at USD 320 immediately. Classified employees shall not engage in outside employment that impairs the effectiveness of their service.

### **Transportation of Students in Personal Vehicles**

The transportation of students in personal vehicles is strongly discouraged. USD 320 does not provide insurance coverage for transportation of students in personal vehicles. USD 323 and USD 329 may or may not cover transportation of students in personal vehicles. An employee who chooses to transport students in his or her personal vehicle assumes all risk and liability for accidents that may occur. Employees are required to contact the Director of Special Education ten working days or more in advance before transporting a student in a personal vehicle.

### **Resignation**

Employees resigning employment should give two weeks (ten working days) written notice of intended termination and reason for resignation. This will allow our staff, students, and parents to begin the process of transition to your replacement. This is considered to be a reasonable and professional standard in a school setting.

### **Salary Schedule Placement**

In order to qualify for placement at Level 2 or higher on the paraeducator salary schedule, the paraeducator must submit a complete college transcript for all college hours to the USD 320 district office for approval on or before the 10th of the month following the first official day at work. No salary adjustment or amendment to pay shall be made after that date.

### **Paraeducator Job Description**

The main components of the job description are: instructional duties, interpersonal skills, professional qualities, personal qualities, and clerical skills. Each of these components has a variety of sub-components that are important to a paraeducator position.

The role of the paraeducator is to provide support to the assigned special education personnel in a building(s) by assisting with instructional tasks assigned to students from day to day and providing other duties deemed necessary by the supervising teacher. Each paraeducator is assigned to at least one or more certified special education teachers.

### **Paraeducator Employment Standards**

To be employed as a paraeducator, a person must;

- Be a high school graduate (or GED equivalent), and
- Complete an orientation session addressing Confidentiality, Sexual Harassment, Blood Borne Pathogens, Mandated Reporting, Suicide Prevention, Bullying Prevention, Education for the Homeless, Emergency Safety Interventions, the services to be provided, the policies and procedures of the local education agency concerning special education, and a required certification of health and TB blood test.

To follow the intent of Kansas statute, a paraeducator is qualified... to assist certified teachers in the instruction of exceptional children... This individual, therefore, shall be referred to as an instructional paraeducator. Special education paraeducators are team members who work alongside the special education teacher. They not only free the teacher from the more routine tasks of the classroom, but also serve as an effective part of the educational team. With differentiated responsibilities, paraeducators carry out the program developed by the special education professionals. The scope of the definition described here and in Kansas statute in general focuses on instructional paraeducators who work with the specified teacher and are assigned to a particular classroom.

### **Confidentiality**

District employees may have ongoing opportunities to access confidential information or records that are only available to the public on a limited view basis. Much of the information processed by district employees is confidential, and law governs its release; for example, confidential student records, information pursuant to Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) intervention, etc.

Employees are prohibited from divulging information contained in the records and files of the district, except to other authorized employees who may need such information in connection with their duties and to authorized persons or agencies only in accordance with law, district policies, and administrative rules.

If an employee is approached to provide information inappropriately, the employee must refuse to release the requested information unless authorized by his/her supervisor or otherwise required to release the information under law or court order. In all cases, the employee's immediate supervisor shall be informed, immediately, of any requests.

Any employee who inappropriately releases information, or uses confidential information obtained in the course of his/her employment with the district for personal reasons or private gain, will be disciplined in accordance with Board Policies. Disciplinary action may include severe penalties, up to and including discharge.

### **Paraeducator Role**

The special education paraeducator has become an essential person in the development of programs for students with special needs. Exceptional students require smaller classes; therefore, more personnel are needed. In addition, more and more students who are in institutional settings or were receiving no educational services at all are being admitted to public school programs. Paraeducators can help overcome these obstacles and work towards the quality education that is necessary for exceptional students.

### **Legal Authority for Paraeducators in Special Education**

In 1974, the Kansas Legislature enacted the Special Education for Exceptional Children Act which gave a more precise definition and role to paraeducators in special education. In Kansas statute, special education teacher means a person employed by a local education agency for special education services who is (a) a teacher qualified to instruct exceptional children as determined by standards established by the State Board and who is so certified by the State Board, or (b) a paraeducator qualified to assist certified teachers in the instruction of exceptional children as determined by standards established by the State Board and who is so approved by the State Board. In addition, Kansas statute calls for reimbursement of special education paraeducators... each special education teacher who is a paraeducator as defined by Kansas statute shall be counted as two-fifths full-time equivalent special education teacher...As a result of this legislation, rules and regulations for training, utilization, supervision and approval of special education paraeducators shall be established to ensure the proper intent of the law.

The definition of paraeducators in Kansas Statute does not include those individuals who are referred to as non-instructional aides and who are employed for the primary purpose of performing such duties as playground or lunchroom supervision, office clerical tasks, attendance recording, lunch and milk money collecting, or personal and hygienic care to students outside of the instructional program. Aides may be employed to do the task previously mentioned, but are not eligible for reimbursement as special education instructional paraeducators.

### **Utilization of Paraeducators**

In order to use paraeducators effectively, the teacher must first have a clear vision of his/her own role as a teacher. He/she needs to understand the hierarchy of the instructional tasks and then decide which ones best involve his/her time and which ones should be delegated to his/her para. The amount of quality professional supervision given is crucial in deciding what duties paraeducators can and should perform. There is almost universal agreement that the diagnosis of educational needs and the planning and design of programs and procedures to meet those needs are professional functions. The role of the paraeducator is to provide support to the special education teacher in the implementation of the educational programs, management of students, and completion of non-instructional tasks.



## **Duties and Responsibilities**

Instructional responsibilities shall center on follow-up or reinforcement activities. Initial instruction involving the presentation of new lessons or concepts should be the responsibility of the special education teacher. The teacher shall plan cooperatively with the paraeducator and assign implementation duties to this individual. The teacher will work with individual students or small groups on particular learning problems while the paraeducator may tutor individual children or work with small groups, using materials and techniques chosen or designed by the teacher. The paraeducator is employed to improve the quality of education for exceptional students.

There are two instances in which a special education paraeducator may be approved to provide assistance during the time students are being transported by bus to and from an attendance center:

1. Cases in which the student's physical needs are of a severe nature; such as a severely multiple handicapped student having a choking or seizure condition which requires close monitoring by an adult.
2. Cases in which the student's emotional/behavioral needs are of such a severe nature that constant adult supervision is necessary.

Local educational agencies are encouraged in both cases to utilize these paraeducators also in the special education classroom to which they are assigned. Each of the above cases is subject to individual approval from the Director of Special Education.

## **Paraeducators Facilitating Least Restrictive Environment**

State and Federal law speak to the provision of the least restrictive environment in programming for students in special education programs. Any paraeducator may be assigned to a general education classroom program where one or more special education students are being maintained, but that paraeducator shall be supervised by a special education teacher who meets the requirement in Kansas statute and shall be assigned duties which relate solely to the education of exceptional children.

The paraeducator, special education teacher and the general education teacher will collaborate to best support the student in the general education class setting. The amount of time the paraeducator spends in the general education classroom will depend on the number of special education students included and the nature and degree of the students' needs.

When paraeducators are supporting a student with physical or visual impairment in the general education classroom, they should spend the majority of the school day providing individual attention to the student, assisting him/her with physical needs and/or educational activities. The paraeducator should be assigned to the general education class teacher(s) and the appropriate special education teacher. Each local education agency shall obtain individual approval from the Director of Special Education for any paraeducator whose only assignment is to assist students with one or more hearing, physical or visual impairments in a general education classroom program. Local education agencies utilizing paraeducators in these specific areas shall obtain approval for each individual case from the Director of Special Education.

## **Class Size and Caseload**

The class size and caseload in selected categorical areas can be increased by the utilization of paraeducators. In certain program areas, a paraeducator is required for specific numbers of students up to the maximum class size. In programs for students with severe needs, where the demands of the educational program include both physical and academic educational programming, the ratio must be approved by the Director of Special Education.

In team-teaching settings, interrelated programs, or itinerant situations, the paraeducator should have a special education professional he/she is assigned to for counseling, supervision and on-the-job training.

Paraeducators may work with individual students, small groups, large groups, or the total classroom. There is no specified ratio of paraeducator to students. However, in settings where the students have serious or involved needs, the ratio of paraeducator to students may be decreased.

### **Supervision of Students on Campus**

Paraeducators may work with and supervise students in the classroom, hall, restroom, therapy area, gymnasium, on the playground, and in other specified instructional areas on campus under the supervision of the professional to whom they are assigned.

The supervising professional may leave the class under the supervision of the paraeducators for short periods of time while the teacher is still on the school campus. If the supervising teacher must leave the school campus, another professional on campus should be designated as the supervisor of the class and of the paraeducators. The designated professional may be the principal or a certified special or general education staff member.

### **Supervision of Students Off Campus**

Off-campus activities, such as work study placements and community programming, may be supervised by paraeducators. Paraeducators also may accompany small groups of students on shopping trips and other such instructional activities without the supervising professional being present. Supervision of each paraeducator must be provided by certified professional staff. The certified professional must work with paraeducators and students at least twice a week progressing toward accomplishment of program goals. When paraeducators are "on-site", and the certified professional is not present, the paraeducator shall be subject to the direction of designated on-site personnel. Designated on-site personnel shall be identified and a record maintained of same in the administrative office of each district.

### **Unacceptable Duties and Responsibilities – No special education paraeducator shall:**

- (1) Be solely responsible for a classroom or a professional support or related service
- (2) Select or administer formal diagnostic or psychological instruments or interpret the results of those instruments unless authorized under Kansas statute
- (3) Program or prescribe education activities or materials for the students without supervision and guidance of the teacher
- (4) Be solely responsible for preparing lesson plans or initiating original concept instruction
- (5) Be assigned to work with one or more of the most difficult students the majority of the school day merely for the convenience of the teacher
- (6) Be employed in lieu of needed itinerant special education personnel
- (7) Be utilized as a substitute teacher, unless the paraeducator possesses the appropriate certificate
- (8) Be enrolled as a secondary school student
- (9) Perform nursing procedures or administer medications without appropriate supervision from an approved health care professional

### **Inservice Requirements**

Paraeducators are required by law to obtain inservice training annually. The State Department of Education determines which training hours may be counted toward the required minimum. The Director of Special Education will be responsible for scheduling the appropriate training for paraeducators. The inservice hours must be logged on the Paraeducator Inservice Log. The supervising teacher(s) must sign for all approved hours that he/she has knowledge of. All individual hours will be reported to the Director of Special Education's office prior to the last official day of employment or earlier at the request of the Director. Continuation of employment requires that the minimum training hours be attained. A copy of acceptable hours and the authorized form used to document hours will be reviewed at the beginning of each school year. Every paraeducator is required to show evidence of required inservice hours.

### **Supervision and Assignments**

Usually it is obvious who has supervisory responsibility for paraeducators. Typically, the professional responsible for the provision of services who is receiving assistance from the paraeducator is assigned as the supervisor of the paraeducator. In some instances, based on the paraeducator's assignment, other special education personnel may be identified as the paraeducator's supervisor. Examples might include community based paraeducators supervised by a district level coordinator who is responsible for implementing the community based program; or a building level paraeducator facilitator. In extremely rare instances, a paraeducator may be supervised directly by the Director of Special Education if determined necessary.

### **The Identified Supervisor Must Be:**

Claimed on the Personnel Report for special education categorical aid and responsible for the paraeducator's day to day job performance and evaluation. When districts have teachers on a waiver or have assigned substitutes to professional positions, different supervisory arrangements may be in the best interest of students. In such cases, special education administrators have the authority to assign another special education teacher as the supervisor. Districts have a responsibility to ensure appropriate supervision of special education paraeducators and the delivery of services. An identified process to ensure supervision occurs must be developed and implemented.

Districts are responsible for implementing policies to ensure appropriate supervision of paraeducators in the delivery of special education services. Districts must evaluate and determine appropriate levels of supervision based on the services provided, the paraeducator assigned, and the needs of the student as outlined in the IEP or IFSP. In addition to locally determined paraeducator supervision policies, the following supervision requirements apply.

### **When the Supervising Special Education Teacher is not in the Building:**

Paraeducators assigned to a professional may work with a child when the professional is not in the building, ONLY if the professional works directly with both that child and the paraeducator at least 10 percent of the total service time each week. When the assigned special education teacher is not present, a paraeducator must have a designated principal or teacher available in the building for assistance and supervision as needed.

### **Paraeducators Assigned to SLPs, OTs, and PTs**

Paraeducators assigned to speech-language pathologists or audiologists must be supervised a minimum of 10 percent of the time they are working with students (training time does not count toward this minimum percentage). Paraeducators assigned to OTs and PTs (including OTAs and PTAs) must be supervised according to statutes and regulations established by the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts for Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy.

### **When the Paraeducator is Assigned to a Learning Site Off School Property**

A paraeducator who is assigned to a learning site that is off school property must be supervised by a special education teacher. The special education teacher must work with the paraeducator and the student at least twice a week if services are provided daily. If services are provided at least once a week, 20% of the sessions per month must be supervised. If services are provided less than one time a week, 20% of the sessions per quarter must be supervised.

