

# PARA HANDBOOK & TRAINING GUIDE

SSD SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY

SPECIALIZED FOR SUCCESS 12110 Clayton Road ■ St. Louis, MO 63131 ■ 314.989.8100

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# OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## What is Special School District (SSD)?

Special School District of St. Louis County (SSD) is a public school system founded in 1957 through state legislation and local voter approval. The district is responsible for providing special education services to all St. Louis County students with disabilities, ages 3 to 21. Additionally, SSD operates North Technical High School and South Technical High School, which offer students experiential learning opportunities in more than 30 different programs.

Through the years, SSD has been a pioneer in developing innovative programs to help students with disabilities. Currently, the district serves more than 24,000 students. Ninety- seven percent of the students who receive services from SSD attend a school in their local school district. In addition, SSD annually performs more than 100,000 screenings and evaluations for area students.

## What are the Guiding Principles for the District's Work?

### Mission

To support and empower students of all learning abilities to excel to their greatest potential.

### Vision

All students realize their full potential in life and learning.

### Core Values



## What does SSD Provide?

SSD provides special education services to students who meet Missouri state eligibility criteria in one or more of the following categories:

- Autism
- Deaf/Blindness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment/Deafness
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impaired
- Specific Learning Disability
- Language Impairment
- Sound System Disorder
- Speech (Fluency, Voice)
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment
- Young Child with a Developmental Delay

The District also provides special education related services for students, which include:

- Adaptive Physical Education
- Assistive Technology Services
- Audiology
- Counseling Services
- Hearing Impaired Services
- Interpreter Services
- Language Therapy
- Music Therapy
- Nursing/Medical Services
- Speech Therapy
- Special Transportation
- Transition Services
- Vision Impaired Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Orientation and Mobility Services
- Orthopedically Impaired Services
- Parent Education/Counseling
- Physical Therapy
- Psychological Services
- Recreation
- School Health Services
- Social Work Services

Other SSD special education services include:

- Applied Behavioral Analysis
- Family and Community Engagement
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Homebound Program
- Safe & Drug-Free Schools Grant
- Special Non-Public Access Program (SNAP)
- Special Olympics
- Title I Reading Program

Students in grades 10-12 living in St. Louis County are eligible to apply to technical schools. Programming prepares students for college and careers by offering access to:

- Real-world classrooms
- Job shadowing
- Internships
- Complex projects
- Clinical rotations
- Many other immersive experience

## What do each of the Related Service Provider Teams Offer?

Related services offer developmental, corrective, and support services necessary for students to access curriculum that are not usually provided by general and special education teachers.

- **Adapted Physical Education (APE)** — APE staff utilize specialized skills and knowledge to work collaboratively with the partner districts to develop and adapt physical education curriculums. This is to assure that students with disabilities (K-12) are afforded, to the fullest extent possible, opportunities to participate safely and successfully in physical education classes/activities along with their non-disabled classmates.
- **Audiology** — Tests for hearing loss and usable range of hearing; considers language development, knowledge of language habilitation and speech reading; offers counseling and guidance to students, parents, and teachers about specific audiology needs; and determines a child's need for appropriate aids.
- **Homebound Services** — When a student is physically or emotionally unable to receive instruction at school, special education and regular education teachers provide instruction in the student's home, in a hospital setting, or other sites of confinement.
- **Music Therapy** — Music therapists address educational goals in areas such as language, cognitive, motor, and daily living skills through music.
- **Occupational Therapy (OT)** — Occupational therapists (OTs) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTAs) use purposeful, goal-directed activities and adaptive equipment/techniques to enable a student with a disability to benefit from an individualized educational program, designed to assist in the development of skills that are prerequisites for academic learning within the educational setting. This may include improving gross and fine motor skills, sensory-motor processing, coordination, adapting environments, organizing and using materials appropriately, and/or developing dressing and feeding skills appropriate to the learning environment.
- **Physical Therapy (PT)** —The physical therapy team (made up of PTs and physical therapy assistants) is concerned with facilitating the child's overall performance in the classroom, considering the student's developmental level and physical disability. Services provided to enhance independent functioning and may include positioning, strengthening, modifications, and adaptations to the environment. Although medical concerns are significant, rehabilitation is not the focus of school-based physical therapy.
- **Psychological Services** — School psychologists administer and interpret psychological and achievement tests, interpret behavioral assessment instruments,

and coordinate the diagnostic/evaluation process to determine eligibility for special education. They also consult with school personnel and parents about evaluation issues.

- **Social Work (SW)** — Provides direct individual and group counseling to students in addition to consultation to parents, teachers, and administrators. Social workers connect families with outside resources and liaise with medical doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and other professionals.
- **Special Non-Public Access Program (SNAP)** — Special education teachers provide services to students in private/parochial schools who need special education programs. SNAP services are offered after school in select public school buildings throughout St. Louis County.

## Where are SSD Services Available?

SSD staff provide special education services to students in 265 public schools located across 22 partner school districts in St. Louis County.

**Partner Districts served:** Affton, Bayless, Brentwood, Clayton, Ferguson-Florissant, Hancock Place, Hazelwood, Jennings, Kirkwood, Ladue, Lindbergh, Maplewood-Richmond Heights, Mehlville, Normandy, Parkway, Pattonville, Ritenour, Riverview Gardens, Rockwood, University City, Valley Park, Webster Groves



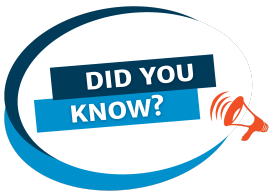

**SSD also operates five special education and two technical schools:** Ackerman, Litzsinger, Neuwoehner, Northview, Southview, North Technical High School, South Technical High School

The District serves students attending private, parochial, and independent schools, who are home-schooled and/or homebound for medical or other issues, as well as those who are assigned to the Juvenile Detention Center, Lakeside Center, Bridges Program (for students with significant challenging behavior), and various other placements.

## What Type of Settings are Services Provided in?

While there is a wide range of options, students generally receive their special education services from SSD in: the general education setting, special education classrooms in neighborhood schools, or in special education schools. The determination of what kind of services a student receives and where they will be received is based entirely on each

student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). This is an IEP team decision, which is informed by administrators, particularly when considering highly restrictive settings.

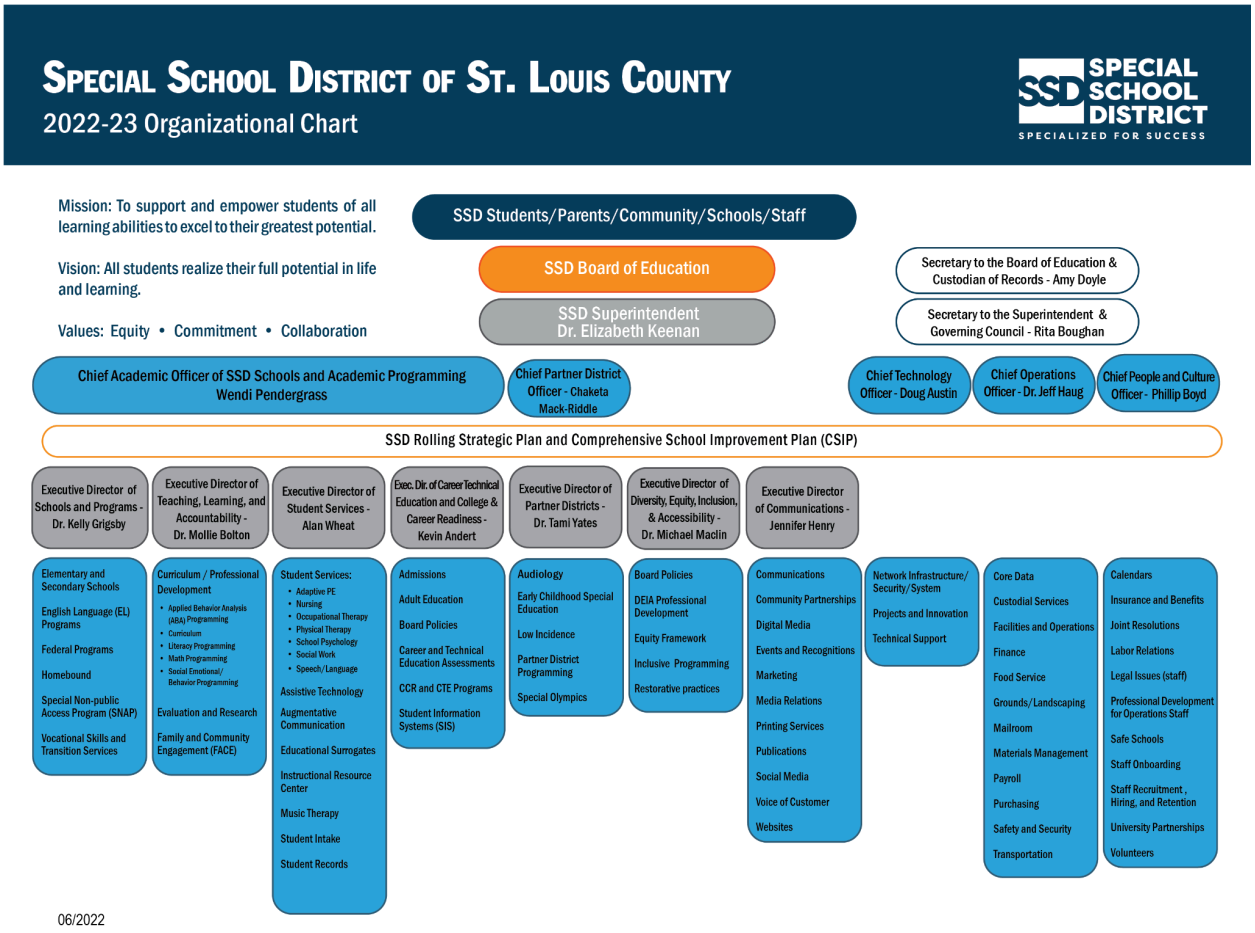



Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) refers to students being educated to the maximum extent appropriate, with children without disabilities.

