



Utah State  
Board of  
Education

Special  
Education  
Services

# PARAEDUCATOR MANUAL

A UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE DOCUMENT

**Sydnee Dickson**

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**Leah Voorhies**

Assistant Superintendent of Student Support

ADA Compliant: 1/26/2023

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- Tanya Semerad, Autism/Significant Cognitive Disabilities Specialist
- Trish French, K-6 and Gifted and Talented Specialist
- Val Murdock, Title I Monitoring and Support Specialist

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- Christina Guevara, Spectrum Academy, Academic Director – North
- Liz Banner, Spectrum Academy, Principal
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## FOREWORD

The Utah State Board of Education is pleased to provide this manual to paraeducators and educators as a training and supervision resource for collaboration to support students. This manual is the result of efforts from a Utah State Board of Education workgroup, which included representatives from general and special education classrooms as well as school and district administrators from rural and urban school districts and charter schools (local education agencies [LEAs]). This manual offers guidance, resources, and appropriate support for training and supervising paraeducators. It is also a communication tool for educators to work together. We hope both supervising educators and paraeducators will use the ideas and techniques in the manual as a team. The manual is not an exhaustive resource, and LEAs are responsible for training and supervision as appropriate.

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the manual is to explain and clarify the roles and responsibilities of a paraeducator and the supervising educator.

The term **paraprofessional** is used for an individual who performs a non-instructional or instructional supporting role in various educational settings. A paraprofessional may give support in a non-instructional role, such as providing parental or guardian involvement activities or in a setting such as a playground or a lunchroom ([see Fig. 1 below](#)).

A **paraeducator** is a paraprofessional who provides instructional support under the direct supervision of a licensed educator or other licensed/certified professional ([Utah Code Ann. § 53F-2-411](#)).

Special education, Title I, and Title III include specific paraeducator requirements and funding. Qualifications, roles, and responsibilities of the paraeducator must meet these requirements.

A paraprofessional or a paraeducator may be referred to as a teaching assistant, aide, instructor, or other similar titles in school districts and charter schools (local education agencies [LEAs]). The term paraeducator is used throughout this manual to guide individuals who provide instructional support in educational settings under the direct supervision of a licensed educator or another licensed/certified professional.

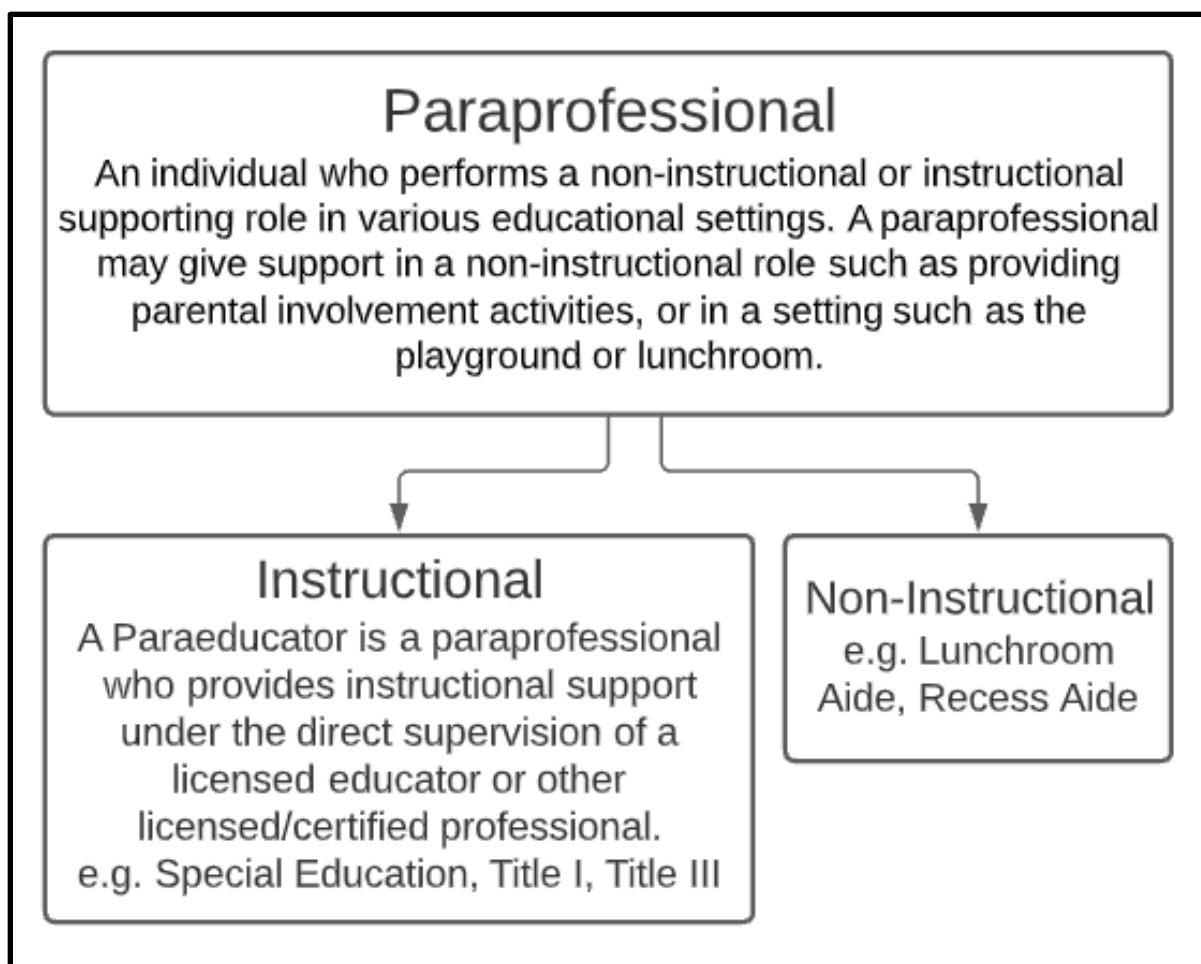


Figure 1: Paraprofessional Definition

## PARAEDUCATOR AND THE SUPERVISING EDUCATOR ROLES

A paraeducator may serve students on all grade levels from preschool to post-high school. According to [Board Rule R277-324](#)<sup>1</sup>, a paraeducator may be expected to do the following:

“(a) upon completion of explicit training from appropriately licensed teachers or related service providers, provide individual or small group instructional

<sup>1</sup> **N.B.:** Board Rules are part of the larger Utah Administrative Code and deal with section 277. These rules can be found in two places: the [USB E Administrative Rules webpage](#) or the [Utah Office Administrative Rules webpage](#). Therefore, Board Rule R277-324 refers to the same rule as Utah Admin. Code R277-324. Additionally, it should be noted that the Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules (SpEd Rules) are part of but distinguished from Board Rules. Though separate, these Rules are incorporated into Board Rule by reference ([see Board Rule R277-750](#)).



assistance or tutoring to students as designed by an appropriately licensed teacher or related service provider during times when students would not otherwise receive instruction from an appropriately licensed teacher or related service provider;

(b) assist with classroom organization and management, such as organizing instructional or other materials;

(c) provide assistance with supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and support, such as assistive technology devices and services;

(d) conduct parental involvement activities;

(e) provide support in library or media centers; or

(f) provide supervision for students in non-instructional settings.”

And, according to Board Rule R277-324, a paraeducator may not:

“(a) be responsible for selecting or administering formal diagnostic or psychological instruments or for interpreting the results of those instruments if the paraprofessional's training, licensure, or other forms of certification do not align with the administration and interpretation requirements stated in an instrument's technical manual;

(b) be responsible for selecting programming or prescribing educational activities or materials for the students without the supervision and guidance of an appropriately licensed teacher or related service provider;

(c) be solely responsible for designing lesson plans;

(d) be assigned to implement elements of an [Individualized Education Program (IEP)] IEP for a student with disabilities without direct training, supervision, and involvement from an appropriately licensed teacher or related service provider;

(e) employed to fulfill the responsibilities that may only be provided by an appropriately licensed and otherwise qualified teacher or related service provider; or

(f) perform nursing procedures or administer medications without appropriate supervision and training from an appropriately licensed health care professional.”

LEAs are responsible for assigning a licensed educator or another licensed/certified professional to supervise the paraeducator. The supervising educator prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraeducator will implement. The supervising educator also evaluates the students’ achievement with whom the paraeducator works. The paraeducator and supervising educator work together in close proximity. To supervise a paraeducator, the supervising educator should have specialized training in providing students with quality educational experiences linked to the [Utah Core Standards, Essential Elements, and Early Childhood Standards](#).

These standards provide a framework for quality instruction. They outline for the supervising educator and paraeducator the essential knowledge, concepts, and skills students should acquire in a given subject area and grade level. The supervising educator also designs and implements instruction based on these standards.

# UTAH STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PARAEDUCATORS

The content of this manual is based on the [Utah Standards for Instructional Paraeducators](#). These standards and corresponding knowledge and skill competencies provide approved performance expectations for the paraeducator. These performance expectations are designed to be used in any setting across all LEAs.

There are four standards that define the paraeducator's instructional priorities. These standards include:

1. Support instructional opportunities
2. Demonstrate professional and ethical practices
3. Support a positive learning environment
4. Communicate effectively and participate in the team process

The standards are divided into two sections:

- **Core Competencies**
  - These are the essential knowledge and skills required for effective performance as a paraeducator.
  - Core competencies are based on the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the 2016 Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules (USBE SER).
- **Supporting Competencies**
  - These are additional knowledge and skills needed by the paraeducator.
    - Some supporting competencies may only be required for specific roles.
  - LEAs may provide additional training to outline exact duties that utilize the supporting competencies.

The following sections outline the core and supporting competencies for each of these four standards.

# STANDARD 1: SUPPORT INSTRUCTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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A paraeducator supports instructional opportunities by collaborating with the supervising educator to increase student success and improve outcomes.

## *CORE COMPETENCIES OF STANDARD 1*

A paraeducator requires essential knowledge and skills to effectively assist and deliver instruction, implement interventions, collect data, and organize instructional materials.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

For Standard 1, this means that a paraeducator must:

- Have knowledge and proficiency in assigned instructional areas
- Have knowledge of strategies, techniques, and delivery methods of instruction

#### KNOWLEDGE AND PROFICIENCY IN ASSIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL AREAS

---

When a paraeducator has knowledge and proficiency in assigned instructional areas, this means that they may assist in teaching reading, mathematics, writing, and other subject areas. The supervising educator will regularly provide direction to the paraeducator regarding the content that will be taught to students. To acquire knowledge and proficiency in subject areas, paraeducators may participate in additional training.