### **Special Assignments for Paraeducators**

#### **(a) Speech-language Paraeducators/Assistants**

Speech-language pathologists are required to train, monitor, supervise, and evaluate Paraeducators assigned to them.

#### **(b) Audiology Assistants**

Audiologists are required to train, monitor, supervise, and evaluate Paraeducators assigned to them.

Paraeducators performing hearing screenings must have the appropriate level of training for the type of hearing screenings they are performing and must perform hearing screenings according to the Hearing Screening Guidelines (2001).

(c) School Nurse Paraeducators

Paraeducators who provide nursing or school health services are persons who, by specialized training from registered professional nurses, are qualified to carry out basic nursing tasks or procedures in the care of students, according to the student's Individualized Healthcare Plan, which becomes a part of their IEP. First aid is not a special education service. Special education reimbursement is authorized for school nurse Paraeducators, whose personnel agreements designate them as Paraeducator/aide for a school nurse, who provides nursing or school health services specified in a student's Health Care Plan and/or IEP and that is appropriately delegated and supervised by registered professional nurses.

(d) Administrative Assigned Paraeducators

MIS Paraeducators:

Reimbursement as a Paraeducator is authorized for persons responsible for collecting, entering, and verifying Management Information System (MIS) data for a school district or cooperative. MIS clerks also may assist with the review, maintenance, and storage of IEPs and accompanying paperwork.

Responsibilities that do not qualify as MIS duties include such things as maintaining the personnel database, processing Medicaid claims, clerical duties not related to the MIS data system and serving as an administrator's secretary. Logs are required. Regardless of certification/license held, MIS duties will be reimbursed at Paraeducator rates.

Translator:

Reimbursement as a Paraeducator is authorized for persons responsible for translating special education paperwork from English to another language. The Paraeducator may be assigned to a special education administrator. Reimbursement will be prorated for clerical duties and for translating non-special education paperwork. Logs are required. NOTE: the above identified Paraeducator assignments should be assigned to administrators for direct supervision.

### **Supervision and Evaluation**

Any Paraeducator assigned to an itinerant professional may work with an exceptional student when the professional is not in the building only if the professional works directly with both the student and the Paraeducator at least twice each week. If the itinerant professional is not present each day, the Paraeducator shall be assigned to, and supervised by, a designated principal or regular classroom teacher.

Instructional Paraeducators shall be directly supervised and evaluated by the special education teacher to whom they are assigned. Overall supervisory and evaluative responsibilities rest with the principal or special education administrator as they do for other school staff members. In cases in which the Paraeducator is assigned to an itinerant special education staff member, and the staff member is not present every day, the Paraeducator shall be assigned to and supervised by the principal or designated regular classroom teacher. Periodic written evaluation with resulting conference should be a definite part of the administrative structure of the local education agency.

A Paraeducator may be assigned to assist in a general education program when one or more students with exceptionalities are included in that program, if the Paraeducator is assigned to and supervised by a special education teacher who meets the requirements in Kansas statute.

A local education agency shall not assign more Paraeducators to an approved special education teacher than can be adequately supervised by that teacher. When an assigned special education teacher is not present, a designated principal or teacher may supervise a Paraeducator. A local education agency shall not assign a Paraeducator to more than two special education teachers for supervisory purposes. A special education teacher shall supervise any Paraeducator who is assigned to a learning site that is off school property. The special education teacher shall work with the Paraeducator and the student at least twice each week.

Except for Paraeducators providing supervised occupational, physical or speech therapy, any Paraeducator assigned to a professional may work with an exceptional student when the professional is not in the building only if the professional works directly with both the student and the Paraeducator at least twice each week. Any

Paraeducator providing specialized occupational or physical therapy must receive direct supervision by a professional occupational or physical therapist twice each month. If the professional therapist is not present each day, the Paraeducator shall be assigned to, and supervised by, a designated principal or teacher.

### **Evaluations**

Paraeducators will be evaluated formally on the same schedule as all other classified employees of USD 320 – once per year. Exceptions include during the first year of employment when the para will be evaluated twice per year and the state department's recommendation to the district to conduct such more frequently, or, if the performance criteria is not meeting the anticipated expectations. If performance standards are not being met, then at the discretion of the supervising teacher the decision can be made to conduct an evaluation more often than annually.

The Paraeducator evaluation form can be found in this guide. A "self" evaluation is also afforded to each para being evaluated. The self-evaluation will not become a part of the evaluation records but will serve as a point of discussion as the Para and the supervising evaluator review the official evaluation of the Para's performance and competency.

### **Job Descriptions**

Paraeducators should have job descriptions which clearly define their duties and responsibilities in the special education program(s) to which they have been assigned. The job descriptions may also contain a list of unacceptable duties, terms of employment, specialized training and qualifications.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PARAEDUCATOR JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Purpose:** The instructional Paraeducator assists the special education teacher in creating a positive learning environment to facilitate the personal, social, and intellectual development of students. To accomplish these tasks, the instructional Paraeducator works closely with the staff and administration of the school district.

**Responsible To:** Director of Special Education, Special Education Teacher, Para Facilitator and Building Principal

**Payment Rate:** According to the Classified Salary Schedule

### **Qualifications:**

1. High school diploma or equivalent
2. Health and Inoculation Certificate on file in the District Office (after employment offer is made and accepted)
3. Desire to continue career improvement
4. Drive record from state (after employment offer is made and accepted – those transporting students only)
5. Defensive driving and first aid certification (required for those transporting students)
6. Clean background check through USD 320 HR department (after employment offer is made and accepted)

### **Essential Functions:**

1. Assist in facilitating the personal, social, and intellectual development of students
2. Assist in establishing a positive learning environment, and respond to the individual needs of students
3. Ensure that all activities conform to district guidelines
4. Communicate effectively with members of the school district and community while following district confidentiality guidelines
5. React to change productively and handle other tasks as assigned
6. Appropriately operate all classroom equipment
7. Demonstrate effective interpersonal relationships with others
8. Support the value of an education
9. Support the philosophy and mission of the school district

## 10. Regular attendance

### **Physical Requirements for Specialized Programs:**

1. Lift up to 40 lbs. unassisted
2. Good physical agility which requires the following:
  - a. Kneeling
  - b. Getting up and down off floor
  - c. Frequent bending
  - d. Sitting
  - e. Standing
3. Moving and operating equipment

### **Environmental Conditions:**

1. Requires some travel
2. Must work in noisy and crowded environments
3. Must work outdoor activities

### **General Responsibilities:**

1. Assist in the instruction and supervision of students. This may involve completing assignments, reading material aloud, explaining directions, and explaining concepts, administering tests
2. Set-up and lead students in activities prepared by the supervising teacher or therapist
3. Tutor students as directed
4. Assist with small group instruction
5. Monitor student progress
6. Assist in modification of materials for student's abilities
7. Assist students in games and in the proper use of playground equipment
8. Use appropriate behavior management techniques to maintain a positive climate for teaming
9. Implement, monitor, and collect data on behavior plans for individual students
10. Motivate students through effective communication and evaluative feedback
11. Set high expectations for student achievement and behavior
12. Assist in providing for the special physical and emotional needs of students
13. Grade papers and assist with record keeping in the special education program
14. Prepare instructional materials and supplies for use
15. Escort and supervise students to and from various school facilities and areas. Occasionally, escort students on field trips
16. Act as a liaison between special education teacher and general education teacher
17. In the inclusion classroom, assist students with class work, taking notes, tests, etc. Also provide positive support for the classroom teacher by monitoring student progress and behavior
18. Provide daily feeding and /or mealtime supervision, toileting, diapering and hygiene care as needed
19. Take attendance and record absences in the special education classroom
20. Attend staffing and general staff meetings
21. Assist in the maintenance and inventory of materials
22. Work effectively with students, teachers, parents, community agencies, and other groups while following strict confidentiality guidelines
23. Assist in safeguarding confidential information
24. Immediately report accidents, assaults, destruction of property, and abusive behavior to the instructor and principal.
25. Adhere to required program guidelines as defined by the Kansas Plan for Special Education
26. Keep abreast of new information, innovative ideas, and techniques and share with professional assigned
27. Adhere to all district and cooperative health and safety policies, including all precautions of the Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan

28. Other duties as assigned by the instructor, principal, para facilitator or Director of Special Education

### **LOW INCIDENCE/BEHAVIOR PARAEDUCATOR JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Purpose:** The instructional Paraeducator assists the special education teacher in creating a positive learning environment to facilitate the personal, social, and intellectual development of students. To accomplish these tasks, the instructional Paraeducator works closely with the staff and administration of the school district.

**Responsible To:** Director of Special Education, Special Education Teacher, Para Facilitator and Building Principal

**Payment Rate:** According to the Paraeducator Salary Schedule

#### **Qualifications:**

1. High school diploma or equivalent
2. Health and Inoculation Certificate on file in the District Office (after employment offer is made and accepted)
3. Desire to continue career improvement
4. Drive record from state (after employment offer is made and accepted – those transporting students only)
5. Defensive driving and first aid certification (required for those transporting students)
6. Clean background check through USD 320 HR department (after employment offer is made and accepted)

#### **Essential Functions:**

1. Assist in facilitating the personal, social, and intellectual development of students
2. Assist in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students with exceptionalities
3. Assist in establishing a positive learning environment, and respond to the individual needs of students
4. Ensure all activities conform to district guidelines
5. Communicate effectively with all team members
6. React to change productively and carry out all assigned duties
7. Appropriately operate all classroom equipment
8. Demonstrate effective interpersonal relationships with others
9. Support the value of education
10. Demonstrate regular attendance
11. React positively to supervision and constructive feedback

#### **Physical Requirements/Environmental Conditions:**

1. Work with multiple settings and travel to alternative locations, as necessary
2. Work in noisy and crowded environments
3. Work in both indoor and outdoor settings (year round)
4. Good physical agility which requires the following:
  - a. Frequent bending
  - b. Sitting
  - c. Standing
  - d. Waking
  - e. Kneeling
  - f. Getting up and down off floor
  - g. Reaching
5. Physically block, move or restrain students
6. Physical exertion to manually move, lift, carry, pull or push heavy objects or materials up to 40 lbs.
7. Direct physical contact with students, including basic hygiene activities and physical assessment of students with possible exposure to bodily fluids

### **General Responsibilities:**

1. Assist in the instruction and supervision of students. This may involve supporting assignment completion, reading material aloud, explaining directions/concepts, and administering non-standardized tests/curriculum based measures.
2. Set-up and lead students in activities prepared by the supervising teacher or therapist.
3. Assist with small group instruction
4. Closely monitor and accurately document student physical and behavioral functioning
5. Prepare student specific materials and equipment
6. Provide daily feeding and/or mealtime supervision, and assist with toileting, diapering and hygiene care for students, as needed
7. Assist in modification of materials
8. Assist students in playing games and with proper use of playground equipment
9. Use appropriate behavior management techniques to maintain a positive climate for learning
10. Implement, monitor and collect data on multi-step and involved behavior plans
11. Motivate students through effective communication and evaluative feedback
12. Set and maintain high expectations for student achievement and behavior
13. Directly and effectively respond to the specific physical, behavioral and emotional needs of students
14. Prepare instructional materials and supplies
15. Escort and supervise students to and from various school facilities and areas. When necessary escort students on field trips
16. In inclusion classrooms, assist students with class work and in maintaining appropriate behavior
17. Provide support for the general education classroom teacher by monitoring student progress and behavior
18. Take attendance and record absences in the special education classroom
19. Attend staff meetings, as directed by supervising teacher
20. Assist in maintenance and inventory of materials
21. Assist in safeguarding confidential information
22. Adhere to required program guidelines as defined by the Kansas State Department of Education
23. Adhere to all USD 320 health and safety policies, including all precautions of the Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan
24. Other duties as assigned by the supervising teacher, Principal, para facilitator or Director of Special Education

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT - REPORTING**

The Kansas Child Protection Act (KSA 38-716-724) requires that any employee who suspects that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is being adversely affected by abuse or neglect immediately reports this fact to the local Social Rehabilitation Services (SRS) office. Or the local law enforcement agency if the SRS office is not open. It is required that the building administrator also be notified after the report is made. In the event that the child is the administrator's child, the superintendent, not the building administrator, will be notified.

Employees will not contact the child's family or any other personas to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. It is not the responsibility of the school employee to prove that the child has been abused or neglected.

#### **Child Abuse**

Child abuse is an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child. Abuse can be in the form of:

- \* physical injury
- \* physical neglect
- \* sexual abuse
- \* emotional abuse



**Physical Abuse** – Any physical injury of a child by intention or non-accidental means. May include physical marks, injuries, or unusual bleeding inconsistent with the explanation of how the injury was received. Must consider behavior in conjunction with other signs: Is behavior consistent, extreme, or changed recently? Are family or environmental stresses apparent?