Special education placements, kindergarten through 12th grade, include:

- **Inside the general education classroom at least 80% of the time** (DESE Code 1100)
  Students leave the general education classroom at specific times throughout the day to receive services from special education staff in a specific subject or skill area.
- **Inside the general education classroom 40% to 79% of the time** (DESE Code 1201)
  The other part of the day, students are taught with other students with similar needs in special education classrooms (i.e., resource rooms) located within the general education buildings.
- **Inside the general education classroom less than 40% of the time** (DESE Code 1301)
  Students spend the majority of their time in a special education classroom (i.e., self-contained). These students may receive their special education services in classrooms located within Partner District schools or in SSD-operated schools.

# What are the Roles & Responsibilities of SSD's Education Team?




[View a larger version of this organizational chart on the District website.]

## The Superintendent Cabinet

The following roles are responsible for overseeing the direction of the District:

- **Superintendent of Schools** — The Superintendent of Schools is the Chief Executive Officer of the Board of Education and the administrative head of all divisions and departments of SSD, including the day-to-day District operations. It is their responsibility to execute the Board's policies, rules, and regulations. The superintendent recommends to the Board of Education (BOE) hiring and dismissal of staff.
- **Chief Academic Officer of Schools and Academic Programming (CAO)** — The CAO reports directly to the superintendent. They oversee staff, as well as daily and long-term operations of SSD schools, Court programs, student services, teaching, learning and accountability, and career technical education and college-career readiness.

- **Chief People and Culture Officer (CPCO)** — The CPCO reports directly to the Superintendent. They oversee the Office of Employee Success and Engagement including insurance and benefits and staff onboarding.
- **Chief Operations Officer (COO)** — The COO reports to the superintendent and is responsible for the oversight of facilities and operations including core data, custodial services, finance, food service, grounds and landscaping, mailroom, materials management, payroll, purchasing, safety and security, and transportation.
- **Chief of Partner Districts (CPD)** — The CPD reports directly to the superintendent. They oversee staff and the daily-/long-term special education operations in the 22 partner school districts, as well as other District programs, such as early childhood special education, Low Incidence, and Special Olympics.
- **Executive Director of Communications** -The ED of Communications reports directly to the superintendent and is responsible for the oversight of all District communications including the website, social media, public relations, community partnerships, and events.
- **Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Awareness** - The ED of DEIA reports to the superintendent and oversees the equity division and projects for the district.

## District Leadership Team

The following roles are responsible for guiding the work that supports the overall direction of the District:

- **Chief Technology Officer (CTO)** — The CTO reports to the superintendent and is responsible for the oversight of technology including infrastructure, networks, and technology supports.
- **Executive Director of Student Services** - The ED of Student Services reports directly to the Chief Academic Officer and supervises the related services as well as other services provided by the SSD such as vision, audiology, student records, and SLP EPS.
- **Executive Director of Career and Technical Education and College and Career Readiness** - The ED of CTE and CCR reports directly to the Chief Academic Officer and supervises the Career and Technical Schools as well as adult education and student information systems.
- **Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Accountability** - The ED of TLA reports directly to the Chief Academic Officer and supervises curriculum, professional learning, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), measurement, evaluation and research, family engagement, and FACE.

- **Executive Director of Schools and Programs** - The ED of Schools and Programs reports directly to the Chief Academic Officer and supervises the SSD schools, Federal Programs, Homebound, SNAP, and the Vocational Skills Program.
- **Executive Director of Partner Districts** - The ED of Partner Districts reports to the Chief Officer of Partner Districts and supervises the directors of the partner districts.

## SSD Instructional Administrators

- **Directors** — Directors report to the Executive Director of their area and are responsible for special education in one or more of the partner districts/ special education schools, or in a program or department that comprises the responsibilities of the executive director (e.g., professional development, related services, early childhood).
- **Special Education Coordinators and SSD Principals** — SSD Special Education Coordinators serve as administrators to special education teachers located in the partner district schools. They are responsible for everything related to special education in the school and supervise the special education teachers, as well as the diagnostic and related services staff. Special Education Coordinators may supervise staff at several schools. SSD principals supervise the staff in the special education schools, programs, and the technical high schools.

## SSD Staff Supporting Instruction

The following roles are responsible for providing the District's services/programs to students:

- **Facilitators/Coaches** — SSD staff who assist in the development and evaluation of professional development in a variety of areas, including but not limited to: co-teaching, supporting positive behavior, high-quality instruction, high leverage practices for special education, continuous improvement, universal supports, and data collection and analysis
- **Speech/Language Pathologists (SLP)** — A speech/language pathologist provides services in both general and special education settings for students who have a disability in speech or language. A speech/language pathologist may be assigned to one or more schools.
- **Effective Practice Specialists (EPS)** — SSD staff with expertise in a specific area such as speech/language, diagnostics, social work, autism, social/emotional/behavior, OT/PT/APE, and transition. EPS staff may do coaching, consulting, mentoring, and orienting of new staff as well as researching best practices and providing a variety of professional learning options.

- **Applied Behavior Analysts**
    - **ABA Coordinators** - ABA Coordinators are responsible for providing support and supervision to the associate analysts. Support and supervision includes ensuring adherence to SSD policies and procedures, overseeing the assessment process, providing programming guidance, assisting in staff supervision, evaluating student progress, making programming recommendations to the IEP team, disseminating knowledge pertaining to the principles of behavior analysis, working collaboratively with other district professionals within their assigned regions, and working with other administrative teams as assigned.
    - **Board certified behavior analyst (BCBA), Assistant Behavior Analyst, and Provisional License Behavior Analyst** - ABA Staff are responsible for training and programming decisions for ABA in the IEP. Primary duties include supporting staff in the acquisition of skills necessary to provide quality behavior analytic intervention, developing educational programs, monitoring the implementation of programs, conducting assessments, collaboration with other professionals, participation in IEP team meetings and summarizing and graphing student data as necessary.
    - **Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) -** This is a paraprofessional position that requires Board Certification of Behavior Analyst. These paraprofessionals serve the direct ABA service minutes in the IEP.
    - **Teachers** — SSD teachers work with students in a variety of settings. Special education teachers may work with students who are enrolled in general education classrooms for most of the school day, yet require special education instruction in specific areas. They provide academic instruction and collaborate with the general education staff to facilitate the inclusion of students into the general education setting throughout the day. Other special education teachers may work with students who receive most of their instruction in a special education classroom within one of the 22 partner school districts, or with students who attend one of SSD's special education schools. Whereas itinerant teachers usually travel between schools and work with students with disabilities enrolled in general education classrooms. Some itinerant teachers specialize in working with students with vision, hearing, or physical disabilities.
- **Paraprofessionals (Teacher Aides/Assistants)** - Paraprofessionals work in classrooms where their students require support. Paraprofessionals classified as

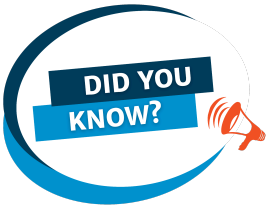
teacher assistants[1] may serve as a substitute[2] when a teacher is absent for 3 consecutive or cumulative hours within the same day. Paraprofessionals serving as substitutes are responsible for implementing lesson plans previously prepared by the teacher.

## Understanding the Role of a Paraprofessional

Paraprofessionals play an important and dynamic role in expanding learning opportunities for students. They help meet students' needs for more intensive/individualized instruction as well as help monitor the classroom in order to promote increased appropriate student performance and behaviors. Paraprofessionals also lend support to teacher-level staff.

Some of the types of tasks assigned to paraprofessionals include:

- **Assisting with preparing and coordinating instruction**
  - Work with the teacher to develop classroom schedules
  - Assist in preparation/production of instructional materials
  - Perform clerical tasks, i.e., typing and photocopying
  - Operate and maintain classroom equipment, including film projectors, overhead projectors, etc.
- **Assisting with instruction**
  - Assist in monitoring supplementary work and independent study
  - Reinforce learning in small groups or with individuals, while the teacher works with other students
  - Provide assistance with individualized-programmed materials
  - Carry out instructional programs designed by the teacher
  - Carry out tutoring activities designed by the teacher




A paraprofessional may also need to substitute for a teacher, other than the one to whom they are assigned. Most substitute teaching will be done in the paraprofessional's assigned building(s).

- **Monitoring**
  - Supervise students in the hallway, lunchroom, and playground
  - Assist teachers with crisis problems and behavior management
  - Assist the teacher in observing, recording, and charting behavior

[1] Teacher Assistants must have completed 60 hours of college credit and hold a substitute certificate with the state of Missouri.
[2] When a paraprofessional works as a substitute, the teacher who was absent is responsible for signing the substitute report form and verifying dates and times.

