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Welcome!

As a special education paraprofessional you are in an important and challenging role within the school system. The role of paraprofessionals in educational environments has changed dramatically over the past several years. New educational priorities emphasize the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular classroom and community environments and increase the need for and use of paraprofessionals.

Along with the increased need for paraprofessionals comes the need for training and professional development. At Aurora, we have identified some core competencies that paraprofessionals hired to work in schools must have. These core competencies, which form the basis of this handbook, are designed to provide the special education paraprofessional with the basic skills and knowledge required to carry out this very important job.

In addition to the core competencies, each school building has its own policies and procedures, which are outlined in the building’s faculty/staff handbook. It is important to review your building’s handbook and become familiar with the policies and procedures of your particular building in order to perform the job in an orderly, appropriate, and efficient manner. This handbook is intended to be a guide that serves as a basis for training. The Aurora R-VIII Schools will assist in providing ongoing training and support to paraprofessionals, which may be provided through a variety of mediums such as in-services, web based instruction, and one-on-one support.
Chapter 1
Philosophical, Historical and Legal Foundations of Education

Historically individuals with disabilities were not valued members of the community. Sometimes, special asylums were built for people who were disabled. Often conditions in these institutions were dehumanizing, filthy and crowded. There is little evidence that people in these institutions were given skills or education that would enable them to cope with the world and become members of the greater community. Much of the lack of education occurred because it was believed that these individuals were not able to learn like other people and that it would be a waste of time and money to help them learn. In recent times as early as the 1970’s, prior to Public Law 94-142 (Education of All Handicapped Children Act), children with special needs often continued to be excluded from the public education system or if included, they were often segregated from their peers in separate classrooms or schools. This practice is no longer acceptable.

Today, with the reauthorization of P.L. 94-142, now called IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), students with disabilities are now an integral part of the regular school environment. This legislation emphasized the inclusion of children with disabilities into the regular classroom and community environments, and increased the need for and use of paraprofessionals. When that is not possible, children are to be educated in the "least restrictive environment" appropriate for the child. Federal law, as well as State mandated practices, have established procedures to assure that to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with non-disabled students. Special classes, separate schools, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Research supports that children with disabilities benefit from inclusive instruction within the regular classroom environment. For children with moderate to severe handicaps, inclusion can increase social interaction between disabled and non-disabled children. Inclusion can increase social acceptance by peers and provide disabled students with appropriate behavior models.

It is important to note however, that the mere physical placement of children with disabilities in regular classrooms does not necessarily result in positive results. Often these children require direct intervention and support in order to be successful. Paraprofessionals play an important role in providing that intervention and support as they are often utilized to implement and reinforce teacher designed programs to increase the students’ success in the classroom setting.

Paraprofessionals have a difficult but rewarding position within education. They influence positive changes in academic achievement and behavior. Their interest in students and assistance to teachers is invaluable.
**Individualized Programming**

Along with the sweeping changes that occurred with the passage of P.L. 94-142, schools were challenged by the mandate that each child in special education should have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The law required that the plan be written and be developed in a meeting that includes the parents, those staff identified by the school and by age 14, the student. Since that time two other plans have evolved with a similar intent. The Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) was designed to meet the special needs of children under the age of three with special needs and their families. Recently the Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP) has been implemented for children with disabilities ages 3 to 21 years who are involved with two or more public agencies.

The IEP/IFSP/IIIP is a yearly written plan developed through a team process designed to meet the needs of the child with disabilities. It is confidential and should not be discussed outside of the school setting.

The intent of the Individualized Education Plan is to ensure that each child with a disability is able to take part in an educational program that will assist and support the child to learn to live, work, play and make friends in the community. An essential part of this plan must be to assist the child to participate in the same settings as are used by other children of the same age. This means that learning should occur in the "least restrictive environment" which is generally considered the community setting or regular classroom in which children of the same age are placed.

The IEP summarizes a child’s present level of performance in all areas of functioning and identifies the child’s specific needs in each area. The team yearly identifies goals and possibly specific objectives for meeting the identified needs. The plan will also describe changes, adaptation, or modification that will be necessary for accommodating a child with special needs in the school setting. The plan also describes how a student will be educated with peers. It will state the time, location and staff member who will provide the service. Paraprofessionals will most likely be involved in the observation and documentation of progress on plan goals. Any parent questions or concerns about the services provided by the plan should be directed to the teacher.

**Diversity and Learning**

Many areas of the United States are considered very diverse culturally because of the different people who live there. Here in southwest Missouri, we may not have as many opportunities to experience the different cultural heritages, colors, languages and family and economic backgrounds found in other areas of the country. Even so, classrooms in the 21st century often reflect diversity and value systems we may not have experienced in our own school years.

Values are developed over the course of a lifetime and they come from a variety of different directions. We may learn them from parents, religious affiliations, school, friends, reading materials or a host of other sources. However they are learned, they have become a part of us and are important to each of us in our own way.
Recognizing the values of others is an important piece of recognizing the individuality of each person. In order to do so, you must be aware that the values system of another person is uniquely that person's; attempts to ignore it or to make changes will probably meet with failure.

It is necessary for paraprofessionals to realize that when they prepare lessons, there may be times when a skill that they are teaching is not one that the child feels a need to learn. It is important to anticipate that this might happen, and in so doing, be ready to alter lessons as needed. By understanding and appreciating the diversity in the cultures, lifestyles and other characteristics of children, it helps the paraprofessional to shape and refine lessons and instructional methods in ways that will reinforce the value of the children.

Role Clarification: The Paraprofessional and the Supervising Teacher
Teachers and paraprofessionals are partners in education, working together to provide the best educational experience possible for each child. The special education paraprofessional's role is to assist the teacher and allow more effective utilization of the teacher's abilities and professional knowledge. The teacher must function in a leadership role. It is the teacher's responsibility to assure that the students are moving toward achievement of individualized goals and objectives. Paraprofessionals serve under the direction and supervision of the teacher to assist in carrying out the individualized education program. In order for paraprofessionals to provide direct instruction to the student, teachers must plan and prescribe the learning environment and instruction for the student. Teachers must train the paraprofessional in the specifics of the instruction, evaluate student progress and monitor the effectiveness of the paraprofessional's implementation of the instructional strategies.