**Physical Neglect** – Failure or inattention on the part of parent or caregiver to provide for child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care and supervision. Physical neglect tends to be chronic rather than episodic. Behaviors may include: requesting, stealing, or begging for food, frequent absences, fatigue, extended stays at school, child doesn't know the whereabouts of parents/caretaker.

**Sexual Abuse** – Any sexual act or exposure of sexual acts to or before a child, to include sexual exploitation. Physical signs may include: STD, infections, difficulty walking, and report of pain or discomfort. Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing. Child behavioral signs can include fear of a particular person, being sexually inappropriate with other children, advanced vocabulary, provocative or promiscuous behavior. Parents could be overprotective of the child or jealous of the child.

**Emotional Abuse** – Consistent, chronic behavior by a parent or caretaker which has a harmful effect on the child. The attitude or behavior is such that it seriously impairs the child's social, emotional, or intellectual functioning. Parent or caregiver behaviors which may contribute to emotional abuse include primarily negative interactions with the child, child blamed for things beyond his/her control, child isolated from normal social experiences and discipline appears to be inconsistent, unpredictable, erratic, or threatening. Child behavioral signs can include: rocking, head-banging, thumb sucking (or in older children, habitual behaviors), unrealistic, irrational or persistent fears, sleep problems, or behavior extremes.

### **Mandated Reporter**

According to Kansas law, when any person working in direct contact with children has reason to **suspect** a child has been injured as a result of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect, that person is **required by law** to report to proper authorities – this includes teachers, school administrators or other employees of an educational institution which the child is attending.

- The law only requires you to report suspected abuse
- Kansas complies with the immunity clause for mandated reporters. This states a person who reports suspected child abuse in "good faith" is absolutely immune from criminal and civil liability.
- Some agencies expect staff to discuss abuse situations with their supervisor before reporting. However, if a staff member believes a report of child abuse or neglect needs to be made to authorities, it is the responsibility of the staff member to report, whether or not the supervisor is in agreement.
- The legal penalty for a mandated reporter failing to report suspected child abuse can be a class B misdemeanor.

### **When a Child Discloses Abuse**

- Be calm and in control of your responses and emotions
- Listen
- Don't react with disgust
- Validate the child's feelings
- Be on eye level and remove barriers between you and the child
- Don't interrogate or interview the child
- If you must ask questions, make sure they are open ended
- Be supportive
- Reassure the child you care for him/her and this does not change your feelings

- Remember 80% of child abuse occurs at the hand of a parent, and despite the abuse, the child likely continues to love the parent
- Consult with a colleague or administrator while being respectful of confidentiality

### **Reporting Abuse**

- Consult with a colleague, administrator, school social worker or counselor
- Best practice is for the person who receives the information to make the report
- Note details of injuries (i.e. type, location, appearance, color, etc.) for the report
- If a decision is made to NOT report, staff should consider keeping documentation in case further issues arise (i.e. date and type of incident, circumstances, etc.)
- To make a report call 1-800-332-6378
- Additional information is available through the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services - Children and Family Services

# Chapter 2

## Serving Students with Special Needs

## INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

### What is an individualized education program?

Every exceptional student receiving special education services must be provided with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) which specifies what education and related services will actually be provided. This is the key to assure that each exceptional student is receiving a free and appropriate education.

### Components of the IEP:

#### 1. Participants in the IEP Conference (staffing):

The participants in initial case conferences in which entry IEPs are developed:

- The principal (LEA) or his/her designee who is qualified to supervise the provision of Special Education and has the authority to make decisions relative to the services to be provided.
- The school psychologist
- Related service providers (Speech-Language, OT, PT)
- The student's general education teacher primarily responsible for providing special education instruction
- The student's parents/legal guardians
- The student, when appropriate
- Other individuals at the discretion of the parents/guardians or the school

For annual reviews of the IEP, the conference includes principals, the parent/legal guardians, special education teacher, related service providers and other individuals providing direct services to the special education student.

#### 2. Contents of IEP:

The content of the IEP shall include information which sets forth:

- The present level of performance in the areas of academic achievement, social functioning, pre-vocational skills, sensory and motor skills, self-help skills, and speech-language skills
- The special education and related services necessary to meet the student's individual needs that will be provided by the school

## EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT AND LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

### Introduction

Within the IEP meetings, the IEP Team must consider what services are needed for the student based on the evaluation process and results. The IEP Team develops goals to target during the next year while ensuring participation and progress in the general curriculum, and including the services the student will need to achieve those goals. Also, the team must consider how the student can be educated with peers without exceptionalities and his/her participation in other activities in addition to educational placement, such as extracurricular and nonacademic activities. The last decision the team makes is the student's educational placement, which must be based on the student's needs, goals to be achieved, and the least restrictive environment for services to be provided. For students with exceptionalities, the placement must be in the environment that is least restrictive, always beginning with the general education classroom as the initial consideration. Least restrictive environment (LRE) means education with peers who are not disabled, to the maximum extent possible. If for some reason the student is not receiving services in the general education classroom, the IEP Team must provide evidence why with supplemental aids and services, the student is not able to be educated in the general classroom, or to participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities.

The definition of special education requires that various settings are available for instruction. The requirement to serve students along a continuum as appropriate applies to students with exceptionalities. The continuum includes the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education (instruction in the general education classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals, institutions and when incarcerated).

The process for determining the least restrictive environment (LRE) must be individualized for each student with an exceptionality, and must be reconsidered at least annually and at each review of the student's IEP. Students with exceptionalities are required to be educated with students who do not have exceptionalities, to the maximum extent appropriate, as close to the student's home, and in the school that he or she would attend if nondisabled. The requirement applies to students in public schools, or other care facilities. Removing a student from the general education classroom must not occur, unless the nature or severity of the exceptionality is such that education in general classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. For students who are gifted, LRE does not apply, but individual placement decisions must be made by the IEP Team, based on their individual needs. The LRE requirement also does NOT apply to students who are convicted as adults and are in adult prison.

The IEP Team must discuss program modifications or supports for teachers and staff to ensure that the student: (1) moves ahead in attaining the goals listed on the IEP, (2) is progressing in the general curriculum and participating in extracurricular and nonacademic activities, and (3) is educated and participating with other students with and without exceptionalities in these activities, as appropriate. The IEP must include an explanation of the extent, if any, that the student will NOT participate with students without exceptionalities in general education classes AND in extracurricular and other non-academic activities. Placement decisions may not be made on the basis of staff convenience, economic factors, or administrative convenience.

### **Important Points**

- Schools should value each student regardless of his or her disabilities or exceptionalities
- Schools should provide dynamic, individualized and innovative learning for all students
- Schools should strive to provide education based on the needs of individual students with exceptionalities as determined by a well-designed IEP
- Schools should facilitate outcomes-based education by combining all of the specialized resources at the school to enhance learning of all students at the school

### **Factors involved in student placement**

It is imperative that each student's individual needs determine placement. Placement should reflect the setting in which the student's needs can best be met when providing the educational services needed to implement the student's IEP. Placement decisions must not be based solely on any of the following factors: category of exceptionality, configuration of service delivery system, availability of educational or related services, availability of space, curriculum content, or methods of curriculum delivery. Individual strengths and needs should determine the student's program. The type and intensity of special education and related services required for the student to derive educational benefit must be made available.

In the field of education, the value of diversity is beginning to be recognized, as well as the value of individualizing each student's education, to address his/her diverse learning styles, strengths and needs. Kansas students who have exceptionalities benefit from receiving their education in general education settings alongside their nondisabled peers. Similarly, Kansas students who do not have identified exceptionalities also benefit from an inclusive educational program by learning to appreciate diversity and value the achievement of those with exceptionalities. Instead of separate track educational systems, schools are encouraged to strive toward a unified system which values and includes students of varying levels of ability.

### **Important points**

- Placement is comprised of the setting of the educational program and the educational program itself
- Placement shall not be made based upon the student's categorical label nor upon administrative convenience
- Special education is not a place; it is services which may be provided in any setting

### **WHAT PARAEDUCATORS CAN DO IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS**

There are many adaptations, modifications and types of assistance a Paraeducator can provide in an inclusive classroom. The following is a partial list of possibilities to assist teams to think about new roles for the Paraeducator.

Please recognize that:

- Adaptations are individually determined based upon student need, AND
- Paraeducators should only begin an adaptation following instruction from the teacher or related service provider

Some Paraeducators may feel more comfortable implementing modifications than others. An attempt should be made to match complexity of the modifications with the Paraeducator degree of comfort, while at the same time providing instruction for the Paraeducator to increase his/her skills in this area. Any adaptation should first be approved and designed by the team prior to the Paraeducator's implementation of the modification.

#### **For students who are inattentive, a Paraeducator could:**

- With the teacher's permission, seat the student in a quiet area
- Seat the student near a good role model
- Seat the student near a "study buddy"
- Assist the student in setting short-term goals
- Pair written instructions with oral instructions
- Give clear, concise instructions
- Have student repeat instructions or expectations

#### **For students who are impulsive, a Paraeducator could:**

- Ignore minor, inappropriate behavior
- Increase immediacy of rewards and consequences
- Supervise closely during transition times
- Attend to positive behavior of other students
- Acknowledge positive behavior of other students

#### **For students who are very active, a Paraeducator could:**

- Provide reassurance and encouragement
- Frequently compliment positive behavior and work product
- Speak softly in non-threatening manner if student shows nervousness
- Review instructions of new assignments to make sure the student understands
- Look for opportunities for student to display leadership in the class and mention them to the teacher
- Make time to talk alone to the student
- Encourage social interactions with classmates if student is withdrawn or shy
- Reinforce frequently when signs of frustration are noted
- Spend time talking to student who seem pent up or display anger easily
- During a lecture, model note taking of key concepts on projector, white/chalkboard or flipchart
- Make sure that both written and oral directions are given
- Provide feedback to the team about whether or not a student may need shortened assignments or longer time to complete assignments

- Assist the teacher in providing immediate feedback to student after completion of assignments
- Assist student with an alternate assignment when the team has determined one to be appropriate (example: if the student has poor writing skills, the teacher may allow the student to do an oral assignment)
- Read material aloud with the student to allow another method of input
- Assist students who have trouble memorizing to use manipulatives, cards, number lines, math fact tables or calculators
- When a student has trouble aligning numbers, use graph paper or turn lined paper in a vertical direction

**For students who have difficulty with visual perception, a Paraeducator could:**

- Give oral directions to an assignment
- Tape record directions, so that the student may replay as often as needed
- Reduce the visual distractions in the student's work areas
- Make sure that directions given are concise and clearly written
- Make sure that the student has a copy of the teacher's lecture notes
- Teach the student to take notes and proofread
- Assist the student to highlight key points in textbooks purchased for the student
- Introduce new vocabulary before a new chapter/story/assignment
- Check for comprehension after reading
- Discuss written responses with the student
- Assist the student to make a small notebook dictionary of misspelled words to use as a reference
- Have the student verbally state steps to solving math equations before doing them

**For students who have difficulty with auditory perception, a Paraeducator could:**

- Provide short oral directions
- Have the student repeat the directions back to you
- Talk slowly to the student – give them time to process
- Provide a quiet work area for the student
- Try to pair a visual cue with auditory directions when possible
- Provide a lecture outline
- Provide an example on worksheets for the student to refer back to
- Increase your "wait time" before expecting a response

**Paraeducators can assist the classroom teacher in providing a variety of instructional arrangements:**

- Assisting one or more cooperative groups to complete an assignment or activity
- Assist peer partners to complete an assignment or project
- Assist peer tutor or cross-age tutors
- Assist students during independent work time

**Paraeducators can assist the teacher in changing the format of a lesson:**

- Facilitate a small group discussion following presentations of some materials
- Assist the teacher in developing and providing games, simulations, role-playing and activity based lessons. This could include gathering and preparing materials, making games, setting up activities, supervising small groups or individual work.
- Provide instruction in a community setting (particularly for students with moderate to severe exceptionalities)

**Other things Paraeducators can do:**

- Assist students who have different learning outcomes for a particular activity. (Example: a student with severe exceptionalities may have a learning outcome that focuses on reaching and grasping materials during a science experiment rather than acquiring knowledge of a scientific process)
- Provide information to the team about adaptations that are needed to the physical environment such as accessing materials or activities, lighting and seating location
- Provide information to the team about adaptations needed for instruction materials such as larger print, need for manipulatives, etc.
- Provide suggestions to the team for ways to fade out adult assistance and substitute peer assistance or independence when possible
- Develop a picture schedule for the student to use throughout the day
- Take data on behavior or IEP objectives
- Provide suggestions to the team about new vocabulary to teach based upon the student's daily schedule, interests
- Provide positive support for the teacher

## **SERVING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

### **Behavioral Areas:**

1. It is important that the Paraeducator become familiar with the types of students that they are serving
2. Informal diagnostic techniques used to get a better understanding of the needs of the students should be understood by the Paraeducator
3. The Paraeducator should acquire a working knowledge of behavior management techniques, especially those used by the teacher

### **Academic Areas:**

1. It may be important for the Paraeducator to become familiar with diagnostic and prescriptive techniques used for placement of the student within the academic program, check with your teacher
2. The Paraeducator must become familiar with various types of instructional equipment and materials used with the students
3. The Paraeducator should become familiar with the academic approach used by the classroom teacher
4. The Paraeducator should know that academic resources available within the building and district

### **Personal Emotional Strengths:**

1. The Paraeducator must have a positive self-concept and a positive approach when working with students
2. Enthusiasm and sensitivity to the feelings of student is very important
3. Paraeducators should discuss any problems they are experiencing which may influence their job performance with the classroom teacher or building principal

## **40 ways to Provide Positive Reinforcement**



1. That's really nice.
2. Thank you very much!
3. Wow!
4. I like the way you're working
5. Keep up the good work
6. It's fun working with you
7. That's quite an improvement
8. What neat work
9. You really outdid yourself today
10. This kind of work pleases me very much
11. I am proud of the way you are working
12. CONGRATULATIONS!
13. Much better
14. I appreciate your help and extra effort
15. Very good. You should show that to Mom  
and/or Dad
16. MARVELOUS!
17. Right on!
18. Mom and/or Dad will be proud to see the job  
you did on this
19. I like the way you stayed focused
20. TERRIFIC!
21. I like the way you raised your hand when you  
had the answer instead of blurting it out!
22. I like the way you took your time to make  
sure you "got it".
23. You are right on track, keep up the good work
24. I like the way you were ready right on time
25. You are a very smart thinker
26. You put a lot of work into this and I can tell!  
Great job!
27. You were a GREAT helper when it was time to  
clean up
28. That's clever
29. That's a good way to look at it
30. You figured it out
31. Thank you for helping
32. SUPER!
33. You have a good point
34. You make this look easy
35. I like the way you think of others
36. You make my day a little brighter
37. Will you help me again? You did a great job!
38. Happiness is having students like you in this  
class
39. Thank you for being patient and waiting your  
turn
40. You have a great attitude and it makes me  
smile!