- Score objective tests and papers and maintain appropriate records for teachers

## Understanding the Teacher's Role as Supervisor

Teachers are paraprofessionals' direct supervisor and responsible for assigning work tasks. They structure and monitor the workday of a paraprofessional, which includes the following responsibilities:

**Planning/Scheduling**

The teacher should provide the paraprofessional with a schedule and work plan for each day (including before and after school).

| SCHEDULE | WORK PLAN |
|---|---|
| • Time<br>• Location<br>• Activities | • Lesson Plans<br>• Materials to Use |

*Paraprofessionals are allotted a 30-minute lunch period and two 15-minute breaks.

**Monitoring Performance and Providing Feedback**

The teacher should provide opportunities for the paraprofessional to observe teaching style and behavior management techniques utilized within the classroom to which they are assigned. The teacher should observe the paraprofessional, provide feedback, and assist with the Summative Evaluation Form where appropriate in accordance with the guidelines in the Performance-Based Paraprofessional Evaluation.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION

## Students' Legal Rights

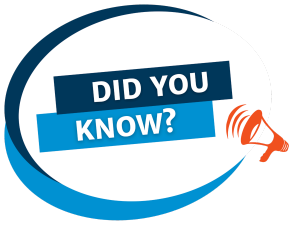
The federal government requires school systems to carry out a systematic search to identify every child with a disability in need of special education. The delivery of those services is detailed in two major federal laws governing special education:

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA, the most comprehensive federal law of its kind, governs how SSD provides special education. According to this law, students with disabilities have a number of basic rights. The most significant rights are:

- The right to a **free and appropriate public education (FAPE)**. In St. Louis County, SSD is charged with providing a free and appropriate education to all students with disabilities, including those attending private/parochial schools. These services are to be available on the child's 3rd birthday and may continue through age 21.
- The right to have educational services provided in the **"least restrictive environment."** Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
- The right to have **instructional and support services and supplementary aids** provided when they are needed. These services include but are not limited to physical therapy, counseling, speech therapy, transportation, adaptive equipment, etc., depending on individual needs.
- The right to **fair assessment procedures**. Educational assessment (or evaluation) is conducted to identify a child's learning needs and to determine whether a child requires special education and, if so, what type. Assessments must be conducted before a child is placed in special education.




A re-evaluation to determine eligibility must occur at least every three years following the student's placement. Parents and/or teachers may request an assessment at more frequent intervals.

- The right of a **parent to be involved in developing an individualized education program (IEP)** or plan for their student. See the following section for more information on family involvement during the IEP Process.
- The right to **due process**, thereby ensuring parents of a student with disabilities to have access to an appeal process to challenge educational decisions regarding their student.

## Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 protects the civil and constitutional rights of persons with disabilities. It applies to anyone receiving federal funds. While IDEA lists specific categories of disability, Section 504 more broadly defines a disability as a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

If a student is not diagnosed as having a disability under IDEA, the local district may still have obligations under Section 504. Section 504 provides for a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, reasonable accommodations, and a written plan describing placement and services. This particular Act also applies to: college students, the workplace, and physical access to public buildings. The Office of Civil Rights enforces this Act.

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA gives civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state/local government services, and telecommunications.

## Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is another major federal law that affects persons with disabilities. It provides privacy safeguards to parents, legal guardians, and students by forbidding the release of a student's records or personally identifiable information to unauthorized persons.

In addition to the protections afforded by FERPA, IDEA prohibits a school district from releasing information to unauthorized persons regarding a student's disability, or the fact that a student is disabled, without the consent of the student's parent or guardian.

As a special education agency, the additional confidentiality requirements of IDEA restrict SSD from sharing directory information, which is permitted under FERPA, since any release of student information could be construed as identifying a student with an

educational disability. Therefore, SSD will deny requests for any student information without authorization of the parent, legal guardian, or majority-age student.

However, both FERPA and IDEA permit the release of educational information without parental consent, to a public school district where the student is enrolled. The receiving school district is bound by the same confidentiality requirements under these laws. Nevertheless, for students receiving special education services in a local school district building, the release of directory information by the local district can be prohibited through notification to that district.

In compliance with FERPA, IDEA, and other federal laws, state regulations, and district policies and procedures, SSD encourages parents/guardians and eligible students (18 years of age or older) to exercise their rights to:

- Inspect and review the student's educational record
- Have access to the SSD student record policy/procedures pertaining to the disclosure of information contained in the student's educational file
- Request an interpreter or translator to assist in the interpretation of the student's educational record and/or district policy/procedure regarding the student records
- Have a hearing when the district does not amend the student's record according to the parent/guardian or eligible student's request
- File a complaint with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) if SSD violates the privacy rights of parents/guardians/students

## The Legal Responsibility of Upholding Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the most critical and important aspect of the paraprofessional's job. You have a legal obligation to maintain the privacy of students and their families. Like teachers and administrators, paraprofessionals have access to personal information about children and their families including:

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

Both children and their families have the absolute right to expect that all information will be kept confidential and made available only to personnel in school or another agency who require it to meet the needs of the child. Confidentiality upholds the rights of students, honors their dignity, privacy, and is a reflection of respect.

As a paraprofessional, you will be privy to information that affects the privacy of students and staff. Consistent and effective communication between home and school is a critical part of student success. Families may have a team of individuals supporting their student and communicating between home and school on a frequent basis.

When the student's team includes paraprofessional support, that individual(s) becomes an integral part of the team connecting with families. Families have the need for regular, reliable, and useful information. Often, because of how closely paraprofessionals work with an individual student or students, it may be the responsibility of the paraprofessional to provide communication between home and school. The kind of (modality) and the amount of contact (daily, weekly, etc.) between paraprofessionals and families should be addressed by the student's team (families, staff, administrators, student, etc.).

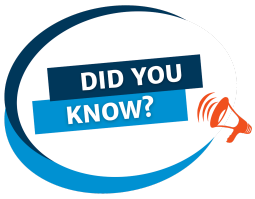
You may be responsible for keeping student data. Remember to remain professional, courteous, and empathetic when communicating student information. Your supervisor can offer you guidance on what and how to report to families. Confidentiality in all student matters is a top priority. Discuss school related matters and confidential information only with appropriate personnel, and only when students are not present. The need for a written communication log will be determined by the student's team.
When long-term subbing for a teacher level staff member, paraprofessionals should maintain communication with families similar to teacher level staff (parent communication log, collection of student data, etc.)

When it comes to confidentiality, remember to:

- **Be cautious of what you discuss.**
    - Avoid using specific student information (names, disabilities) if you are asked about your job.
    - Do NOT share other student's names or information regarding their programs with parents during IEP meetings, conferences, or informal conversations.
    - Do NOT discuss information regarding one student with another student.
    - Do NOT answer questions or share information about students. Often parents share information with the bus personnel, and bus personnel may comment or ask further questions of staff. What a parent decides to share with bus personnel is beyond our control, but we are NOT to discuss or share any information with them.

| Teacher Communication | Paraprofessional Communication |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Discipline (in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, officer referral) | Daily Functioning (bathrooming, lunch, transitions between classes) |
| Specific data for IEP goals and/or objectives | Communication between home and school (information from the parent received in the AM regarding the previous evening/weekend) |
| Specific behavior data | Social interactions with others (peers - without names given, and adults) |
| Facilitated dialogue between members of the team supporting the student (paraprofessional, special education teacher, general education teacher, administration, etc.) | Input (in writing or in person) provided for IEP meetings. The determination for whether or not a paraprofessional provides information in writing or in person will be determined based on student needs building-wide. |
| Information regarding special education staff working with students - names of staff, potential background information (fun facts) about staff, schedule of staff supporting students | Classroom reminders (change of clothes, upcoming field trips, school events, etc.) |




As a general rule, you should never share information about a student with anyone other than the student's team. This would include the student's special education teachers, therapists, school psychologist, social worker, school counselor, school nurse, and principal.

- **Be aware of where your conversations take place.**
    - Information regarding specific students and programs should not be shared in the lunchroom, staff room, office areas, out in the community, or any other setting.
    - When conferencing or writing information regarding a student or family that contains confidential information, be aware of those around you who may be within hearing distance. Look for a more private place within the school building.
- **Defer questions to teacher-level staff.**
    - Questions about a student are best directed to the special education teacher.

- No matter who asks you a question about a student, if you are unsure whether you should answer, DON'T. Respond gently and politely that you need to confer with the student's educational team before sharing potentially confidential information. Then, follow up. Remember only staff that have a need to know should be given information about a student.
- If a student has a medical issue that should be monitored during transport, a member of administration or nursing should escort the student to the bus and they will share only what information they deem necessary to safely transport the student.
- For program consistency as well as confidentiality, paraprofessionals must support teacher techniques, materials, and methods, especially in the presence of students, parents, and other staff. Questions should be directed to the specific teacher privately.

## Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 is a bipartisan measure reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It is a national education law which provides a longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. ESSA includes provisions that help to ensure success for students and schools by:

- Upholding critical protections for America's disadvantaged and high-need students.
- Requiring that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers.
- Ensuring that vital information is provided to educators, families, students, and communities through annual statewide assessments that measure students' progress toward those high standards.
- Helping to support and grow local innovations—including evidence-based and place- based interventions developed by local leaders and educators—consistent with Investing in Innovation and Promise Neighborhoods.
- Sustaining and expanding investments dedicated to increasing access to high-quality preschool.
- Maintaining an expectation that there will be accountability and action to effect positive change in the nation's lowest-performing schools, where groups of students are not making progress, and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time.