A clear delineation of roles of the teacher and the paraprofessional is an important element of a successful program. Identification of teacher and paraprofessional roles insures adherence to ethical and legal requirements and serves as a guide in supervision and evaluation. Actual follow up delivery of instruction to the student may be carried out by the paraprofessional under supervision of the teacher. Paraprofessionals may not deliver initial instruction.

The teacher’s responsibilities to the learner include:
- Assessing the student’s entry level performance,
- Planning instruction for individual students,
- Implementing the goals and objectives of the individualized education plan,
- Supervising and coordinating work of paraprofessional and other support staff,
- Evaluating and reporting student progress,
- Involving parents in their child’s education, and
- Coordinating and managing information provided by other professionals.

The teacher also has a number of roles to fulfill in the proper utilization of the paraprofessionals in the classroom:
- Set an example of professionalism in execution of teacher responsibilities;
- Establish the criteria for acceptable job performance of the paraprofessional at the beginning of the school year;
- Provide consistent feedback to assist the paraprofessional in refining skills;
• Communicate the needs of each student to the paraprofessional;
• Establish and communicate the paraprofessional’s role in behavior management;
• Assign the paraprofessional responsibilities which facilitate the teacher’s ability to provide more direct student instruction; and
• Assist the paraprofessional in defining his/her position as an authority figure.

Role of the Paraprofessional
Various factors influencing the specific responsibilities assigned to the paraprofessionals include: Characteristics and personalities of teachers, paraprofessionals and students; interpersonal skills of both teachers and paraprofessionals; the skill level of the paraprofessionals; and the physical environment of the classroom. Individual teachers may vary the responsibilities of the paraprofessionals to enhance the program of instruction. The following list illustrates instructional and administrative duties that could be assigned to paraprofessionals:

• Assist individual students in performing activities initiated by the teachers.
• Supervise children in the hallway, lunchroom, and playground.
• Assist in monitoring supplementary work and independent study.
• Reinforce learning in small groups or with individuals while the teacher works with other students.
• Provide assistance with individualized programmed materials.
• Score objective tests and papers and maintain appropriate records for teachers.
• Perform clerical tasks, i.e., typing and duplicating.
• Assist the teacher in observing, recording, and charting behavior.
• Assist the teacher with crisis problems and behavior management.
• Assist in preparation/production of instructional materials.
• Carry out instructional programs designed by the teacher.
• Work with the teacher to develop classroom schedules.
• Carry out tutoring activities designed by the teacher.
• Operate classroom equipment with the proper training.

The paraprofessional may perform these instructional duties:

• Assist in organizing field trips.
• Read aloud or listen to children read.
• Assist students in performing activities that have been initiated by the teacher.
• Hand out papers and collect paper work.
• Assist with supplementary work for advanced pupils.
• Provide special help such as drilling with flash cards, spelling, and play activities.
• Assist in preparing instructional materials.
• Reinforce learning with small groups.
• Assist children in learning their names, addresses, telephone numbers, birthdays, and parents’ names.
• Supervise free play activities.
• Prepare flash cards and charts.
• Prepare art supplies and other materials.
• Hear requests for help, observe learning difficulties of pupils, and report such matters to teachers.
• Score objective tests and papers and keep appropriate records for teachers.

**Instructional duties the paraprofessional may not perform:**
• Be solely responsible for a classroom or a professional service.
• Be responsible for the diagnostic functions of the classroom.
• Be responsible for preparing lesson plans and initiating instruction.
• Be responsible for assigning grades to students.
• Assume full responsibility for supervising assemblies or field trips.

**Non-Instructional duties the paraprofessional may not perform:**
• Shall not assume full responsibility for supervising and planning activities.
• Shall not take children to clinic, dental, or medical appointments unless authorized personnel grant permission.
• Shall not prescribe educational activities and materials for children.
• Shall not grade subjective or essay tests.
• Shall not regulate pupil behavior by corporal punishment or similar means.
The following chart highlights the differences in the role of the teacher and paraprofessional in various aspects of an educational program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>TEACHER ROLE</th>
<th>PARAPROFESSIONAL ROLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Organization</td>
<td>Plans weekly schedule, lessons, room arrangements, learning centers, and activities for individuals and the entire class.</td>
<td>Implements plan as specified by the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Administers and scores formal and informal tests.</td>
<td>Administers informal tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Objectives</td>
<td>Determines appropriate objectives for groups and individual children.</td>
<td>Carries out activities to meet objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Teaches lessons for the entire class, small groups, and individual children.</td>
<td>Reinforces and supervises practice of skills with the entire class, small groups, and individual children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Management</td>
<td>Observes behavior, plans and implements behavior management and management activities.</td>
<td>Observes behavior, carries out behavior strategies for entire class and for individual children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Parents</td>
<td>Meets with parents and initiates conferences concerning child’s progress and IEP.</td>
<td>Participates in parent conferences when appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a Classroom</td>
<td>Arranges schedule for conferences, shares goals and philosophy with the paraprofessional, organizes job duties for the paraprofessional.</td>
<td>Shares ideas and concerns during conferences and carries out duties as directed by a teacher.</td>
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Confidentiality and Its Application
Confidentiality is the most critical and important aspect of the paraprofessional's job. It is a legal responsibility to observe both the rights of students with disabilities and parents in regard to data privacy. Like teachers and administrators, paraprofessionals have access to personal information about children and their families including these examples:

• The results of formal and informal tests;
• Behavior in classrooms and other education settings;
• Academic progress;
• Family circumstances and family relationships;

Both the children and the family have the absolute right to expect that all information will be kept confidential, and made available only to personnel in school or another agency who require it to ensure that the rights, health, safety, and physical well being of the children are safe guarded. Confidentiality must be maintained and protected, and the rights of students to due process, dignity, privacy, and respect must be promoted.

Always ask yourself:
• What information would you want discussed with others regarding your child?
• What would you like said about yourself as a parent?
• What would you like said about your family, your values, your lifestyle?

