



**2015-2016
PARAPROFESSIONAL
MANUAL**

SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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EMPLOYMENT IN DISTRICT #763

MEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Special Services Department

Special Education Services:

Medford Public Schools offers a wide-range of Special Education Programs and Services. Each student with a disability receives educational programs and support based on their individual needs. Programs and services are provided to students and their families beginning at birth through the age of 21 or completion of a secondary education program. Special education is also available for students attending non public schools.

Special Education teachers in the district provide direct and indirect services to students in the areas of academic, emotional/behavioral, fine and gross motor, social skills, functional skills, adaptive skills, vision, deaf/hard of hearing, speech/language therapy, and vocational work skills.

The district also offers related services based on individual student need in the areas of Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Developmental Adaptive Physical Education.

Disability Categories:

There are thirteen categories or areas of disability within special education. They are as follows:

- ✓ Autism Spectrum Disorders
- ✓ Blind-Visually Impaired
- ✓ Deaf-Blind
- ✓ Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- ✓ Developmental Cognitive Disability
- ✓ Developmental Delay
- ✓ Emotional-Behavioral Disability
- ✓ Other Health Disability
- ✓ Severe Multiply Impairment
- ✓ Specific Learning Disability
- ✓ Speech-Language Impairment
- ✓ Traumatic Brain Injury

Position Description

- TITLE:** Paraprofessional: Special Education
- REPORTS TO:** Building Principal and Special Education Director
- CLASSIFICATION:** Non-Certified-Grade 2
- QUALIFICATIONS:** High School Diploma
- JOB GOAL:** Assist the special education teacher in implementing a well-organized, individualized special education program for students.

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Provide support for students in general education classrooms (e.g. clarify directions, model, redirect attention, modify and adapt assignments per teacher direction).
2. Supplement instructional activities under the direction of a special education teacher or related services provider. Work with individual students or small groups.
3. Reinforce drill and review previously taught skills and monitor independent work completion.
4. Maintain a high degree of confidentiality.
5. Provide supervision to ensure safety for special education students during instructional periods, community activities, before school and at dismissal.
6. Assist students with and encourage independence in self help skills related to dressing, feeding, hygiene and toileting.
7. Assist the student to develop independence in problem solving, making choices and task completion by allowing the child to function with as little intervention as possible.
8. Observe, record and chart information about student performance, behaviors and learning styles.
9. Assist with and/or implement behavioral management and intervention plans under the direction of the special education teacher.
10. Assist teacher to safely lift and transfer students.
11. Follow teacher instructions regarding the use of walkers, wheelchairs, standers, assistive technology equipment and safety restraints during seating.
12. Employee is responsible to be knowledgeable about all district policy.

13. This job description is not intended to be all-inclusive, and employee will also perform other reasonable related business duties as assigned by immediate supervisor and other management.

Employee Acknowledgement

Date

This organization reserves the right to revise or change job duties and responsibilities as the need arises. This job description does not constitute a written or implied contract of employment.

Minnesota State Board of Education Special Education Rules

MN 3525.0200 Definition of Paraprofessional SPECIAL EDUCATION

Subp. 10a. Paraprofessional. “Paraprofessional” means a district employee who is primarily engaged in direct instruction with one or more pupils for instructional activities, physical or behavior management, or other purposes under the direction of a regular education or special education teacher or related services provider.

Minnesota State Laws Regarding Paraprofessionals

Minnesota Statute 125A.08(b) SCHOOL DISTRICT OBLIGATIONS.

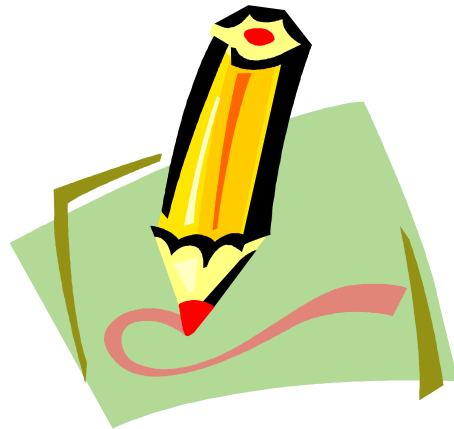
(b) For paraprofessionals employed to work in programs for students with disabilities, the school board in each district shall ensure that:

(1) before or immediately upon employment, each paraprofessional develops sufficient knowledge and skills in emergency procedures, building orientation, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, vulnerability, and reportability, among other things, to begin meeting the needs of the students with whom the paraprofessional works;

(2) annual training opportunities are available to enable the paraprofessional to continue to further develop the knowledge and skills that are specific to the students with whom the paraprofessional works, including understanding disabilities, following lesson plans, and implementing follow-up instructional procedures and activities;

and (3) a district-wide process obligates each paraprofessional to work under the ongoing direction of a licensed teacher and, where appropriate and possible, the supervision of a school nurse.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS



Roles and Responsibilities of Team Members

Area/Setting	Teacher/Service Provider	Paraprofessional
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans weekly schedules for students and adults • Plans lessons and activities • Sets up data collection system for goals and objectives • Communicates decisions and plans • Communicates needs of the students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements plan following the directions of the teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For daily activities - Observes and records student performance/skills - Facilitates inclusion - Communicates student progress to teachers
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses student skill levels • Administers tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists with data collection • Assists in monitoring student performance
Individualized Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and implements individual plans • Communicates with team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carries out the plan under the direction of the teacher and/or related service providers
Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With team input determines goals and objectives • Develops lessons and instructional strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carries out lessons and strategies to meet objectives under the direction of teacher and/or related service providers
Instruction and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives initial instruction of lessons for students • Provides direct instruction for skills development • Consults with paraprofessionals for demonstration of data collection and skills instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides repetition and practice of skills learned • Reinforces the lessons using teacher directed strategies • Collects data using teacher directed data collection systems
Behavior Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates and plans behavior management strategies for students • Creates and implements behavior support plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements behavior strategies and behavior support plans under the direction of teacher • Collects data on behavior
Working with Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets with parents and team members • Initiates conferences concerning planning and review • Initiates parent communication systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides data and information to be communicated to parents and team members • Communicates with parents in coordination with teacher • May be requested to attend IFSP/IEP meeting or staffing
Training of Paraprofessionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides on-the-job training • Models instructional techniques and strategies • Provides time to collaborate • Problem solves as a team • Assesses training needs/skills of paraprofessional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates needs to teacher and supervisor • Asks for clarification and help when needed • Requests training, both formal and informal, for increasing skills • Attends district and/or building training as directed

Responsibilities of Teachers Directing the Work of Paraprofessionals

Teachers are responsible for the following:

- Planning work assignments for paraprofessionals based on program objectives, learner needs, and the readiness of paraprofessionals to perform the task.
- Developing daily and weekly schedules for paraprofessionals.
- Planning and delegating non-instructional activities to paraprofessionals (e.g., inventorying supplies, filing information, reproducing instructional materials, & reviewing parental permission forms for participating in field trips).
- Monitoring and documenting the day-to-day performance of paraprofessionals.
- Providing feedback and on-the-job training to effectively integrate paraprofessionals into the instructional process and the team.
- Sharing relevant information with administrators about the strengths and any additional training paraprofessionals may require.

From *Paraprofessionals in Schools: Strengthening the Educational Team*, by A.L. Pickett, 2007

The Paraprofessional's Role in Daily Practice

Area/Setting	Expectation or Performance Indicator
Setting and the Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraprofessionals make daily accommodations and modifications for students under the direction of teachers • May keep daily practice records, notes, and data • Will talk through decisions, plans and strategies with teachers and related service providers • Communicates openly with teachers and supervisor • Provides daily information and data to teachers
Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraprofessionals provides daily monitoring and reports results and observations to teachers • Informal observations are provided to teachers
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraprofessionals help determine objectives and progress on objectives • Updates status of objectives based on data collected on a daily student contact
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms and activities • Paraprofessionals provide follow-up instruction, review and practice of learned skills • Collects data, uses established data collection systems, and reports data to teachers • Provides review, repetition and practice of learned skills across educational settings
Behavior Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraprofessionals provide feedback on behavior strategies to teachers based on daily contact with students • Collects data, uses established data collection systems, and reports data to teachers • The team modifies students' environments as needed based on data based decisions
Working with Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraprofessionals may communicate with parent in consultation with teachers • Parameters of paraprofessional-parent communication is set with teacher and district input
Individualized Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraprofessionals may attend IFSP/IEP meetings upon request • Communicate observations, data collected, and information obtained across educational settings to teachers

Modified From: Module One. *The Paraprofessional: An Introduction*. Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 1995.