Such training may be available through the LEA and/or the Utah State Board of Education (USB E) and can be leveraged by paraeducators to increase knowledge and skills related to a specific content area.

For Title I-specific/Highly Qualified requirements, [see Appendix A](#).

#### KNOWLEDGE OF STRATEGIES, TECHNIQUES, AND DELIVERY METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

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To effectively transfer knowledge and information to students, a paraeducator must have a basic knowledge of instructional strategies and the skills to implement them. A paraeducator implements instructional strategies as directed by the

supervising educator. Instructional strategies may include direct instruction, explicit instruction, and center-based instruction. These strategies involve implementing some of the following techniques outlined below:

- **Direct Instruction**
  - Provides teacher-directed instruction
  - Focuses on mastery teaching and immediate error correction
  - Maintains a highly structured environment
  - Determines learning goals for students
- **Explicit Instruction**
  - Focuses on how students learn
  - Provides prompts and models
  - Highlights concepts through multiple methods (manipulatives, models, graphic organizers)
  - Implements interactive supports (pairing with partners, small groups, cooperative learning structures)
  - Designs language experiences to build students' background knowledge and vocabulary
  - Requires students to engage in goal setting and self-evaluation
- **Center-Based Instruction**
  - Differentiates instruction to meet student's individual needs
  - Offers a range of activities and learning opportunities
  - Targets student readiness levels, interests, or learning profiles
  - Provides flexible groupings (small group, partners, and independent work)
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**
  - Designs learning experiences that meet the needs of all learners
  - Offers concrete suggestions that can be applied during instruction to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities
  - Provides multiple ways that students can be engaged or motivated to learn
  - Gives multiple ways students can perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them
  - Offers options for students to show what they know through action and expression

- **Cooperative Learning**
  - Ensures positive interdependence within groups by encouraging individual student participation
  - Gives students group roles and responsibilities
  - Promotes positive learning interactions
  - Supports individual and group accountability
  - Reinforces effective communication and interpersonal skills
  - Facilitates group processing and conversation

Finally, all strategies should have a discourse-rich focus that offers students a way to express their ideas, reasoning, and thinking.

For special education considerations regarding strategies, techniques, and deliveries of instruction, [see Appendix C.](#)

## SKILLS

For Standard 1, paraeducators must be able to:

- Assist in delivering instruction according to supervisor’s lesson plans
- Use basic interventions to adapt to student needs, learning styles, and skills
- Demonstrate the ability to record relevant information/data about students
- Use assessment instruments specified by supervisor to document and maintain data
- Organize material and be prepared to support learning and the instructional process

### ASSIST IN DELIVERING INSTRUCTION ACCORDING TO SUPERVISOR’S LESSON PLANS

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A paraeducator may assist the supervising educator in implementing instructional strategies ([see the list above](#)), monitoring student work, supporting positive behavior systems, answering student questions, and helping the supervising educator distribute a variety of instructional materials. A paraeducator is not responsible for creating lesson plans or planning instruction independently; the paraeducator is a support to the supervising educator responsible for student learning.

For special education considerations regarding instruction according to supervisor’s plan, [see Appendix C.](#)

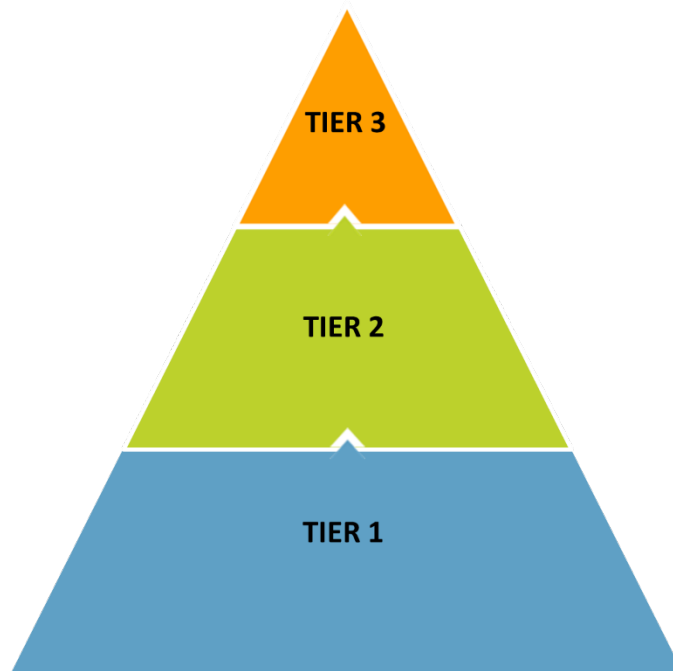
## USE BASIC INTERVENTIONS TO ADAPT TO STUDENT NEEDS, LEARNING STYLES, AND SKILLS

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The Utah Multi-Tiered System of Supports (UMTSS) is a framework for implementing systemic, evidence-based practices to ensure student academic and behavioral success in preparation for and leading to college and career readiness. UMTSS can be implemented throughout all educational settings to meet students' diverse needs.

The eight critical components of UMTSS are:

1. High-quality instruction
2. Data-based decision-making
3. Team-based problem solving
4. Equitable education for all
5. College and career readiness
6. Proactive school climate and structure
7. Parent and community involvement
8. Supportive leadership



*Figure 2: UMTSS Tiers of Instruction*

UMTSS includes three tiers of instruction, depicted in the image above, which are described as follows:

- **Tier 1**—Represented by the bottom of the pyramid as all students receive rigorous grade-level content instruction using evidence-based curriculum and instructional strategies at this tier.
- **Tier 2**—The middle of the pyramid represents this tier as it provides targeted interventions for some students. These students receive supplemental instruction and support systematically delivered in addition to and aligned with the grade-level content. These supports address the needs of students who have not responded sufficiently to Tier 1 instruction.
- **Tier 3**—Finally, the top of the pyramid represents the intensive individual intervention of Tier 3. In this tier, a few students receive individually responsive instruction and supports delivered in addition to and aligned with grade-level content. These supports address the specific needs of students who are most at risk or have not responded to Tier 2 interventions.

It is important to note that Tier 2 and Tier 3 are not equivalent to special education instruction or the IEP, but rather are part of a general method of instruction utilized in the classroom.

A paraeducator may provide support in any tier of instruction based on direction from the supervising educator. It is important to know that the tiers refer to the type of instruction and supports, not the students receiving it. The supervising educator determines the specific interventions and strategies needed to differentiate instruction based on the student’s individual needs. The paraeducator helps implement the chosen interventions.

#### DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY TO RECORD RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA ABOUT STUDENTS

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The supervising educator trains the paraeducator on specific data collection procedures. The paraeducator may monitor and record student progress using various methods and tools.

Examples of progress monitoring include:

- Counting or tallying the frequency of specific behaviors
- Recording scores
- Timing of a student’s reading fluency rates or duration of a behavior
- Recording data for curriculum-based measures
- Writing anecdotal notes about academic performance or behaviors



For special education considerations regarding record relevant information and data, [see Appendix C](#).

#### USE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS SPECIFIED BY SUPERVISOR TO DOCUMENT AND MAINTAIN DATA

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A paraeducator might administer various assessments and document relevant data under the supervision of a licensed professional, as outlined in each assessment's administration policy. A paraeducator must follow administration procedures given by the supervising educator.

Assessments should be delivered in a way that ensures students will demonstrate knowledge and skills independently. A paraeducator must avoid practices that interfere with a student's independent response to items during assessments. The supervising educator informs the paraeducator of the appropriate accommodations for individual students during assessments.

For special education considerations regarding assessment instruments specified by a supervisor to document and maintain data, [see Appendix C](#).

#### ORGANIZE MATERIALS AND BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

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The supervising educator shares lesson plans with the paraeducator to provide enough time to organize and prepare materials. The supervising educator ensures the paraeducator knows how to prepare materials, e.g., how to use the copy machine and where to locate instructional materials. A paraeducator may be expected to support students in remote learning under the direction of the supervising educator, e.g., virtual groups, individualized instruction, student check-ins, tracking, and monitoring.

### **SUPPORTING COMPETENCIES OF STANDARD 1**

A paraeducator facilitates the integration of students into unfamiliar settings. The paraeducator utilizes technology to support students and complete work duties and may assist in observing and monitoring student behavior.

For Standard 1, a paraeducator may also be able to:

- Use strategies to facilitate effective integration into various settings
- Use basic educational technology
- Assist in providing objective documentation for observations and functional assessments

## USE STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION INTO VARIOUS SETTINGS

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These settings could include, for example, libraries, computer labs, learning centers, playgrounds, community centers and sites, and assorted modes of transportation. A paraeducator may assist students during transitions from one educational setting to another by implementing the strategies determined by the supervising educator. Examples of strategies that facilitate effective integration are:

- **Pre-Teaching**—Pre-teaching provides instruction of a skill before the students must perform the skill independently.
  - For example, a paraeducator may teach students how to walk from the library to the classroom before the students walk with their class, or a teacher may teach a science concept through Tier 2 instruction in preparation for whole group learning.
- **Generalization**—Generalization teaches students to take skills learned in one setting and apply them in another.
  - For example, a paraeducator may help students understand that just as there are behavioral expectations in the library, there are similar behavioral expectations in the computer room.

## USE BASIC EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

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A paraeducator may use an electronic device to problem solve, support student learning, and complete work-related duties. The supervising educator should provide training on the use of basic educational technology. Some of the ways a paraeducator may use educational technology include:

- Operating digital devices and technologies required for job duties (e.g., computer, tablet, printer, email, internet, and online professional development)
- Operating standard office equipment (e.g., copy machine and laminator)
- Inputting data (e.g., timecards, leave requests, and student scores)
- Learning and using new technology

- Modeling safe internet and technology use
- Assisting with remote learning platforms (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Canvas)

## ASSIST IN PROVIDING OBJECTIVE DOCUMENTATION FOR OBSERVATIONS AND FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENTS

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A paraeducator may assist in observing students and collecting data on their behavior. This data may be part of a functional behavior assessment which gives information about why the students are engaging in specific behaviors or may be part of progress monitoring for students' behavior intervention plan. The supervising educator will inform the paraeducator of what behaviors to look for, what type of data to collect, and the appropriate procedure for collecting the data.