Confidentiality Pointers
• Avoid using names if you are asked about your job.
• Suggest that questions about a student are best directed to the special education teacher.
• Do not share other student's names or information regarding their programs with parents during IEP meetings, conferences or informal conversations.
• Information regarding specific students and programs should not be shared in the lunchroom, staff room, office areas, out in the community or any other setting.
• When talking about a student or family, be aware of those around you who may be within hearing distance. Look for a more private place within the school building.
• When writing about a student or writing information regarding a student or family that contains confidential information, be aware of those around you who may be able to see the written material. Look for a more private place within the school building.
• No matter who asks you a question about a student, if you are unsure whether you should answer, DON'T. You can do this gently and politely. Remember only staff that has a need to know should be given information about a student.
• For consistency of program as well as confidentiality, paraprofessionals must support teacher techniques, materials and methods, especially in the presence of students, parents and other staff. Questions should be directed to the specific teacher privately.
Why Must Confidentiality Be Maintained?
Federal laws, state laws, and local policies require it.

Who May Access Written or Oral Information About Children and Youth or Their Families?
Only personnel who are responsible for the design, preparation, and delivery of education and related services (i.e. supervising teacher, speech therapist, school nurse). The personnel responsible for protecting the safety and welfare of a child or youth also may access such information. Paraprofessionals may be included in this group if closely supervised.

Who Should Not Have Access to Information About the Performance Level, Behavior, Program Goals, and Objectives or Progress of a Child or Youth?
Teachers, therapists, or other school personnel and staff who are not responsible for planning or providing services to children, youth, or their families. In short, anyone who is not included on the child’s IEP does not have access to such information.

What Information Do Children/Youth and Their Families Have the Right to Expect Will Be Kept Confidential?
The results of formal and informal assessments; social and behavioral actions; performance levels and progress; program goals and objectives; all information about family relationships, financial status and other personal matters.
Chapter 2
Characteristics of Learners

Paraprofessionals will need to understand the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social characteristics that are generally associated with children identified as in need of special education services. Children may exhibit one or more characteristics to varying degrees. The following are the definitions and descriptions of the state of Missouri eligibility criteria for special education services.

**Autism**
A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal or nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

The term does not apply if a child’s educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disability as defined in this document. A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age 3 can be diagnosed as having autism if the criteria above are satisfied.

**Deaf/Blindness**
Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

**Emotional Disturbance**
A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or social problems. The term includes schizophrenia, but does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined they have an emotional disturbance.

**Hearing Impairment and Deafness**
“Hearing impairment” means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance, but is not included in the following definition for deafness.
“Deafness” means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, adversely affecting a child’s educational performance.

**Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disability**
Significantly sub average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

**Multiple Disabilities**
Concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that the child cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf/blindness.

**Orthopedic Impairment**
A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., club foot, absence of some member, etc.) impairments caused by disease (poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.) and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations and fractures, or burns that cause contractures).

**Other Health Impairment**
Having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems, such as asthma, attention deficit disorder, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia; and adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

**Specific Learning Disability**
A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**Speech or Language Impairment**
A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**
An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child’s
educational performance. The term includes open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychological behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Visual Impairments/Blindness
Visual impairment, including blindness, means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Young Child with a Developmental Delay
A child aged 3 through 5 who is experiencing developmental delays, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and who needs special education and related services.

A special note about ADD/ADHD
ADD (attention deficit disorder) and ADHD (attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder) are not listed as separate disability categories in the IDEA Amendments of 1997; a child with such a diagnosis is not automatically eligible for special education services. Some children who have significant learning problems because of ADD or ADHD may meet the definition of Other Health Impaired described on a previous page or the criteria for one of the other disabilities. An evaluation, as required under IDEA, would be necessary to determine your child’s specific disability.

Children with ADD or ADHD who do not meet the eligibility criteria of any of the disabilities in IDEA may be entitled to the services and legal protections described in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 also requires a multidisciplinary evaluation and the provision of a free appropriate public education. If your child has ADD or ADHD and it is interfering with your child’s ability to learn, the school district is required by Section 504 to provide an appropriate education. An appropriate education in this case means modifying the regular education program and furnishing any necessary services as outlined in your child’s 504 or Accommodation plan. These services might include reducing the amount of required work, completing fewer assignments in a shorter period of time, providing more visual instruction, or developing a behavior management program.

For more information about Section 504, contact the Office for Civil Rights, or the U.S. Department of Education.
Chapter 3  
Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment is the process of collecting and interpreting information relating to a child with a disability for the purpose of determining the child's present skills to form a base on which new learning experiences can be planned. Before a child can receive special education services a thorough evaluation is carried out. Depending on the areas of concern, it would include a comprehensive look at the child's physical, cognitive, academic, social, emotional and language development. Generally teachers and other professional staff members are responsible for conducting the assessment activities. Often, however, paraprofessionals are asked to help identify the child's functional capabilities or provide specific observations regarding the child.

Based on the evaluation data the team, made up of professionals and the parents, determine if the child meets criteria in one or more of the disability areas identified by the state of Missouri. After a child is placed in special education, a re-evaluation is conducted at least every three years to determine the student's present level of performance and if special education continues to be needed.

Paraprofessionals are often asked to provide data regarding a student they work with during the evaluation as a means of documenting progress and determining areas of need. This documentation may be in the form of anecdotal reports, checklists or formal and informal observations.

Observing and Keeping Good Data
Acquiring and using objective skills of observation and keeping data are important to all paraprofessionals. Much of the information needed by the team to determine whether or not children are gaining new skills is acquired by careful observation and good record keeping. In addition, observation will keep the team posted on whether or not the individuals are learning and using the functional skills necessary to let them achieve the objectives and long-term goals that are outlined in the IEP.

The written information as to what has been observed is called "data". It serves as a more permanent record of what is seen or heard and, when done well, is an objective account of the individual's activities and skills. It is important to keep written data on all the observation activities. If this is not done, there is a risk of reporting inaccurately what has happened.

Carrying out observations and keeping data must be done with an objective point of view. Sometimes, we may be tempted to let our biases or prejudices get in the way. We may like one student better than another and tend to look more favorably on his/her activities. It is very important to guard against these inclinations and to put down precisely what is seen or heard and to avoid anything that is stigmatized by personal perceptions of a child or a specific behavior.

Observation Is
Systematically watching what a person does and says and recording the behaviors in order to make instructional decisions. Observation should:
• Be done for a specific reason;
• Provide samples of a child's/student's behavior over a period of time, in a variety of settings; and
• Be objective.