## Mandated Child Abuse/Neglect Reporter

When any employee of SSD has reasonable cause to suspect or observes that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, the employee shall immediately report, or cause a report to be made, to his/her district principal, special education coordinator, or other administrator. Said administrator shall immediately investigate the incident or case reported. If necessary, the administrator may seek the help and advice of the SSD Social Work department.




Nothing in this procedure is to preclude any employee from reporting abuse or neglect directly to the Missouri Division of Social Services-Children's Division through its Hotline or otherwise.

The District prohibits discrimination, negative job action, or retaliation against any District employee who, in good faith, reports alleged child abuse or neglect, including alleged misconduct by another District employee.

Please consult Board Policy JHG for more information.

## Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Before a student can receive special education services, an IEP must be developed. An IEP is a meeting where a team made up of parents, students (when appropriate), and school personnel (which may include a paraprofessional) jointly make decisions about an educational program for a student with a disability. It is a written record of the decisions reached at the meeting and a management tool for implementing an educational program with special education and related services.

### The IEP Team

The IEP team approach is a cooperative effort between parents, teachers, and other specialists with different kinds of skills. Together they reach the decision (IEP) that best meets the needs of the student.

An IEP meeting should include the following people:

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child
- At least one regular education teacher of the student (if the student is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment)
- At least one special education teacher

- A representative of the local district who is knowledgeable about the resources and curriculum of the district
- An individual to interpret instructional implications of evaluation results
- At the discretion of the parent or local education agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student
- The student (if appropriate)
- At transition (age 16), the other agencies needed to plan for the student's future

As a paraeducator, your work is vital to the success of the special education program. You may be called on to provide input or participate in the IEP meeting since you work so closely with the student. Please consult with your administrator for additional information.

## Paraprofessional Access to the IEP

Staff who have a role in implementing part of the IEP are not only authorized but mandated to be provided that information. Accessing this information is helpful when implementing the educational goals and objectives of students.

## Sections of the IEP

The sub-sections that follow outline the information documented in an IEP.

### Addressing the Student's Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

Under IDEA 2004, the IEP must contain a statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), which are objective data from assessments. This statement also identifies the student's strengths and weaknesses as noted by school staff, parents and the student.

The PLAAFP statement explains how the student's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the regular education curriculum (or for preschool children, participation in age-appropriate activities). Statements describing the way students perform are based off of assessment information, teacher input, and parent observation[3], and account for the following considerations:

- How the regular education curriculum will be accessed by the student
- Educational disability/disabilities

[3] Sources may include recent evaluation/re-evaluation results, academic (including regular state and district-wide assessments), social, language, psychomotor, self-help, pre-vocational, and other areas.

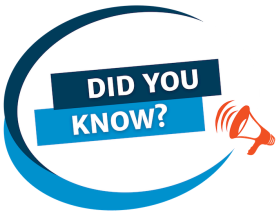
- Learning style
- How the disability/disabilities affect performance in both academic and non-academic areas
- How the regular education curriculum will be accessed by the student

# Sample Statements




Prompts used to develop the PLAAFP include considerations surrounding the student's current performance level and growth since the most recent IEP, including:

- What the child has learned or accomplished, academically and socially
- What his or her progress is in the regular education curriculum (i.e., grade group participation, task and project completion)
- Academic and social concerns of the school staff
- Concerns of the student



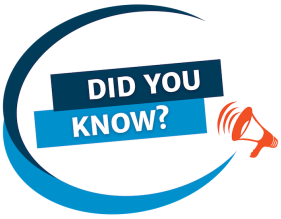

All areas of concern that are in need of special education, as identified through the evaluation IEP process, must be addressed by goal(s), accommodation(s), or an explanation of why the concern is not addressed.

## Annual Measurable Goals

Annual goals are targets toward which the student's special education program is directed. They describe what he or she can be expected to accomplish within an academic year. They are written to increase the student's successful participation in the regular education curriculum, include appropriate activities, and allow for inclusion in the regular education environment to the maximum extent appropriate. A well-written goal is meaningful, measurable, and able to be monitored, useful in making decisions, and aligned with Grade Level Expectations (GLE).

The IEP includes annual goals that:

- Demonstrate consistency with the content of the PLAAFP
- Can reasonably be accomplished within the duration of the IEP (generally one year)
- Are written in measurable terms that include a skill or behavior to be achieved, as well as a direction (e.g., increase, decrease, maintain), and a level of attainment for that skill or behavior
- Demonstrate involvement in the general education curriculum, as appropriate (for preschool children, participation in appropriate activities)
- Address the child's other educational needs resulting from her/his disability
- Are present for each special education and related service




Alternate assessments are used to evaluate the performance of students with significant cognitive disabilities, who are unable to participate in general state assessments even with accommodations.

**For Children Eligible for Alternate Assessments Only**

A description of benchmarks or short-term objectives aligned to alternate achievement standards is included if they are not listed in the present level. See examples below:

- Is there an area indicated? (skill or behavior)
- Is there a direction for that skill? (i.e., increase, decrease, maintain)

- Is there an action noted? (e.g., combine, compare, construct, predict, write, revise, read, categorize, infer, analyze, diagram, compute, demonstrate, solve, use, describe, explain, paraphrase, define, list, recite from memory, spell, etc.)
- Are there conditions? (i.e. with verbal cues such as: across all settings, when given a series of 3 directions, upon receiving a consequence for behavior, when presented with random numbers 1 to 10, using a third-grade reading book, given a list of known words, etc.)
- Is there a measurement criteria? (e.g.,: 4 or 5 trials on 3 consecutive days; with 80% accuracy; 10 minutes in a structured activity, 10 times in a 5-minute period, etc.)

**Goals Drive Service**

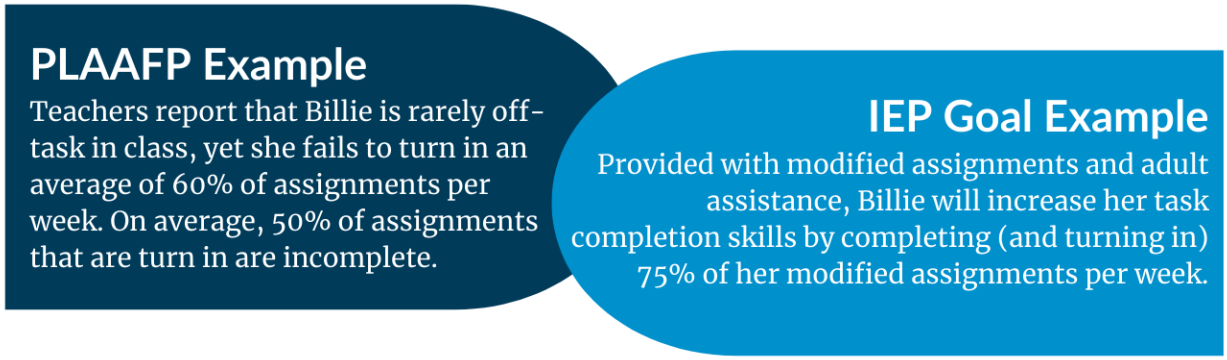
IEP goals address skills or behavior for which specially designed instruction is required for children to access and make progress in the general education curriculum. Therefore:

- Goals are not written for a specific disability, but rather to address the academic, functional, and behavioral needs of the student.
- Goals should not reiterate the curriculum but should address the skills or behaviors the student needs in order to be successful (progress) in the regular education classroom.
- The IEP Team must determine a logical link between the PLAAFP and the proposed goal.
- When possible, related service needs of the student are addressed in existing goals.
- Behavior concerns that interfere with learning can be addressed through IEP goals, regardless of diagnosis.

**Developing IEP Goals**

Details to consider:

- What are the areas of need for the student?
- How is this relevant to the student's needs?
- What is the starting point for this knowledge or skill?
- What does the IEP team want the student to know or be able to do?
- What will the student be doing when the goal is reached?




## Special Education, Related Services, Supplemental Aids/Services, Supports for School Personnel Required to Accomplish the Goals and Objectives

**Special Education**: Refers to the special instruction being provided and is based upon the student's goals. Examples include: instruction in math, instruction in written language, instruction in task-related behavior, speech and/or language therapy, transition services, instruction in social skills.

**Related Services**: Services required to assist a student in benefiting from special education. Please consult the introductory section of this handbook for more information on the related services SSD provides.

**Supplemental Aids/Services**: Services necessary to enable the student to benefit from the general education environment, which are often provided by paraprofessionals. Examples: support to facilitate social interactions at lunch/recess or on field trips, assistance with note- taking, interpreter services; referral to and use of assistive technology devices, etc.

**Supports for School Personnel**: Any specialized materials, training, or consultant services needed in order for school personnel to work effectively with the student, such as the use of facilitators (behavior, LRE, autism), consultations, access to reading materials and videotapes, training opportunities, and observational site visits.

## Program Accommodations, Adaptations, and Modifications

This section of the IEP includes statements of the supplementary aids, services, supports, and equipment a student needs to help him or her be successful in school.