Common types of behavioral data collection are:

- **Frequency**
  - The observer records each time the identified behavior occurs
- **Duration**
  - The observer records how long the identified behavior occurs
- **Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC)**
  - The observer records what happens directly before the behavior, what the behavior looks like, and what happens directly after the behavior

For special education considerations regarding providing documentation for observations and functional assessments, [see Appendix C.](#)

## STANDARD 2: DEMONSTRATE PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICAL PRACTICES

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A paraeducator demonstrates professionalism and ethical practices by being aware of assigned responsibilities, maintaining appropriate relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and the supervising educator, and respecting the privacy of all individuals within the educational setting.

## *CORE COMPETENCIES OF STANDARD 2*

A paraeducator recognizes the difference between their role and those of other individuals in the educational setting. A paraeducator understands and carries out job duties according to the laws and guidelines provided and maintains the confidentiality of student information.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

For Standard 2, this means that a paraeducator must:

- Have knowledge of and adhere to the distinctions in the roles and responsibilities of teachers/providers, paraeducators, administrators, families, and other team members

#### **KNOWLEDGE OF AND ADHERENCE TO THE DISTINCTIONS IN ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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The LEA provides a job description outlining the paraeducator's position and ensures that the paraeducator is aware of their role and responsibilities. The supervising educator is ultimately responsible for classroom management and instruction. If parents have questions or concerns, the paraeducator directs the parents to the supervising educator, whose role is to communicate with parents. It is important for a paraeducator to immediately notify the supervising educator of any concerns. The paraeducator must only engage in activities for which they have received training.

### **SKILLS**

For Standard 2, paraeducators must be able to:

- Carry out responsibilities in a manner consistent with all pertinent laws, regulations, policies, and procedures
- Respect confidentiality
- Have reliable attendance, punctuality, and dependability
- Exhibit sensitivity to cultural, individual differences, and disabilities
- Adhere to the civil and human rights of children, youth, and their families
- Have knowledge of health, safety, and emergency procedures

## CARRY OUT RESPONSIBILITIES IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH ALL PERTINENT LAWS, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

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Schools follow federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures. Additionally, LEAs have policies and procedures specific to their schools. It is pertinent for the supervising educator and paraeducator to be familiar with and adhere to all requirements regarding their work in educational settings.

A paraeducator is expected to act ethically and avoid actions that adversely affect the performance of assigned duties. In addition, a paraeducator maintains a professional demeanor, appearance, and appropriate educational relationships with students, parents, and colleagues, as defined by the LEA.

## RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY

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A paraeducator must maintain confidentiality in matters concerning students. Paraeducators must not share personally identifiable data, information, and educational records collected or maintained by schools.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of students' educational records. Personally identifiable information (PII) is confidential. It includes students' names, parents' names, addresses, social security numbers, personal characteristics, and any other information that makes students easily identifiable, (e.g., report cards, transcripts, and discipline records) and must not be shared. Specific information may be shared with a paraeducator about students' medical needs or any other services, including special education services, and must be kept confidential. This information helps the paraeducator assist the supervising educator in supporting students.

A paraeducator uses social media responsibly and respectfully and maintains professional communication with parents, students, and colleagues. The supervising educator will share specific district or school guidelines regarding this subject.

## HAVE RELIABLE ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY, AND DEPENDABILITY

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The paraeducator and supervising educator maintain consistent communication regarding schedules and job expectations, including dress code and cell phone policy during work hours. It is important to be on time and to notify the supervising

educator of an absence as soon as possible. The supervising educator informs the paraeducator about who is responsible for finding a substitute in times of absence if necessary.

A paraeducator is expected to focus on instruction and assigned tasks during work hours. Conversation with colleagues should be professional and appropriate for the setting.

#### EXHIBIT SENSITIVITY TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES, AND DISABILITIES

Educators are responsible for providing educational equity by acknowledging differences, by looking for the good in everyone, including oneself, and by showing due regard for feelings, rights, cultures, and traditions. To understand and promote educational equity, a paraeducator can examine their own culture, seek to understand other cultures, and interact across cultural contexts with sensitivity to differences (e.g., socioeconomic status, race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability).

#### **Some ways to promote educational equity are:**

- Allow each student an opportunity to respond to questions (remember to wait for a response from students who need extra think time)
- Phrase questions so that each student is accountable to respond (consider different ways that students can respond through safe engagement strategies (e.g., choral response, partner talks, or give a signal))
- Incorporate multiple methods or modalities of learning and demonstrating knowledge and skills (e.g., writing, speaking, demonstrating, role-playing, and assistive technology)
- Implement strategies to ensure engagement for each student
- Point out and celebrate student strengths
- Encourage and support student participation in areas of both strength and need
- Become familiar with students' cultures
- Develop meaningful and genuine relationships with students

#### ADHERE TO THE CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND THEIR FAMILIES

All students enrolled in LEAs, regardless of, race, color, national origin, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, or sexual orientation have the right to participate in

reading, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, recess, school lunch, any extracurricular activities, etc. A paraeducator can promote participation for each student regardless of their abilities and encourage learning from both mistakes and successes.

A paraeducator considers each student's circumstance by collaborating with diverse community members to understand, recognize and appreciate what we all have in common as humans, including acknowledging diverse cultures, languages, traditions, values, needs, and lived experiences. This is a proactive way to address each student's right to learn.

Paraeducators should be aware that the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) works with the U.S. Department of Education "to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence through vigorous enforcement of civil rights in our nation's schools." They serve "student populations facing discrimination and the advocates and institutions promoting systemic solutions to civil rights problems" (Office for Civil Rights, 2022).

#### HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH, SAFETY, AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

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An effective paraeducator knows the health, safety, and emergency procedures of the LEA and/or school in which they work. The paraeducator will be provided with employee guidelines regarding the policies and practices against possessing alcohol, drugs, illegal substances, and pornography on school grounds.

A paraeducator will be expected to know:

- Basic safety, first aid, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) information as required by the paraeducator's job duties
- Assigned and designated functions during practice and active emergency evacuation procedures
- Worksite policies and procedures for students and staff related to safety and codes of conduct
- Security and safety procedures regarding visitors in the building
- Protocols for addressing behaviors that a student may exhibit during emergency situations such as:
  - Following a student's behavior plan
  - Using visual cues to support student's understanding of expectations during an emergency, or

- Giving advanced warning and review of procedures for upcoming practice drills
- Correct use of adaptive equipment (e.g., wheelchairs, positioning chairs, and personal needs devices)
- Procedures for providing a student’s medical and self-care needs such as toilet training/diapering, feeding, and administering medication

**Health**—LEAs follow OSHA guidelines that require personnel to wear gloves in the presence of blood or body fluids and require first aid kits at convenient locations throughout the school and on buses. A paraeducator may be required to follow additional safety and emergency procedures. It is the responsibility of the LEA to train a paraeducator on health and safety policies. LEAs should also follow current local health department guidelines (local health concerns, epidemics, and pandemics).

**Safety**—All schools have procedures that must be followed to help ensure the safety of students and staff. These procedures range from daily proactive strategies such as wearing identification badges to emergency procedures in the event of a serious situation such as an earthquake. Safety at school is discussed with students at age-appropriate levels under the direction of the supervising educator. It is vital that the paraeducator is familiar with and follows the LEA’s policies and procedures.

Some examples of safety and emergency procedures might include:

- Check-in and check-out procedures for students
- Requirements for wearing identification badges
- School-wide discipline procedures
- Safety procedures outlined in a student’s behavior intervention plan (BIP)
- Procedures to follow if staff feels threatened or harassed
- Procedures to follow in the event of a fire, earthquake, or flood
- Lockdown procedures if there is a perceived threat on or near school grounds

## SUPPORTING COMPETENCIES OF STANDARD 2

A paraeducator positively impacts the educational environment by maintaining positive relationships, finding solutions to problems, and participating in professional learning opportunities.



For Standard 2, a paraeducator may also be called on to:

- Have a positive attitude and contribute to a positive work environment
- Pursue and participate in staff learning and growth opportunities

#### HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND CONTRIBUTE TO A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

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A paraeducator contributes to the school environment by supporting the instructional team and thinking of solutions to problems as they arise. Paraeducators can contribute to a positive work environment by developing positive working relationships with other staff members and responding respectfully and appropriately to feedback. A paraeducator and supervising educator work together to develop strategies to improve instruction while focusing on improving student outcomes through an asset-based approach and a growth mindset. Because educational work environments can be challenging, LEAs should offer support to paraeducators as needed.

#### PURSUE AND PARTICIPATE IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

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The LEA provides training opportunities for a paraeducator directly related to their daily work and responsibilities (e.g., learning strategies for working with students with disabilities or teaching specific content). A paraeducator may seek training opportunities through the LEA, colleges, universities, or the USBE.

### STANDARD 3: SUPPORT A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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A supportive environment encourages student engagement and learning. A positive and consistent classroom management plan that includes clear expectations and reinforcements helps to promote student inquiry, participation, and group collaboration.

#### *CORE COMPETENCIES OF STANDARD 3*

A paraeducator is involved in creating a positive learning environment by supporting behavior management plans, becoming familiar with each student's background and abilities, and implementing proactive behavioral management and engagement strategies.

## KNOWLEDGE

For Standard 3, this means that a paraeducator must:

- Support the supervisor’s behavior management plan
- Have knowledge of student characteristics and factors that influence behavior

### SUPPORT THE SUPERVISOR’S BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

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It is the responsibility of the supervising educator to create and implement behavior management plans. A behavior management plan, also known as a classroom management plan, refers to a wide variety of skills and techniques that the professional uses to help students be organized, stay on task, and demonstrate socially appropriate behavior. It is the role of the supervising educator to train the paraeducator on how to best implement behavior management plans.

Some examples of supporting a behavior management plan are:

- Helping students follow classroom procedures and routines
- Reinforcing positive student behavior
- Redirecting students when needed
- Collecting data on student behavior and academic progress

For special education considerations for support the supervisor’s behavior management plan, [see Appendix C](#).

### HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR

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A supervising educator must understand how a student’s background and abilities affect learning and expected school behavior. This may include a student’s disability, academic performance, culture, language, and home life. The supervising educator should discuss individual students’ unique characteristics and circumstances with the paraeducator, as needed. Some student information may be confidential and not shared with the paraeducator because it is not relevant to the paraeducator’s role.

## SKILLS

For Standard 3, paraeducators must be able to:

- Use proactive management strategies to engage students
- Assist in maintaining an environment conducive to the learning process

### USE PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE STUDENTS

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Using proactive management strategies means taking the necessary steps to eliminate or prevent problems before they arise. Positive learning experiences are more likely to occur when the supervising educator and paraeducator anticipate and are prepared to implement safety and emergency procedures and address instructional questions or students' challenging behavior.

The following are specific methods for implementing proactive management that paraeducators should be skilled in utilizing.

#### *POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS*

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a systematic approach for promoting positive behavior. It teaches students about behavior expectations and strategies. The focus of PBIS is prevention, not punishment.

The following are few effective proactive management strategies along with examples of implementation:

- **Reinforcement**—Increases positive behavior through the delivery of a reward or verbal praise; provides immediate, frequent, enthusiastic, descriptive, and varied positive feedback; increases the likelihood that the behavior will occur again; and benefits students when educators improve their positive to negative ratio of reinforcement to 5:1.
  - For example, give specific verbal praise, social praise (e.g., high five or thumbs up):
    - Say, "Roberto, I love how you finished your assignment on time! Give me a high five."
  - Or give access to motivating activities or items:

- Say, “Kaeilani, thank you for moving to your group so quickly and participating in the activity. You earned a point for your team!”
- **Pre-teaching**—Teaches students a desired behavior or an academic skill before they need to use it; follows the pattern of teaching, modeling, and practicing.
  - For example, pre-teach science concepts before the science lesson if there are anticipated concerns.
- **Behavior Momentum**—Increases student compliance and desire to follow directions.
  - For example, start with an easy or motivating task before asking a student to perform a more challenging task.
- **Environmental Engineering**—Arranges the physical environment of the classroom to enhance student learning and behavior.
  - For example, arrange student seating to limit distractions.
- **Praise Around**—Encourages instructional participation and engagement for students who are off task through specific praise of students who are on-task or following directions.
  - For example, say, “Ali, I appreciate the way you are focusing on your work,” to praise Ali and encourage another student to get on task.

### *PRECISION DIRECTIONS*

Precision Directions are statements made by educators to help students comply or follow directions.

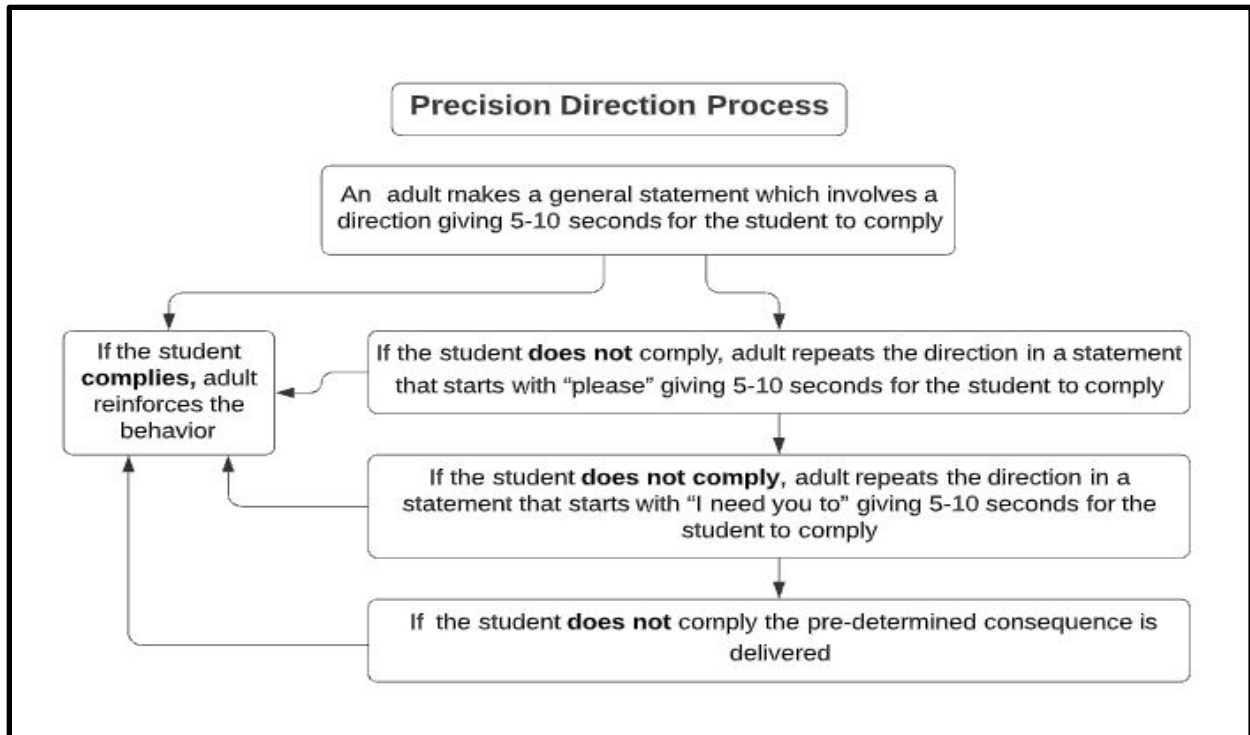


Figure 3: Precision Direction Process

The precision direction process begins with an adult making a general statement that involves a direction, then giving the student 5–10 seconds to comply. If the student complies at this stage of the process, then the adult has successfully reinforced the behavior. However, if the student does not comply, then the adult repeats the direction in a statement that starts with “please,” and gives the student another 5–10 seconds to comply. If the student complies, then the behavior has been reinforced at this stage. However, if the student once again does not comply, then the adult repeats the direction in a statement that starts with “I need you to,” and once again gives the student 5–10 seconds to comply. If the student complies, the behavior is reinforced. If the student does not comply at this stage of the process, then a pre-determined consequence is delivered by the adult.

An example of precision direction with student compliance:

- As the recess bell rings, the teacher gives the general direction, “Let’s line up for recess.”
- After 5–10 seconds, Carmen does not line up for recess, and the teacher says, “Carmen, please line up for recess.”
- Within 5–10 seconds, Carmen lines up and is given a high five and a point for following the direction.

An example of precision direction without student compliance:

- As the social studies lesson is about to begin, the teacher gives the general direction, "It is time to log in to your computer."
- After 5–10 seconds Barry does not log into the computer, and the teacher says, "Barry, please log into your computer."
- After 5–10 seconds, Barry does not log into the computer and the teacher says, "Barry, I need you to log into your computer."
- After 5–10 seconds, Barry does not log into the computer, and the teacher lets Barry know that he will lose his free computer time later that afternoon.

### *THE BIG EIGHT STUDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES*

The Big Eight Student Engagement Strategies, identified and shared by Annette Brinkman, Gary Forlini, and Ellen Williams in their book *Help Teachers Engage Students: Action Tools for Administrators*,<sup>2</sup> are skill sets containing related skills and strategies that educators should master to actively engage their students in learning.

These strategies are as follows:

1. **Expectations**—Educator ensures that students know what to do and when and how to do it.
2. **Attention Prompts**—Teacher uses verbal or visual prompts to focus students' attention for instruction to follow.
3. **Proximity**—Educator moves purposefully around the classroom for maximum effect.
4. **Cueing**—Educator uses positive, clear, and effective verbal cues to clarify, maintain, or redirect activity.
5. **Signals**—Educator uses nonverbal signals to direct performance, students' responses, and other activities.
6. **Time Limits**—Educator identifies and communicates specific times for beginning and completing tasks.
7. **Tasking**—Educator focuses and sharpens students' engagement through questioning strategies, purposeful and thought-provoking activities, and other tactics to direct their learning.

<sup>2</sup> Brinkman, A., Forlini, G., & Williams, E. (2009). *Help Teachers Engage Students: Action Tools for Administrators*. Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education.

8. **Voice**—Educator uses voice to maximum effect: pitch in the lower registers, tone geared for situations, diction appropriate to students' age levels, and voice modulation, or cadence, to maintain interest.

The supervising educator may train the paraeducator on how to implement these strategies. Some behaviors may require simple strategies, such as talking to a student about a problem or a situation. Other behaviors are more complex and may require an individualized behavior intervention plan. Positive behavior is more likely to increase when instructional teams respond consistently to all student behavior in a consistent manner.

For special education considerations for proactive management strategies, [see Appendix C](#).

#### *ADDITIONAL PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES*

Additional strategies for increasing student engagement are:

- **Proximity**—Being physically near students improves their behavior and focus.
  - For example, if two students are talking at an inappropriate time, then stand next to the students and they will likely stop talking.
- **Effective Directions**—Be specific and explicit when telling students what to do.
  - For example, give directions through statements rather than questions.
    - Say, “It is time for math,” instead of, “Should we do math now?”
- **Specific Praise**—Deliver specific feedback regarding observed student success, informing the student of exactly what was done correctly and praising success.
  - For example, when complimenting a student for following directions identify the specific actions and behaviors the student did to follow directions.
    - Say, “Maria, I like how you got out your pencil, and you are looking at me, ready to work.”

## ASSIST IN MAINTAINING AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE TO THE LEARNING PROCESS

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A paraeducator should model expected school behavior through their actions. Here are some examples of how a paraeducator can support the learning process throughout the day.

- Before the Day Begins:
  - Arrive on time
  - Be prepared
  - Be familiar with lesson plan and materials
  - Be aware of the daily schedule and assigned tasks
  - Greet and welcome the students to help establish a safe learning environment
- During the Day:
  - Begin lessons/activities promptly
  - Eliminate distractions
  - Encourage students to stay on task
  - Remain focused
- Closing the Day:
  - End on time
  - Help students make a smooth transition
  - Leave the work area clean and organized
- Review:
  - Take time to reflect by considering, "What went well? Should I do anything differently? Were the students engaged?"
  - Accept feedback and suggestions graciously, then implement them

## ASSIST IN MONITORING STUDENTS AND MAKE APPROPRIATE DECISIONS WHILE COACHING OR TUTORING IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS

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A paraeducator needs to understand and confirm the supervising educator's expectations before instructing, coaching, or tutoring. It is better to ask questions before beginning an activity with students rather than assume or incorrectly interpret the supervisor's intentions. A paraeducator is expected to monitor and intervene with students using the techniques and plans outlined by the supervising educator.