**Objective Observation Means**
- Watching events without being affected by personal biases/prejudices;
- Watching what is happening without guessing at the reasons that cause the action;
- Watching the activity without judging whether it is good or bad, and
- Producing an objective record that states exactly what an observer sees and hears.

Through observation, we can learn what the child can do, what the child likes or dislikes, how the child behaves under various circumstances and how the child interacts with people.

**Observing Objectively**
There are two points to remember when making observations:
- A behavior must be **observable** and
- A behavior must be **measurable**.

In other words we must be able to see or hear a behavior and we must be able to count or time how often a behavior occurs.

**Keeping Data**
There are several ways to keep data. They include:

**Checklists**—These may be in the form of standardized checklists that include specific skills and behaviors based on developmental levels, or a list of behaviors compiled by the teacher. When paraprofessionals work with a checklist, they simply watch the child and record whether or not the behavior described is observed.

**Anecdotal Records**—These usually consist of a sentence or two written in a notebook that describe what the child is doing at a specific moment. When making an anecdotal record, only behaviors that can be **seen or heard** and behaviors that **can be counted** should be recorded.

**Interviewing**—This is a specific kind of record keeping, one in which the team is trying to determine what the child likes or dislikes, what the child's interests are, or other feelings or beliefs that cannot be observed. When interviewing, it is extremely important to record precisely what the child says. There is no room for editorializing in this kind of record.

**Frequency or Duration Notes**—Sometimes the information that is to be collected refers to how often or how long a behavior is occurring. For example, the team may want to know how many times a child talked to or communicated with playmates or how often a child initiated a conversation with peers. For this kind of record keeping, paraprofessionals will count the frequency of the behavior occurring, to observe how long or frequent behaviors are.
Chapter 4
Instructional Content and Practice

Motivating Students
Students who are motivated cause fewer discipline problems because they care about what they are learning. When students are actively learning content that has personal meaning for them, they have neither the time nor the energy to create discipline problems. Conversely, when students feel that they are not actively involved, they become bored, turned off, and find satisfaction in acting out.

Characteristics of a classroom with a motivational environment include the following:
- Trust is established and fear is minimized.
- Students understand the benefits of learning and understand that changing behavior is part of learning.
- Students are aware of different learning options and are able to make choices that are real, meaningful, and significant.
- Students are actively engaged in learning.
- Learning is relevant and meaningful and is related to real-life.
- Feelings and thoughts are incorporated for learning to have personal and lasting usefulness.

Researchers have examined motivation from the perspective of a student’s self-concept, a student’s motivation to achieve, and a student’s perceived ability to control his learning. Strategies for increasing motivation based on these three aspects include the following:
- Increase student response. Ask more open-ended questions.
- Ensure that all students are called on equally as often, regardless of perceived capability.
- Encourage students to persist with difficult problems and to finish projects.
- Foster excitement about new ideas.
- Offer more in-depth projects, activities, or independent studies.
- Incorporate student self-assessment in the grading system.
- Involve students in directing their own learning.
- Exhibit high expectations for all students.
- Increase students’ readiness to learn.
- Increase involvement and interest.
- Cooperative assignments increase motivation.
- Audiences are great motivators. Invite the principal, parents, or other classes to activities.
- Integrate all domains of learning; engage the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in many tasks.
- Stress accomplishments rather than winning.

How students feel about themselves often gives them the determination and strength to pursue learning and pursue challenging tasks. Teachers and paraprofessionals can help instill the will to want to learn with just a few words of encouragement. Of course there will always be students
who are seemingly “un-motivate-able”. In these cases, perseverance in motivation tactics can greatly improve the chances of success with such students.

This is a simple assessment of student motivation by teachers/paraprofessionals. Discuss your results with your supervising teacher if you have concerns.

Do you listen to your students? Yes No
Do you give students permission to express their feelings? Yes No
Do you take your students seriously? Yes No
Do you allow your students to make choices, even if bad choices? Yes No
Do you compliment your students when they do a good job? Yes No
Do your students feel that you have high expectations for their learning? Yes No
Do you tell your students that you care about them? Yes No
Do you find yourself comparing students with other students? Yes No
Do you put your students down? Yes No
Do you criticize students harshly when they misbehave? Yes No

Notice that in questions one through seven, a response of “yes” is most desired, and in questions eight through ten, a response of “no” is most desired.

**Classroom Accommodations**

**Modifying Classroom Materials**

Children with disabilities assigned to a regular classroom should have every opportunity to participate in all activities that are appropriate. A goal of adaptation is to provide all students with the opportunity to participate to the maximum extent possible in the typical activities of the classroom. Ensuring that children with disabilities are active learners, in contrast to passive observers or parallel learners (with a whole different educational experience) is a primary concern.

To insure continuity, it works well for students to receive group instruction in the regular classroom whenever possible rather than experiencing the disruption of leaving the classroom for another location. The special education teacher needs to consider what students can do independently, what they can do with adapted or modified curriculum, what they could do with peer assistance, and what they can do with paraprofessional assistance inside the regular classroom setting. At times, due to a student’s distractibility, functional academic skills, social skills, and/or frustration level, students may need to have special services delivered outside of the regular classroom.

A paraprofessional may be assigned to modify or adapt curriculum inside the regular classroom to assure success for children with disabilities and is one way of providing a least restrictive environment. This is a good opportunity for paraprofessionals to be creative. Modifying curriculum to help students find success is challenging, but the rewards are exciting. Ideas for curriculum modification can come from the classroom teacher, special education teacher, school psychologist and other consultants. Adaptations are most effective when they are simple, easy to develop and implement, and based on typical assignments and activities.
Questions about Adapting Curriculum and Instruction

Q: Are adaptations just for students with identified disabilities?
   A: Adaptations are necessary and appropriate for any student who is not experiencing success, regardless of whether that student has a disability. Research and educational values tell us that all children can learn what is important to them to learn, and that the teacher's role is to assist all students to succeed.

Q: What areas of the curriculum or aspects of instruction can be adapted?
   A: The three areas that teachers typically adapt are curriculum materials (e.g., textbook assignments, workbook or worksheet pages, and tests), instruction (e.g., grouping strategies, learning centers, audio visuals, and cooperative learning), and classroom organization and behavior management (e.g., daily schedule and routines, classroom rules, seating arrangements, and individualized behavior plans). When planning adaptations, consider all possible areas and, if necessary, adapt in more than one area at a time.