Accommodations may be either adaptations or modifications needed by the student because of his or her disability. Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations; they provide access.

**Adaptations** refer to changes needed for understanding or responding. Examples include oral test, taped textbook, large print, extended time, highlighted instructions.

**Modifications** refer to practices that change, lower, or reduce expectations. Examples include reduced number of math problems, use of spell check devices, adapted materials. It is important to note that modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level. Using modifications may result in implications that could adversely affect students throughout their educational career.

## Dates

Specifies when services will begin, how long each service or program will be offered, and the date the IEP is written.

## Program Placement Recommendations

Placement is determined by the amount (%) of special education service that is provided outside of the general education program. See the types of settings services are provided in section for the continuum of placements.

## Transition Planning

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that are focused on improving the student's academic and functional achievement to facilitate his or her movement to post-school activities, including:

- Post-secondary education
- Vocational education
- Integrated employment
- Continuing and adult education
- Adult services
- Independent living
- Community participation

Transition planning includes instruction, related services supports, community experiences and the development of employment and other adult living objectives which are based on the student's needs, including his or her strengths, preferences, and interests. For some students, where appropriate, objectives may also include acquiring daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation.

**The Transition Process**

When a student reaches age 16, transition planning becomes a required part of the IEP. This process will assist the team in developing appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to:

- Training
- Education
- Employment
- Independent living skills (if appropriate)

The IEP must contain the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the student in reaching those goals. For example:

- A service must be stated for each post-secondary goal listed for the student
- Each service must include the course of study needed to assist the student in meeting his or her post-secondary goals

Not later than one year before the student turns 18, the student is required to be informed of his or her rights, if any, that will transfer to him or her when they reach that age (referred to as the "age of majority").

## Inclusive Education

Inclusion is a set of practices and beliefs that includes educating all students, regardless of disability, in their neighborhood school and in age-appropriate general education settings with appropriate support and necessary services.

Below are some frequently asked questions related to inclusive classrooms:

### ? The student I support only goes to art, music, and PE and spends the rest of his/her time in the self-contained classroom. Is this inclusion?

Students who have a home base in a self-contained classroom (which is determined by the IEP) are not typically considered students who are included. Remember, special education is not a place, inclusion is about how interactions are facilitated once students are there and included with their peers.

The time spent with the student's typically developing peers is important. To ensure success and maximize time with peers, the general strategies for supporting students in inclusive settings should apply whenever students are integrated with their typically developing peers (e.g., PE, library, lunch, computers, art, etc.).

### Why is this student in an inclusive classroom and other students are in self-contained classrooms/buildings?

Placement decisions are made during the IEP meeting. The IEP team, including the student's parents, provides input and helps make the decision about where the student attends school. Placement is based on the unique service needed by the student. Several factors come into play when making this decision. At first, it would seem beneficial to take a student with a disability out of a general education classroom and place them with a small group of students with similar disabilities in a less distracting setting, a reduced teacher/student ratio, and provide individualized instruction. However, in contrast to what one might expect, the vast majority of available research has failed to show the effectiveness of such programs. Placement in self-contained classrooms and schools does not improve the academic or social progress of students with disabilities.

### Who is responsible for making sure the IEP goals and objectives are met?

While the special education and related services needed for an individual student with disabilities are required to be stated in the IEP, regulations do not require the person providing the service to be named. The education of a student with an identified disability is not the sole responsibility of the special educator or general educator. Implementation of the IEP typically becomes the responsibility of several professionals, which could include a team of general/special educators, service providers, and support personnel. The paraprofessional is one of the team members who may be called upon to report progress on the IEP goals and objectives.

### Am I responsible for knowing what is on the IEP and taking data on the IEP goals and benchmarks?

Each team divides the responsibility of collecting data a little differently. Data is a direct measure of student performance. The information collected should help in making decisions about a student's performance and quality of life. When you are collaborating with the IEP chairperson ask them to share information about the:

- Student's IEP
- Adaptation and Modification page of the IEP
- Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Data they would like you to collect and how to collect it

### Who is my supervisor since I am in the general education classroom most of the day and seldom see the IEP chairperson?

Each team is going to approach this question a little differently. Since you are an SSD employee, the people responsible for your evaluation are the IEP chairperson and the

Special Education Coordinator. It would be appropriate, however, for this supervisory team to check with the general education staff
in the building and ask for their input.

### What if the general education teacher is telling me one thing to do and the IEP chairperson is telling me another thing to do. To whom do I listen?

The importance of working as a team can't be emphasized enough. When teams collaborate and work together, this problem will seldom occur. If it does occur, request a meeting with at least the two teachers involved so you can come to a consensus on the issue in question.

### Who is responsible for the adaptations and modifications that are needed for the student who is included?

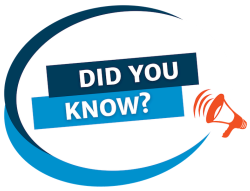
This is not an easy question to answer because the expectations differ from classroom to classroom and student to student. The general education teacher is the instructional leader in the classroom. It is an expectation that the paraprofessional will consult with the IEP chairperson and the general education teacher to determine the nature of the adaptations and modifications and who will be responsible for implementing them.
The best solutions come from working as a collaborative team and pre- planning. The team can then address curricular concerns and assign responsibilities to ensure student success.

### How do I know how much help to give the student I am supporting?

When working with the student in the classroom environment, it is important to be available to the student but not hover over him/her. Your primary responsibility is to assist the student. It is important to offer this support in a manner that is respectful and fosters independence. Walk around the class. Assist all students. In this manner, all students will begin to see you as an integral part of the class as opposed to your student's paraprofessional, there will be many students who would like your help. While you may assist others, remember that your primary focus is the student receiving services from Special School District.

### How do I help students build friendships?

First, it is important to recognize that we can't make friendships happen for students. What we can do is provide social opportunities that set the stage for students to become better acquainted. This is made possible by consistently increasing the amount of opportunities students have to socially interact with each other so that they can connect over common interests.




Research shows that "social opportunities play a more prominent role in friendship development than the social skills of students with disabilities."

Here are some ways that you can provide more quality social opportunities for the students you work with:

1. **Give the student some space.** It is hard for students to make friends when an adult support is with them. Try extending explicit invitations or prompts to other students, and then step away and make space for peers their own age to come and interact.
2. **Facilitate social interactions.** It is important to always model how to interact with a student with disabilities. Then create opportunities that require students to interact (e.g., strategically grouping students together, redirecting class conversation to a student with disabilities, ask students to share supplies for an activity).
3. **Highlight students' similarities and shared interests.**
4. **Believe and convey that the student you are working with has a lot to offer and would make a great friend.** You can do this by using explicit statements and/or introducing group activities that highlight their strengths.
5. **Help classmates understand student behaviors and/or how to interact with a student with a particular disability.** Staff should explain or translate any noticeable behaviors in developmentally appropriate terms so classmates can understand them and feel comfortable (e.g., "Even though Dwayne does not speak, he can hear and understand everything, so you should talk to him like anyone else in class."). Also, make sure to teach/reinforce social interaction skills to all students, regardless of whether they have a disability.
6. **Prepare students for social interactions.** Prompt the student you are working with to join their peers when key social times arise (e.g., walking to the cafeteria). Remind them of possible conversation starters/topics they would enjoy socializing about.

# GENERAL PARAPROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

Paraprofessionals represent the largest job category at SSD, making up approximately one- third of the District's workforce. They are essential members of an educational team. The following subsections discuss the policies that shape a paraprofessional's responsibilities and the support the District has in place to continue to strengthen their vital skill set.

## Paraprofessional Job Description

The following posting gives a general description of what a paraprofessional is likely to be tasked with doing, the necessary qualifications, and the skills required to effectively support students.

**Position Title:** Teacher Assistant
**Reports To:** Teacher/Principal/Coordinator
**Summary:** Assists the teacher in providing each student with a program that will enable the student to reach his/her fullest potential.

**Job Responsibilities:**

**Instruction and Learning – Student achievement/performance and staff growth**

1. Becomes familiar with the teaching procedures used by the teacher, the teacher's schedule of activities, the continuity of academic progression, and the materials and equipment available.
2. Works with individual students or small groups of students to reinforce learning of material or skills initially introduced by the teacher.
3. Assists the teacher in devising strategies for reinforcing materials or skills based on an understanding of individual students, their needs, interests, and abilities.
4. Guides independent study, enrichment work, and remedial work set up and assigned by teacher.
5. Provides escort and assistance to children as necessary throughout a variety of school and community settings.
6. Checks students' work, corrects papers, and supervises testing and make-up work, as assigned by the teacher.
7. Assists with large group activities such as drill work, reading, and storytelling.
8. Assists teachers in maintaining work and study areas, equipment, materials, and facilities.
9. Assists the student(s) assigned to him/her in such physical tasks as putting on/taking off outerwear, moving from room to room, using the lavatory, etc.
10. Operates teaching aids (e.g., VCRs, computers, tape recorders, etc.).