## SUPPORTING COMPETENCIES OF STANDARD 3

A paraeducator promotes positive behavior by teaching social skills to students. They may also assist students in using self-control, self-management, and self-care to foster a positive learning environment.

For Standard 3, a paraeducator may:

- Assist in teaching children and youth social skills
- Assist students in using self-control and self-management strategies
- Assist in providing medical care and/or teaching self-care

### ASSIST IN TEACHING CHILDREN AND YOUTH SOCIAL SKILLS

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Social skills, like academic skills, are taught in the school setting. While some students may learn social skills through observation, other students require more explicit instruction. A paraeducator may assist in teaching social skills through modeling expected behavior or as part of specific instruction or curriculum outlined by the supervising educator.

Below are some examples of social skills that might be taught and modeled in the school setting:

- Communicating respectfully and effectively with others
- Sharing
- Following directions
- Asking for and making clarification
- Negotiating
- Accepting feedback
- Regulating emotions

### ASSIST STUDENTS IN USING SELF-CONTROL AND SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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Lack of self-control and self-management can affect a student's performance and interpersonal relationships. Some strategies a supervising educator may ask a paraeducator to use when teaching or assisting students with self-leadership are:

1. **Role Play**—A technique that allows students to explore realistic situations by interacting with other people in a structured environment.
  - a. For example:

- i. Helping students practice asking peers to play at recess
  - ii. Helping the students practice asking teachers to explain their grades
- 2. **Modeling**—A demonstration of self- control and self-management skills throughout the day to model the desired student behavior.
  - a. For example:
    - i. Greeting students at the door in a friendly manner
    - ii. Calmly expressing feelings or confusion about an undesired situation
- 3. **Pre-teaching**—A technique that prepares the students for activities that may be academically or behaviorally challenging.
  - a. For example:
    - i. Teaching key vocabulary words before reading a story
    - ii. Helping students practice walking to the library from the classroom using expected hallway behavior
- 4. **Reinforcement**—A delivery of a reward or verbal praise to increase positive behavior
  - a. For example:
    - i. Giving the students stickers or points when they engage in positive behavior
    - ii. Thanking students and giving them specific, positive feedback such as, “Thank you for sitting quietly and raising your hand.”

#### ASSIST IN PROVIDING MEDICAL CARE AND/OR TEACHING SELF-CARE

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Some students require medical care or assistance in learning self-care during the school day. An individual student’s medical and self-care needs can vary and may include toilet training/diapering, tying shoelaces, putting on a coat, using eating utensils, feeding, and administering medication.

A paraeducator must be appropriately trained before aiding students with medical or self-care needs. The school nurse can train school staff and thus delegate their nursing responsibilities to other school staff. The American Nurses Association (2012) explains delegation as the transferring of authority to a competent individual to perform a nursing task.<sup>3</sup> The school nurse retains ultimate responsibility for

<sup>3</sup> See page 6 in the American Nurses Association’s, (2012), *Principles for Delegation by Registered Nurses to Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP)*. Silver Spring, MD: Nursesbooks.org.

deciding which tasks can be delegated and to whom and must ensure the procedures are performed and documented correctly throughout the school year. Training for medical needs or procedures must be provided by a licensed nurse. Look to your supervising educator to clarify specific needs related to a student's 504 plan and/or IEP.

## STANDARD 4: COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY AND PARTICIPATE IN THE TEAM PROCESS

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Paraeducators are important members of instructional teams. A team is more effective when the paraeducator understands the job expectations of team members, as well as the process for problem-solving and communicating.

### *CORE COMPETENCIES OF STANDARD 4*

As an active member of an educational team, a paraeducator solves problems, communicates effectively, and gives the supervising educator relevant feedback about students. The paraeducator uses the appropriate channels to resolve conflict and report concerns.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

For Standard 4, this means that a paraeducator must:

- Participate as an effective member of an instructional team utilizing a problem-solving process

### **PARTICIPATE ON THE INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM UTILIZING A PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS**

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Good instructional teams focus on serving students. As a member of an instructional team, the paraeducator may work with several educational professionals (e.g., general education teacher, special education teacher, principal/director, related service provider, and other paraeducators). Each team member will have a different role and different responsibilities.

The paraeducator plays different roles with varying responsibilities depending on where they are working and the specific job description for the position. The supervising educator will provide information and training regarding job

expectations for a paraeducator to be an effective member of the educational team.

It is important to know and support the policies and procedures of the school and LEA. A problem-solving process is usually included in the LEA's policies and procedures which outlines steps to take and team members to involve if problems arise. A paraeducator can ask the supervising educator for direction and clarification if the problem-solving process has not been shared.

Examples of instructional teams may include:

- The classroom teacher and a paraeducator
- Job coach or employment specialist of a school and the special education teachers
- Title I tutor and program supervisor
- Paraeducator providing direct services (e.g., physical therapy, mobility aide, speech therapy) and a supervising licensed professional
- Special education teacher, personal care assistant, and student
- Special education teacher, general education teacher, school counselor, and paraeducator
- Special education teacher with multiple paraeducators under their supervision
- After school paraeducators and their supervisors

## SKILLS

For Standard 4, paraeducators must be able to:

- Use effective communication skills (written, verbal, nonverbal)
- Provide relevant feedback regarding student performance and instruction to supervisor
- Use appropriate channels for resolving concerns or conflicts

### USE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS (WRITTEN, VERBAL, NONVERBAL)

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Effective communicators are valued employees in all professions and situations. The way a paraeducator communicates with their supervising educator, other staff, and students provides a role model for students. A paraeducator may communicate verbally and/or in writing.

An effective communicator:

- Demonstrates professionalism
  - Uses correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization
  - Speaks and writes clearly and professionally
  - Avoids slang, swearing, and profanity
  - Avoids gossip on and off campus and negative talk about other staff members, students, and their families
  - Keeps personally identifiable information confidential
- Listens with the intent to understand
  - Pauses before responding or asking a question
  - Paraphrases
  - Poses questions
  - Puts ideas on the table
  - Provides data
  - Pays attention to self and others (e.g., look at the speaker, put aside distracting thoughts, and use body language to show that you're listening)
  - Presumes positive intentions
  - Asserts opinions politely
  - Treats others with respect
- Explains problems or gives information in a concise, factual manner
- Stays calm and cool in challenging situations
- Shares information in a timely, appropriate manner
- Acknowledges the contributions, knowledge, and expertise of others

#### PROVIDE RELEVANT FEEDBACK REGARDING STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTION TO SUPERVISOR

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Because a paraeducator works directly with students, they have a good insight on an individual student's academic and behavioral performance. It is important that the paraeducator communicates timely, comprehensive, and accurate information regarding each student's performance with the supervising educator.

A paraeducator may have opportunities to provide feedback when:

- Instructing students in reading or mathematics or other academic areas while the classroom teacher instructs the rest of the class

- Teaching students to use public transportation to access job sites or community services
- Monitoring students' behavior in various unstructured situations such as on the bus, before and after school, at recess, or during lunch

A paraeducator must share all pertinent facts and information related to students with the supervising educator. It is important to only report actual data and to avoid making assumptions or sharing personal interpretations.

Below are some anecdotal examples of providing feedback to a supervising educator. An example of relevant feedback grounded in data is given, as well as an example of irrelevant feedback based on assumptions or personal interpretations. These are as follows:

#### 1. Example One

- Relevant Feedback**—When James worked with his group on a multiplication math task, he was able to draw models for one-digit by one-digit problems independently, but he asked for help two times when solving the two-digit by two-digit problems.
- Irrelevant Feedback**—It is clear that James hates math and can't do the problems and is constantly asking for help.

#### 2. Example Two

- Relevant Feedback**—Helena threw her pencil during spelling practice after yelling, "This is too hard." When given the direction, "Go pick up the pencil, sit back down at your desk, and raise your hand for help," Helena did as instructed.
- Irrelevant Feedback**—Helena seems to get angry when asked to do something she doesn't want to do.

#### 3. Example Three

- Relevant Feedback**—The paraeducator shadowed from 10 feet away as Koah walked through the halls to the bathroom independently. He kept his hands to himself and did not ask for help. He said, "Hi!" to three peers on the way.
- Irrelevant Feedback**—Koah does a good job when he walks to the bathroom by himself.

#### 4. Example Four

- a. **Relevant Feedback**—When Martha was asked to do a read and retell using informational text during small group instruction, she was able to accurately retell three out of five facts.
- b. **Irrelevant Feedback**—Martha doesn't pay attention during the reading group, so she doesn't understand the story.

When sharing performance feedback regarding students, a paraeducator may be asked to use a tracking sheet or a data form provided by the supervising educator.

#### USE APPROPRIATE CHANNELS FOR RESOLVING CONCERNS OR CONFLICTS

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The supervising educator will provide information to the paraeducator about steps to take when resolving concerns or conflicts.

A paraeducator should try to resolve concerns or conflicts with the individual(s) involved. For example, if a paraeducator has a problem with another paraeducator, they should try to resolve the problem before going immediately to the supervising educator.

Most educational systems follow a "chain of command" to facilitate communication and problem solving among staff members. A paraeducator is responsible to know the "chain of command" so when there is a need for information, directions, or help in solving a problem, it is clear who to approach first and then who to approach next if the situation has not been resolved.

Typically, the chain of command is as follows:

- The immediate supervising educator (classroom teacher or licensed professional)
- The administrator (principal, assistant principal, or program administrator)
- The program director (special education director, Title I director, or human resource director)

A paraeducator has the right to due process if there is conflict after following the LEA's problem-solving model and chain of command.

## SUPPORTING COMPETENCIES OF STANDARD 4

A paraeducator participates in team meetings and attends conferences with families when needed. A paraeducator has a key role in cultivating positive

relationships with staff members and students and building strong learning communities in their educational setting.