Legal and Ethical Duties of a Paraprofessional

Paraprofessionals must:

- Maintain confidentiality
- Respect the legal and human rights of student and families
- Follow district policies for the health and safety of students
- Understand roles and responsibilities of the educational staff
- Follow the directions of teachers and other supervisors
- Follow the chain of command for administrative procedures
- Demonstrate dependability, integrity, respect for student differences and other standards of ethical conduct
- Demonstrate a willingness to participate in training activities to improve performance

Expectations and Professionalism on the Job

Just as the teachers with whom we work are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is worthy of their profession, we, as paraprofessionals, are expected to do likewise. Although this is not always well defined in black and white, there are certain unwritten standards which paraprofessionals are expected to exemplify. Since it is the community which expects this, and since it is the community's children with whom paraprofessionals are working, these expectations are understandable. Paraprofessionals are often closer to students than is anyone else. With this in mind, we, as paraprofessionals, should try to maintain an awareness of the example we are setting.

Because paraprofessionals are not teachers, but often function like teachers, the role of the paraprofessional is often perceived differently. This can sometimes present problems which paraprofessionals should be prepared to face. Parents tend to perceive paraprofessionals as one of their peers, and may not recognize the restrictions placed upon paraprofessionals. Parents may ask us about a neighbor child who is receiving special services when they would not think of asking the same questions of a certified teacher. This is simply because parents fail to recognize the restrictions of confidentiality which comes with our role as a paraprofessional. This tends to happen more often in a smaller or rural community where ties are closer. In such cases, we must be straightforward in explaining the restrictions of confidentiality, even though their questions may stem from genuine neighborly concern or personal friendship.

On the other hand, students often think of paraprofessionals as being another teacher. They do not see the difference in our roles. Because students often confide in teachers, and because paraprofessionals often spend more time with certain students than the actual teacher, students may share privileged information with us. This information has been entrusted to us, and that trust should not be violated. It should be treated with respect and held in confidence.

Because the duties of a paraprofessional are often very similar to those of the teacher, our code of ethics is based on respect for others and a belief in human dignity. The code of ethics provides us with a solid foundation.

Professional, Ethical, and Legal Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessional team members are responsible for the following:

- Practicing standards of professional and ethical conduct approved by the school district.
- Respecting the legal and human rights of children, youth, their families, and school staff.
- Performing tasks only for which they are trained.
- Recognizing and respecting distinctions in the roles of teachers, other professional practitioners, and paraprofessionals.
- Performing assigned tasks under the direction of teachers in a manner consistent with guidelines established by the district and professional organization representing different areas of education and related services.
- Carrying out instructional activities, behavior management plans, and other tasks that are planned, modified, and assessed by teachers.
- Sharing information with parents about their child's performance as directed by the supervising teacher.
- Following LEA procedures for maintaining the confidentiality of written and oral records concerned with learner's academic performance and progress, results of formal and informal tests, behaviors, lifestyles, health and medical history, and other information about students and their families.
- Sharing confidential information only with supervising teachers or other designated staff.
- Not using language or actions that discriminate against learners, their families, and staff members based on differences in ability, race, culture, lifestyles, religion or sex.
- Following guidelines established by the school district to protect the health, safety, and well-being of learners and staff members.
- Following the chain of command established by the district to address policy questions, systems issues, and personnel practices; when problems cannot be resolved, following the district's grievance procedure.
- Participating with administrators and other stakeholders in creating and implementing opportunities for career development and advancement linked to identified skills and knowledge required by paraprofessionals.
- Participating in opportunities for continuing education.

From *Paraprofessionals in Schools: Strengthening the Educational Team*, by A.L. Pickett, 2007.

Code of Ethics for Paraprofessionals

The paraprofessional should discuss the children's limitations only with the supervising teacher and those directly involved with the child's educational program.

The paraprofessional should refrain from:

- Airing should problems and confidential matters, including personalities outside of school circles.
- Discussing administrative, interdepartmental and interschool problems in the presence of pupils.
- Talking or "gossiping" about problems with those who cannot assist in the solution.
- Expressing differences of opinion or dissatisfaction with the supervising teacher in the presence of students.

The paraprofessional must:

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Respect the legal and human rights of children, youth and their families.
- Follow school district policies for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of students.
- Demonstrate an understanding of distinctions in roles of the various educational personnel.
- Follow the directions of teachers and other supervisors.
- Follow the chain of command for various administrative procedures.
- Demonstrate dependability, integrity, respect for individual differences, and other standards of ethical conduct.
- Demonstrate a willingness to participate in training activities to improve performance.

"Paraprofessionals are respected and supported as integral team members responsible for assisting in the delivery of instruction and other student related activities"

What Paraprofessionals Need to Know About Confidentiality

Parental Access to Student Records

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Key Points:

- Federal law protects the privacy of student educational records.
- Parents or age eligible students (18yrs.) have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school.
- Schools must have written permission from the parent in order to release any information from the education record.

Maintaining Confidentiality When Working with Students and Families

Key Points:

- The MN Government Data Practices Act protects individuals by prohibiting the sharing of information about them without their permission.
- Confidentiality is one of the most critical and important aspects of your job as a paraprofessional.
- It's your legal responsibility to observe both the rights of individuals and of parents in regards to data privacy.
- It is best to only share information about a student with the educational team.
- Follow the NEED TO KNOW policy as outlined by the district.

“Needs” Checklist for Paraprofessionals

Use the checklists outlined below to acclimate yourself to your job, the building and district.

To be handled at the building level:

- ✓ Name of immediate supervisor and contact information.
- ✓ Introduction to other staff with who you will have contact.
- ✓ List of all staff/personnel, including room, phone numbers and positions.
- ✓ Location and use of phones and number to be reached at work.
- ✓ Copy of Personnel Directory for building and district.
- ✓ Map and/or tour of the building and district.
- ✓ District school calendar and building site calendar.
- ✓ District and building Code of Conduct, publications on Respectful Behavior and Harassment Policy.
- ✓ Access to paraprofessional seniority list.
- ✓ Policy and procedure for leaving the building during regular school hours.
- ✓ Calling tree for school closings.
- ✓ Break/lunch period. Refer to Paraprofessional Contract Agreement and discuss with teacher and/or supervisor.
- ✓ Procedures for ordering lunch and buying lunch tickets.
- ✓ Duties/responsibilities regarding lounge duty, sunshine fund, etc.
- ✓ Behavior management training and requirements for training.
- ✓ Familiarity with the performance appraisal process and Minnesota Paraprofessional Core Competencies.
- ✓ Sources of staff development opportunities at the building, district, regional and state levels.
- ✓ Procedure for requesting an absence from work.
- ✓ Procedure for calling in absence from work and substitute request.
- ✓ Procedure for reporting an injury to self or student.
- ✓ Policy regarding building visitors.
- ✓ Emergency Procedures and Crisis Management Procedures.
- ✓ Work room and supply room guidelines.
- ✓ Discuss opportunities for involvement with building and district organizations, committees, and activities.
- ✓ Procedures for Health and Safety including disease, illness, and bloodborne pathogens.

To be handled by special education staff:

- ✓ Paraprofessional substitute folder checklist.
- ✓ Name of building paraprofessional mentor and building representative.
- ✓ Documentation and reporting procedures for student incidents.
- ✓ Policy regarding communication with parents.
- ✓ Guidelines for use of staff development hours (check paraprofessional contract).
- ✓ Meeting with case manager or service provider, classroom teacher, related service providers, and paraprofessional at the beginning of the school year regarding:
 - Work Schedule
 - Students’ IEP goals, objectives, learning styles, interests, materials needed, FBA/BSP, and data collection systems.
 - Communication process and systems with teachers and paraprofessionals.

- Accommodations and modifications for students.
 - Behavior management training, systems, and interventions.
 - Health and safety precautions and/or concerns.
- ✓ Periodic meetings with service provider, classroom teacher, and paraprofessional to discuss progress and/or any needed changes in technique, style, expectations, etc.
 - ✓ Pertinent information from conferences and IFSP/IEP meetings shared with paraprofessional.
 - ✓ Policy regarding accessibility to students' special services file.
 - ✓ Procedures for sanitizing toys, equipment, materials or play/work areas when blood or body fluids are presents. This may require custodial or health office assistance.
 - ✓ Procedure/guidelines for student removal from class. Discuss who decides when and where to take the student and who deals with immediate needs of students.)
 - ✓ Procedure for requesting immediate assistance due to safety or health needs.
 - ✓ Guidelines for monitoring a student in "in-school" suspension.
 - ✓ Copy or access to the Paraprofessional Handbook.