# Chapter 3

## Communication and Teamwork

## **THE TEACHER/PARAEDUCATOR RELATIONSHIP**

- Mutual respect and support between the teacher and Paraeducator must be evident at all times in front of students. A difference of opinion should be discussed after the students leave.
- There should be consistency between the teacher and Paraeducator in the handling of rules and rewards in the classroom.
- While the teacher is ultimately responsible at all times, a division of responsibility may be worked out whereby certain times or activities may be the immediate responsibility of the Paraeducator.

## **PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE WITH FACULTY AND PARENTS**

The success of the paraeducator is often tied to others' perception of attitude which is often developed from verbal and nonverbal cues. A positive attitude can be conveyed in many ways. For example, smiling and being friendly towards others can make a difference as well as looking for ways to assist others. When working with students, having a sense of humor, praising their positive efforts and using positive statements show students that you care about them and that you enjoy what you are doing.

- The Paraeducator is considered a member of the faculty of the school where he/she is assigned and is expected to take part in any duties or responsibilities expected of other staff, where appropriate.
- The Paraeducator should at no times discuss home or background information of any students with other members of the school faculty or other parents.
- The Paraeducator should direct all inquiries made of them by parents to the classroom teacher. At a teacher's direction, the Paraeducator may assist in the home-school communication program (i.e. daily written notes or checklists)
- Paraeducators may be invited to sit in on parent-teacher conferences as well as staffing where appropriate and possible. Your special education and/or classroom teacher will notify you as to whether or not it would be beneficial for you to attend.

## **CLASSROOM RESPONSIBILITIES**

- The supervising special education teacher and Paraeducator should establish within the first week of school specific activities, routines, data collection, record keeping, etc.... for which the Paraeducator will be responsible.
- The Paraeducator may be expected to supervise individual activities or to maintain group focus while the classroom teacher works with a small group of students or an individual student
- The Paraeducator can contribute to the curriculum with the use of their specific interests or talents. These might be in the areas of music, arts, crafts, cooking, sewing, photography, history, etc.
- The teacher and Paraeducator should work together in rewarding appropriate behavior and in enforcing classroom rules
- The chain of command for concerns should follow this sequence: Supervising Special Education Teacher – Building Administrator – Director of Special Education

## **SUPERVISING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS COLLABORATE WITH PARAEDUCATORS BY**

- Try to gain an understanding of the basic professional competencies for Paraeducators
- Review Council for Exceptional Children's professional standards for Paraeducators
- Understand what duties Paraeducators can legally perform in schools
- Clearly understand your supervisory responsibilities for Paraeducators
- Review background information about applicants
- Participate in the interview process and decisions in selecting Paraeducators
- Look for a goodness of fit between Paraeducators and classrooms

- Provide the Paraeducators with a clear and objective job description and a thorough orientation to the job, classroom, school and district
- Discuss and understand each other's work style and strengths
- Discuss and create a shared vision for working with other professionals and students
- Review working with parents and concept of confidentiality
- Communicate in a professional, supportive manner, using clear/objective language
- Delegate clearly defined duties and tasks
- Delegate only those tasks that all allowed by policy
- Do provide Paraeducators with regular opportunities to attempt new and more demanding tasks, building previously acquired competencies and skills
- Take the time to help Paraeducators develop a plan for professional development
- Encourage participation in training opportunities
- Collaboratively develop a plan for observation of skills and duties
- Establish regular times to review observations and help Paraeducators self-analyze and reflect on performance
- For the Paraeducators benefit, as well as your own, document all training and supervision
- Always role model behaviors, attitudes, and ethics
- Openly support them in front of the students, parents and other staff members
- If you are able to complete most or all of the previously described steps you will gain insight into potential areas of disagreement or conflict; try to address conflict before it occurs or the need to address it before it arises
- Manage conflicts in a proactive and professional manner, depersonalize conflicts as much as possible and utilize an objective third party when necessary

**PARA EXPECTATIONS**  
***For Teacher File – Do not return to CoOp***

In order to meet the needs of our students, we will all need to work cooperatively. These are the para expectations/guidelines set forth by the supervising teacher, para facilitator and Director of Special Education. ***Unwillingness to perform outlined duties will result in termination.***

**Duty Day:**

Your work day is from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

You will receive 30 minutes unpaid and duty free lunch. (If different, give explanation here)

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If you work past your designated work day hours, you will be required to provide written confirmation of time and duties performed from your supervising teacher.

**Absences:**

Call your assigned teacher at \_\_\_\_\_ between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ if you will be absent from school. Complete leave request prior to absence if possible. If your leave has not been recorded prior to your absence, do so immediately upon your return to school. You must use Skyward to submit your leave time. You **MUST** record all time off in Skyward – with or without pay! If you have time acquired, you must use it before taking time off without pay.

**Attendance Standards:**

Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the proper operation of USD 320 Special Services Cooperative. Excessive employee absence or tardiness creates undesirable performance factors for all employees. Those found to be in violation of USD 320 Special Services Cooperative's standards may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

1. If you will be arriving late, leaving early, or not reporting to work for any reason (unless an unexpected medical or other emergency makes it impossible to do so), you must inform the supervising teacher as soon as possible, but no later than one (1) hour prior to the scheduled start of your workday. Failure to call in properly will be considered an unreported absence, and may result in disciplinary action.
2. For absences of three (3) or more consecutive scheduled workdays, you will be required to provide a written doctor's statement to your supervisor. However, your supervisor may request written documentation for any absence of any length. If a paraeducator is absent from work for three (3) or more consecutive scheduled workdays without properly contacting the supervisor, it will be assumed that he/she has voluntarily resigned his/her employment.
3. Additionally, five (5) or more absences or tardies during any quarter without a medical reason or emergency situation may also lead to disciplinary action.
4. Unless you are on an authorized leave of absence, you must maintain contact with your supervisor throughout any absence extending beyond one (1) day, notifying him/her daily whether and when you will be returning to work.
5. Any paraeducator exceeding five (5) absences will be required to meet with the supervisor. The meeting content, addressing specific expectations for attendance from that point forward, will be documented in a letter and signed by the supervisor and the paraeducator. Copies will be distributed to the paraeducator, building administrator and Special Services administrator. A copy of the letter will also be placed in the paraeducator's file in the Special Services office (see example form letter). If the expectations of attendance detailed in the letter are not met by the paraeducator, the supervisor will notify the Special Services administrator and the para facilitator. The para facilitator will contact the para and Human Resources to initiate termination action.

**Positive Work Habits:**

- Maintain a positive attitude and be flexible in assignments and schedules – we are all here to do what's best for kids
- Have good work attendance
- Follow the dress code in your building and be a good role model for students
- Utilize time appropriately
- Communicate positively, objectively and professionally
- Demonstrate respect to students, teachers, parents and others
- Demonstrate appropriate boundaries with students and families, observing confidentiality policy
- Understand and follow the chain of command
- Represent the school/district in a positive manner when working with students out in the community

**Job Responsibilities and Expectations:**

- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times
- Implement IEP and Behavior Intervention Plan as directed
- Report child abuse to supervisor per policy guidelines
- Show initiative

## CHECKLIST - THINGS TO FIND OUT

	Item	Comments/Notes
1.	<b>Duties and Responsibilities</b>	
a.	What are my regular and special duties?	
b.	What records am I responsible for keeping?	
c.	What schedules am I responsible for following?	
d.	What lunchtime activities will I be responsible for?	
e.	If I am responsible for working with more than one teacher, how is my time divided?	
2.	<b>Scheduling and Daily Activities</b>	
a.	What schedule should I follow?	
b.	When do students come to class? When do they leave?	
c.	Where are supplies kept and how are they obtained?	
d.	What are the playground regulations?	
e.	What should I do if I find myself with some spare time?	
f.	What equipment is available and how is it used?	
g.	What is expected of me in terms of student discipline?	
3.	<b>Communication and Relationships</b>	
a.	What is the line of communication and authority I should follow?	
b.	To whom should I direct questions concerning school policies?	
c.	With whom should I discuss a problem concerning relationships?	
d.	What should be my response when a parent raises a question on his/her child's functioning in the classroom?	
e.	What course should I follow if I feel I do not have enough to do?	
f.	How does the teacher view the teacher / para relationship?	

## **FOSTERING STRONG WORK RELATIONSHIPS**

1. Communicate with your special education teacher daily
2. Ask your teacher's feedback on your performance
3. Communicate concerns as they arise and ask questions as needed
4. Follow instructions exactly as given
5. All final decisions are up to your teacher
6. Maintain confidentiality with all school related information
7. Let teachers know your interests, hobbies, background and experience. You may be able to contribute to special class projects and special interest centers.
8. Learn classroom procedures, i.e. restroom, recess, lunch, drinks, fire drills
9. Share responsibilities and take initiative when there is a need
10. Be patient with yourself and others. Teaching and learning is hard work.
11. Become familiar with the needs of the students served in the classroom
12. Become familiar with the academic approach of the teacher
13. Become familiar with the various types of equipment and materials used in the classroom

## **CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT**

- Mutual trust and respect between teacher and student
- Clear definition of rules, responsibilities and rules
- A climate where the students feel they belong to the group
- A climate where it is safe for students to express feelings
- A climate where students receive recognition, acceptance, and appreciation
- A climate where individual differences and cultural differences are respected
- A climate where students establish helpful interpersonal relationships
- A climate that expresses support and caring for one another
- A climate where students are involved

## **CODE OF ETHICS FOR PARAEDUCATORS**

1. The Paraeducator should discuss the student's needs only with the special education teacher and those directly involved with the student's educational program
2. The Paraeducator should refrain from: (a) airing school problems and confidential matters, including personalities, outside of school circles; (b) discussing administrative, inter-departmental and inter-school problems in the presence of students; and (c) gossiping about problems with those who cannot assist in the solution
3. The Paraeducator should be consistent in managing the behavior of the students
4. The Paraeducator should refrain from expressing differences of opinion or dissatisfaction with the supervising teacher in the presence of students
5. The Paraeducator should never show that he/she is angry at himself/herself or others in the presence of students
6. The Paraeducator should not threaten students
7. The Paraeducator will not subject students to sexual harassment or racial harassment. Paraeducators will not have any interaction of a sexual nature with any student at any time regardless of the student's age or status or consent.
8. The Paraeducator should never program and prescribe educational activities and materials for students
9. The Paraeducator should never evaluate students from psychological or diagnostic instruments
10. The Paraeducator should never be responsible for preparing lesson plans and initiating original concept instruction

11. The Paraeducator should never initiate parent contact
12. The Paraeducator should share concerns in a confidential and professional manner
13. The Paraeducator should never be directly responsible for the discipline of students

Remember that you are a member of a most important profession. What you do in the classroom will have an impact on the lives of your students. A student may learn to read because of your efforts. A student may begin to see him/herself as a capable, independent learner because of your efforts on his/her behalf. Your individual help may give a student new confidence in dealing with future problems. Others may learn greater tolerance and respect for those with different abilities or from other racial or economic groups because of your actions.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Respecting confidentiality means respecting privacy. As a Paraeducator, you will hear, read and observe information about students that is considered confidential. In short, you will learn a great deal about the students you work with, as well as their families. You must always respect the privacy of the students and their families. There are federal and state laws designed to protect the confidentiality of students served by special education. The laws say that only educators directly involved in delivering services to a student may have access to records and information about him/her. Persons not directly involved in delivering services to a student do not have a right to the information. Count yourself among those "directly involved" educators. You have the need to know information about the students which will aid you in offering appropriate support. Please note you are allowed access to information only for the students with whom you are directly involved.