For Standard 4, a paraeducator may also be called on to:

- Participate in instructional team meetings
- Participate in conferences with families or primary care givers when requested
- Foster beneficial relationships between agency/school, families, children/youth, and community

#### PARTICIPATE IN INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM MEETINGS

A paraeducator is expected to participate in different types of instructional team meetings. A paraeducator may participate in meetings to plan and discuss students' needs. The paraeducator and supervising educator should work together prior to these meetings to discuss the purpose of the meeting and prepare needed information. At other times, the supervising educator may ask a paraeducator to meet formally for department or staff meetings that include receiving specific training or access to job-related information. Some meetings may be less formal. For example, a paraeducator may meet with the supervising educator to plan learning activities.

For special education considerations for participate in instructional team meetings [see Appendix C.](#)

#### PARTICIPATE IN CONFERENCES WITH FAMILIES OR PRIMARY CARE GIVERS WHEN REQUESTED

As a member of an instructional team, the paraeducator may be asked to attend IEP or Section 504 meetings, parent-teacher conferences, or other informal meetings to discuss the educational program of a student. It is appropriate to attend when invited and with consent from the supervising educator. This is an additional opportunity to demonstrate confidentiality involving student information as well as effective communication and problem-solving skills.



## FOSTER BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AGENCY/SCHOOL, FAMILIES, CHILDREN/YOUTH, AND COMMUNITY

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Practicing and following all the standards and competencies outlined in this document will help a paraeducator to foster positive relationships with others in all educational settings.

### *AGENCY/SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS*

A paraeducator can help to foster beneficial relationships with the agency/school by proficiently performing expected duties. A paraeducator shows that they are trustworthy and adds value to an educational organization by following outlined policies and procedures, respecting instructional team members, and complying with the supervising educator's requests.

### *FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS*

A paraeducator builds positive relationships with families by respecting different cultures and parenting styles, honoring confidentiality, and deferring to a licensed educator for parent/family communication.

### *CHILDREN/YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS*

A paraeducator typically works with a diverse population of students who have different strengths and challenges. Developing positive relationships with students helps the supervising educator to be more effective. Therefore, the supervising educator may share information with the paraeducator about students' learning styles and ways to best support and assist them. A paraeducator can foster beneficial relationships with students by following the guidance of the supervising educator and respecting the personal circumstances of all students.

### *COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS*

A paraeducator can help build community support under the direction of the supervising educator for educational programs by building positive relationships within the community. Depending on the job description or role, a paraeducator may be required to interact with the following individuals in the community:

- Employers of students

- Outside agencies such as:
  - Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
  - Boys and Girls Clubs
  - Job Corps
  - Big Brothers Big Sisters
  - Community rehabilitation providers (CRPs)
  - Department of Workforce Services (DWS)
  - Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) providers
- Social Security Income (SSI) providers
- Medicaid personnel
- Vocational training programs
- Rotary clubs
- Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs)
- Outside providers such as:
  - Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs)
  - Mental health providers
  - Health care providers
- Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (USDB)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### PRINT RESOURCES

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### DIGITAL RESOURCES

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[Science Essential Elements](#)

[USBE Special Education: Paraeducators webpage](#)

[USBE Special Education Rules](#)

[Utah Core Standards](#)

[Utah's Early Childhood Core Standards with Teaching Strategies and Activities](#)

[Utah Multi-Tiered System of Supports](#)

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# APPENDICES

[Appendix A: Title I Considerations](#)

[Appendix B: Title III Considerations](#)

[Appendix C: Special Education Considerations](#)

[Appendix D: Behavior](#)

[Appendix E: Supervision and Training Guidance](#)

[Appendix F: Model Forms](#)

[Appendix G: Glossary of Terms](#)

## APPENDIX A: TITLE I CONSIDERATIONS

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### *WHAT IS TITLE I?*

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the largest K-12 federal education grant program. It provides supplemental funding to support schools with higher rates of families experiencing poverty. Title I funds are used to improve the academic achievement of students who are economically and educationally disadvantaged.

Note: The ESEA uses the term “paraprofessional” rather than “paraeducator.”

### *WHICH TYPE OF TITLE I PROGRAM DOES YOUR SCHOOL PROVIDE?*

**Targeted Assistance:** In a targeted assistance program, the school uses Title I, Part A funds to provide additional supports to specifically identified students who are struggling to meet State academic standards.

**Schoolwide:** The schoolwide Title I program offers a high poverty school (40% or higher) the flexibility to implement comprehensive school reform strategies and not be limited only to narrow services for identified students.

### *WHAT TYPES OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT MAY A PARAPROFESSIONAL PROVIDE?*

The following is paraphrased from [Board Rule R277-324-4](#):

- Tutoring eligible students, if the tutoring occurs at a time when a student would otherwise not receive instruction from a classroom teacher;
- Classroom management, including organizing instructional materials;
- Managing a computer lab;
- Assisting with parental engagement activities;
- Providing support in a library media center;
- Translating for parents or families; or
- Instructional services to students under the supervision of a licensed teacher.

## *WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A HIGHLY QUALIFIED PARAPROFESSIONAL?*

Both targeted assistance and schoolwide Title I programs require paraprofessionals to be highly qualified.

To meet the highly qualified requirements, according to [Board Rule R277-324-5](#), a paraprofessional must have a high school diploma or equivalent plus one of the following:

1. An associate degree; or
2. 48 semester hours or 60 quarter hours of credit from an accredited college or university; or
3. Meeting a rigorous standard of quality:
  - a. Receive a passing score on one of the Board-approved assessments, i.e., ParaPro, ParaEducator, or Project PARA, and
  - b. Can demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to assist in instructing, as appropriate, in either:
    - i. Reading/language arts, writing, and mathematics; or
    - ii. Reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

Exceptions to the Title I highly qualified requirements:

- A paraprofessional who serves only as a translator;
- A paraprofessional who only conducts family engagement; or
- A paraprofessional who only provides personal care services or other non-instructional services to students with disabilities.



## APPENDIX B: TITLE III CONSIDERATIONS

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All paraeducators supporting students learning English (English Learners) must be under the supervision of a certified/licensed educator. If providing translation services to a student supporting students' access to grade level content in English, the paraeducator must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, but do not have to meet the Title I educational requirements.

This requirement ensures that English Learners (ELs) have the instructional support necessary to access the same opportunities as their English-speaking peers. Additionally, this requirement ensures that the local education agency (LEA) is in compliance with *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) based on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352) and the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.

Paraeducators and supervising educators must closely consider instruction for students who are learning English to access the general education content. Supervising educators and paraeducators may center their discussion about students' connection to literacy skills by considering the four domains of listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

The focus in the first stage of language acquisition is the receptive skill of listening. Paraeducators can help students build listening skills by pairing listening with a stated purpose and reading a variety of content-rich texts that help students activate their background knowledge. A direct way to access content is by engaging students in strategic conversations about what they are reading. Some effective strategies include:

- Implementing “turn and talks” to access students' prior knowledge
- Modeling through “think alouds”
- Providing pictures to support memory and speaking
- Using strategic questioning directly connected to the text
- Adding kinesthetic activities to act out vocabulary embedded in the text
- Talking about how specific language gives meaning to the story

Implementing these strategies while providing instruction is beneficial for all students who are struggling with reading and acquiring language skills. Multilingual learners generally struggle with the expressive skills of speaking and writing throughout the stages of language acquisition. Therefore, creating learning

conditions where students feel safe talking and making mistakes is critical to building language skills. Writing skills must be approached much like the skill of reading, beginning with spelling, sentence structure, and writing with a purpose after listening and reading. Connecting writing to content-rich text that allows students a choice in reading about subjects they are interested in, allows students to practice using academic language and vocabulary while speaking and writing.

Another promising practice with students who are also multilingual learners is providing clear learning expectations that include what they are learning and why they are learning it. Three questions build students' capacity as assessment capable learners and help them gauge their own learning process and clarity. These questions include:

- What are you learning?
- Why are you learning it?
- How will you know you are successful?

These questions help engage students in their learning experience, set goals to measure their progress and growth as they build language skills, and develop greater comprehension of the English language.

## APPENDIX C: SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS

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A paraeducator may be assigned to support and assist students receiving special education services, under the supervision of educators or related service providers. Students must meet the requirements for one, or more, of the thirteen categories under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These include:

- Autism
- Deafblindness
- Developmental delay
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing impairment/deafness
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech-language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairment (including blindness)

For students to receive special education services they must be determined eligible through an evaluation process. All schools are required to provide a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to eligible students.

Paraeducators working in special education might receive different or specialized training depending on their assignment. In contrast to Title I, the USBE does not have requirements for a person to work as a special education paraeducator, however, some schools or LEAs may.

All paraeducators, including those serving students receiving special education services, are expected to have knowledge and skills as outlined in the [Utah Standards for Instructional Paraeducators](#). However, there may be additional knowledge and skills expected from a paraeducator based on an individual student's needs.

**Additional special education considerations for each standard are addressed below:**

## *STANDARD 1*

### **HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF STRATEGIES, TECHNIQUES, AND DELIVERY METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

1. Task Analysis—The process of breaking a skill down into smaller, more manageable components used to teach students a skill that is too challenging to learn all at once.
2. Discrete Trial Teaching (DTT)—A structured approach for teaching discrete skills or components of a skill. These skills are systematically taught one by one, using reinforcement strategies.
3. Modeling—A visual teaching technique in which the student learns a skill by watching someone demonstrate that skill. Modeling can be in person or through video and is provided by an educator, peer, or parent.
4. Social Stories—A teaching approach which uses a narrative with illustrations to outline behavior expectations, how to manage those expectations and the consequences of exhibiting certain behaviors.

### **ASSIST IN DELIVERING INSTRUCTION ACCORDING TO SUPERVISOR’S LESSON PLANS**

A paraeducator may be advised by the supervisor to adjust instruction to align with accommodations or modifications for students on an IEP or 504 plan.

### **DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY TO RECORD RELEVANT INFORMATION/DATA ABOUT STUDENTS**

Paraeducators working with students receiving special education services may be expected to record data related to academic, functional, or behavior IEP goals. A special education paraeducator may also participate in collecting data for a functional behavior assessment (FBA) or a behavior intervention plan (BIP). Data collection methods for students with special education services will be determined by the supervising educator, and training will be provided to the paraeducator. As with any data, paraeducators are expected to keep data collection information confidential.