To be handled by Human Resources (District Administrative Office):

- ✓ Instructions for calling in absence from work.
- ✓ List of substitute names.
- ✓ Guidelines for reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect, Mandated Reporting.
- ✓ How to report an injury of self or a student.
- ✓ Blood borne pathogen information.
- ✓ Copy or access to Paraprofessional Handbook.
- ✓ Procedure to obtain mandated employee ID badge.
- ✓ Copy of mast agreement for Paraprofessionals.
- ✓ Name of officers and/or negotiators representing paraprofessionals.
- ✓ In-service information regarding life, dental, medical insurance plans and options, and investment saving plan options.
- ✓ Data Privacy and confidentiality.
- ✓ Right to Know.
- ✓ Guidelines for computer and internet usage.
- ✓ Pay roll and time sheet instructions and pay periods.
- ✓ Direction for direct deposit of pay checks.
- ✓ ISD 763 Staff Handbook.

Communication and Questions to Ask

Effective Communication

- Listen actively
- Know, respect, and understand attitudes
- Share common vocabulary
- Be aware of non-verbal cues
- Be clear on directions and expectations
- Be aware of special interests and talents
- Create an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, respect and loyalty

Questions You Need to Ask

Communication:

- How will we communicate about the students (e.g., lesson plans, progress reports, written logs, regularly scheduled time, etc.)?
- What do you want me to communicate to you on a regular basis?
- What and how should I communicate with parents, teachers and staff?

Academic/Instructional:

- What are the needs of the student(s) with whom I will be working?
- Are there special instructional activities I should use with specific students?
- What are the priorities for each student I will be working with?
- What lesson plan system will you provide?
- How should I report results of academic work to you?
- Where should I document information regarding academics, behavior, schedule changes, etc.

Classroom Behavior Supports:

- What is your classroom positive behavior support plan?
- What are your classroom rules?
- What are the strengths and interests of the students I'll be working with?
- How should I communicate to you regarding students' behavior?
- What are your typical classroom routines and schedules?

Emergency Procedures

- Discuss Emergency Procedures with the teacher who directs your work.
- Discuss any health needs of your student(s) with the building nurse.
- Discuss other building/staff procedures or policies with teachers.

If you have any questions regarding Paraprofessional Orientation, please contact your special education teacher, principal, or supervisor in Special Services.

Checklist for Paraprofessional Substitute Folders

When calling for substitute, please provide the substitute's name and phone number to building administration and teachers. The information below is to be used as a guideline for creation of your substitute folder.

Paraprofessional Substitute Folder:

- Name of folder owner and building contact information.
- List of students (first name and last initial), room number, teacher, case manager, and service provider.
- A copy of your daily schedule.
- A copy of the case manager or service provider's daily schedule.
- Map of the building.
- Safe location for personal belongings.
- Procedure for lunch and/or ordering lunch.
- Location of staff lounge, restroom, and private telephone.

- Emergency procedures, drills, and responsibilities.
- Procedures to be followed for health, safety and/or student behavior problems.
- Procedures and emergency phone numbers for teachers and administration.
- Students' IFSP/IEP goals, objectives, FBA/BSP, expectations, student learning styles, and instructional techniques.
- Data collection systems, sheets, and instructions for how to record the data.
- Information specific to student health or safety concerns (i.e., seizures, diabetes, chronic disease or medical conditions, etc.).
- Universal safety procedure outline for handling blood or body fluids.
- Sub form to be completed and turned in at the end of the day.
- Sub folder update, sub initial and turn in at the end of the day.
- Instruct the sub to confer with the teacher regarding special instructions or questions.
- Procedure for reporting accident or injury to student, self or others.
- Data Privacy and need for maintaining confidentiality.
- Code of Ethics for Paraprofessionals.

Tips for Paraprofessionals Working with Students Receiving Special Education Services

Building and Classrooms:

- At the beginning of the year, clarify rules, procedures, and your responsibilities.
- Inquire about availability of textbook or teacher's manual for your use.
- If you are quite certain of what the teacher wants, initiate and do not wait to be told.
- Try to be inconspicuous whenever the teacher wants the attention of the class.
- Inform the teacher when you take a student to another location.
- Know emergency procedures and drill procedures as well as your responsibilities.
- Be observant of the teacher's style of teaching and try to fit in and work together.
- Be familiar with building and classroom respect and behavior policies and hold all student accountable for them.
- Foster student independence → when a student can do a task, let him/her do it, even if it takes longer, is not quite perfect, or you see the student struggling to do the task.

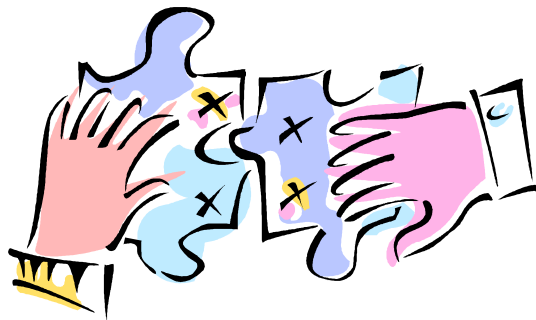
Special Education Teacher and Related Service Providers:

- At the beginning of the year ask to meet with the case manager, service provider, classroom teacher and possibly the previous paraprofessional or classroom teacher to discuss specifics of the IEP goals, objectives and expectations.
- It is recommended that written and phone contact with parents be done by the teacher/case manager and/or related service provider.
- Request periodic meetings with the teachers and case manager and/or related service providers to discuss student progress toward goals and expectations for students.
- Be informed regarding your role in data collection and documenting information about students.
- Observe strict confidentiality practice in all educational settings and at all times.
- Be aware of any health and safety issues regarding students or self.
- Be aware of Emergency Procedures in the building or for individual students (evacuation procedures, fire, weather, etc.).

Students Receiving Special Education Services:

- Avoid working alone with students behind closed doors.
- Treat students with special needs as much like non-disabled peers as possible.
- Listen to and communicate with the students.
- Keep a sense of humor and celebrate the small successes.
- Challenge the students to achieve to the best of his/her abilities.
- Find a balance, observe student behavior, and avoid overwhelming a student. Work on one problem area at a time.
- Win cooperative and motivate the student to try a task rather than demand compliance.
- Lead the student to success and accomplishment, then reward with positive comments.
- Be observant, document and record data and observations, and report such to teachers.
- Be consistent and follow through with expectations, rules and behavior management techniques and/or behavior support plans.
- Establish a trusting, accepting, and positive rapport with your students.
- Ask for and give respect to your students.
- Use natural consequences when possible; students learn best by doing and experiencing things first hand.
- When possible, become an “invisible support” so that the student performs the tasks independently (as much as possible).
- Ask yourself, “Am I as far away as I can safely be?” And, “Can the student perform this task without my direct assistance?”.
- Know your students’ learning styles and teach to them. Discuss this with teachers.
- In situations when behavior has escalated, call for help if needed, and wait for the student to calm down before attempting to discuss or problem solve the situation.
- Remember → promote independence, self-reliance, and problem solving skills.
- Reinforce the use of acceptable social skills. Model for student the methods of making good choices and establishing and maintaining friendships.
- When possible, present limited options or choices to students and allow them to the choice.
- Consult with teachers on how to accommodate and/or modify curriculum and assignments for students.
- For students with challenging behavior, try to:
 - Anticipate problems and use preventative measures.
 - Avoid power struggles, as there are no winners.
 - Allow a student to “save face”.
 - Redirect to the task with a different explanation. Give time for the student to respond.
 - State that the “behavior” is not appropriate, rather than the “person” is not appropriate.
 - If the behavior plan, technique, method or intervention is not working after weeks of trial, notify the teacher or case manager so that the plan can be discussed and modified.