Q: How intrusive should adaptations be?
   A: As adaptations are generated, a continuum of intrusiveness will become apparent. Some adaptations will closely resemble the activities of classmates, while others will be less similar and require alternate materials, supports, or types of instruction. To create "least intrusive curriculum and instruction", it is often beneficial to begin with less intrusive adaptations and work up as necessary. In addition, when adaptations are necessary, it is important to minimize rather than highlight student differences. For example a communication notebook that hangs around a student's neck will be stigmatizing. By contrast, a small billfold-sized notebook will meet the same goal without calling unnecessary attention to the differences between students. Progress monitoring is also important so that adaptations can be made less intrusive as students gain skills and competencies.

Q: Won't adapting curriculum and instruction create lowered expectations and watered down curriculum for all?
   A: There is no evidence that students in classrooms where adaptations regularly occur score differently than their peers on achievement or other benchmark tests. In contrast, many teachers observe higher levels of mastery for nondisabled students when adaptations are common practice. Since adaptations are made for students at the high end of the achievement continuum as well as the lower end, there is no need to make significant adjustments in the typical pace of instruction for the majority of students. As teachers make adaptations, they evaluate each student's abilities and determine the minimal amount of adaptation needed in order for that student to succeed. In many cases this means increased rather than lowered expectations.

Q: Is it really fair and equitable to adapt for individual students? Won't students resent their classmates who have adaptations made for them?
   A: Though a common concern for many teachers, the problem of fairness appears to be more of an issue for adults than for students. In a recent interview in an elementary school where adaptation is the norm, a group of nondisabled students were asked if they felt it was fair for classmates to receive adapted assignments and tests. Overall students
responded that it was fair because everyone is different. Student comments include: "It's okay because they're getting better," "Shorter assignments don't bother me because they need more help than I do," and "It makes me feel good that the teacher helps them." Making adaptations available to any student who needs them, and creating a classroom climate of acceptance, often minimizes the problem.

Types of Adaptations
1. **Size**-Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or complete.
2. **Time**-Adapt the time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing.
3. **Level of Support**-Increase the amount of personal assistance with a specific learner (e.g., assign peer buddies, paraprofessionals, peer tutors, or cross-age tutors).
4. **Input**-Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner (e.g., Use different visual aids, plan more concrete examples, provide hands-on activities, place students in cooperative groups).
5. **Difficulty**-Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work (e.g., Allow the use of a calculator to figure math problems; simplify task directions; change rules to accommodate learner needs).
6. **Output**-Adapt how the student can respond to instruction (e.g., Instead of answering questions in writing, allow a verbal response, use a communication book, allow students to show knowledge with hands-on materials).
7. **Participation**-Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task (e.g., In geography, have a student hold the globe, while others point out locations).
8. **Alternate Goals**-Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same materials (e.g., In social studies, expect a student to be able to locate just the states while others learn to locate capitals as well).
9. **Substitute Curriculum**-Provide different instruction and materials to meet a student's individual goals (e.g., During a language test one student is learning computer skills in the computer lab).

Special Responsibilities
**Home-School Notebooks**
Home-school notebooks provide needed information to parents and teachers. Notebooks are generally kept for students who are very young or have limited verbal skills. This is a way for parents to know what activities their child participated in at school, and for teachers to know what kinds of activities occur at home. Notes can be used to record milestones, medical information and provide communication with therapists. Paraprofessionals can assist in recording a student’s daily activities in the notebook. Entries should be factual and based on a student’s strengths. Care should be given to assure that the information is written is not only positive or only negative, but rather a sensitive accounting of the key information necessary to share. Remember, both parents and school staff can easily misinterpret the written word. When miscommunication occurs, it is often difficult to regain the trust relationship that is so important when working with children with disabilities and their families.

*Paraprofessionals should never send out notes, notebooks, letters, or any other kind of communication, verbal or written, unless they have first reviewed the information with their supervision teacher.*
Chapter 5
Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment

Classroom Management
Although paraprofessionals are not required to maintain a classroom independently, there are times when the paraprofessional must conduct a well-managed classroom or educational session in order to accomplish the tasks prescribed by the supervising teacher.

Classroom management involves the following factors which, when put into practice by educators, are most influential in maintaining discipline and motivation for students. To be an effective classroom manager, one must have in practice each of the following:

- Establish the rules and procedures of the classroom early in the year and communicate them explicitly.
- Continually monitor compliance with the rules.
- Use detailed and consistent accountability systems, keep track of student assignments, and describe the evaluation system clearly.
- Communicate information, directions, and objectives clearly.
- Organize instruction efficiently, waste little time getting prepared or making transitions, keep the momentum in lessons, and maximize student engagement.
- Seem to “have eyes in the back of your head”.
- Understand classroom context and events and use this information to develop activities that maintain the instructional flow with minimal interruptions.

Seizures
During a seizure the most important rule of first aid is to protect the individual. If the student is having a grand mal seizure whereby the student falls to the floor, the head should be cradled or something soft placed under the head. Convulsive seizures must run their course; a bystander can do nothing to prevent or stop a seizure. While the seizure may look scary, the assisting person should remember to stay calm. Gently talking to and reassuring the student who is having a seizure can be beneficial to everyone involved.

Objects should not be put into a person’s mouth during a seizure or the person’s movements restrained. It is important to remove all sharp or dangerous objects from the immediate area so that the person does not become injured. If possible turn the individual on his side and time the seizure. If a seizure lasts longer than five minutes, the parent should be notified as medical attention may be needed. For some children who are seizure prone, the school may have developed a health plan that outlines the steps to be taken in an emergency. It is important to be familiar with this plan ahead of time.

There may be incontinence during a seizure. It is critical to handle this situation in a sensitive manner and to protect the student from the view of others should this occur.
Child Abuse and Neglect

Children who are experiencing abuse or neglect need help from the people in their community. Providing a safe community for children takes determination and commitment on the part of everyone. As a paraprofessional who works with children and families, you are in a key position to help protect children from harm. In Missouri as a mandated reporter, you have a legal obligation to make a report if you know or have reason to believe a child is being neglected or abused. You are personally responsible and cannot shift the responsibility to your supervising teacher or to other persons such as the principal in your building. Paraprofessionals who suspect neglect or abuse should report immediately to their supervising teacher. The teacher will receive the report and take action from there. The paraprofessional should take no further action unless asked to do so.