Having access to records and test results, being part of discussion and planning for a student, and observing and closely working with the student are ways to find out more about the needs of the student. All of these formal strategies for learning more about students, their abilities, and their needs are carefully monitored and documented. You also need to be mindful of more informal ways of finding out about students, such as asking questions and listening to conversations about the students. These methods, while useful in gathering more information, are also less strictly monitored. Always remember that you are a professional, and professionals honor confidentiality. After all, it's not only unprofessional to do otherwise, but also illegal. Breaches of confidentiality are not always intentional. Eagerness to celebrate a student's accomplishment or progress for example, may appear harmless, but you may give more information about a child's area of exceptionality, needs, or educational plan than should be shared.

Here are a few tips to help keep confidentiality from becoming a concern:

- Be careful with whom you share information. Is that person directly involved with the student's education?
- Don't point out or label students in public, outside of school, as "your" students.
- Avoid using names if you are asked about your job.
- Suggest that questions about a student are best directed to the general classroom teacher or the special education teacher
- Be careful not to distort, exaggerate, or confuse information
- Never use information about a student as gossip or as a joke
- Focus comments on student strengths and be positive
- No matter who asks you a question about a student, don't answer if you are unsure. Be direct and honest: "I can't say"



# Chapter 4

## Inservice Information

## INSERVICE PROGRAM STANDARDS

Paraeducators are required by law to obtain inservice training annually. The State Department of Education determines which training hours may be counted toward the required minimum. The Director of Special Education will be responsible for scheduling the appropriate training for paraeducators. The inservice hours must be logged on the Paraeducator Inservice Log. The supervising teacher(s) must sign for all approved hours that he/she has knowledge of. All individual hours will be reported to the Director of Special Education's office prior to the last official day of employment or earlier at the request of the Director. Continuation of employment requires that the minimum training hours be attained. A copy of acceptable hours and the authorized form used to document hours will be reviewed at the beginning of each school year. Every paraeducator is required to show evidence of required inservice hours.

Paraeducators must participate in staff development, regardless of the number of hours/day or days/week worked. Each inservice program must include the following:

- An orientation session (e.g. confidentiality of student records, important school policies, etc.) at the time a paraeducator is employed and an annual orientation thereafter to ensure compliance with confidentiality and other requirements; and
- Staff development activities specifically related to the area and type of program in which the special education paraeducator is employed

### **20 Inservice Hours Required**

Paraeducators who have worked as a Kansas special education paraeducator less than 3 years (**within the past 3 years**) are to complete 20 hours of inservice if employed for 9 months during the school year. Staff development hours must be reported to KSDE through the Personnel Web System as currently reported.

### **10 Inservice Hours Required**

Paraeducators who have worked as a Kansas special education paraeducator for more than 3 years (**including the past 3 years**) as validated through archived special education personnel data, must complete 10 hours of inservice if employed 9 months during the school year. Staff development hours must be reported to KSDE through the Personnel Web System as currently reported.

### **College Hours**

College hours may be substituted for special education inservice hours. Each college hour will be counted as 20 inservice hours, applied to the school year in which the coursework was obtained. College hours should be reported as college hours, because the conversion to inservice hours is automatically calculated within the program for the Personnel Report. Submit a copy of your transcript as evidence of course completion.

### **Required Paraeducator Inservice Hours**

It is essential that Paraeducators in the district receive the minimum number of inservice hours required for the month in which they become employed (e.g., if you become employed in the month of November, you will be required to complete 14 hours of inservice) These will apply to NEW Paraeducators only.

<u>Month Employed</u>	<u>Number of Hours Required</u>
August	20
September	18
October	16
November	14
December	12
January	10
February	8
March	6
April	4
May	2

Paraeducators who have worked as a Kansas special education paraeducator for more than three consecutive years (within the past 3 years) are required by the state to complete 10 inservice hours for the year. An experienced paraeducator who works a partial year will be required to complete the following number of hours:

<u>Length of Employment</u>	<u>Number of Hours Required</u>
9 months	10
8 months	9
7 months	8
6 months	7
5 months	6
4 months	5
3 months	4
2 months	3
1 month	2

- If you were not an employee of the district at the time of the paraeducator inservice, it is essential that you receive the specified number of hours based on the month you became employed.
- You may earn inservice hours for attending building level inservice sessions, reading articles and/or books related to your job, viewing videos related to your roles and responsibilities, etc. There are a variety of resources available through the Special Services Department office.
- Copies of inservice logs are due to the Special Services Cooperative office at the end of first semester. Paraeducators should have completed at least half of their required hours by this time.
- **Completed and signed inservice logs are due to the Special Services Cooperative office the last day of March, as soon as your required number of inservice hours have been completed or immediately upon resignation or termination. Total the hours at the bottom of your inservice log, have your assigned teacher sign the form, keep a copy for yourself and send the *original* to the Special Services Cooperative office as soon as possible. It will not be accepted until it is signed by you and your supervising teacher.**

## INSERVICE ACTIVITIES AND EQUIVALENT HOURS

Activity	Equivalent hour(s) for inservice
Review the Paraeducator Handbook	20 minutes
Bloodborne Pathogens	20 minutes
Mandated Reporting	20 minutes
FERPA/HIPAA/Confidentiality	10 minutes
Bullying Awareness & Prevention	10 minutes
Emergency Safety Interventions	25 minutes
Suicide Awareness & Prevention	1 hour
Education for the Homeless	15 minutes
Sexual Harassment	20 minutes
Attend pre-approved building level inservice sessions: activities must be specifically related to the area and type of program in which you are employed. (Must be pre-approved by the Principal and Cooperative.)	Inservice hours earned are equivalent to the number of hours spent in session.
Attend pre-approved district level inservice sessions: activities must be specifically related to the area and type of program in which you are employed. (Must be pre-approved by the Principal and Cooperative.)	Inservice hours earned are equivalent to the number of hours spent in session.
Infinitec videos ( <a href="http://www.myinfinitec.org">www.myinfinitec.org</a> )	Inservice hours earned are equivalent to Infinitec learning credits.
Complete Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training	Initial training 6-8 hours, refresher training 4 hours. Must be on your school's NCI team and/or pre-approved.
Complete pre-approved college classes	Each college hour will be counted as 20 inservice hours and applied to the school year in which the course- work was obtained.
Read pre-approved article: *Must be relevant to your specific classroom and/or students with whom you work.	½ hour
Read pre-approved book: *Must be relevant to your specific classroom and/or students with whom you work.	1 hour / 200 page book. Additional ½ hour for written summary.
Watch pre-approved training video/DVD: *Must be relevant to your specific classroom and/or students with whom you work.	Up to 2 hours

## *Special Services Cooperative 2021-2022 Inservice Log*

Name:	Hrs Required:	
Supervisor	Hrs Completed:	

Paras are required to complete two inservice hours for each month of employment. Inservice hours are needed to meet KSDE requirements to hold a para position for the State of Kansas and the Special Services Coop. Paras must participate in inservice regardless of the number of hours per day or days per week worked.

<b>20 Hours</b>	Paras who have worked as a Kansas special education paraeducator less than 3 years (within the past 3 years). 9 month school year = 1 year
<b>10 Hours</b>	Paras who have worked as a Kansas special education paraeducator more than 3 years (including each of the past 3 years). 9 month school year = 1 year
<b>5 Hours</b>	Paras who hold a current KS license/certificate in the following areas: Teacher, NCLB requirement met (during current school year), SLP, OT, PT, OTA, PTA or LPN. If working in a related area.

Required For	Title of Inservice Activity & Required Documentation	Date	Hours
ALL Paras Employed in August	CoOp Para Back to School Meeting (sign-in sheet or Google electronic signature)		
ALL Paras	Paraeducator Handbook Review (Talent Ed electronic signature)		
ALL Paras	Bloodborne Pathogens (Google electronic signature)		
ALL Paras	Mandated Reporting (Google electronic signature)		
ALL Paras	FERPA/HIPAA (Google electronic signature)		
ALL Paras	Bullying Awareness & Prevention (Google electronic signature)		
ALL Paras	Emergency Safety Interventions (Google electronic signature)		
ALL Paras	Suicide Awareness & Prevention (Google electronic signature)		
ALL Paras	Education for the Homeless (Google electronic signature)		
ALL Paras	Sexual Harassment (Google electronic signature)		



**Pre-approved Books/Articles/Videos/DVDs:** must be relevant to your specific classroom and/or students with whom you work. 1 hour for a 200 page book/30 min for each article/30 min for written summary.

**College Credits:** classes in related subjects may be substituted for inservice hours. Each college credit/hour will be counted as 20 inservice hours and applied to the school year in which the coursework was completed. Copy of the transcript must be submitted to receive credit.

**Total Hours:** Completed logs are due when all hours are completed, IMMEDIATELY upon resignation/termination, or at the end of March.

*Paraeducator's Signature & Date:*

*Supervising Teacher's/Provider's Signature & Date:*

# Chapter 5

# Evaluation Procedures



## EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Evaluations are to be used as a tool for professional growth. New paraeducators and paraeducators that are new to the school building will be evaluated by their supervising special education teacher twice a year. The first evaluation must be completed prior to October 31 and the second prior to March 31. Returning paraeducators will be evaluated by their supervising special education teacher at least once each year prior to March 31. When complete, the teacher will discuss the evaluation with the paraeducator and make suggestions for improvement. The evaluation will be signed by the paraeducator, evaluating supervisor and building administrator. Paraeducators will have an opportunity to respond to any and all areas addressed on the evaluation form. The evaluation form will then be sent to the para facilitator at the Special Services Cooperative.

Paraeducators will be evaluated annually the same as all other classified employees of USD 320. Exceptions to this include new paraeducators, recommendations by the State Department of Education to conduct evaluations more frequently, or the performance of the paraeducator is not meeting the anticipated expectations. If performance standards are not being met, the supervising teacher may conduct an evaluation more frequently. As part of the evaluation process, paraeducators may conduct a self-evaluation which will serve as a point of discussion between the paraeducator and the supervising teacher.

Because paraeducators may be assigned to more than one special education classroom, general education classroom, or building, the supervising teacher responsible for the evaluation will seek input from other certified personnel who have knowledge of the paraeducators work. If more than one special education teacher supervises a paraeducator, those teachers will collaborate on the evaluation. The primary supervising teacher will file the official evaluation with the Director of Special Education's office.

If a plan of improvement is required, a conference will be held to review the contents of the plan, including the goals to be achieved, the methods that will be used to achieve those goals, the supervisory plan of support, and the timelines in which the goal(s) will be reviewed. The meeting to discuss the plan of improvement may include one or all supervising special education teachers, the building principal and the Director of Special Education. The building principal will make the final determination of those in attendance.

# Wamego Special Services Paraeducator Evaluation

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Paraeducator:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Supervising Teacher:*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*General Education Teachers:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Paraeducator self-evaluation?* \_\_\_\_ *Yes* \_\_\_\_ *No*

\*\* The self-evaluation document is a copy of this document and should be attached, if completed.

*Domain 1: Planning and Preparation*

PERFORMANCE CONTINUUM	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	ACCOMPLISHED	DISTINGUISHED
<b>1a. Demonstrating knowledge of content</b>	Displays little understanding of the subject or basic skill areas taught.	Knowledge of content area represents basic understanding, makes little connection with basic skill areas or to possible student misconceptions.	Demonstrates solid understanding of the content and its relationships and connections with basic skill areas.	Knowledge of the content is extensive, showing evidence of continuing search for improved practice. Actively builds on knowledge of the basic skill areas and their relationship to the content and any student misconceptions.
<b>1b. Demonstrating knowledge of students</b>	Makes little or no attempt to acquire knowledge of students' background, skills, or interests, and does not use such information.	Demonstrates knowledge of students' background, skills, and interests, and attempts to use this knowledge when working with students.	Demonstrates thorough knowledge of students' background, skills, and interests, and uses this knowledge to work with students.	Demonstrates thorough knowledge of students' background, skills, and interests, and uses this knowledge to work with individual students.
<b>1c. Planning and preparing for coherent instruction w/ supervision by a licensed educator</b>	Shows little or no evidence of following directions or planning or preparing the structured lessons as assigned. Unwilling and/or unable to collaborate or show initiative.	Follows directions in implementing planned or prepared structured lessons as assigned. The para engages students in meaningful learning.	Can independently follow directions in planned or prepared lessons as assigned. Collaborates with licensed educators to share ideas and strategies to aid in meaningful learning for students.	Collaborates with the licensed educator by contributing ideas, showing initiative in planning or preparing lessons. Is able to plan and prepare for differentiated instructional strategies for individual students.