CORE COMPETENCIES FOR MINNESOTA PARAPROFESSIONALS



Guiding Principles for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

- Paraprofessionals are respected and supported as integral team members responsible for assisting in the delivery of instruction and other student related activities.
- The entire instructional team participates within clearly defined roles in a dynamic changing environment to provide an appropriate educational program for students.
- To ensure quality education and safety for students and staff, paraprofessionals are provided with a district orientation and training prior to assuming those responsibilities.
- Teachers and others responsible for the work of paraprofessionals have the skills necessary to work effectively with paraprofessionals.
- By recognizing paraprofessionals' training, responsibilities, experience, and skill levels, they are placed in positions for which they are qualified, which effectively and efficiently use their skills to enhance the continuity and quality of services for students.
- Administrators exercise leadership by recognizing paraprofessionals as educational partners.

From: Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium
<http://ici2.umn.edu/para/New/Spotlight/Past/eLinkFacts.htm>

Core Instructional Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

Competencies are Based on these Guiding Principles Set by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium

- ✓ Paraprofessionals are respected and supported as integral team members responsible for assisting in the delivery of instruction and other student related activities.
- ✓ The entire instructional team participates within clearly defined roles in a dynamic changing environment to provide an appropriate educational program for students.
- ✓ To ensure quality education and safety for students and staff, paraprofessionals are provided with a district orientation and training prior to assuming those responsibilities.
- ✓ Teachers and others responsible for the work of paraprofessionals have the skills necessary to work effectively with paraprofessionals.
- ✓ By recognizing paraprofessionals' training, responsibilities, experience, and skill levels, they are placed in positions for which they are qualified, which effectively and efficiently use their skills to enhance the continuity and quality of services for students.
- ✓ Administrators exercise leadership by recognizing paraprofessionals as educational partners.

General Information

To be competent in a job, an individual must have knowledge, skills, and abilities to do all that is expected and required. The competencies are statements that indicate the knowledge and skills needed for instructional paraprofessionals to work successfully in educational settings.

This is a revised version of the competencies, designed for all Minnesota instructional paraprofessionals, including Special Education, Title I, Limited English Proficient, Bilingual, English Language Learner, Career and Technical Education, American Indian Education, as well as locally funded paraprofessionals. Although this version has a new numbering system, the competencies from the previous version can be identified within this version by using the codes provided in parenthesis.

Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Education

1.1 Sensitivity to the beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures and how these impact the relationships between children, families, and schooling. (1K1)

1.2 Awareness of the human and legal rights and responsibilities of parents and children/youth as they relate to students. (1K2)

1.3 Understanding of the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel. (1K3)

1.4 Understanding of the purposes and goals of education and instruction for all students. (1K4)

1.5 Knowledge of relevant laws, rules, regulations, and local district policies and procedures to ensure paraprofessionals work within the parameters. (1K5, 1S1)

Characteristics of Students

2.1 Knowledge of the similarities and differences between cognitive, communicative, physical, social, and emotional needs of students and the factors that influence these different needs. (2K1)

2.2 Awareness of the effects that exceptional conditions have on a student's life, family, school, and community. (2K2)

2.3 Knowledge of and respect for the diverse backgrounds (cultural, linguistic, environmental) of students and how these characteristics affect the student's life and learning. (2K3)

2.4 Understanding of the effects and side-effects of medications commonly prescribed for students. (2K4)

2.5 Awareness of the potential implications of various student characteristics on learning and achievement. (2K5)

Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation

3.1 Awareness of the tools used by the district for student assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation. (3K1)

3.2 Ability to collect and record performance data on students under the direction of a licensed teacher, while respecting student confidentiality and the laws regarding ethical practices of assessment. (3S1, 3S2)

Instructional Content and Practice

4.1 Ability to utilize learning styles theory in supporting instructional practices. (4K1)

4.2 Awareness of the challenges and expectations of various learning environments. (4K2)

4.3 Ability to establish and maintain rapport with students. (4S1)

4.4 Ability to draw on knowledge and resources regarding a variety of developmental and age-appropriate instructional methods, techniques, and materials when supporting the instruction of the licensed teacher. (4K3, 4S2)

4.5 Ability to assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials according to the needs of the student, under the direction of a licensed teacher. (4S3)

4.6 Ability to follow oral and written direction of licensed teachers, seeking clarification as needed. (4S4)

Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment

5.1 Ability to assist and reinforce elements that support a safe, healthy, and effective teaching and learning environment. (5K1, 5S1)

5.2 Awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning. (5K2)

5.3 Understanding of strategies for assisting with the inclusion of students in various settings. (5K3)

5.4 Ability to use strategies that promote the student's independence. (5S3)

5.5 Awareness of how paraprofessionals can impact the overall learning environment for students and staff. (5K4)

5.6 Ability to prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning, as directed by a licensed teacher. (5S2)

Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills

6.1 Understanding of applicable laws, rules and regulations, and procedural safeguards regarding the management of student behaviors. (6K1)

- 6.2 Understanding of ethical considerations inherent in the management of student behaviors. (6K2)
- 6.3 Understanding of the district-building behavior management plans for students. (6K7)
- 6.4 Awareness of the primary factors that influence student behavior. (6K3)
- 6.5 Ability to effectively employ a variety of strategies that reinforce positive behavior. (6K6, 6S1, 6S2)
- 6.6 Ability to collect objective and accurate information on student behavior to be provided to licensed professionals, as appropriate and directed by a licensed teacher. (6S3)
- 6.7 Awareness of the social skills needed for current and future environments. (6K4)
- 6.8 Ability to reinforce the development of student social skills by using appropriate strategies to modify the environment. (6K5, 6S4)

Communication and Collaborative Partnerships

- 7.1 Ability to participate as a member of the educational team when requested to attend conferences with families or primary caregivers, with an understanding of some of the concerns of parents. (7K1, 7S5)
- 7.2 Ability to use ethical practices for confidential communication about students. (7S1)
- 7.3 Ability to be sensitive and respectful in communications regarding all children and families – regardless of differences in cultural heritage, lifestyle, values, and home environment. (7S4, 7S7)
- 7.4 Awareness of the roles of students, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school and community personnel in planning an individualized program, when relevant. (7K2)
- 7.5 Ability to employ constructive communication strategies and approaches in working with and responding to students, their families, and school and community personnel. (7S2,7S8)
- 7.6 Ability to follow teacher instructions while conferring and collaborating with them around student schedules, instructional goals, and performance. (7S3)
- 7.7 Ability to understand and use appropriate educational terminology regarding students, roles, and instructional activities. (7S6)

Professionalism and Ethical Practices

- 8.1 Ability to demonstrate a commitment to assisting students in reaching their highest potential, including the modeling of positive behavior. (8K1, 8S1)

- 8.2 Ability to carry out responsibilities in a manner that demonstrates knowledge of, and a positive respect for, the distinctions between the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, professionals, and other support personnel. (8S2)
- 8.3 Perform duties within the context of written standards and policies of the school, state, or agency where they are employed. (8S7)
- 8.4 Perform duties in a manner that demonstrates the ability to separate personal issues from one's employment responsibilities. (8S3)
- 8.5 Ability to show respect for the diversity of students. (8S4)
- 8.6 Ability to demonstrate proficiency in academic skills (including oral and written communication) while knowing how to self-evaluate one's own knowledge of the content being taught. (8S6)
- 8.7 Ability to show a willingness to participate in on-going staff development, self-evaluation, and apply constructive feedback. (8S5)

Academic Instructional Skills In Math

- 9.1M Ability to support and reinforce the instruction of students in math following written and oral lesson plans developed by licensed teachers.
- 9.2M Ability to utilize effective developmental, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive instructional strategies in math that support the instruction of licensed teachers.
- 9.3M Ability to access and effectively use available resources (including technology) for supporting teacher instruction in the subject of math. (Examples: internet resources, instructional manuals, tangibles, colleagues, etc.)
- 9.4M Ability to support a licensed teacher in the gathering and recording of data regarding student performance in the area of math. (Examples: rubric instruments, curriculum based measurement, etc.)
- 9.5M Knowledge of terminology related to the instruction of math.
- 9.6M Understand how the Minnesota Standards and Testing (including state and local testing) direct the teaching of math in Minnesota.

Academic Instructional Skills In Reading

- 9.1R Ability to support and reinforce the instruction of students in reading following written and oral lesson plans developed by licensed teachers.
- 9.2R Ability to utilize effective developmental, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive instructional strategies in reading that support the instruction of licensed teachers.
- 9.3R Ability to access and effectively use available resources (including technology) for supporting teacher instruction in the subject of reading. (Examples: internet resources, instructional manuals, tangibles, colleagues, etc.)