Anyone who reports child abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability. The reporter’s name is confidential, accessible only upon consent of the reporter or by court order. Anyone who is required to report and fails to do so is guilty of a misdemeanor. If you are uncertain whether or not a situation should be reported, you may call your local social service agency. The child protection staff there will help you decide if a report should be made based on the information you have.

The following points may be helpful in identifying children in need of protection, and are based on materials developed by school personnel. While no one indicator is proof that a child is being neglected or abused, these are some signs to be aware of.

Abused or neglected children may:

- seem unduly afraid of their parents;
- often have welts, bruises, untreated sores, or other injuries;
- show evidence of poor overall care;
- be given inappropriate food, drink, or medication;
- exhibit behavioral extreme. For example: crying often or crying very little and showing no real expectation of being comforted; being excessively fearful, or seeming fearless of adult authority; being unusually aggressive and destructive, or extremely passive and withdrawn.
- be wary of physical contact, especially when an adult initiates it, or become apprehensive when an adult approaches another child, particularly one who is crying. Others are inappropriately hungry for affection, yet may have difficulty relating to children and adults. Based on their past experiences, these children cannot risk getting too close to others.
- exhibit a sudden change in behavior. For example: displaying regressive behavior—pants wetting, thumb sucking, frequent whining, becoming disruptive or becoming uncommonly shy and passive.
- take over the role of parent, being protective or otherwise attempting to take care of the parent’s or younger sibling’s needs.
- have learning problems that cannot be diagnosed. If a child’s IQ and medical tests indicate no abnormalities, but the child still cannot meet normal expectations, the
answer may well be problems in the home; one of which might be abuse or neglect. Particular attention should be given to the child whose attention wanders and who easily becomes self-absorbed.

- be habitually truant or late to school. Frequent or prolonged absences sometimes result when a parent keeps an injured child at home until the evidence of abuse disappears, or when an older child is kept home to care for younger siblings. In other cases truancy may indicate a lack of parental concern or ability to regulate the child’s schedule.
- arrive at school too early and remain after classes rather than going home.
- be tired frequently and sleep often in class.
- be inappropriately dressed for the weather. Children who never have coats or shoes in cold weather are receiving less than minimal care. On the other hand, those who regularly wear long sleeves or high necklines on hot days may be dressed to hide bruises, burns or other marks of abuse.
Chapter 6
Facilitating Positive Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills

Paraprofessionals will want to observe a child’s emotional, social, and behavioral skills to:

- assist in developing their peer and adult relationships;
- to reinforce a positive self-concept in the student;
- to encourage understanding of the student’s own and other’s feelings and perspectives;
- to demonstrate and reinforce on task behavior;
- to encourage problem solving and planning for pro-social behaviors, and
- to watch for things that promote or interfere with the students learning.

Children are most likely to succeed if they feel good about themselves and their abilities. How a person feels on the inside is how he will act on the outside. A student with high self-esteem is going to demonstrate motivation, self-confidence, security, eagerness to learn, happiness, cooperation, risk taking, friendliness, responsibility, independence, and creativeness. A child with low self-esteem is going to have difficulty making decisions, taking initiative, sharing, being kind to friends, building relationships, and demonstrating self-control.

Paraprofessionals will often work directly with students who have low self-esteem. Children with and without disabilities struggle with these issues of self-esteem; however, students with disabilities face greater frustration and failure when compared to peers. By building a trusting relationship in a positive and caring environment, the paraprofessional can assist the student in feeling secure. By building an awareness of the students unique qualities and assisting them to identify and express emotions and attitudes, the paraprofessional can help the student define a sense of who they are. Promoting group acceptance and support will increase the student’s skill at making friends. When the paraprofessional enhances the student’s ability to make decisions, seek alternatives and identify consequences, they increase the child's academic and behavioral performance.

Children with disabilities will be working to develop skills in all of the personal, social, and functional areas. Paraprofessionals are key in assisting children to develop independent functioning skills. It is important that teachers and paraprofessionals allow children to practice these skills daily. These are the skills that will help children function independently in school, home and the community. Paraprofessionals and teachers need to allow enough time for children to complete these activities with minimal assistance. Often, adults assist too quickly. After giving a child a direction to complete a task, it is important to leave enough wait-time to discover what the child already knows how to do. Only with practice can the child learn to complete these activities efficiently. The paraprofessional may need to assist a child in such personal care activities as eating, maintaining a proper diet, table manners, proper social skills, dressing, undressing, toileting, grooming and hygiene, reminding them to take medication, and/or monitor medical conditions.
Some students are included in the regular classroom for socialization purposes. Just as the typical developing child learns from observing and participating in activities with other typical developing children; so to do special need children. Research has shown that children with disabilities, who generally interact only with other children with disabilities, do not develop the appropriate social skills, which will allow them to become a contributing part of the community as adults. In addition to the benefits to the child with a disability, the typical child in the classroom learns lessons in acceptance of human differences, becomes more aware of others’ needs, and more comfortable with people who have disabilities.

The goal of the paraprofessional is to provide support to the child with a disability with the least intrusion. Paraprofessionals and regular classroom educators should treat a child with disabilities like a child who does not have special needs. A child will feel connected to peers and the classroom teacher if the paraprofessional attempts to be discreet in delivering assistance. Continually sitting beside or hovering over the child when support is not needed only serves to reinforce that the child is different and tends to discourage interaction with the student and peers. On the other hand, some students need total hand over hand guidance with activities. With the classroom teacher’s approval, the paraprofessional should be able to move about the room and help all students that need assistance.

Behavior Management

Behavior management is complex and unique to each individual. In each classroom environment, staff will manage behavior in a variety of ways. Paraprofessionals, in order to reinforce consistency, need to model the classroom management systems defined by each classroom teacher. When further intervention is necessary, the regular classroom teacher and special education teacher will plan appropriate interventions for the paraprofessionals to implement. It will be important for paraprofessionals to define their role with the teacher in each classroom setting.

There are a number of general management strategies that paraprofessionals will want to be familiar with no matter what setting they may be working in. The most regarding procedure to use is positive reinforcement.