11. Substitutes for teachers when needed.
12. Alerts the teacher to any problem or special information about an individual student.
13. Assists with the supervision of children during regular play periods.
14. Assists with clerical responsibilities of the teacher.
15. Participates in pre-school workshops, in-service training, parent conferences (when appropriate), IEP conferences, and team meetings.
16. Assists with lunch, snack, clean-up, wash-up, and toilet routines.
17. Assists with health-related procedures such as, but not limited to, feeding/tube feeding, lifting, positioning, carrying, toileting, cleaning intermittent catheterization and suctioning (when trained).
18. Assists teachers in dealing with students who have challenging behaviors.
19. Assists with Crisis Prevention Intervention Techniques (CPI) when trained.
20. Assists the teacher in maintaining an environment that is conducive to learning.
21. Observes, records and follows the management plan established by the teacher.
22. Assists in managing pupils in the classroom, cafeteria, on the playground, and all related activities as directed.
23. Assists in preparing teaching materials during the school day as directed by the teacher.
24. Assists in prompting pupils to reinforce previously taught materials as prescribed by the teacher.
25. Within the classroom setting, the assistant reports to the teacher in matters involving the students' programs and related activities.

## Compliance

- Maintains ethical behavior and confidentiality of information about students.
- Adheres to the district's policies and procedures.
- Workday is 7.5 hours.
- Performs other duties and responsibilities as assigned.

## Qualifications

**Education and/or Experience:** Sixty hours of college credit required. Experience working with children is preferred.

### Essential Functions[4]

**Language Skills**: Ability to read and interpret documents such as safety rules, operating and maintenance instructions, and policy and procedure manuals. Ability to write routine reports and correspondence. Ability to communicate effectively.
**Mathematical Skills**: Ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide in all units of measure, using whole numbers, common fractions, decimals, and percentages.
**Reasoning Ability**: Ability to problem-solve and apply common sense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written, oral, or diagram form.
**Physical Demands**: While performing the duties and responsibilities of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk/hear, stand, move/walk at a brisk pace, sit, and use hands/arms to handle, feel and reach. The ability to accompany students anywhere on school premises. The employee is occasionally required to stoop or kneel and occasionally lift and move up to 50 pounds. Regular attendance on the job is expected and necessary. Additionally, the employee must be physically able to implement all BOE policies, district procedures, and perform NCPI training and techniques. The employee must be physically able to react and intervene quickly during crisis situations, such as but not limited to the following circumstances: student elopement, physical altercations involving students or any situation that requires physical intervention to maintain student safety. Regular certification of Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training is a requirement of the job.

### Terms of Employment

Terms covering compensation, benefits, and working conditions are specified by the Board of Education's policies, agreements, and approvals.

## Qualifications of an Instructional Paraprofessional

The requirement that instructional paraprofessionals be qualified applies to all public elementary or secondary instructional paraprofessionals employed by a local education agency receiving federal funds. There are two job titles that fall under the category of Paraprofessional: Teacher Assistant and Teacher Aide. All Teacher Assistants in a school-wide building must meet the stated qualifications.

- 60 college hours[5] **OR**
- Holds a Missouri Substitute Teaching Certificate via a DESE approved alternative pathway
    - Prior to 09/23/13: Passed the ParaPro Assessment

[4] As required by law, reasonable accommodations will be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of a job.
[5] Paraprofessionals who do not hold a teaching certificate shall receive a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of training within six (6) months of hire during their initial year of employment and a minimum of ten (10) hours of training yearly in subsequent school years.

    - From 09/23/13 to 10/31/2021: Passed the Paraprofessional Assessment
    - After 11/01/2021 Hold a Missouri Substitute Teaching Certificate

Teacher Assistants are permitted to work alone with students, substitute for special education teachers on a short-term basis, and attend IEP meetings. Teacher Aides are not permitted to participate in those activities. Apart from those important distinctions, Teacher Assistants and Teacher Aides share the same responsibilities.

Missouri allows paraprofessionals who are appropriately trained and supervised to assist in the provision of special education and related services to students with disabilities. (See Regulation VIII – Personnel Standards)

On-site supervision is provided by a properly certificated teacher appropriate for the setting. Prior to working with students, SSD is required to provide each paraprofessional with the orientation and initial training necessary to perform the duties associated with the work assignment. At a minimum, such training shall include information and experiences related to:

- The type of disabilities displayed by the students with whom they will work;
- Basic principles of behavior modification;
- Basic instructional techniques expected to be used (demonstration, modeling, cueing, reinforcement, correction, etc.); and,
- Other areas as necessary (positioning, lifting and transferring techniques, feeding procedures, etc.).

## Human Resources Orientation Information for Paraprofessionals

A standard orientation for all SSD staff members is offered by the HR Department via self-paced online modules. This differs for paraprofessional-specific training, which will be discussed in the sections that follow.

The online modules are accessible at any time through TalentEd, and provide information on the following topics:

- Equifax 1-9
- W-4
- Missouri W-4
- Direct Deposit
- Employee Information
- Board Policy Sign-off
- Certification Sign-off
- HR Contact Card
- SSD Document Self-Service
- SSD Life
- Technology Information
- Safe Schools
- Retirement Benefits
- Payroll Information
- Clocking in and out
- Insurance and Benefits

## SSD Paraprofessional Required Trainings

All trainings discussed below must be entered in KickUp, the district's system for registering and maintaining employee transcripts on trainings received. Instructions on navigating KickUp have been provided at the end of this section.

### New Paraprofessional Training

All paraprofessionals are required to complete the New Paraprofessional Training sessions prior to working with students[6]. This three-day training covers:

- Disabilities Awareness
- Behavior Modification
- Instructional Techniques
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training

Classroom teachers and/or supervisors will orient new paraprofessionals with lifting and transferring techniques, feeding procedures, and any other necessary supports.

Paraprofessionals may be expected to attend additional specialized training based on their assignment (e.g., ABA Basic Training).

[6] DESE requirement.

## Peer Observation

Peer observations are a built-in component of a new paraprofessional training, which allows new staff to get a feel for the role and to build their confidence in working independently. Over two half days, new paraprofessionals observe experienced paraprofessionals for a combined total of 7.5 hours. Observations are scheduled through the special education coordinator/principal during a paraprofessional's first 2 months of employment.

The observation provides new paraprofessionals with the following opportunities:

- Observe an experienced paraprofessional with similar students/program;
- Focus on particular needs such as behavior management, and the general daily routine; and,
- Create a supportive connection with an experienced peer.

Criteria used by special education coordinator/principal in selecting the experienced paraprofessional:

- Three years of experience preferred
- Willing to assume the responsibilities assigned by the teacher
- Committed to personal and professional development
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills needed for success as a paraprofessional
- Works within the same program with students of similar ages/disabilities

**Scheduling the Observation**

The special education coordinator/principal determines a suitable site and selects the experienced paraprofessional from within the schools/districts under their supervision. If a suitable paraprofessional is not available, the AC/principal will consult with their director to find an appropriate match from another location.

**Responsibilities of the Experienced Paraprofessional**

- Share knowledge and skills
- Demonstrate specific skills needed to work with certain students/programs
- Serve as a resource and a support for a first year paraprofessional

The new paraprofessional is responsible for entering the information into KickUp in order for it to be viewed on their transcripts and recorded. This will be entered as an outside event. Directions can be found online.

## Ongoing Professional Development for SSD Paraprofessionals

The Paraprofessional Academy is guided training for paraprofessionals in their first three years of employment with SSD.

| Year | Format | Content |
|---|---|---|
| **Year 1** | In-person training | New Paraprofessional Training |
| **Year 2** | Asynchronous modules | Literacy, numeracy, social-emotional behavior, autism, etc. |
| **Year 3** | | |

Paraprofessionals will work with their supervisor to determine which courses will be appropriate for them to complete in alignment with their immediate job responsibilities.

**Safe Schools Training**

In August 2009, SSD began to use SafeSchools to train staff on the district's key policies. All staff are now required to annually complete mandatory online training on SSD's Board policies at http://ssd.mo.safeschools.com/login.

Instructions on how to complete this mandatory district training are provided below (additional information can also be found on SSD Life). Administrators will provide paraprofessionals with release time during the workday to complete this training. Failure to complete SSD's online policy training may result in disciplinary action up to termination.

Staff should primarily access the District's BoE policies online through SafeSchools and on the District's website. However, all policies are also maintained in hard copy form in the Board Policy Manual in the superintendent's office.

The policies of SSD are designed to provide stability for the district as well as its students and staff. However, these policies are subject to change from time to time, and it is the responsibility of the employee to keep themselves informed of any changes.

Follow the instructions below to complete the mandatory training on SSD's Board policies.

## SafeSchools Safety Training 2022-2023 Instructions

1. **Sign on to http://ssdo.mo.safeschools.com (No "www." is necessary.)**

**To access your assigned training:**

2. **LOGIN on the lower left of the screen**
    a. **LOGIN: Enter the 6-digit SSD employee ID number located on your paycheck. Then click OK.**
    b. **If you cannot determine your employee ID number, call the HR Department at 314-989-8211.**
    c. **Do not share your ID number with other employees.**
3. **You will then see a welcome message verifying your name, job code, and assigned building. If this is correct, click Log Me In.**
    a. **If this is not correct, contact HR help at 314-989-8211.**
4. **Once you are logged in, you will see your main training screen. Under the "Mandatory Training" heading, all required courses that have been assigned by the District will be listed. You will see the title of the course, the number of days until it is due, the due date, time required, and course status.**
5. **Select any course by simply clicking on the name of the course. After you click the course name, a disclaimer will appear on the screen. Click the Accept button. After you accept, you will see all scenario that are required to complete that course. Click on each blue hyperlink to begin the appropriate scenario. After you complete each scenario, the status will change to 'Finished'.**

**The courses have audio, so turn up your speakers if you wish to hear narration. Complete all the training scenarios and the assessment to receive completion credit for the course.**

Once you have completed all the scenarios, you must take a quiz. The quiz is based on the information provided in the corresponding course. In order to pass the quiz, you must score at least 80%. If you do not score 80%, you will be required to retake the quiz until you pass.