9.4R Ability to support a licensed teacher in the gathering and recording of data regarding student performance in the area of reading. (Examples: rubric instruments, curriculum-based measurement, etc.)

9.5R Knowledge of terminology related to the instruction of reading.

9.6R Understand how the Minnesota Standards and Testing (including state and local testing) direct the teaching of reading in Minnesota.

Academic Instructional Skills In Writing

9.1W Ability to support and reinforce the instruction of students in writing following written and oral lesson plans developed by licensed teachers.

9.2W Ability to utilize effective developmental, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive instructional strategies in writing that support the instruction of licensed teachers.

9.3W Ability to access and effectively use available resources (including technology) for supporting teacher instruction in the subject of writing. (Examples: internet resources, instructional manuals, tangibles, colleagues, etc.)

9.4W Ability to support a licensed teacher in the gathering and recording of data regarding student performance in the area of writing. (Examples: rubric instruments, curriculum based measurement, etc.)

9.5W Knowledge of terminology related to the instruction of writing.

9.6W Understand how the Minnesota Standards and Testing (including state and local testing) direct the teaching of writing in Minnesota.

Specialized Behavior Management Competencies

For Paraprofessionals in Minnesota

K=Knowledge-based competency

S=Skill-based competency

- K1 Understanding of personality and social/emotional development, and that behavior is patterned and addresses a function.
- K2 Understanding of behavioral/emotional challenges and their interaction with other disabilities, and the value of perceiving the behavior as separate from the individual.
- K3 Understanding of the need for utilizing formal and informal assessment strategies in obtaining information necessary for educational and behavioral programming for individual students.
- K4 Understanding of the rationale, components, operation and evaluation of the program models in which they are working.
- S1 Ability to document change in learner behavior in both academic and social areas.
- S2 Ability to observe and record pupil behavior utilizing different social rating systems.
- S3 Demonstrate the use of different methods to intervene proactively to change and maintain behavior
- S4 Ability to implement remedial techniques in academic skill areas with learners.
- S5 Ability to use materials designed for skill development in the social areas.
- S6 Ability to collaborate effectively with team members and families, including anticipating teacher needs when working with students who have challenging behavior
- S7 Ability to build trusting relationships with students while remaining professional and objective.

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Autism Spectrum Disorders Specialized Competencies

K=Knowledge-based competency

S=Skill-based competency

- K1 Understanding of the range of characteristics of students with ASD in the social, communication, and behavioral domains and the implications of various learning styles unique to students with ASD.
- K2 Understanding of the meaning and implications of the following terms: visual learner, concrete/abstract learning, stress and anxiety issues, sensory differences/issues, social-communication issues, idiosyncratic behaviors/issues, direct teaching/incidental learning.
- K3 Understanding of the importance of building multiple relationships among the student, their peers, and other adults in various settings, so that the student's independence is emphasized.
- K4 Understanding of the importance of building multiple relationships among the student, their peers, and other adults in various settings, so that the student's independence is emphasized.
- S1 Demonstrates the ability to provide structure and predictability for the student through consistent implementation of direct teaching methods that support prior learning and ongoing development of social, communication, and adaptive behavioral skills, etc. under the direction of licensed staff.
- S2 Demonstrates the ability to adapt, modify, or structure the environment based on an understanding of which auditory, visual, or other sensory stimuli may be distracting, offensive, reinforcing, or calming for the individual student under the direction of licensed staff.
- S3 Demonstrates the ability to consistently use various visual strategies, including environmental structuring, schedules, visual cues, and social stories to communicate social information and expectations that support the student's learning as directed by the teacher.
- S4 Demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively and consistently, using strategies to help students with ASD communicate effectively, including: modeling and reinforcement, repairing social/communication breakdowns, providing relevant social/communication cues and implementing planned interventions such as picture exchange or symbolic communication systems under the direction of licensed staff.
- S4 Demonstrates the ability to consistently utilize proactive strategies, positive behavioral supports including: structured teaching methods, ABA methods including discrete trial and generalized approaches, and sensory interventions to enhance learning and prevent behavioral problems, and directed by the teacher or related service staff.

S4 Demonstrates the ability to accurately collect data for documenting learner outcomes and reports to the teacher when a strategy is or is not producing the planned effect.

INTERVENTIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS



Behavioral Interventions

Many approaches may be effective in redirecting students to more appropriate behavior when a challenging situation appears to be developing. The goal for educators is to help the student decrease his/her emotional intensity while conveying the fact that they are there to support and to understand the why the student is having a hard time. Adults who are successful at supporting a student through a difficult time are seen by the student as:

- unconditionally caring
- trustworthy
- able to protect them from harm and humiliation
- confident in the student's ability to cope with excessive stress
- confident that the student will learn skills to better cope in the future

The following techniques and strategies are offered as options for redirecting the student to more appropriate behavior. It is important to tailor interventions to the developmental level of the student, both cognitively and socially-emotionally. These options are not intended to be the sole intervention to increase a positive behavior; rather, they are examples of how inappropriate behavior may be de-escalated or redirected so as to avoid the need for more intrusive interventions. As with all interventions, IFSP/IEP teams will want to choose techniques and strategies that support the return of the student to appropriate behavior rather than approach that inadvertently reinforce negative behavior.

Increase Student Control and Choices:

- Teach choice-making and group decision-making.
- Ask students what they need to have a better experience at school.
- Include students in planning and problem solving.
- Increase the number, variety and importance of decisions students make.
- Support students having flexibility in their daily schedules.
- Grant students legitimate power; involve students in leadership roles.
- Support students to transition to the next class/activity at a different time.
- Add interesting activities and experiences that are matched to students' interests and individual needs.
- Support student to self-evaluate their work.
- Support students to choose between various assignments or choose what part of an assignment to do.
- Support students to leave class when needed (to calm, take a short break).
- Support students to choose testing methods.
- Develop assignments which emphasize student's choices, strengths and talents.

Increase Opportunities for Positive Attention:

- Assign students to teacher advisors/mentors.
- Increase the number of friends or allies who know and spend time with students.
- Encourage other student so include the student in activities.
- Engage family, friends, faculty, students in support the students.
- Identify an adult mentor within the community.
- Increase the number of community activities to which students have access.
- Support students to join after school groups/club/teams.

- Increase others' knowledge of students' interests, strengths and preferences.
- Help all students in the class rather than being paired directly with one student.
- Speak and respond to students in ways that model respect and friendship.
- Develop a peer buddy system for students.

Increase Students' Status, Self-Esteem, and Positive Self-Image:

- Support students to be peer mentors and/or tutors.
- Support students' involvement in community service activities.
- Give students assignments which will "guarantee" success.
- Support students to obtain a job.
- Add prosocial skills to students' curricula.
- Support students to access high status materials, clothing accessories (in style for age group and community).
- If any characteristics of a student's life reinforce a negative reputation, try to decrease the stigma the students experience.
- Give students high status jobs or roles in the classroom and school.
- Increase amount of time students spend in roles that offer the best opportunities to express their natural abilities or strong interests (i.e., drawing, drama, music, sports, writing, poetry, reading, math).

Match Teaching Strategies to Meet the Student's Strengths:

- Increase the use of hands-on activities, small group instruction, teacher-directed and student-directed activities; decrease or limit large groups activities and lecture format.
- Temporarily change the personnel who are working with the student or otherwise adapt staffing patterns.
- Increase the use of cooperative learning activities.
- Provide students with instruction and frequent feedback on how to work in a group.
- Select instructional groups in advance; rearrange groupings to ensure good matches among students.
- Alter or adapt the schedule of activities.
- Increase the use of activities in which students work independently.
- Eliminate problem activities that serve no important goal or purpose.
- Design alternate activities which achieve the same goal or purpose as problem activities.
- Increase the use of peer partner or tutoring teaching formats and pair students with good behavioral models for class projects.
- Gain student attention prior to giving directions.

Match Teaching Strategies to Meet the Student's Strengths Continued:

- Provide students with written notes, audio tapes of lectures, visual charts, outlines, and written directions.
- Adapt, change or purchase materials.
- Increase the use of a questioning/discussion format.
- Be sure that students know when activities will be finished and how much time they have between activities → pre-warn the student before changes in activities.
- Shorten or break down assignments into smaller, more easily achieved units.
- Increase use of comprehension checks before going on to a new topic.