- Praise is a positive interpretation of factual data. Praise is immediate, specific, deserved, and related to behavior. Paraprofessionals should praise appropriate behaviors by describing the appropriate behaviors they see students perform. Paraprofessionals and other staff ought to praise each other in front of students (modeling), tell students to praise themselves, and tell students to praise others.
- Positive reinforcement involves the presentation of a “reward” (smiles, stickers, points, etc..) following a student performing a particular targeted behavior. The reward is designed to increase the frequency of the desired response and works particularly well with elementary students. If the reinforcement is to be effective, the student must get the reinforcers only after performing the target behavior. A reinforcer should be delivered immediately after the target behavior is performed.
- Concept reframing is a technique in which staff attempts to increase a student’s awareness of certain strengths and capabilities. A teacher/paraprofessional will
recognize the strength each time a student demonstrates it and then will describe it to the student (i.e. You are so good at remembering to put away your books). This feedback is delivered on an individual basis, not in front of the group.

- Modeling is used by a teacher/paraprofessional to increase appropriate behaviors. Modeling is a process in which appropriate behavior of a peer is reinforced who is in the proximity of a student behaving inappropriately.

- Extinction is used to decrease behavior. Extinction is the removal of all reinforcement. This is commonly known as “ignoring”. Extinction may be used if a student is not harming himself, another student, or damaging property.

- Over-correction is also used to decrease behavior. This is used to teach students to take responsibility for their behavior and teach them the appropriate response. Over-correction is based on exaggerated experiences.

- Restitutional over-correction is when a student must restore an environment to its original condition. The student must make improvements beyond the original condition (i.e. pick up the books thrown on the floor plus the pieces of paper that were already on the floor).

- Positive-practice over-correction involves engaging the student in the exaggerated experience of an appropriate behavior. At the same time the staff person recites the rules for doing the behavior the “right way” (i.e. walking in the hallway).

- Contingent observation time-out is a process used to remove a student from all reinforcement for a brief period of time following misbehavior. During the time-out, a student is not given verbal prompts or eye contact. The child is told to watch or think about the appropriate behavior. While in time-out, students observe ongoing classroom activities and when appropriate, are followed up immediately by being requested to re-join the group. The student verbalizes what he needs to be doing in order to re-join the ongoing activity. It is important when entering or exiting a time-out that a paraprofessional focuses the student on the appropriate behavior only. After a time-out a staff person will backward chain the events leading to the time-out. Therefore, any work missed, over-correction or any positive practice procedure that may be required is completed in the appropriate order before a student rejoins the group.

- Re-direction is a very effective behavioral technique. There are a variety of ways to positively re-direct behavior in order to avoid using an aversive procedure. Many times a paraprofessional can ignore what a student does or says and can simply change the subject. A child can be distracted by a positive statement, an unrelated question, or by giving an unrelated direction. Another way for a paraprofessional to re-direct behavior is by replacing the behavior (i.e. a child may not be allowed to throw rocks but he can throw a ball). Paraprofessionals can also give behavior an appropriate time and place (i.e. a student may not yell loudly in the classroom, but can yell outside at recess). Often, giving a student a time and place for a certain type of behavior helps to eliminate it at inappropriate times. In order to not reinforce the behavior, the paraprofessional must under-react to the student’s inappropriate behaviors and use a sense of humor when dealing with a difficult situation.
The key to making these behavior management strategies successful is to build good relationships with students. Good relationships are developed through consistency, caring, cooperation, and trust. Students need to feel they can trust paraprofessionals. Trust is built by consistent behavior. A student needs to see the paraprofessional doing what she says in a consistent fashion. If the paraprofessional nags students with warnings, they will not get consistent compliance. Paraprofessionals need to verify with the teacher the types of privileges they can remove or withhold. It is essential to have both the authority and means of implementing the consequences you choose because the students must see that you will do what you say. Remember for consistency, whoever gives the directive that is not complied with should carry out the correction procedure.
Chapter 7
Communication and Collaborative Partnerships

Teaming/Collaborations
Effective teaming is critical to the success of the delivery of services by both certified teachers and paraprofessionals. Effective teaming requires that team members share a common vision for achieving their mutual goal-delivering educational services to meet the need of all children. The beliefs they have about curriculum and instructional practice support this vision. If one member of the team's beliefs are consistent with an education model supporting conventional instruction and the other member of the team's beliefs are consistent with an educational model supporting reform instruction, it is going to be difficult for the team to work together.

Communication serves as the foundation for teaming. It involves the exchange of information between parties, and should help both parties assist the child in learning. Effective communicators reach out beyond themselves to the people with whom they are working. Good communication is "other-focused," not "self-centered". Much of the failure to communicate can be blamed on failure to understand and respect people's feelings, and unwillingness to cooperate, or a needless show of authority.

How You Act In Conflicts
The proverbs listed below can be thought of as descriptions of some of the different strategies for resolving conflicts. Proverbs state traditional wisdom, and these proverbs reflect traditional wisdom for resolving conflicts. Read each of the proverbs carefully. Using the following scale, indicate how typical each proverb is of your actions in a conflict.

5 = very typical of the way I act in a conflict
4 = frequently typical of the way I act in a conflict
3 = sometimes typical of the way I act in a conflict
2 = seldom typical of the way I act in a conflict
1 = never typical of the way I act in a conflict.

___ 1. It is easier to refrain than to retreat from a quarrel.
___ 2. If you cannot make a person think as you do, make him or her do as you think.
___ 4. You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.
___ 5. Come now and let us reason together.
___ 6. When two quarrel, the person who keeps silent first is the most praiseworthy.
___ 7. Might overcomes right.
___ 8. Smooth words make smooth ways.
___ 9. Better half a loaf than no bread at all.
___ 10. Truth lies in knowledge, not in majority opinion.
___ 11. He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day.
___ 12. He hath conquered well that hath made his enemies flee.
___ 13. Kill your enemies with kindness.
15. No person has the final answer but every person has a piece to contribute.
16. Stay away from people who disagree with you.
17. Fields are won by those who believe in winning.
18. Kind words are worth much and cost little.
19. Tit for tat is fair play.
20. Only the person who is willing to give up her or his monopoly on truth can ever profit from the truths that others hold.
21. Avoid quarrelsome people, as they will only make your life miserable.
22. A person who will not flee will make others flee.
23. Soft words ensure harmony.
24. One gift for another makes good friends.
25. Bring your conflicts into the open and face them directly; only then will the best solution be discovered.
26. The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them.
27. Put your foot down where you mean to stand.
28. Gentleness will triumph over anger.
29. Getting part of what you want is better than not getting anything at all.
30. Frankness, honesty, and trust will move mountains.
31. There is nothing so important you have to fight for it.
32. There are two kinds of people in the world, the winners and the losers.
33. When one hits you with a stone, hit her or him with a piece of cotton.
34. When both give in halfway, a fair settlement is achieved.
35. By digging and digging, the truth is discovered.