Teacher Feedback: \_\_\_\_\_

*Domain 2: Supports the Classroom Environment*

PERFORMANCE CONTINUUM	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	ACCOMPLISHED	DISTINGUISHED
<b>2a. Creates an environment of trust and respect</b>	Interactions between the employee and students are negative, inappropriate and/or characterized by sarcasm, put-downs, or conflict.	Interactions are appropriate and free from conflict.	Interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among the students.	Interactions are highly respectful, and reflect genuine warmth and caring, and respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among the students.
<b>2b. Ability to use strategies to promote student independence</b>	Is unable to use inclusive strategies that promote student independence.	Under the direction of a licensed educator, can implement some strategies to promote student independence.	Knows and implements strategies to promote student independence.	Implements and encourages collaboration of educational team on promoting student independence.
<b>2c. Ability to effectively employ a variety of strategies that reinforce positive behavior</b>	Has limited knowledge and is unable to demonstrate a variety of strategies that reinforce positive behavior.	Has some knowledge and with support, is able to implement some strategies that reinforce positive behavior.	Has an understanding and is able to demonstrate a variety of strategies that reinforce positive behavior. Knows and understands what positive behavioral supports are.	Demonstrates a variety of strategies that reinforce positive behavior using a student's behavior plan. Implements positive behavioral supports. Appropriately collects objective, accurate information on student behavior.
<b>2d. Responsible for assisting with the health, safety and welfare of students and the classroom environment</b>	Limited awareness of health/ safety factors that affect student health and school safety.	Identifies factors that affect student health and school safety.	Examines and implements ways to improve the learning environment.	Proactive about problem solving factors and ways to improve the learning environment.

Teacher Feedback: \_\_\_\_\_

*Domain 3: Delivery of Services/Accommodations*

PERFORMANCE CONTINUUM	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	ACCOMPLISHED	DISTINGUISHED
<b>3a. Ability to employ constructive communication strategies and approaches in working with students, staff, and the greater school community</b>	Written or oral communications are absent, poorly organized, vague, or incomplete; causing mistakes or misunderstandings. Has limited understanding of the importance of, or does not apply constructive communication strategies with students, staff and families.	Written and oral communications are generally clear, concise, and well organized. Communicates messages appropriately and respectfully.	Ideas, opinions, and instructions are clearly and concisely communicated. Continuously seeks input from others and is sensitive to the information needs of others. Has an understanding of and demonstrates constructive communication strategies with students, staff and families.	Demonstrates a strong ability to communicate ideas, opinions, and instructions to others. Accomplished in the presentation/understanding of written documents. Mentors team members on effective communication and conflict resolution strategies.
<b>3b. Engaging students in learning</b>	Unable to read and follow a lesson plan. Unable to provide students with complete and specific instructions to activities.	Has knowledge of the process of adapting materials according to student needs. Follows oral and written directions.	Understands and demonstrates the adaptation process when looking at students. Provides appropriate accommodations. Seeks out clarification and/or directions when needed.	Can successfully collaborate with educational team in meeting student needs by appropriately using accommodations.

Teacher Feedback: \_\_\_\_\_

*Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities and Development*

PERFORMANCE CONTINUUM	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	ACCOMPLISHED	DISTINGUISHED
<b>4a. Reflective on Practice</b>	Shows little or no evidence of thinking about the programs, practices or students.	Shows evidence of thinking about supporting students. Contributes little insight and suggestions on supporting students.	Reflects on experiences with students. Provides an accurate, objective description of practice, citing positive and negative characteristics. Makes some specific suggestions about how the support program could be improved.	Reflections on practices and programs are a constant source of new ideas and improvements based on student needs. Shows an attitude of action; researching is a frequent habit.
<b>4b. Relationships with colleagues</b>	Employee's relationships with colleagues are negative or self-serving.	Employee maintains cordial relationships with colleagues to fulfill the duties that the school district requires.	Support and cooperation characterize relationships with colleagues.	Support and cooperation characterize relationships with colleagues. Staff member takes initiative in assuming leadership among colleagues.
<b>4c. Participating in professional learning opportunities</b>	Avoids professional learning opportunities; has not participated in learning opportunities during this year.	Participates in professional learning opportunities. Shows evidence of applying new learning.	Seeks out professional learning opportunities and applies their learning to his/her work.	Shares outcomes of his/her learning opportunities, and assumes a leadership role to help others.
<b>4d. Showing integrity, professionalism and confidentiality</b>	Has trouble maintaining confidentiality; or has made errors in judgement about how to show professional integrity.	Acts with professional integrity; knows, understands and maintains confidentiality.	Displays high standards of honesty and integrity in all interactions. Respects confidentiality norms. Effectively resolves conflict using appropriate communications, follows district chain-of-command.	Serves as a model of professionalism and is able to share with colleagues best practices about confidentiality and ethics.
<b>4e. Displaying a positive work ethic</b>	Has regular episodes of failing to be punctual, present, or	Can be relied on daily to be punctual, present, or prepared	Consistently relied on to be punctual, present, or prepared	Can be relied on in any circumstance; commits themselves to tasks that

	prepared to start work in an appropriate manner.	to start work in an appropriate manner.	to start work in an appropriate manner. Works well under pressure.	take a large amount of time and/or personal investment.
--	--	---	--	---

Teacher Feedback: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER  
COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PARAEDUCATOR COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PARAEDUCATOR SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

BLDG ADMINISTRATOR SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### EMPLOYEE CORRECTIVE ACTION REPORT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The employee is being corrected for the following reason(s):

	Unreported/Excessive Absence		Failure to follow specific directions		Reporting under the influence or use of alcohol and / or drugs at work
	Not clocking in / out as required		Tardiness		Breach of confidentiality
	Improper conduct with student(s) / staff		Showing disrespect to supervising teacher/building staff or student(s)		Not utilizing time as assigned by supervising teacher
	Inappropriate attire		Lack of motivation / initiative / follow through		Dishonesty / violation of acceptable use policy
	Other - specify		Cell phone use in the classroom		Not focusing on student needs in the classroom

Date and time of occurrence that lead to correcting action: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the employee been counseled before for the same offense?  Yes  No If yes, give date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Specifics of the incident for which corrective action is being taken:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Corrective action to be taken at this time: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Follow up date on corrective action: \_\_\_\_\_

Corrective action to be taken upon further violation of district policy: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Follow up results:  continued employment  termination

\*\*\*\*\*



**I have reviewed this form with the employee and he/she understands this form will become part of his/her personnel file.**

**Signature of Supervisor** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Administrator** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand this corrective action form and understand what will result from further violations of district policy of poor job performance.

**Signature of Employee** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter 6

## Workplace Safety

## WORKPLACE SAFETY

### **Work Environment and Employee Responsibilities:**

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, staff, family members and community members, USD 320 Special Services Cooperative strives to furnish a workplace free of recognized hazards that could cause any physical harm. Employees are responsible for reporting any unsafe conditions or circumstances to a supervisor to prevent accidents. Serious or recurring problems involving equipment maintenance or procedural problems which have an adverse effect on an individual's or Cooperative's wellbeing, should be reported to a supervisor or building/district office administrator. A safe and productive workplace is a Cooperative priority.

### **Workplace Illness or Injury:**

- Early, accurate and immediate reporting is expected – NO EXCEPTIONS
- Anything more involved than a paper cut should be reported
- Kansas law allows for worker compensation claims to be denied if not reported within 10 days
- Follow all the reporting steps – every time
- Any job-related injury/illness must IMMEDIATELY be reported to your supervisor – if your immediate supervisor is not available proceed to the next line of supervisor/administrator
- Failure to immediately report a job-related injury/illness may result in disciplinary action
- Complete the appropriate “injured employee” form available in each building's front office and return to the para facilitator at the Sped Coop
- The date of the injury and date reported must be accurate
- Employees will be referred to and expected to immediately proceed to the building nurse or if deemed necessary by the building nurse, the Coop's designated physician.
- DO NOT go to your personal or family physician for any job-related injury/illness – personal health insurance may deny payment once they determine your injury/illness is job-related
- You must be seen by a physician in our worker's compensation network, but under Kansas law, worker's compensation insurance may provide up to \$500 for you to see a second doctor of your choice

### **Return to Work:**

- The amount and length of workers' compensation is established by state law
- Workers' compensation does not cover 100% of employee wages
- Returning to work under restrictions is good for everyone
- Provides employee with support system and helps them feel productive
- Employees must be cleared to return to work by workers' compensation network physician
- Any remaining restrictions will be clearly prescribed and documented by a physician
- Every effort will be made to return the employee to his/her original work assignment/unit
- Modified duty assignments, that comply with any physician's restrictions, will be established and arranged by building/Special Services Department administration, district nurse and other administrators as necessary
- Once an employee has been placed in a modified duty assignment, the supervisor is expected to hold him/her accountable to not exceed restrictions
- It is the employee's responsibility to not exceed the restrictions. Doing so will result in disciplinary action
- The ongoing need and appropriateness of modified duty assignments will be reviewed by administration as necessary and per updates from the physician

# Chapter 7

## Attendance and Timekeeping Procedures

## PARAEDUCATOR ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

**Punctuality and regular attendance convey how seriously you take your job and are essential to the proper operation of USD 320 Special Services Cooperative. Your supervising teacher and the students you work with count on you being at work and on time every day. Attendance will be noted on your evaluation and taken into consideration for employment.**

**Excessive employee absence or tardiness creates undesirable performance factors for all employees. Those found to be in violation of USD 320 Special Services Cooperative's standards may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.**

1. If you will be arriving late, leaving early, or not reporting to work for any reason (unless an unexpected medical or other emergency makes it impossible to do so), you must inform the supervising teacher as soon as possible, but no later than one (1) hour prior to the scheduled start of your workday. Failure to call in properly will be considered an unreported absence, and may result in disciplinary action.
2. For absences of three (3) or more consecutive scheduled workdays, you will be required to provide a written doctor's statement to your supervisor. However, your supervisor may request written documentation for any absence of any length. If a paraeducator is absent from work for three (3) or more consecutive scheduled workdays without properly contacting the supervisor, it will be assumed that he/she has voluntarily resigned his/her employment.
3. Additionally, five (5) or more absences or tardies during any quarter/trimester may also lead to disciplinary action.
4. Unless you are on an authorized leave of absence, you must maintain contact with your supervisor throughout any absence extending beyond one (1) day, notifying him/her daily whether and when you will be returning to work.
5. Any paraeducator exceeding five (5) absences will be required to meet with the supervisor. The meeting content, addressing specific expectations for attendance from that point forward, will be documented in a letter and signed by the supervisor and the paraeducator. Copies will be distributed to the paraeducator, building administrator and Special Services administrator. A copy of the letter will also be placed in the paraeducator's file in the Special Services office (see example form letter). If the expectations of attendance detailed in the letter are not met by the paraeducator, the supervisor will notify the Special Services administrator and the para facilitator. The para facilitator will contact the para and Human Resources to initiate termination action.



**Accurately Reflecting Work Time:**

All employees are expected to report hours worked or time off in an accurate manner using the correct district designated process. Employees must accurately record all work hours and authorized time off for vacation, sick, personal leave, other leave (jury duty, FMLA, disability, etc.) and holidays.

Employees failing to properly record time (including in and out for meal periods), signing in or out for another employee or having other employees sign in or out for you are all violations of this policy and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Timeclocks/Time cards:**

All hourly employees are required to use the time clock system that is part of the Skyward Business Management system. A computer to be used for log-in purposes will be provided at all locations. Employees are to clock in and out each time they report to or depart from district duty. Employees must utilize Skyward system at all times (including lunch periods). Supervisors may approve other methods of documenting duty hours worked when the Skyward system is not available. Handwritten time cards should only be used in the event the Skyward system is not available to an employee.

Time cards should be filled out accurately and completely, including:

- Date for beginning of payroll week (Monday)
- Clocked hours on appropriate day of week (1st day is Monday)
- Leave time should be designated as holiday, personal, sick, bereavement, vacation, or leave without pay. (Appropriate Request for Leave forms should be initiated and submitted. See "Leave.")
- Handwritten changes or notations on a timecard should be approved and initialed by the supervisor.
- Authorization of Overtime forms must be completed and signed by the immediate supervisor if more than 40 hours are worked in one week.
- The building administrator must sign all time cards prior to submitting to the District Office

Timecards are due at the District Office by the payroll deadline given by the human resources/payroll department. Payroll deadlines will be communicated each month via email from the payroll department. If any employee does not receive this communication for any reason, it is the responsibility of the employee to inquire of the deadline from their building office or the payroll department. Failure to turn in your timecard to the payroll department by the deadline date may result in a delay of up to 7 days in receiving your paycheck.

# Chapter 8

## Special Education Terms and Definitions

## SPECIAL EDUCATION TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Accommodation:** An adjustment to an environment, situation, or supplies for individual differences. A classroom could accommodate a student in a wheelchair if desks were moved to make wider spaces.