- Increase use of teacher demonstration, use of visuals, and modeling.
- Change or adapt the settings in which the goal or activity is taught (i.e., general education, community).

More Tips on Neutralizing or Momentarily Calming a Stressful Situation:

- Think about what message you are communicating by:
 - Your body language and proximity to the student (avoid being a threat, chasing, or engaging in a power struggle).
 - How quickly or slowly you are taking or moving.
 - Your tone of voice and your choice of words.
 - The intensity of your response (i.e., if a student is loud or yelling, you need to be calm and use a quiet voice with a slow rate of speaking).
- Try not to lose focus on the struggle; think about what you want the student to do instead (i.e., ideally what the situation should look like).
- Take into consideration that the student may be scared, confused, and embarrassed and may need to “save face”. Provide a fair and logical option to calm the moment.
- Whenever possible, continue the flow of the day. Take a break and re-enter the class or daily schedule when the student is calm and able to re-engage. This will minimize focusing on the “problem behavior”.
- When safety is an issue, interrupt the behavior to avoid injury, supporting, not punishing the person.
- Remember there is a qualitative difference between ignoring a person’s behavior and ignoring a person.
- If necessary, adjust the environment to keep things from getting worse.
- If you think your response is making things worse, stop and re-evaluate.
- Others should continue with their regular date. If you need help, tell others what they should do. If another teacher is dealing with a difficult situation, refrain from intervening unless asked to do so.
- If you need help, ask for it.

General Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodations are often necessary for student is special education. This academic accommodations list is not exhaustive but is provided as a guide or a starting point for your consideration. It is always a good idea to discuss use of accommodations with a classroom teacher and/or special education teacher prior to use.

Listing of Academic Accommodations for Consideration:

- Underline or highlight key words and/or directions.
- Block out parts of visually “busy” worksheets.
- Provide study guides questions prior to reading.
- Give student the option of dictating a creative writing rather than writing the story.
- Use manipulatives, especially in math.
- Give student an oral test rather than a written test.
- Have student repeat directions before starting an assignment.
- Number priorities of work order.
- Provide models of expected work.
- Provide directions both in oral and written form.
- Seat students near good role models.
- Allow student to use study carrel when distracted.
- Provide a daily or weekly time for cleaning desks or lockers.
- Assist student with clearing out unnecessary material before work time.
- Tape a schedule to the student’s desk, locker or planner.
- Allow more time for completion of tasks.
- Talk with case manager regarding necessary accommodations for your student.
- Read the adaptations section of the student’s IEP.

From: Minnesota Pre-Referral Project; Minnesota Department of Education.

CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT



What Paraprofessionals Should Know About Laws Regarding Abuse and Neglect

Mandated Reporting

Key Points:

- If you work with children and/or families, you are legally required to report suspected abuse or neglect. All states impose a civil or criminal penalty on those who don't report incidents.
- The Law requires that the person who believes a child is or has been maltreated make the report to law enforcement or child protection.
- As a mandated reporter it is important to understand some basic laws.

Maltreatment of Minors Act (MN Statutes, 626.556)

Key points:

- Abuse and neglect of children is defined in Minnesota state law.
- Under legal mandate, professionals and paraprofessionals are required to report a suspected incidence of child abuse or neglect.
- Anyone who reports child abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability.
- The reporter's name is confidential, accessible only upon consent of the reporter or by court order.

Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults Act (MN Statutes, 626.557)

Key Points:

- This MN law states that all persons employed by or providing services in a facility required to be regulated by either the MN Dept. of Health or Human Services are mandated reporters.
- Vulnerable adults are those 18 years and older who receive services at or from a facility required to be licensed by the MN Dept. of Health or Human Services.
- A vulnerable adult is dependent upon others for care and protection because of a disability.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Anyone is capable of child abuse and neglect. Although any child can be the victim of child abuse and neglect, statistics have shown that children with a disability have a higher incidence of being abused or neglected than the general population of non-disabled children. Although a number of factors, including the stress of dealing with a child with a disability may contribute to the incidence of child abuse and neglect occurred. It is our responsibility to be aware of physical and behavioral indicators of abuse and/or neglect to act appropriately.

Minnesota law requires that all school personnel report suspected child abuse and neglect. It is not only important and appropriate that paraprofessionals report incidents of child abuse and neglect, but it is your legal obligation to take such action if you suspect child abuse and neglect. Taking appropriate action would begin by informing your supervisors of any suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect based on your observations.

Included in this chapter is a list of some of the physical and behavioral indicators of different types of abuse and neglect. Any of indicators that you observe should be reported to your supervisor. Any of these indicators by themselves may have a legitimate explanation. Certainly, no isolated symptom is automatic proof of child abuse and neglect. These symptoms could result from causes other than child abuse and neglect. In fact, county social workers investigating such cases try to find other causes before suspecting child abuse or neglect. County social workers do their best to eliminate all symptoms of reported child abuse or neglect. The last thing anyone wants to do is falsely accuse innocent parents of abusing or neglecting their children.

At the same time, no one wants to ignore a child or vulnerable adult who is being abused or neglected. Consequently, patterns and combinations of physical and behavioral indicators should be cause for concern and should be reported to your supervisor. Supervisors and administrative staff should initiate the proper process for investigating child abuse and neglect according to Minnesota law.

Signs of Abuse and Neglect

Indicators of Physical Abuse

Unexplained Bruises and Welts:

- On the face, lips, mouth, torso, back, buttocks, thighs (places where children are not ordinarily bruised).
- In various stages of healing (indicating not accidental bruising)
- Clustered in one area (indicating a pattern of abuse)
- Reflecting the shape of the inflicting instrument (e.g., electrical cord, belt buckle.)
- On several different areas (indicating non-accidental repetition).
- Regularly appearing bruise after absence from school, weekend, or vacation.

Unexplained Buns:

- Cigarette (especially in unlikely places like palms, soles of feet, and back).
- Immersion burns (as if a hand or foot was held in boiling water).

- Rope burns (on arms, legs, neck or torso).

Unexplained Fractures:

- Skull, nose, facial structure (object blows).
- In various stages of healing

Unexplained Lacerations or Abrasions:

- To mouth, lips, gums, eyes, (prime targets of impulsive reactions.)
- To external genitalia

Behavioral Indicators of Physical Abuse:

- Leery or avoids adult physical contact.
- Apprehensive when other children cry.
- Extreme range of emotion from aggression to withdrawal.
- Frightened of parents; afraid to go home.
- Is less compliant than most children of a similar age.
- Behaves negatively.
- Seems unhappy.
- Is angry or destructive.
- Socially isolates.
- Displays either no concern or excessive anxiety about separation from parent.

Indicators of Physical Neglect

Physical Indicators or Signs:

- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress.
- Consistent lack of supervision (especially during dangerous activities or for long periods of time).
- Unattended physical problems or medical/dental needs.
- Abandonment.
- Inadequate clothing for weather conditions.

Behavioral Indicators or Signs:

- Begging, stealing food.
- Spending extra time at school when schedules do not necessitate.
- Constant fatigue, listlessness, falling asleep in class.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Delinquency or criminal behavior.
- Truancy or excessive absence from school.
- Self-report that there is no caretaker at home.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators or Signs:

- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
- Pain or itching in the genital area.
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas.
- Venereal disease.
- Pregnancy.
- Frequent urinary tract infections.

Behavioral Indicators or Signs:

- Unwillingness to change for gym or to participate in Physical Education class.
- Withdrawal, fantasy, or infantile behavior.
- Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual behavior.
- Poor peer relationships.
- Delinquent, criminal behavior or run-away.
- Self-reports of Sexual assault.
- Exhibits poor self-esteem.
- Seems frightened or phobic, especially of adults.
- Expresses feeling of shame or guilt.
- Decline in school performance without apparent cause.

Indicators of Emotional Maltreatment

Physical Indicators or Signs:

- Speech Disorders.
- Lags in physical development.
- Failure to thrive.
- Extremely low or high body weight.
- Lack of concern for physical appearance.

Behavioral Indicators or Signs:

- Habitat disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.)
- Conduct disorders (anti-social, destructive, etc.)
- Neurotic traits (trouble sleeping, inhibited play).
- Psychoneurotic reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias)
- Behavior extremes (passive, withdrawn, aggressive)
- Overly adaptive behavior (inappropriately adult or inappropriately infant).
- Developmental lags.
- Attempted suicide.
- Continual worry or anxiety.