Once you pass the quiz and have completed all the other courses, when you log back in, your main SafeSchools training page will show that you have completed and passed the course.

Follow this process to complete all assigned SafeSchools courses. Please note that if you leave SafeSchools unattended for 30 minutes or more, SafeSchools will time out, and you will have to log in again. All completed scenarios are automatically saved, but if you start a scenario and don't finish it, you will lose the data.

If you have any questions or problems with the site or need accommodations to complete the assigned training courses, please contact HR at 314-989-8211.

## Professional Development for Returning Paraprofessionals

**10 Hours of District Approved Training**

SSD and MSIP require that returning paraprofessionals receive a minimum of 10 hours of training annually. This training is scheduled by paraprofessionals in conjunction with their immediate supervisor according to individual and situational needs. The topic of the training attended must directly relate to the needs of the student in the classroom and assist in positively impacting student achievement.

For their first three years of employment, the Paraprofessional will obtain these hours through asynchronous learning as part of the Paraprofessional Academy program. Paraprofessionals, along with their supervisor, will have an opportunity to choose one of four pathways for further development: Literacy, Numeracy, Autism Strategies, or Behavior Modification. These, and other resources can be found on the Paraprofessional Learning website.

Release time must be approved by a supervisor and entered into WFM. Trainings are offered through SSD, in cooperation with the partner district and/or on regularly scheduled professional development days. Consult with the supervisor to determine if a training offered through the partner district may count towards the 10 hours.

## Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) Refresher

This professional development is a required yearly follow-up training for those staff who have attended the full NCI training. Only those staff who have attended the full course, or previous Refresher, may attend this Refresher course.

This class provides participants the opportunity to practice verbal and physical techniques and discuss strategies to provide for the care, welfare, safety, and security of staff and students. The class will provide staff with an opportunity to examine their own behavior and to become more proactive when supporting positive behavior in students. An

emphasis is placed on verbal techniques and personal safety while reserving physical intervention as a last resort to be used in a team approach.

## Professional Development Tracking System- KickUp

Kickup is a professional development tracking system the district uses to support registration for professional learning opportunities within the districts.

The system is also used to keep learning transcripts for all district employees. All professional learning opportunities, both within the district and outside of SSD, are logged into the system as a means for keeping a record of professional development attended by all district employees.

For more information on how to log into Kickup, please visit Technology Service's Knowledge Center.

## Tuition Reimbursement

SSD's Board of Education recognizes the importance of ongoing study and encourages employees to pursue advanced study/continued professional growth that will enable them to provide better education opportunities for students and more efficient and effective school operations.

In support of this goal, the District may provide tuition reimbursement for successfully completed courses that have received prior approval from the director of HR, or designee. Applications submitted after coursework has begun will be denied.




Full-time employees under SEEA/SDVLS/SESPA are eligible to apply for reimbursement of up to 3 undergraduate credit hours per school year.

## Submitting a Tuition Pre-Approval Application

Once you have logged into Talent Ed[7], complete the following steps:

1. Click the small box on the top right of the screen next to your initials and click on Records
2. Choose Available Forms from the left side main menu
3. Click on the Tuition Reimbursement application
4. In the Add Available Form window, select Add for Myself
5. Click Add as an E-Form

[7] If this is your first time logging into Talend Ed, please follow the steps outlined in this section.

6. Fill out the required information
7. Click Save Final to submit the application
8. You will be contacted by HR once your application has been reviewed

Employees who submit a pre-approval request will receive notification from HR to their SSD email indicating whether their application has been approved or denied for tuition reimbursement.

Courses eligible for tuition reimbursement will meet the approval criteria established by the District. For more information, contact HR at tuitionreimbursement@ssdmo.org.

## Paraprofessional Checklist of Expectations

The following checklist has been developed to provide a greater understanding of all the processes and structures paraprofessionals should be made aware of. It also lists the skills needed to successfully support students, and overall expectations for the role.

The corresponding Board policies have been identified next to each heading.

**Interpersonal Skills** (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #2)

- ☐ Review process for maintaining approachability, respect, and positive image of SSD services with staff, students, and the community
- ☐ Review process for maintaining collaboration, cooperation, and a team approach to meet all student needs
- ☐ Review "Paraprofessional Code of Ethics"

**Professional Growth** (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #3, #4)

- ☐ Review of professional learning expectations
- ☐ Review obtaining/maintaining appropriate DESE certification and licensure
- ☐ Review job-specific professional learning courses/sessions provided by SSD

**Professional Responsibilities** (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #2, #4, #8, #10, #12)

- ☐ Review student files, behavior supports, pertinent health information with supervisors and student services staff
- ☐ Review and implement all student instructional plans
- ☐ Review and discuss building-wide and student-specific crisis plans
- ☐ Define and discuss student arrival/departure, transition routines
- ☐ Review and discuss the process and expectations for supervising all students
- ☐ Review and define Hotline Procedures and the District's expectation for Mandated Reporters

- ☐ Review and discuss the District's expectation for maintaining confidentiality as outlined in Board Policy GBCB
- ☐ Provide a copy of applicable School Handbook including Partner District Handbooks to ensure knowledge of school policies, rules, procedures
- ☐ Review expectations for assuming the role of the teacher and additional responsibilities
- ☐ Review all mandated SSD District and Partner District professional learning (Nonviolent Crisis Intervention®, ABA, SafeSchools, etc.) and provide the appropriate release time
- ☐ Review reporting procedure expectations for any staff or student safety concern
- ☐ Review reporting procedure expectations when an employee witnesses any inappropriate physical intervention

**Dependability** (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #12, #15; GBCBC and GBCBC-R)

- ☐ Review attendance/tardiness policies, procedures, and expectations
- ☐ Review building-specific absence procedures
- ☐ Review WorkForce Management (WFM) guidelines and expectations for clocking in on-site
- ☐ Knowledge of partner district policies and procedures
- ☐ Review expectations for maintaining accountability and responsibility for all job functions, District property, technology, classroom equipment, and supplies

**Initiative**

- ☐ Discuss classroom expectations for prioritizing daily tasks and assignments
- ☐ Discuss time-management expectations for prioritizing daily schedule

**Adaptability**

- ☐ Process for adapting and changing daily needs of the school/students
- ☐ Review the expectation of being flexible and adapting to daily and/or immediate changes in routines and schedules based on student needs

**Communication Skills** (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #2; Social Media Guidelines, GBH & GBH-R)

- ☐ Review expectations of all employee's responsibility for checking SSD email on a consistent basis
- ☐ Review building-specific written communication systems (email where available)
- ☐ Review expectations for the paraprofessional role when communicating with parents

- ☐ Review the employee's role as an ambassador for the District when communicating with staff, students, and the community (both in person, in writing, and when using social media)
- ☐ Review expectations for maintaining positive, professional communication with all students, parents, staff, and community

**Problem-Solving/Decision-Making** (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #2)

- ☐ Review appropriate chain of command for resolving staff conflict (a) immediate Supervisor; b) Special Education Coordinator/Principal; c) Director d) Assistant Superintendent)
- ☐ Review PDSA model (Plan, Do, Study, Act) for process improvements
- ☐ Review expectations for participating in team meetings, lesson design, and individual student planning sessions for problem-solving and process improvement
- ☐ Review process for facilitating appropriate interactions and conflict management among students

**Motivation of Students** (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #3, #11)

- ☐ Review all student Behavior Intervention Plans and behavior protocols
- ☐ Review the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® Verbal De-escalation Model and its application with students
- ☐ Review student-specific techniques and activities which promote student participation
- ☐ Discuss approved materials, resources, and interventions used to appropriately motivate students
- ☐ Review Universal Supports as they apply to your assignment (Rules, routines, schedules, 4:1 positive interactions, etc.)

**Behavior Intervention** (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #2, #10, #11; JGGA & JGGA-R)

- ☐ Review and identify approved classroom management system(s) and intervention techniques
- ☐ Review all approved District positive behavior intervention strategies as outlined in Board Policies GBCB, JGGA, JGGA/R)
- ☐ Review and implement all classroom positive behavior support plans and implement them with fidelity/consistency
- ☐ Review student-specific levels of supervision across a variety of settings (the need for 1:1 supervision)

**Instructional Implementation** (GBCB - Staff Conduct, #1, #4, #6, #12)

- ☐ Review roles and responsibilities for assisting the teacher with preparation for instruction
- ☐ Review the paraprofessional role with regards to preparing instructional materials, use of equipment/technology, maintaining data sources, setting up the classroom, and other related classroom duties.
- ☐ Review expectations for knowledge of subject matter/curriculum
- ☐ Review expectations for observing and recording student data/progress
- ☐ Review expectations for the use of technology to collect and analyze data
- ☐ Review expectations for assisting all students as needed within the classroom setting
- ☐ Provide specific, evaluative feedback to students regarding student performance
- ☐ Provide feedback to the teacher regarding student behaviors, academic performance, and health

## Paraprofessional Code of Ethics

In your work as a paraprofessional, you may face situations where the interests of a student, the school, or your own may conflict. Understanding and practicing ethical standards will help you to:

- Become aware of the correct course of action regarding a variety of perspectives other than just your own
- Consider the implications of the decisions that you make
- Consider the potential impact of those decisions on students and other school staff

Ethics are particularly important within the educational setting because paraprofessionals and teachers are placed in a position of authority over students. Students are often vulnerable and have limited influence, relying on paraprofessionals, teachers, and parents to protect their best interests. It is necessary that you be as fully prepared as possible to function ethically, as well as legally, in the school environment. Ethical standards provide a framework for reflecting on appropriate behavior.

