



Paraprofessional Training Series

**PART III:
COMMUNICATION AND TEAMWORK**

Missouri Department
of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Paraprofessional Series

This is a multi-part series offered for paraprofessionals. Verification of orientation training necessary for each paraprofessional to perform duties as assigned is present. The Federal Regulations and the Missouri Office of Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators indicate that paraprofessionals who do not hold teaching certificates are required to have received fifteen clock hours of training within six months of hire including orientation and initial training prior to working with the student. A minimum ten clock hours each school year thereafter is also required.

Objectives

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Part 3 of this series will provide information about:

- organizational structure of the school district; and
- learn how to effectively communicate with students and adults.



Guide to this Webinar

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Handouts:

- HO #1 – Guided Notes for Strategies for Communicating with Students
- HO #2 – Communication Log
- HO #3 - Information From Today



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Organizational Structure



Organizational Structure

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Each district has a unique structure that helps them do business.

It is important to know the structure of the district.

Examples:

- Board of Education
- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent/Director of Special Education
- Building Principals
- Assistant Principals
- Teachers
- Staff



Organizational Structure and Evaluation Process

- All paraprofessionals participate in a personnel evaluation process
- The district decides how often this occurs
- It may be once or twice a year
- The district determines who will conduct the evaluation

Do you know the evaluation process in your district?

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Communication



When Communicating

- Avoid specifics.
- Don't distort, exaggerate, or confuse information.
- Always be positive and focus on strengths.
- Don't label children as "your students."
- Avoid using student names.
- Develop a standard response.
- Refer questions to the teacher.
- If you don't want to answer, or are unsure, then don't.

Adapted from The Master Teacher, PDXPERT

Communication and Confidentiality

- Respect the privacy of students and their families.
- Know the laws – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Be selective with whom you share student information.
- Be careful and thoughtful about what you say.
- Realize that you may not be able to answer every question you are asked.

Communication with Students

The following characteristics are important when interacting with students

- Honesty
- Confidence
- Openness, care, and empathy
- Humor

• Adapted from: 10 Management Strategies
Education Assistants and Paraprofessionals

Activity #1

Guided Notes for Strategies for Communicating with Students

Fill in the blanks as you view the next slides.

Strategies for Communicating with Students

- Active Listening
- Sidestep Power Struggles
- Catch Them Being Good
- Model Prosocial Skills
- Alter the Volume and Cadence of Your Voice

• 10 Management Strategies for Education Assistants and Paraprofessionals, CPI, June 2016

Active Listening

- Giving the student total and complete focus
- Giving eye contact and keep a friendly and open expression on your face
- Listening closely
- Withhold judgement

Adapted from: 10 Behavior Management Strategies for Educational Assistants & Paraprofessionals

Sidestep Power Struggles

Instead of trying to force students to do what you want, try using these alternatives:

- Find a common interest and build on that
- Be friendly. Smile!
- Use a one word direction
- Remember that “No” is a complete sentence.
- Provide choice
- Find a win-win compromise

Adapted from: 10 Behavior Management Strategies for Educational Assistants & Paraprofessionals

Catch Them Being Good

Sometimes negative behavior is the only way that students can communicate their needs to you. It may be the only way they know how to get your attention. Instead of reinforcing the negative behavior, try to catch them being good. The goal here is to praise the positive behaviors and neutralize or ignore the negative behaviors.

Adapted from: 10 Behavior Management Strategies for Educational Assistants & Paraprofessionals

Model Prosocial Skills

You can support prosocial skill development by being a positive role model. The more that students see positive adult interactions, the more likely they are to engage in such activities themselves.

Adapted from: 10 Behavior Management Strategies for Educational Assistants & Paraprofessionals

Alter the Volume and Cadence of Your Voice

Often we overlook how we can affect the emotional state of our students. Emotions can be infectious. When we are angry, aggravated, excited, anxious, or nervous, these emotional states can impact the state of escalation of our students.

Adapted from: 10 Behavior Management Strategies for Educational Assistants & Paraprofessionals

Alter the Volume and Cadence of Your Voice

If you notice that your student is escalating and becoming visibly agitated, try these techniques to control your own emotions:

- Lower the volume of your voice and speak more quietly. As you speak more quietly, your student will have to become quieter to hear you.
- Alter the cadence of your voice and speak more slowly.
- Modulate your tone of voice and be calm and supportive.
- Simplify your vocabulary.

Adapted from: 10 Behavior Management Strategies for Educational Assistants & Paraprofessionals

Communication with Students

As a paraprofessional you might be required to keep a log that documents your activities. It is considered a best practice to document communication.

Please pause the webinar and look at handout #2.

* Adapted from: Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Final Thoughts on Communication with Students

Communicating with students should:

- Support independence
- Promote student communication
- Promote social skills
- Support appropriate behavior

* Adapted from: Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Effective Communication with Adults

How do I ask questions, give suggestions, or communicate concerns?

- Use good common sense and discretion.
- Never imply judgment.
- Be sincere, simple, and direct.
- Be willing and ready to listen.

*Adapted from: The Master Teacher, PDIXPERT

Effective Communication with Adults

What causes communication problems?

- Lack of time to communicate or plan
- Unclear role or task assignments
- Differences in styles
- Difficulty adjusting to different work arrangements
- Tenure differences and “connectedness”

* Adapted from: The Master Teacher, PDIXPERT

Effective Communication with Adults

When dealing with communication problems

- Communicate on a business level.
- Don't complain or make excuses.
- Don't take things personally.
- Make time to communicate.
- Deal immediately with problems.
- Involve a third person, as appropriate.

* Adapted from: The Master Teacher, PDIXPERT

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Wrap Up

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Summary

“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.”

- Anthony Robbins

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HO #3

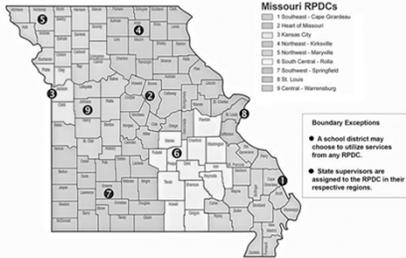
Information From Today

Most Important...

Surprised me...

How will I use...

Regional Professional Development Centers



THANK YOU FOR WATCHING!