*** If you observe any of the indicators listed above, report them to your supervisor.***

414 MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD NEGLECT OR PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to make clear the statutory requirements of school personnel to report suspected child neglect or physical or sexual abuse.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the school district to fully comply with Minn. Stat. § 626.556 requiring school personnel to report suspected child neglect or physical or sexual abuse.
- B. It shall be a violation of this policy for any school personnel to fail to immediately report instances of child neglect, or physical or sexual abuse when the school personnel knows or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Child” means one under age 18.
- B. “Immediately” means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.
- C. “Mandated Reporters” means any school personnel who knows or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years.
- D. “Neglect” means failure by a person responsible for a child's care to supply a child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, health, or medical or other care required for the child's physical or mental health when reasonably able to do so, including a growth delay, which may be referred to as a failure to thrive, that has been diagnosed by a physician and is due to parental neglect; failure to protect a child from conditions or actions which imminently and seriously endanger the child's physical or mental health when reasonably able to do so; failure to provide for necessary supervision or child care arrangements appropriate for a child (considering factors such as the child's age, mental ability, and physical condition, the length of the absence, the environment, whether the child is unable to care for his or her own basic needs or safety or the basic needs or safety of another child in his or her care); or failure to ensure that a child is educated in accordance with state law. Neglect also includes chronic and severe use of alcohol or a controlled substance by a parent or person responsible for the care of the

child that adversely affects the child's basic needs and safety or emotional harm from a pattern of behavior which contributes to impaired emotional functioning of the child which may be demonstrated by a substantial and observable effect in the child's behavior, emotional response, or cognition that is not within the normal range for the child's age and stage of development, with due regard to the child's culture. Neglect does not include spiritual means or prayer for treatment or care of disease where the person responsible for the child's care in good faith has selected such means for treatment or care of disease, except where the lack of medical care may cause imminent and serious danger to the child's health.

- E. "Physical Abuse" means any physical injury, mental injury, or threatened injury, inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care other than by accidental means; or any physical or mental injury that cannot reasonably be explained by the child's history of injuries. ("Mental injury" means an injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of a child as evidenced by an observable or substantial impairment in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior with due regard to the child's culture.) Abuse does not include reasonable and moderate physical discipline of a child administered by a parent or legal guardian which does not result in an injury. Actions which are not reasonable and moderate include, but are not limited to, any of the following that are done in anger or without regard to the safety of the child: (1) throwing, kicking, burning, biting, or cutting a child; (2) striking a child with a closed fist; (3) shaking a child under age three; (4) striking or other actions which result in any nonaccidental injury to a child under 18 months of age; (5) unreasonable interference with a child's breathing; (6) threatening a child with a weapon, as defined in Section 609.09, subdivision 6 of Minnesota Statutes; (7) striking a child under age one on the face or head; (8) purposely giving a child poison, alcohol, or dangerous, harmful, or controlled substances which were not prescribed for the child by a practitioner, in order to control or punish the child, or giving the child other substances that substantially affect the child's behavior, motor coordination, or judgment or that result in sickness or internal injury, or subject the child to medical procedures that would be unnecessary if the child were not exposed to the substances; or (9) unreasonable physical confinement or restraint not permitted under Section 609.379 of Minnesota Statutes including, but not limited to, tying, caging, or chaining.
- F. "School Personnel" means professional employee or professional's delegate of the school district who provides health, educational, social, psychological, law enforcement or child care services.
- G. "Sexual Abuse" means the subjection of a child by a person responsible for the child's care, or by a person in a position of authority to any act which constitutes a violation of Minnesota statutes prohibiting criminal sexual conduct. Such acts include sexual penetration as well as sexual contact. Sexual abuse also includes any act involving a minor which constitutes a violation of Minnesota statutes prohibiting prostitution, or use of a minor in a sexual performance. Sexual abuse includes threatened sexual abuse. (Threatened injury means a statement, overt act, condition, or status that represents a substantial risk of physical or sexual abuse or mental injury.)

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. A mandated reporter as defined herein shall immediately report the neglect or physical or sexual abuse, which he or she knows or has reason to believe is happening or has happened within the preceding three years to the local welfare agency, police department or county sheriff.
- B. If the immediate report has been made orally, by telephone or otherwise, the oral report shall be followed by a written report within 72 hours (exclusive of weekends and holidays) to the appropriate police department, the county sheriff or local welfare agency. The written report shall identify the child, any person believed to be responsible for the abuse or neglect of the child if the person is known, the nature and extent of the abuse or neglect and the name and address of the reporter.
- C. A person mandated by Minnesota law and this policy to report who knows or has reason to believe that a child is neglected or physically or sexually abused, as defined by Minnesota law and this policy, or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor, and such a failure to report may result in discipline.
- D. Submission of a good faith report under Minnesota law and this policy will not adversely affect the reporter's employment, or the child's access to school.
- E. Any person who knowingly or recklessly makes a false report under the provisions of applicable Minnesota law or this policy shall be liable in a civil suit for any actual damages suffered by the person or persons so reported and for any punitive damages set by the court or jury, and the reckless making of a false report may result in discipline. The court may also award attorney's fees.

V. INVESTIGATION

- A. The responsibility for investigating reports of suspected neglect or physical or sexual abuse rests with the appropriate county agency or agencies. The agency responsible for assessing or investigating reports of child maltreatment has the authority to interview the child, the person or persons responsible for the child's care, the alleged perpetrator, and any other person with knowledge of the abuse or neglect for the purpose of gathering the facts, assessing safety and risk to the child, and formulating a plan. The investigating agency may interview the child at school. The interview may take place outside the presence of a school official. The investigating agency, not the school, is responsible for either notifying or withholding notification of the interview to the parent, guardian or person responsible for the child's care. School officials may not disclose to the parent, legal custodian, or guardian the contents of the notification or any other related information regarding the interview until notified in writing by the local welfare or law enforcement agency that the investigation or assessment has been concluded.

- B. When the investigating agency determines that an interview should take place on school property, written notification of intent to interview the child on school property will be received by school officials prior to the interview. The notification shall include the name of the child to be interviewed, the purpose of the interview, and a reference to the statutory authority to conduct an interview on school property.
- C. Except where the alleged perpetrator is believed to be a school official or employee, the time and place, and manner of the interview on school premises shall be within the discretion of school officials, but the local welfare or law enforcement agency shall have the exclusive authority to determine who may attend the interview. The conditions as to time, place, and manner of the interview set by the school officials shall be reasonable and the interview shall be conducted not more than 24 hours after the receipt of the notification unless another time is considered necessary by agreement between the school officials and the local welfare or law enforcement agency. Every effort must be made to reduce the disruption of the educational program of the child, other students, or school employees when an interview is conducted on school premises.
- D. Where the alleged perpetrator is believed to be a school official or employee, the school district shall conduct its own investigation independent of the local welfare or law enforcement agency.

VI. MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL RECORDS CONCERNING ABUSE OR POTENTIAL ABUSE

- A. When a local welfare or local law enforcement agency determines that a potentially abused or abused child should be interviewed on school property, written notification of the agency's intent to interview on school property must be received by school officials prior to the interview. The notification shall include the name of the child to be interviewed, the purpose of the interview, and a reference to the statutory authority to conduct the interview. The notification shall be private data. School officials may not disclose to the parent, legal custodian, or guardian the contents of the notice or any other related information regarding the interview until notified in writing by the local welfare or law enforcement agency that the investigation has been concluded.
- B. All records regarding a report of maltreatment, including any notification of intent to interview which was received by the school as described above in Paragraph A, shall be destroyed by the school only when ordered by the agency conducting the investigation or by a court of competent jurisdiction.

VII. PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE AS SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE

Under certain circumstances, alleged physical or sexual abuse may also be sexual harassment or violence under Minnesota law. If so, the duties relating to the reporting and investigation of such harassment or violence may be applicable.

VIII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING

- A. This policy shall appear in school personnel handbooks.
- B. The school district will develop a method of discussing this policy with school personnel.
- C. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state law.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 626.556 et seq. (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)

SAFETY ON THE JOB



Infectious Diseases – Blood and Body Fluids

Protect Yourself:

- Only employees identified by the district should provide first aid. Instruct injured students in SELF-CARE whenever possible.
- Avoid contact with blood and body fluids. Use gloves and other barriers.
- Use UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS. Treat all blood and body fluids as if there are infectious.
- Attend annual Bloodborne Pathogen training.