**Achievement Test:** A test that measures a student's level of functioning in academic areas such as math, reading, and spelling

**Acting Out:** Behavioral discharge of tension in response to a present situation or stimulus, as if it were a situation or stimulus which was originally associated with the tension. Often a chronic and habitual pattern of response to frustration and conflict.

**Adaptation:** A change in what students do or a reshaping of the materials students use. Adaptations are essentially the same as modifications, but can specifically refer to the materials and equipment student's use to aid in learning. Enlarging the print on a worksheet and audio taping a textbook are examples of some adaptations.

**Adaptive Behavior:** The extent to which an individual is able to adjust and to apply new skills to new environments, tasks, objects and people.

**Adaptive Physical Education:** Adaptive PE programs have the same objectives as regular physical education programs, but are modified to meet the specific needs of students with special needs.

**Adventitious Deafness:** Deafness acquired through illness or accident; not congenital

**Affective Learning:** The area of learning related to emotions or feelings rather than thought or knowledge.

**Age Norms:** Numerical values representing typical or average performance for persons of various age groups.

**Anoxia:** Deficient amount of oxygen in the tissues of a part of the body or in the bloodstream supplying such a part.

**Aphasia:** Loss or impairment of the ability to use or understand oral language. It is usually associated with an injury or abnormality of speech centers of the brain. Several classifications are used, including expressive and receptive, congenital, and acquired aphasia.

**Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA):** The science of applying experimentally derived principles of behaviorism to modify behavior. ABA takes what we know about behavior and uses it to bring about changes of the behavior (frequency, topography, latency, speed, fluency). The behavior is analyzed utilizing behavior assessment to determine the functional relationship of the behavior within the environment.

**Apraxia:** Condition in which there is no paralysis, but the motor activity cannot be coordinated normally, can be seen as impulsive, jerky, movements and tremors with disruptions in balance.

**Aptitude Test:** A general type of test that is designed to predict a student's success in various kinds of learning, before any instruction has taken place, as opposed to an achievement test which is intended to measure mastery of curriculum which has been taught.

**Articulation:** The production of speech sounds.

**Assessment:** A general term for evaluation which may include screenings, observation, testing and diagnosis.



**At-Risk:** A term used to identify students who could benefit from some type of short-term support. These students run the risk of not succeeding for one of many reasons, from poor academic skills to excessive absences to personal problem situations.

**Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** A disorder of the nervous system which interferes with a person's ability to sustain attention or focus on a task or to delay impulsive behavior.

**Attention Span:** The extent to which a person can selectively focus his attention on things.

**Audiogram:** It is a graph showing the hearing sensitivity for air and bone conducted sounds.

**Audiologist:** A specialist in testing hearing.

**Auditory:** Involving the sense of hearing

**Auditory Memory:** The ability to remember and then recall the sounds of spoken words.

**Auditory Perception:** The ability to receive sounds accurately and understand what they mean.

**Auditory Sequencing:** The ability to remember the order of items given in a sequential list (e.g., Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday).

**Augmentative Communication:** Special devices and methods of communication which provide alternatives for spoken language.

**Autism:** A severe life-long developmental exceptionality affecting interpersonal relationships, communication, and behavior. The exceptionality may manifest itself in varying degrees including mild, moderate, and severe. The onset of this disorder is usually before the age of three.

**Basal Reader:** A method of teaching reading in which instruction is given through the use of a series of publisher developed texts. Sequencing of skills, content, vocabulary, and activities are decided by the authors of the series. Basal readers are a graded series that increase in difficulty.

**Baseline Observation:** An operant conditioning procedure in which an initial rate of some response is established. It can be used for descriptive purposes or as a control condition prior to the introduction of behavior modification procedures and subsequent response rate of comparisons.

**Behavior Contract:** An agreement between a student or group of students and a teacher or paraeducator listing specific actions each person is to demonstrate, the rewards the student will receive for completing the task, and the consequences for failing to do so. Also called a contingency contract.

**Behavior Disorders (BD):** A term used to describe individuals who exhibit patterns of behavior which are chronic in nature, occur in several environments, and interfere with learning in the educational setting. These children have marked behavior excesses which persist over a period of time. This includes aggressive behavior, limited ability to withstand frustration, depression, anxiety and withdrawal from interpersonal contacts.

**Blind:** Vision of 20/200 or more in the better eye which necessitates dependence primarily on tactile (e.g. braille) and auditory mediums for education.

**Brain-Injured Child:** Child who before, during, or after birth has received an injury to or suffered an infection of the brain. As a result of such organic impairment, there are disturbances which prevent or impede the normal learning process.

**Case Manager:** The special education teacher or therapist, Title 1 teacher, or at-risk coordinator who is responsible for the implementation, coordination, monitoring, and/or evaluation of a student's special needs program. A case manager should be a certified staff member and is responsible for the paperwork on a student's program.

**Cerebral Palsy:** A disorder of the central nervous system which affects muscle movement.

**Cognitive Learning:** The area of learning based on knowledge and reasoning. Also called academic learning.

**Cognitive Style:** A certain approach to problem-solving based on intellectual, as distinguished from affective, schemes of thought.

**Collaborative Teaching:** A service delivery option which allows special education students the opportunity to be served in the regular classroom. The special education teacher joins the regular education teacher in the classroom and together they deliver instruction in a co-active and coordinated fashion. The regular classroom teacher remains responsible for the course content while the special education teacher provides modified materials and teaches various learning strategies.

**Compensation or Compensatory Instruction:** Instruction aimed at "getting around" a problem or an area of difficulty. Techniques for compensatory instruction include the use of alternative instruction, alternative techniques, and adaptive equipment. A student having a low reading level could compensate by using books on tape or by having the material read aloud to him or her.

**Confidentiality:** The privacy of information about students and their families. Confidential information may be about problems and disabilities, test scores, background, etc. Paraeducator and other educators are required by law to respect the confidentiality of this information.

**Congenital:** Present at birth; usually a defect of either familiar or exogenous external origin which exists at the time of birth.

**Consent:** Refers to parental permission initially needed to evaluate a student or to place a child in a special education program.

**Contract Services:** School systems may arrange with other public or private service providers (e.g., therapists, private schools) to serve students with disabilities when the school system is unable to provide the needed services.

**Cumulative File:** A file housed at the student's school containing report cards, standardized achievement test scores, teacher reports, and other records of a student's school performance.

**Deaf:** A hearing impairment so severe that an individual cannot process sounds even with amplification such as hearing aids.

**Decoding:** The receptive habits of the language process, e.g., sensory acuity, awareness, discrimination, vocabulary comprehension.

**Deficit:** Delay or inadequacy in functioning due to general immaturity and developmental lag. Also, malfunctioning due to irregularities, such as specific lessons.

**Delayed Speech Development:** This is a broad term which refers only to the fact that a student has not acquired speech at the expected time or with the expected proficiency.

**Diagnostic Test:** A test used to locate specific areas of weakness or strength, and to determine the nature of weaknesses or deficiencies; it yields measures of the components of subparts of some large body of information or skill. Diagnostic achievement tests are most commonly prepared for the skill subjects-reading, arithmetic, spelling.

**Distractibility:** This applies to students who find concentration on a specific task difficult to sustain. These students struggle to sort out and focus on what is most important within the range of environmental stimuli.

**Due Process:** A series of steps which assure the right of the parent and child to be fully informed and included in decision making at all steps in identification, evaluation, planning, programming and program evaluation. When the school and parents cannot agree on appropriate services, either has the right to request an appropriate service, either has the right to request an impartial hearing.

**Dyscalculia:** Loss of ability to calculate, to manipulate number symbols, or to do simple arithmetic.

**Dysgraphia:** Impairment in spontaneous writing, the ability to copy being intact.

**Dyslexia:** A disorder in which a person cannot read with ability or understanding because he sees printed words upside down, reversed, blurred, or backwards. Dyslexia is not related to general intelligence but is usually associated with problems noted in persons with learning disorder (e.g. problems with integration of learning materials).

**Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE):** Program designed to provide appropriate intervention services designed to meet the needs of individual students with disabilities, ages 5 and under. USD 320 offers center-based and community-based interventions for children 3-5; conducts screening for developmental delays in children birth to five and provides referral for evaluation for children birth to 3.

**Early Intervention:** Providing services and programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities in or to minimize or eliminate the need for special services as they mature.

**Echolalia:** Automatic reiteration of words or phrases, usually those which have just been heard.

**Educational Advocate:** An individual who speaks or acts knowledgeably for the educational needs of another.

**Endogenous:** Developing within or originating from causes within the organism.

**Epilepsy:** A neurological disorder characterized by sudden recurrent seizures which may take the form of convulsions to minor blackouts.

**Etiology:** The investigation of the causes of significant antecedents of a given phenomenon

**Evaluation:** An assessment to determine a student's level of functioning through the use of formal and/or informal procedures. As a result of this evaluation recommendations are made to develop an appropriate program for the student.

**Exceptional Children:** Children who require special education services to enable them to receive educational benefits.

**Expressive Language Skills:** The ability to communicate through speech, writing, or gestures.

**Exogenous:** Outside the genes, all factors other than heredity or genetic (such as environment or trauma)

**Eye-Hand Coordination:** The ability to coordinate information received through the eye and processed through the brain in order to relay this information into a motor activity. The ability to coordinate eye-hand movements is necessary for fine motor skills such as writing, cutting, coloring, etc.

**Fine Motor:** The use of small muscles to perform tasks such as writing, cutting, eating, tying laces.

**Formal Assessment:** Using standardized tests which measure such characteristics as intelligence, achievement, speech abilities, motor proficiency, adaptive skills, etc. These tests have a standard set of directions for their use and interpretation which may not be deviated from during testing.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):** Public Law 94-142 requires that all children with disabilities receive free educational services. These services entitle them to be provided with the most appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. An IEP must be written for each identified child that includes all services that are to be provided by the local education agency.

**Gifted:** In the state of Kansas, a student who is identified as gifted is characterized by having a high potential in general intellectual ability and specific academic aptitudes.

**Glaucoma:** The intraocular pressure of the eye increases to such a level that the eye becomes damaged and sight is impaired.

**Grade Equivalent:** A score indicating how a student's performance on a test ranks in terms of the average performance of students of various grades on the same or a similar test. An interpretation of a grade equivalent score of 5.0 means the score that the average beginning fifth grader makes on the same measurement. It is recommended that this interpretation is considered with caution.

**Gross-Motor Skills:** The development and use of the large muscles through activities such as running, jumping, and walking.

**Handicap:** Impairment of a particular kind of social and psychological behavior. It is the extent of the individual's subjective interpretation of his exceptionality and impairment.

**Haptic:** Pertaining to the sense of touch.

**Hard of Hearing:** A hearing impairment in which an individual can hear some sounds. Hearing can be corrected sufficiently with a hearing aid to enable the individual to make use of environmental sounds.

**Head Start:** The Head Start program is based on the premise that all children share certain needs, and that children of low-income families, in particular, can benefit from a comprehensive development program to meet those needs. The overall goal of the program is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children, the family as well as the community must be involved.

**Hearing Impaired:** A term that includes individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Hyperactive:** Abnormal excess of physical action accompanied by restlessness, low tolerance for frustration, and short attention span.

**Hypoactivity:** Abnormal low level of physical activity.

**IDEA (Individual with Disabilities Act):** IDEA amended the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142) and outlines special education law and regulations.

**IMC (Instructional Materials Center):** A district building housing instructional materials available for educators.

**Implement:** To do or put into action. Student goals and objectives are often implemented in the classroom by the paraeducator.

**Impulsive:** Acting without thinking and in an uninhibited way.

**Inclusion:** Students with special needs receive their education and support services at their neighborhood school with their age and grade-appropriate peers.

**Inclusive Classroom:** A classroom in which students with a diversity of learning needs and abilities share instructional space and all staff members who are responsible for providing support work together to benefit all the students in the class. A variety of services are provided and a variety of student needs are met inside the regular classroom.

**Independent Reading Level:** A level in which the student is consistently able to read on his/her own with success.

**Individual Education Program (IEP):** Public Law 94-142 assures an IEP for each student in special education which must include a description of his/her present level of functioning, annual goals, short term objectives, related services to be received, dates for beginning and duration of services, extent of participation in the regular education program, and the criteria to measure completion of the written goals and objectives.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):** A written plan of special support goals and services provided to infants and toddlers, as well as their families.

**Individual Transition Plan (ITP):** A written plan of transition goals, objectives, or actions included in the IEP of special education students over the age of 14 or 16.

**Integration:** Students with special needs receive their education and support services in regular education classrooms and some education in the self-contained classroom. Services may not be in their neighborhood school.

**Intelligence Quotient:** A term applied to the statistic indicating one's general or scholastic aptitude when compared with other people of the same age.

**Intervention:** Any service, teaching technique, supplemental or special materials used to help a student reach his/her potential.

**Itinerant Teacher:** A teacher who provides services to students for less than 5% of the school day. These services may be delivered in the regular classroom or in another setting within the school building.