### Scoring

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<th>Smoothing</th>
<th>Compromising</th>
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The higher the total score for each conflict strategy, the more frequently you tend to use that strategy. The lower the total score for each conflict strategy, the less frequently you tend to use that strategy.
Managing Conflict Model

COMPETITION
(shark)
Advantages
• Useful when quick action is required
• Protects against those who take advantage of non-competitive behavior
Disadvantages
• Stops exploration of new approaches
• One’s goals may be achieved at the expense of others
• Win/lose
• Little Commitment
• Temporary solution

COLLABORATION
(owl, fox)
Advantages
• Mutual exploration of new approaches
• Mutual resolution
• Gains commitment
• Win/win
• Permanent solution
Disadvantages
• Can be time consuming
• Requires participation from others.

AVOIDANCE
(turtle)
Advantages
• Useful when risk outweighs gains
• Postpones tension
• Useful when others can solve the problem more effectively
• Useful to postpone action until more information surfaces
Disadvantages
• Restricts input
• Temporary solution

ACCOMMODATION
(teddy bear)
Advantages
• Useful to preserve harmony
• Avoids disruption
• Prevents competition
• Useful when issues are not important to you
Disadvantages
• Sacrifices your own point of view
• Limits creative resolution
• Win/lose

COMPROMISING

Non-Supportive
Dominant
Submissive
Conflict Strategies: What are you like?
Different people use different strategies for managing conflicts. These strategies are learned, usually in childhood, and they seem to function automatically. Usually we are not aware of how we act in conflict situations. We just do whatever seems to come naturally. But we do have a personal strategy; and because it was learned, we can always change it by learning new and more effective ways of managing conflicts.

When you become engaged in a conflict, there are two major concerns you have to take into account:

1. Achieving your personal goals – you are in conflict because you have a goal that conflicts with another person’s goal. Your goal may be highly important to you, or it may be of little importance.
2. Keeping a good relationship with the other person – you may need to be able to interact effectively with the other person in the future. The relationship may be very important to you, or it may be of little importance.

How important your personal goals are to you and how important the relationship is to you affect how you act in a conflict. Given these two concerns, it is possible to identify five styles of managing conflicts:

**The turtle (withdrawing):** Turtles withdraw into their shells to avoid conflicts. They give up on their personal goals and relationships. They stay away from the issues over which the conflict is taking place and from the persons they are in conflict with. Turtles believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflicts. They feel helpless. They believe it is easier to withdraw (physically and psychologically) from a conflict than to face it.

**The shark (forcing):** Sharks try to overpower opponent by forcing them to accept their solution to the conflict. Their goals are highly important to them, and relationships are of minor importance. They seek to achieve their goals at all costs. They are not concerned with the needs of others. They do not care if others like or accept them. Sharks assume that conflicts are settled by one person winning and one person losing. They want to be the winner. Winning gives sharks a sense of pride and achievement. Losing gives time a sense of weakness, inadequacy, and failure. They try to win by attacking, overpowering, overwhelming, and intimidating others.

**The teddy bear (smoothing):** To teddy bears the relationship is of great importance while their own goals are of little importance. Teddy bears want to be accepted and liked by others. They think that conflict should be avoided in favor of harmony and that people cannot discuss conflicts without damaging relationships. They are afraid that if the conflict continues, someone will get hurt, and that would ruin the relationship. They give up their goals to preserve the relationship. Teddy bears say “I’ll give up my goals and let you have what you want, in order for you to like me”. Teddy bears try to smooth over the conflict out of fear of harming the relationship.

**The fox (compromising):** Foxes are moderately concerned with their own goals and their relationships with others. Foxes seek a compromise: they give up part of their goals and
persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of her/his goals. They seek a conflict solution in which both sides gain something – the middle ground between two extreme positions. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals and relationships in order to find agreement for the common good.

**The owl (confronting):** Owls highly value their own goals and relationships. They view conflicts as problems to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their own goals and the goals of the other person. Owls see conflicts as a means of improving relationships by reducing the tension between two persons. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the conflict as a problem. By seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person, owls maintain the relationship. Owls are not satisfied until a solution is found that achieves their own goals and the other person’s goals. And they are not satisfied until the tensions and negative feelings have been fully resolved.
Chapter 8
Professionalism and Ethical Practices

Professional Ethics
The paraprofessional is involved in the educational process with students and many of their expectations are similar to that of a classroom teacher. However, a paraprofessional is in a professional position that requires the following ethical guidelines.

Accepting Responsibilities:
- Engage only in instructional and other activities for which you are qualified or trained.
- Do not communicate progress or concerns about students to parents, community members or other teachers; this is reserved only for communication with your supervising teacher.
- Refer concerns expressed by parents, students, or others to your supervising teacher.
- Recognize the supervisor has the ultimate responsibility for instruction and management and follow the prescribed directions.
- Help to see the best interests of individual students are met.
- Be a positive role model.

Relationships with Students and Parents:
- Discuss a child’s progress, limitations, and/or educational program ONLY with the supervising teacher in an appropriate setting (i.e. do not discuss students in the teacher workroom with other teachers during lunch time).
- Express differences of opinion with your supervising teacher ONLY when students are absent from the room.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel.
- Do not engage in discriminatory practices based on a student’s race, sex, cultural background, religion, or disability.
- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents, and staff members.

Relationship with the Teacher:
- Recognize the teacher as your supervisor.
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher.
- When problems cannot be resolved, use the school district’s grievance procedures (a copy of which can be found in the district office).
- Discuss concerns about the teacher or teaching methods directly with the teacher in an appropriate setting.

Relationship with the School:
- Engage in behavior management strategies that are consistent with standards of the district.
- Accept responsibility for improving your skills.
- Know and follow school policies and procedures.
- Represent the school in a positive manner.