Use Approved Clean-Up Procedures:

- Call the building custodian for body fluid clean-up.
- If you must clean up a small amount of blood or body fluid, use a clean-up kit provided by the district. Check with the teacher directing your work for the location of the clean-up kit.

Exposure to Blood

1. An Exposure Occurs When:

- A human bite breaks the skin.
- There is a puncture of skin with a contaminated or potentially contaminated item (needles, razor, tweezers, scissors, etc.)
- A body fluid splashes in eye, nose, or mouth (mucus membrane contact).
- Body fluid comes in contact with an opening in the skin (cut, scratch).

2. If You Have a Blood Exposure:

- Flush/wash area exposed to blood or fluids with soap and water.
- Contact the district nurse and complete the Exposure Incident form.
- You are encouraged to obtain a medical evaluation within 24-hours.

If you have questions, contact the teacher directing your work, principal, or your supervisor in Special Services.

Bloodborne Pathogen Diseases

Bloodborne Pathogens are pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

HIV Facts:

HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system, and it can cause Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS is characterized by a defect in natural immunity against disease. People who have AIDS are vulnerable to serious illness that would not be a threat to anyone whose immune system was functioning normally.

AIDS is considered one of the most devastating public health problems in recent history. In 1996, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that one million persons in the United States are HIV-positive, and 223,000 are living with AIDS.

Most individuals infected with HIV have no symptoms and feel well. Some develop symptoms that may include tiredness, fever, loss of appetite and weight, diarrhea, night sweats, and swollen glands (lymph nodes) usually in neck, armpits, or groin.

Hepatitis B Virus Facts:

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by HBV. HBV is one of several types of viruses (infections) that can cause hepatitis. There is a vaccine that will prevent HBV infection.

Hepatitis B infection may occur in two phases. The acute phase occurs just after a person becomes infected, and can last from a few weeks to several months. Some people recover after the acute phase, but others remain infected for the rest of their lives. They go into the chronic phase and become “chronic carriers”, meaning the virus remains in their liver and blood.

Acute Hepatitis B usually begins with symptoms such as loss of appetite, extreme tiredness, nausea, vomiting, and stomach pain. Dark urine and jaundice (yellow eyes and skin) are also common, and skin rashes and joint pain can occur. Over half the people who become infected with HBV never become sick, but some may later have long-term liver disease from their HBV infection. About one in 250 Americans is a chronic carrier, and many have no health problems themselves. The Hepatitis B virus is very durable, and it can survive in dried blood for seven to ten days.

Bloodborne Pathogen Transmission

All human blood and certain human body fluids are to be treated as if known to be infected with HIV and HBV and other bloodborne pathogens. Although exposure to body fluids other than blood is unlikely in a school, the following body fluids are also to be treated as being infectious:

- ✓ · semen and vaginal secretions
- ✓ · amniotic fluid
- ✓ · cerebrospinal fluid
- ✓ · all body fluids where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate

Body fluids “not” carrying HIV:

- ✓ · sweat
- ✓ · tears
- ✓ · saliva

- ✓ · vomit
- ✓ · urine
- ✓ · feces
- ✓ · if visible blood, treat as infectious

HIV and HBV are most commonly transmitted through:

- ✓ · sexual contact
- ✓ · needle sharing
- ✓ · blood transfusions
- ✓ · direct skin or mucous membrane contact with infected blood
- ✓ · from mother to baby at birth

Unbroken skin forms a barrier against bloodborne pathogens. However, infected blood can enter your system through:

- ✓ · open sores
- ✓ · cuts
- ✓ · abrasions
- ✓ · acne
- ✓ · any sort of damaged or broken skin such as sunburn or blisters

DID YOU KNOW.....the number one type of exposure in schools is a bite?

Bloodborne pathogens may also be transmitted through the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth. If you are in doubt as to whether or not you have had an exposure, be sure to ask a school nurse, or your own physician.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Universal precautions are practices and procedures that assist in the prevention of contact with blood and other body fluids. They are the best protection against HIV, HBV, and other infectious agents. Universal Precautions provide the first line of defense against the risks of exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When an exposure potentially exists PPE should be used. There is a large range of PPE in the use of infectious control, but the main consideration in choosing and using such equipment is to restrict blood or other potentially infectious materials from contact with skin or other mucous membranes.

Disposable vinyl gloves: Used for first aid, clean up, handling of sharps, and when in contact with any blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Before putting on gloves, check for punctures. Gloves should fit snugly.

To remove gloves, place finger of one gloved hand on the wrist of the other gloved hand. Peel the glove from the wrist to the fingers so that the glove is inside out.

Place the inside-out glove in the palm of the gloved hand. Peel the remaining glove in the same manner (from wrist to fingers) while enfolding the first glove into this one.

Following these practices minimizes contamination. Gloves should be disposed of immediately and never re-used. Wash your hands again after disposing the gloves.

Hand washing:

1. Use warm water only – not hot, not cold.
2. Wet both hands and wrists well before applying soap.
3. Apply liquid soap to palms first (about 1 tsp.).
4. Lather well; spread lather to back of hands and wrists.
5. Continue scrubbing, paying careful attention to fingernails and between fingers. The scrubbing time should be a minimum of 15 seconds.
6. Rinse hands and wrists well to remove all soap and detergent.
7. Dry completely.
8. Turn off faucet using disposable towels when there is no knee control. This avoids recontamination of clean hands.

Bloodborne Pathogens Emergency Procedures:

In an emergency situation involving blood or potentially infectious materials, you should always use **Universal Precautions** and try to minimize your exposure by wearing gloves, splash goggles, pocket mouth-to-mouth resuscitation masks, and other barrier devices.

Spill Clean Up:

1. Always use gloves. Do not reuse disposable gloves.
2. Use absorbent or paper towels to absorb spill.
3. Clean spill with soap and water.
4. Utilize proper disinfectant (usually 1:10 bleach and water that is mixed fresh daily) and follow procedures.

How to Mix Bleach Solutions:

Use for Hard Surfaces (800 ppm)

Water to Regular Bleach 5.25% -- Ultra Bleach 6-6.25%

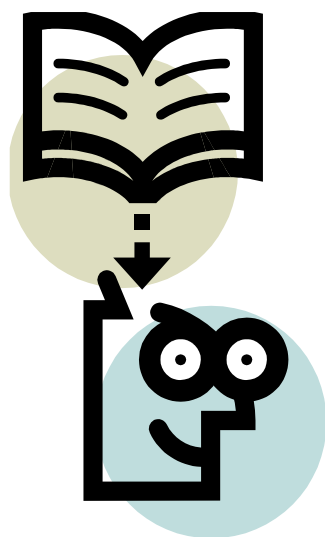
1 Gallon (16 cups) ¼ cup	3 1/3 tablespoons
1 Quart (4 cups) 1 tablespoon	2 1/2 teaspoons
1 Pint (2 cups) 1 ½ teaspoons	1 ¼ teaspoons

Use for Mouthed Toys & Food Contact Surfaces (200 ppm)

Water to Regular Bleach 5.25% -- Ultra Bleach 6-6.25%

1 Gallon (16 cups) 1 tablespoon	2 teaspoons
1 Quart (4 cups) ¾ teaspoon	½ teaspoon
1 Pint (2 cups) 3/8 teaspoon	¼ teaspoon

RESOURCES FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS



Further Research and Training

How to Be a ParaPro: A Comprehensive Training Manual for Paraprofessionals

By Twachtman-Cullen, D. (2000).

Positive Behavior Strategies for Paraprofessionals

By A. Hewitt and K. Langenfeld (1999).

Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: The Role of the Paraprofessional

By T. Kluba, L. Flaherty, C. Wendt, J. Santo, K. Graves, and D. Meidl (2002).

Supporting Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Schools: A Curriculum for Job-Embedded Paraprofessional Development

By G. Ghere, J. York-Barr, and J. Sommerness (2002).

American Federation for Teachers - Paraprofessionals and School Related Personnel

<http://www.aft.org/psrp/>

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium

<http://ici2.umn.edu/para/default.html>

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html>

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

<http://www.nectac.org/topics/personnel/paraprof.asp>

National Education Association - Educational Support Personnel

<http://www.nea.org/esp/resource/parawork.htm>

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals

<http://www.nrcpara.org/>