## *STANDARD 2*

### **RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY**

Paraeducators working with students receiving special education services or qualify under Section 504 may be involved in meetings and participate in activities in which information is shared regarding the student's disability. It is a paraeducator's responsibility at all times to maintain confidentiality. However, there may be circumstances where a paraeducator is asked to share data or information with members of the student's IEP or 504 team. This should be directed by the supervising educator.

## *STANDARD 3*

### **SUPPORT THE SUPERVISOR'S BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

A paraeducator working with students receiving special education services may be involved in implementing a student-specific BIP. The behavior intervention plan outlines strategies and teaching interventions for increasing appropriate, expected behaviors. A paraeducator will be advised and trained on the implementation of the plan by the supervising educator.

## *STANDARD 4*

### **PARTICIPATE IN INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM MEETINGS**

A paraeducator working with students receiving special education services may be expected to attend an IEP or behavior intervention planning meeting for the student. IEP meetings are held annually for students receiving special education services to discuss the student's strengths and needs, as well as determine goals and services. While a behavior intervention planning meeting is held as needed to develop and review a plan for increasing appropriate, expected behavior for an individual student. A paraeducator may have knowledge and information to share with team members which will help in developing and implementing an appropriate plan. If at any time a paraeducator is expected to attend an IEP or behavior intervention plan meeting with a parent, the supervising educator will also attend.

## *ADDITIONAL RESOURCES*

The Increasing Time, Instructional Effectiveness, Engagement, and State and District Support (TIES) Center is the national technical assistance center on inclusive practices and policies funded by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). They have created a document, [“Understanding the Role of Paraprofessionals in Your Child's Education,”](#) to help guide paraeducators and supervising educators in providing inclusive practices for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has outlined specific standards for paraeducators working with students receiving special education services in the [CEC Paraeducator Preparation Guidelines](#). Under each of the Utah Standards for Instructional Paraeducators some competencies may require additional considerations for paraeducators working with students receiving special. The LEA may reference these standards in training and supervision.

## APPENDIX D: BEHAVIOR

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It is the role of all educators to support students in their academic, behavioral, and social learning. As with most environments, schools have behavior expectations for students and staff. Several competencies outlined in USBE's Standards for Instructional Paraeducators address these expectations. However, LEAs may need further resources for supervising educators and paraeducators.

General behavior support systems should be in place for all students. Typically, systematic Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) provides the components for a student to meet behavioral expectations without individualized intervention and instruction. Some students may benefit from or require accommodations as part of a 504 plan, accommodations, and goals as part of an IEP, or a formal individualized BIP. A paraeducator may be expected to provide support for students with these individualized needs. Supervision and specific training should be provided to a paraeducator providing these additional behavior supports.

The USBE has requirements outlined in [Board Rule R277-609](#) regarding Standards for LEA Discipline Plans and Emergency Safety Interventions. Schools are responsible for creating and implementing policies that include provisions to develop, implement, and monitor the use of emergency safety interventions. These policies dictate how behavioral interventions may be determined and implemented and actions to take during an emergency, for example, if a student is exhibiting immediate danger to themselves or others.

A paraeducator may be involved in collecting data for a FBA and a BIP, implementing strategies outlined in a BIP, and taking action based on the information in a crisis management plan.

An FBA is a systematic process of identifying problem behaviors and the events that reliably predict the occurrence and nonoccurrence of those behaviors and maintain the behaviors across time. This process may involve recording formal data, observing the student in various circumstances and settings, and discussing the behavior with family members, educators, and students. All information gathered is analyzed to determine why the problem or unexpected behavior is occurring and guide the development of a BIP.

A BIP is a written plan for changing a student's behavior, including target behavior, strategies for teaching replacement behavior, reinforcers, and a schedule for review of intervention effectiveness data. Information gathered from the FBA will guide the planned strategies and supports for the student.

A BIP identifies target behavior(s) to decrease and target behavior(s) to increase. The plan typically outlines what educators will do to prevent unexpected behavior (antecedent strategies), what to do during the occurrence of that behavior, and what to do after the behavior occurs (consequence strategies). A necessary component of a behavior intervention plan is to systematically teach the student a more socially appropriate or expected behavior that replaces and meets the same function of the problem behavior.

Some paraeducators may receive training on behavior de-escalation techniques to help maintain a safe environment for students. At times, a student may experience a crisis or may become distressed. De-escalation training will provide a paraeducator with the skills needed to communicate and calm a student who is agitated or exhibiting aggressive behaviors. Knowing and using these skills provides support for a safe learning environment.

A paraeducator should never use physical restraint or physically attempt to stop a student from engaging in behavior unless it is included in the student's BIP as an Emergency Safety Intervention (ESI), and the paraeducator has been appropriately trained. Physically intervening with a student in crisis can escalate the problem behavior, putting the student, the paraeducator, and others in danger. There may be a rare occasion in which a paraeducator must physically intervene when it is evident that there is immediate danger to themselves or others. This ESI must be reported to an ESI committee, parents and school administrators as outlined in [Board Rule R277-609](#).



## APPENDIX E: SUPERVISION AND TRAINING GUIDANCE

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A supervising educator is responsible for the training and supervision of assigned paraeducators. As a licensed professional, the supervising educator is ultimately responsible for the education and well-being of students. It is essential for the supervising educator to remember that a paraeducator plays a supportive role and to follow policy as outlined in [Board Rule R277-324](#). When collaborating with a supervising educator, a paraeducator can play an essential part in ensuring student success.

A supervising educator may provide information about a student as part of this collaboration. The supervising educator will have knowledge of individual student needs that may include personal or legal circumstances, an IEP, a 504 plan, a BIP, or a health plan. The scope of information shared with a paraeducator should help them carry out their responsibility to serve the student most effectively. For example, a supervising educator provides a paraeducator with information about a student's needs due to a traumatic event but should be cautious about what details are shared.

The supervision and training are directly related to the paraeducator's specific role and the LEA guidelines. This should be systematically planned and implemented by the LEA and supervising educator. Documentation of the training and supervision is beneficial to the LEA and the paraeducator. This process of providing paraeducators evaluative and constructive feedback can be connected to a pay increase or encourage their future interest in becoming licensed educators. An LEA may also benefit from this documentation of evidence of their deliberate process for training and supervision. A paraeducator who has been trained and given constructive feedback is more likely to persevere and progress.

The included model forms can be helpful in planning and documenting the training and supervision of a paraeducator. LEAs need to ensure that training is continuous, frequent, and offered in several modalities, which may include:

- Observing the instruction of a supervising educator or trained educator
- Receiving one-on-one training and coaching by the supervising educator or trained educator
- Participating in group training sessions

- Attending virtual or in-person courses offered by the USBE, LEA, and local and national professional learning organizations

It is the responsibility of the LEA and the supervising educator to evaluate the competency level of a paraeducator following training or professional learning and to provide supplemental information and support if needed.

## APPENDIX F: MODEL FORMS

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On the following pages are:

- USBE Standards for Instructional Paraeducators: Supervision and Training Forms for:
  - [Standard One](#)
  - [Standard Two](#)
  - [Standard Three](#)
  - [Standard Four](#)
- [Form 27: Implementation of Special Education and/or Related Services](#)
- [Form 26: Special Education and Related Services Paraeducator Training and Supervision](#)

# USBE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING STANDARD ONE FORM

## USBE Standards for Instructional Paraeducators

### Supervision and Training Form

Paraeducator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Educator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Standard One: Support Instructional Opportunities

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Have knowledge and proficiency in assigned instructional areas			
Have knowledge of strategies, techniques, and delivery methods of instruction			

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Assist in delivering instruction according to supervisor's lesson plans			
Use basic interventions to adapt to student needs, learning styles, and skills			
Demonstrate the ability to record relevant information/ data about students			
Use assessment instruments specified by supervisor to document and maintain data			

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Organize materials and be prepared to support learning and the instructional process			
Use strategies to facilitate effective integration into various settings			
Use basic educational technology			
Assist in providing objective documentation for observations and functional assessments			

# USBE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING STANDARD TWO FORM

## USBE Standards for Instructional Paraeducators Supervision and Training Form

Paraeducator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Educator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Standard Two: Demonstrate Professionalism and Ethical Practices

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Have knowledge of and adhere to the distinctions in the roles and responsibilities of teachers/providers, paraeducators, administrators, families, and other team members			
Carry out responsibilities in a manner consistent with all pertinent laws, regulations, policies, and procedures			

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Respect confidentiality			
Have reliable attendance, punctuality, and dependability			
Exhibit sensitivity to cultural differences, individual differences, and disabilities			
Adhere to the civil and human rights of children, youth, and their families			
Have knowledge of health, safety, and emergency procedures			
Health			
Safety			



Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Have a positive attitude and contribute to a positive work environment			
Pursue and participate in staff development and learning opportunities			

# USBE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING STANDARD THREE FORM

## USBE Standards for Instructional Paraeducators Supervision and Training Form

Paraeducator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Educator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Standard Three: Support a Positive Learning Environment

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Support the supervisor's behavior management / support plan			
Have knowledge of student characteristics and factors that influence behavior			
Use proactive management strategies to engage students			

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Assist in maintaining an environment conducive to the learning process			
Assist in monitoring students and make appropriate decisions while coaching or tutoring in different settings			
Assist in teaching children and youth social skills			
Assist students in using self-control and self-management strategies			

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Assist in providing medical care and/or teaching self-care			

# USBE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING STANDARD FOUR FORM

## USBE Standards for Instructional Paraeducators Supervision and Training Form

Paraeducator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Educator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Standard Four: Communicate Effectively & Participate in the Team Process

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Participate as an effective member of an instructional team utilizing a problem-solving process			
Use effective communication skills (written, verbal, nonverbal)			

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Provide relevant feedback regarding student performance and instruction to supervisor			
Use appropriate channels for resolving concerns or conflicts			
Participate in instructional team meetings			
Participate in conferences with families or primary care givers when requested			

Competency	Date Completed	Training Notes (how was the training provided, by whom, time spent, etc.)	Supervisor Observations and Notes
Foster beneficial relationships between agency/school, families, children/youth, and community			

# FORM 27: IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND/OR RELATED SERVICES

The following is Form 27 for Implementation of Special Education and/or Related Services and can be found on the USBE Special Education Compliance webpage under ["Model Forms"](#).

## Implementation of Special Education and/or Related Services

(USBE Rules III.A.; III.B.)