**Job Coach:** A person who works with an individual with special needs at the job site to teach needed job skills and provide ongoing assistance and follow-up.

**Language, Expressive:** Refers to the ability to communicate through speaking or writing.

**Language, Receptive:** Refers to the ability to understand spoken or written communication.

**LEA:** A local education agency such as a district, division, county, or city.

**Learning Center:** A classroom located in a regular school setting, in which a student identified with special needs, gets instruction and support from a certified special education teacher for part of the student's school day. The special educators are responsible for implementing goals and objectives listed on the student's IEP and for offering support and guidance to the regular education teacher to help the student succeed.

**Learning Disability: Now referred to as Intellectual Disability (ID)** Inability to learn effectively with regard to receiving, organizing or expressing information relevant to the school environment. The student's performance does not match expectations based on potential. Deficits are not the result of retardation, environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage or inconsistent educational programming.

**Learning Style:** a method or process that an individual finds to be successful in learning information that is being presented. This may be through visual, auditory or tactile processes or a combination of these processes.

**Least Restrictive Environment:** A special education term meaning the placement in which a student has the best opportunity to achieve with the least amount of restriction, based on the individual student needs and abilities.

**Legally Blind:** In the United States, the legal definition of blindness is central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction.

**Manipulatives:** Hands-on experiential objects or models used to help students develop meaning and understanding of concepts (most frequently in the area of math).

**Memory, Short Term:** Ability to immediately recall what has just been presented, or to remember that information within a few minutes.

**Memory, Long Term:** Ability to recall information that was presented, after a long period of time has passed.

**Mental Retardation:** Substantial limitations in functioning characterized by significantly subaverage intellectual ability and associated deficits in communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, and /or academic performance.

**Minimal Brain Damage:** Early term for designating students with neurogenic learning and adjustment problems. The term is unsatisfactory because brain dysfunction is not necessarily due to damage. The term is often used and applied inaccurately for that reason.

**Modality:** An avenue of acquiring sensation; the visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, olfactory, and gustatory modalities are the most sense modalities.

**Moderately Mentally Retarded:** The general IQ range of 35-49; generally considered trainable.

**Modification:** A change in what students do or a reshaping of the materials students use. Reducing the number of questions students must answer at the end of the textbook chapter, allowing the student to answer out loud instead of writing an answer, and allowing the student to do an activity that is different from what the other students are doing are all examples of modifications.

**Motivation:** A stimulus to action; something (a need or desire) that causes one to act.

**Multidisciplinary Evaluation:** An evaluation of an individual in which a group of professionals will each conduct assessments in their own areas of expertise: psychologists, speech and language therapists, learning specialists, physical therapists, etc.

**Multi-Handicapped:** A student with a combination of impairments in which the severity of these impairments make it difficult to accommodate the student in a program for a particular exceptionality. The nature of the exceptionality could be a combination such as blind, and mentally and physically disabled.

**Multisensory:** Generally applied to training procedures which are simultaneously utilizing more than one sense modality.

**Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS):** A coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each student to achieve high standards.

**Non-Categorical:** A program serving students with disabilities which are based on instructional needs rather than a handicapping condition.

**Nondiscriminatory Testing:** An evaluation in which the materials and procedures are not racially or culturally biased. The test must also be given in the student's primary language. No single measurement or procedure will be used as the sole criterion for placement.

**Objectives, Behavioral:** A statement used in the IEP describing what the student must do, how he/she will do it, and the criteria used to measure if the student accomplished the objective.

**Occupational Therapy:** Activities focusing on fine motor skills and perceptual abilities which assist in improving in all areas of the student's daily life; i.e., writing, eating, cutting, etc.. These activities are developed and implemented by an occupational therapist or under the supervision of the therapist.

**Orthopedically Handicapped Students:** Shall mean a severe orthopedic (skeletal) impairment which adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease, and impairments from other causes.

**Other Health Impaired:** A term used to describe conditions that adversely affect the educational performance of a student not covered by other exceptionalities (e.g., Intellectual Disabilities, Behavior Disorders, etc.). Various medical conditions such as diabetes, cystic fibrosis, leukemia, etc. are health impaired conditions that fall under this category.

**Paraeducator:** Additional educational personnel hired to extend the services of a school's program. Paraeducators usually perform instructional, clerical, or student supervisory duties within a school or program.

**Percentile Rank:** A number between 0 and 100 tells what percentage of individuals in a group of scores below a certain score. A percentile rank of 82 says that the person scored higher than 82% of the group and lower than the other 18%.

**Perception:** Recognition of a quality without distinguishing meaning, which is the result of a complex set of reactions, including sensory stimulation, organization with the nervous system, and memory.

**Perceptual – Motor:** The process by which people select, organize, and interpret information in the form of muscle activity, as this information is received from the five senses.

**Physical Therapy:** A type of treatment for remediation of disorders of the bones, muscles, joints, and nerves. Activities or routines designed to increase movement skills by physical methods such as heat, cold, water, massage and exercise.

**Placement:** The environment in which a student with a disability is to be educated. The school, specific program, classroom, related services, and the amount of time the student will spend with non-disabled peers is all part of the placement decision.

**Positive Behavior Supports (PBS):** a decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students.

**Profoundly Mentally Retarded:** Term used to describe the most severely retarded level, generally covers the IQ range of 0-20.

**Projective Test:** Personality test based on the assumption that any vague, unstructured stimulus will reveal unconscious aspects of one's perception and personality. Such tests include the Rorschach ink blots, drawings, picture completion, and story and sentence completion test.

**Psychomotor:** Pertaining to the motor effect of psychological processes. Psychomotor tests are tests of motor skill which depend upon sensory or perceptual motor coordination.

**Public Law 101-476:** PL 101-476, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is legislation passed by the United States to ensure free education for all children.

**Public Law 99-457:** The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986, reauthorized PL 94-142 and amended it with provisions for children ages birth through five years. The major changes are found in Part H, which addresses infants and toddlers with exceptionalities, and Part B (Section 619) which mandates services for preschoolers with exceptionalities ages three through five.

**Pull-Out Services:** Special remedial, therapeutic, or enrichment services provided to students outside the regular classroom. In the past, almost all additional services were provided in this manner, regardless of individual student need. One aim of inclusion is to reduce the removal of students from the regular classroom when the same intent of service can be provided within the regular classroom.

**Reading Comprehension:** The ability to understand what one has read.

**Receptive Language:** Receiving and understanding spoken or written communication. The receptive language skills are listening and reading.

**Referral:** A formal notification to the local school that a student is experiencing educational difficulties and may need further evaluation to identify the need for special education.

**Regular Classroom: (Elementary or Secondary):** A regular or general education classroom is the location where all students typically receive instruction on grade level curriculum from a general education grade level or content area teacher. All students – including students with exceptionalities should receive their instruction in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible.



**Related Services:** Services a student with exceptionalities must receive to benefit from special education. These services may include among others transportation, speech therapy, physical/occupational therapy, or counseling.

**Related Services Personnel:** Special education personnel other than the special education teacher, including therapists, counselors, psychologists, and special instructors.

**Reliability:** The extent to which a test is consistent in measuring whatever it does measure; dependability, stability, relative freedom from errors of measurement. Reliability is usually estimated by some form of reliability coefficient or by the standard error of measurement.

**Remedial Reading:** The correction of a reading problem through specialized instruction which targets increasing fluency and improving comprehension.

**Remediation or Remedial Instruction:** Instruction aimed at improving a skill or ability in a student or “catching a student up”. Techniques for remedial instruction may include providing more practice or more explanation, repeating information, and devoting more time to working on the skill. A student having a low reading level could be remediated through one-on-one reading instruction, phonics instruction, or practice in reading aloud.

**Residential School:** This school provides a “home-away-from-home” setting for the student, and is primarily used for a student who is multi-handicapped or whose home school district cannot give him the special help he needs.

**Resource Classroom:** The resource room or learning center, is the setting in a school where a student identified with special needs receives instruction for a portion of the school day (60% or less) from a special education teacher.

**Resource Teacher:** A specialist who works with students with special learning needs and acts as a consultant to other teachers, providing materials and methods to help students who are having difficulty within the regular classroom. The resource teacher may work from a centralized resource room within a school where appropriate materials are housed. Students spend the bulk of the day in the regular classroom, coming to the resource room for support in specific skill areas.

**Respite Care:** Temporary care is provided to families with students with exceptionalities in order to receive families of the constant care of these persons. Respite care may take place in the home, the home of the respite care provider, or any agency such as a residential facility. The length of care is dependent upon the needs of the family.

**Reversal Errors:** A term used to describe errors in reading and writing such as reversal of singular letters (confusing b with d, for example), words (reading “was” as “now”), or the order of words in sentences.

**Schizophrenia:** A group of psychotic reactions characterized by fundamental disturbances in reality relationships.

**School Psychologists:** A person trained to give psychological evaluations, interpret results and suggest appropriate educational approaches to learning or behavior problems. The psychologist also provides direct services to students, teachers, and families through consultation and counseling.

**Scoliosis:** Curvature of the spine.

**Screening:** The first step in determining whether special education services are needed. At this level, assessments tend to be more global and to look for cues to a need for more specific, intervention-oriented evaluations.

**Section 504 Educational Plan:** A plan of educational goals and objectives written by regular education teachers for students who demonstrate a need, but do not meet the identification guidelines for areas of exceptionality in special education.

**Self-Care Skill:** The ability to care for oneself; usually refers to basic habits of dressing, eating, etc.

**Self-Contained Classroom:** A classroom in which a student with exceptionalities receives the bulk of their instruction throughout the school day with minimal contact with their non-disabled peers.

**Sensory Integration:** Sensory integration is the process of the brain organizing and interpreting sensory experiences from touch, movement, body awareness, sight, sound, and the pull of gravity. For most students, sensory integration develops in the course of ordinary childhood activities. Motor planning ability is a natural outcome of the process, as the ability to adapt to incoming sensations. When the process does not develop as efficiently as it should, a number of problems in learning, development, or behavior may become evident.

**Sensory-Motor:** Fine and gross motor movements are the result of messages received through the senses which are transmitted into body activity.

**Sequence, Left to Right:** The student must be able to sequence from left to right across the page in order to read.

**Severely Mentally Retarded:** The general IQ range of 20-34; those who fall between the profoundly retarded and the moderately retarded.

**Social History:** A social and developmental history of the student which includes information on the student's family.

**Special Day Schools:** Schools designed for students who have a serious handicap or are multiply handicapped and need comprehensive special education services for their entire school day.

**Special Education:** A federally mandated program organized through state and local educational agencies that provide appropriate educational opportunities for students qualifying under categories of exceptionalities.

**Special Educator:** One who has had special training or preparation for teaching the handicapped; may also work cooperatively with the regular classroom teacher by sharing unique skills and competencies.

**Specific Learning Disability:** Those students who manifest an educationally significant discrepancy between their estimated intellectual potential and their actual level of performance in one or more of the processes of language, perception, reading, spelling, arithmetic, or writing, which may or may not be accompanied by demonstrable central nervous system dysfunctions or behavioral disturbances.

**Speech Impaired:** The study and treatment of all aspects of functional and organic speech defects and disorders; often the same as speech correction.

**Speech Therapy:** Public Law 94-142 identified the need for students with speech disorders to receive the related services from a speech therapist or pathologist in the treatment of this disorder.

**Staffing:** A group meeting in which the parents and members of a multidisciplinary team discuss the results of evaluations and observations in order to determine the student's strengths, weaknesses, and needs, if any, to receive special education.

**Standardized Tests:** Tests that have been developed through use on large groups, with the resulting score being used to establish norms (or expected levels of performance) for specific ages or grades. The main purpose of this is to establish a comparison between a student's score and the average performance of their peers.

**Strabismus:** Lack of coordination in the eye muscles so that the two eyes are not directed at the same point.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** Financial help is given through federal and state aid for persons with developmental exceptionalities and the aged. Eligibility is determined by the financial needs of the student who is under the age of eighteen.

**Syndrome:** A group of signs or symptoms that when they appear together characterize a disease or disorder.

**Tactile:** Sense of touch.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):** An open or closed head injury to the brain, caused by an external physical force, resulting in a total or partial functional exceptionality or psychosocial impairment that adversely affects educational performance.

**Title I:** A federal program that provides remedial and proactive support to qualifying students in the area of math and reading.

**Transition:** The movement from one situation to another. This could refer to a variety of situations including the movement from one level to another (preschool to elementary, second grade to third grade, junior high to high school) or from school into the community.

**Visual Acuity:** Measured ability to see.

**Visually Impaired:** Having a mild to severe vision disorder which interferes with the educational or developmental progress of a student.

**Visual-Motor Coordination:** The ability to coordinate vision with the movement of the body parts of the body.

**Visual Perception:** The identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory data received by the individual through the eye.

**Vocational Education:** Provides training for individuals to prepare them for post school employment.

**Wechsler Intelligence Scales:** Widely used individually administered intelligence tests.

**Word Attack Skills:** The ability to decode (sound out) and understand new or unfamiliar words by using already acquired skills.