Use the following table(s) to document the implementation of services as outlined in the IEP.

Student name:

IEP goal:

Date	Name/Position	Time	Location	Service(s)	Outcomes (including data)/ Additional Notes

IEP goal:

Date	Name/Position	Time	Location	Service(s)	Outcomes (including data)/ Additional Notes



Date	Name/Position	Time	Location	Service(s)	Outcomes (including data)/ Additional Notes

## *FORM 26: SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES PARAEDUCATOR TRAINING AND SUPERVISION*

The following is Form 26 for Special Education and Related Services Paraeducator Training and Supervision and can be found the USBE Special Education Compliance webpage under ["Model Forms."](#)

### **Special Education and Related Services Paraeducator Training and Supervision**

(USBE Rules I.E.32., VIII.K.4., and IX.E.; USBE Paraeducator Standards Standard 1)

Paraeducator name:

Student name:

Paraeducator provided a copy of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Date:

#### **Initial Paraeducator Training**

Provide a description of the initial training provided to the paraeducator related to the student's needs as outlined in the IEP:

## Additional Paraeducator Training

Use the following table to document subsequent formal and informal training activities provided to the paraeducator regarding the student's needs (e.g., team meetings, discussions, formal training, etc.).

Date	Training and Discussion of Student Needs	Anticipated Outcomes

## Supervision of Paraeducator

Supervision includes the planning and implementation of special education and related services. Evidence of supervision may include regularly scheduled meetings, lesson planning, evaluations, informal discussions, data collection, etc.

Date	Supervisory Activities	Supervisor Name

Date	Supervisory Activities	Supervisor Name

**Note:** Form 27, "[Implementation of Special Education and Related Services Form](#)," should be filled out in conjunction with this form. Implementation documentation shows how the paraeducator is assisting.

## APPENDIX G: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Section 504**—A section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1943 designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal Financial Assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. A Section 504 plan is designed to accommodate an individual who has been determined, as a result of an evaluation, to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

**Accommodations**—Accommodations do not alter what is being taught, they alter how it is taught. Accommodations are changes in the environment or format that help students access the general curriculum and other activities similar to their peers.

**Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) Data**—Data taken to identify the function of a behavior (why a person is engaging in a behavior). The antecedent identifies what happens before the behavior occurs. The specific behavior is recorded. The consequence data identifies what happened after the behavior occurred.

**Assessment**—The measurement tools and processes used for analyzing, evaluating, and making instructional decisions to determine which students need help, which kind of intervention they need, and whether that intervention is effective.

**Asset-Based Approach**—An approach to teaching that is grounded in what students can do or areas of strength rather than what they cannot do or areas of weakness. It is an embodiment of the growth mindset in instruction.

**Assistive Technology**—Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such a device ([SpEd Rules I.4](#)).

**Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)**—BIP means a written plan for changing a student's behavior, including target behavior, strategies for teaching replacement behavior, reinforcers, and a schedule for review of intervention effectiveness data.

**Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)**—A person who has graduate-level certification in behavior analysis.

**Charter School**—Tuition-free public schools open to any Utah student. A public school is defined as a school that is open to the public, funded by the public, and accountable to the public. Charter schools meet all three tests. Charter Schools are governed by independent boards and held accountable to a legally binding written contractual agreement with their authorizer. ([USBE, “Charter Schools,” 2022](#))

**Curriculum-Based Measures (CBM)**—A method teachers use to assess students to find out how they are progressing in basic academic areas such as math, reading, writing, and spelling.

**Discourse Rich Instruction**—An instructional approach which offers students a way to express their ideas, reasoning, and thinking. Discourse is encouraged by giving students frequent opportunities to express and expand their thinking.

**District**—A geographic area which includes all the schools that are situated within that area and are governed by an elected board.

**Early Childhood Standards**—The set of standards that help public preschools make informed decisions regarding curriculum to prepare children for kindergarten. The standards may also serve as an optional resource for families and other educators in the community.

**Educational Equity**—An educational approach that acknowledges that all students are capable of learning, where educational resources (funding, programs, policies, initiatives, and supports) are distributed by considering students’ unique backgrounds and school context to guarantee all students have access to high-quality education ([USBE, “Educational Equity,” 2022](#)).

**Educational Intervention**—The support and instruction needed to acquire skills, including functional skills, academic, cognitive, behavioral, and social skills that directly affect the student’s ability to access the general education curriculum and other learning and social experiences.

**English Learner (EL) or student learning English**—A student who has limited skills in speaking, reading, and or writing English, as measured by the State-mandated LEP assessment ([Board Rule R277-404](#)).

**Essential Elements**—Alternate Academic Achievement Standards that are directly aligned to Utah Core Standards. Alternate Achievement Standards are reduced in depth, breadth and complexity for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

**Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**—Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation’s national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students.

**Expected Behavior**—Formal rules or unwritten social rules expected in an environment.

**Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**—A federal law that protects students’ personally identifying information listed in student records, identifies rights regarding records, and outlines rules regarding access to records without parent permission.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**—An education that is individualized for a student with a disability in their least restrictive environment, designed to meet that student’s unique needs, provide access to the general curriculum and the grade-level standards established by the state, and ensure the student receives educational benefit.

**Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)**—A systematic process of identifying problem behaviors and the events that reliably predict occurrence and nonoccurrence of those behaviors and maintain the behaviors across time.

**Growth Mindset**—A belief that obstacles are opportunities for hard work, perseverance, growth, and development and that skills and intelligence can be improved with effort and persistence.

**Immediate Danger**—The imminent danger of physical violence or aggression towards self or others, which is likely to cause serious physical harm.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)**—A written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with Part B of the IDEA and these Rules.

**IEP Team**—A group of individuals that is responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a student with a disability. The required team members are the

parent of the student or an adult student, an LEA representative, not less than one general education teacher of the student (if the student is, or may be, participating in the general education environment), not less than one special education teacher of the student or, where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the student, and a person who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team listed above. For students of transition age, the student must be invited to attend ([34 CFR § 300.321](#)).

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)**—A federal special education law that applies to students with disabilities ages 3 through 21 and ensures they are provided with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that is tailored to their individual needs.

**Instructional**—A period of time scheduled during which students are under the guidance and direction of licensed teachers and paraeducators.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**—To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with students who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if 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.

**Local Education Agency (LEA)**—A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, or school district ([34 CFR § 300.23](#)).

**Modifications**—An instructional decision to make changes to the curriculum, including using a different curriculum, or giving fewer assignments.

**Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**—A framework for implementing systematic, evidence-based practices to maximize student achievement in academics in preparation for and leading to college and career readiness.

**Non-Instructional**—A period of time in a school day during which students do not receive instruction, such as recess and lunch.

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**—The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is responsible for protecting worker



health and safety in the United States. Congress created OSHA in 1971 following its passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for workers.

**Office for Civil Rights (OCR)**—An organization within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that ensures compliance with our nation’s civil rights, conscience and religious freedom, and health information privacy and security laws by investigating complaints and conducting compliance reviews, requiring corrective and remedial action, promulgating policy and regulations, and providing technical assistance and public education for the American people.

**Paraeducator**—A paraprofessional who provides instructional support under the direct supervision of a licensed educator or other licensed/certified professional.

**Paraprofessional**—An individual who performs a non-instructional or instructional supporting role in various educational settings. A paraprofessional may give support in a non-instructional role such as providing parental involvement activities, or in a setting such as the playground or lunchroom.

**Personal Identifiable Information (PII)**—Student information that includes but is not limited to student/family names, home address, social security number/student number, and date of birth.

**Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**—A behavioral approach used in schools to promote positive behavior and school safety. Students are taught behavior strategies and expectations, and the focus is prevention, not punishment.

**Problem Solving Process**—A step-based model for identifying a problem and working to a solution for that problem.

**Reinforcement**—Delivery of a reward or verbal praise to increase positive behavior.

**Related Services**—Transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education, and include speech language pathology and audiology services; interpreting services; psychological services; physical and occupational therapy; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; early identification and assessment of disabilities in students; counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling; orientation and mobility services; and medical services for diagnostic or

evaluation purposes. Related services also include school health services, school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training. The exception is services that apply to students with surgically implanted devices, including cochlear implants.

**Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**—The process through which students acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitude, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions; set and achieve positive goals; feel and show empathy for others; establish and maintain positive relationships; make responsible decisions; and self-advocate.

**Special Education**—Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent(s) or the adult student, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and instruction in physical education. The term includes speech language pathology services and may include other related services, travel training, and applied technology education, if they meet the definition of special education. Special education services are services provided to the student, and do not include consultation between teachers or monitoring a student's grades or work completion. At no cost means that all specially designed instruction is provided without charge but does not preclude incidental fees that are normally charged to nondisabled students or their parent(s) as part of the regular education program.

**Special Education Services**—A range of services provided in public schools at no cost to the parents that may include specially designed instruction and related services and supports through an individualized education program (IEP) for students with disabilities who are determined eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)**—Adapting, as appropriate to the needs of a student who is eligible under these Rules, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction in order to address the unique needs of the student that result from the student's disability; and ensure access of the student to the general curriculum, so that the student can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the LEA that apply to all students.

**Supervising Educator**—The education professional who is licensed to teach or provide services to students in the public school system.

**Supplementary Aids and Services**—Aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with these Rules, including the LRE requirements ([SpEd Rules III.P.-S.](#)).

**Title I**— A federally funded education program that is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). Title I is the largest federally funded education program; designed to provide supplemental support to students who are economically and/or educationally disadvantaged.

**Title III**—A federally funded education program that is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). The purpose of Title III is to help ensure that students learning English or English learners (ELs) attain English language proficiency and meet state academic standards.

**The Utah State Board of Education (USBE)**—A constitutionally established, elected, non-partisan body that exercises general control and supervision over the public education system in Utah, including establishing the Utah Core Standards, state educator licensing policies, and state high school graduation requirements. Its 15 members are elected from geographic areas in Utah to four-year terms.

**Utah Core Standards**—The set of standards that identify the basic knowledge, skills, and competencies- each student is expected to acquire or master as the student advances through the public education system; and that increase in depth and complexity from year to year and focus on consistent and continual progress within and between grade levels and courses.

**Utah Standards for Instructional Paraeducators**—Standards written and approved by the USBE which outline knowledge and skills required of paraeducators working in Utah public schools.