As an integral part of the educational team, you have a commitment to maintain ethical standards of behavior in your relationships with students, parents, and staff. Teachers have a responsibility to help you develop ethical responses to situations that arise.

The teacher and the paraprofessional must take responsible action to ensure that the best interests of individual students are being met. The ethical responsibility for deciding the proper job assignment for you rests with the licensed staff (e.g., teachers, administrators,

related service providers) who direct your work. The responsibility of being prepared to provide support in line with the ethical tenets listed below is yours.

## General Ethical Considerations for Paraprofessionals

**Instructional Support Considerations**

- Engage only in non-instructional and instructional activities for which you are qualified or trained
- Follow directions provided by your supervisor, as they are ultimately responsible for the instruction and behavior management of students
- Ensure data collection is accurate
- Maintain student confidentiality and do not post information about students using social media
- Follow Board policies and building procedures

**Relationship with Students and Families**

- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents, and staff
- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a student's handicap, race, sex, cultural background, or religion
- Use behavior management strategies that are consistent with standards established by the local school district and classroom teacher
- Present yourself as a positive adult role model
- Discuss a child's progress, limitations, and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in the appropriate setting
- Refer concerns expressed by families, students, or others to their teacher/supervisor
- Only discuss school programs and confidential matters with appropriate personnel, and when students are not present

**Relationship with Teacher and Related Service Providers**

- Recognize the role of the teacher as the supervisor
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher
- Express differences of opinion only when students are not present
- Discuss concerns about the teacher, related service providers or teaching methods/support programming directly with the personnel responsible for the plan
    - If issues specific to the related service providers and/or teachers and the approaches used were not resolved at the teacher-level, then discuss concerns only with the teacher's supervisor
- Do not discuss teacher or related service provider problems with students, other teacher-level staff, paraprofessionals, or students' families
- Follow the behavior management approach as established by the teacher

**Relationship with the District**

- Commit to improving your skills
- Become familiar with, and follow, district policies and procedures
- Represent the District and its programs in a positive manner
- When problems cannot be resolved, utilize the grievance procedure outlined by the local school district

## SSD Board Policies

### Staff Conflict of Interest (Board Policy GBCA)

All employees of SSD shall adhere to the laws regarding conflict of interest and avoid situations where their decisions or actions in their employment capacities:

- Violate the provisions of this policy
- Conflict with the mission of the District
- Raise a reasonable question of conflict

This includes:

- Selling, renting, or leasing personal or real property to the District outside of the District's bidding process
- Performing independent contractor services outside of the District's bidding process
- Use or disclosure of personal employee or student information for personal gain or for the benefit of a spouse, dependent children, or other person with whom they are associated
- Acting or not acting in some manner for personal benefit or for the benefit of a spouse, dependent children, or other person with whom they are associated, as outlined in the accompanying regulation

Where applicable, professional staff are to abide by the conflict of interest provisions of their profession's code of ethics including but not limited to those referenced in this policy.

### Student Transportation in Private Vehicles and Common Carriers (Board Policy EEA)

Student transportation services are considered extensions of the school environment. The District is required by state and federal law to provide free transportation for eligible students attending District programs.

Students may be transported in District-owned/leased vehicles, common carriers or other contracted transportation. Access to all District transportation is limited to authorized

staff and other riders given prior authorization, via the IEP process, by the Director of Transportation or designee.

Please consult Board Policy EEA for more information.

## Paraprofessional Evaluation Information

Performance evaluations provide the opportunity for staff to be recognized for their hard work and acknowledged for their contributions. The evaluation process itself also helps to prioritize areas for skill development for each staff member that will be targeted through professional learning.

### Guiding Principles of Evaluation

- Evaluation should reflect the District's mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives
- The process should promote dialogue and professional growth for all staff
- Evaluation should measure the competency required for continued employment
- The process should be user-friendly for everyone
- Administrators and instructional-level staff will require ongoing quality training to ensure that the principles and procedures of evaluation are implemented effectively

### Performance Evaluation Timelines

Performance reviews are conducted, and progress is monitored by administrators. A review can include up to three components, which are outlined in the table below. A copy of your completed reports will be provided to you and the HR department.

| Evaluation Component | Timing | Details |
|---|---|---|
| **Evaluation Report** (detailed below) | Completed each year by May 1 | • Review is based on specific standards and criteria<br>• The proficient category describes performance at the expected level<br>• A summary report is completed for all instructional support staff<br>• Staff will be notified in writing at least 3 days prior to their evaluation conference date |
| **Formative Feedback** | As needed | • Provided with criteria in a staff's Evaluation Report is rated as 'unsatisfactory' or 'needs improvement' |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Formative feedback lists the standard and criteria addressed. It is documented in writing and shared within 10 days via either form, memorandum, letter, non-observed data, and/or artifact data |
| **Performance Improvement Plan** | As needed | • Used to improve professional skills as defined by the criteria<br>• One criterion is addressed for each plan<br>• The plan includes identifiable, precise descriptor(s) and appropriate means for achieving the criteria<br>• The development of a PIP for criteria marked as needs improvement or unsatisfactory is at the discretion of the administrator |

## Instructional Support Evaluation Rubric

The standards forming the basis of the evaluation rubric are listed below, and mirror the categories described in the Paraprofessional Checklist of Expectations.

| **Standard 1: The Employee demonstrates effective interpersonal skills.** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Criteria** | **Unsatisfactory** | **Needs Improvement** | **Proficient** | **Superior** |
| **1A** | **Relationships promote approachability, respect and a positive image of SSD services within the partner district and community.** | Interactions with students, staff, parents and/or the community are inappropriate or ineffective. Displays insensitivity in relationships. Does not demonstrate sensitivity or awareness of issues related to diversity. | Relationships with students, staff, parents and/or the community are not consistently maintained in an effective manner. Inconsistently demonstrates sensitivity or awareness of issues related to diversity. | Maintains effective relationships with students, staff, parents and/or the community. Is cooperative, approachable, respectful and helpful to others. Actions support student's independent functioning, responsibility, self-control and individual thought. Consistently demonstrates sensitivity or awareness of issues related to diversity. Uses empathetic non-judgmental approach. | Makes a considerable contribution towards establishing positive relationships in all interactions. Actions encourage student's independent functioning, responsibility, self-control and individual thought. Actively promotes diversity awareness and supports a positive school environment. |
| **1B** | **Demonstrates collaboration, cooperation and a team approach to meet student needs.** | Works in isolation, seldom seeking information from others. Does not support teamwork. Does not demonstrate effective listening skills. | Displays a lack of team-centered focus. Actions do not always support students, parents, and/or colleagues' best interests. Inconsistently demonstrates effective listening skills. | Works cooperatively with educational teams in planning activities that reflect the best interest of the students. Is regularly and consistently viewed as a team player. Works cooperatively with SSD and Component District Administrators. | Actively develops the cooperation of others. Encourages teamwork and places the success of the team above individual gain. |

| Standard 2: The Employee grows and develops professionally. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Criteria** | **Unsatisfactory** | **Needs Improvement** | **Proficient** | **Superior** |
| **2A** | **Participates in required training activities.** | Does not seek to further develop knowledge and skills. | Only seeks to further develop knowledge and skills and stay informed of current trends affecting the job as directed. | Willingly participates in opportunities to enhance professional knowledge and skills. | Actively seeks out and participates in a variety of professional growth opportunities. |
| **2B** | **Maintains appropriate certification/ licensure (if applicable).** | Does not maintain current applicable licensure/ certification/training. | May maintain current licensure/certification/ training with supervisory intervention. | Maintains current applicable licensure/certification/ training. | Proactively maintains current applicable licensure/certification/ training. |

| Standard 3: The Employee demonstrates professional responsibility. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Criteria** | **Unsatisfactory** | **Needs Improvement** | **Proficient** | **Superior** |
| **3A** | **Adheres to policies and procedures.** | Does not follow District, building and/or Partner District rules, regulations, procedures and policies. Does not carry out duties in accordance with job description in a professional manner. | Inconsistently adheres to and/or supports the District, building and/or Partner District rules, regulations, procedures and policies. Inconsistently carries out duties in accordance with job description. Demonstrates professionalism in the majority of situations. | Consistently adheres to and supports the District, building and/or Partner District rules, regulations, procedures and policies. Demonstrates professionalism. Carries out duties in accordance with job description in a professional manner. | Viewed as an example concerning support and adherence to District, building and/or SSD rules, regulations, procedures and policies. Actively and enthusiastically seeks ways to work as a proponent of the District. Demonstrates professionalism in all he/she does. Employee's enthusiasm is matched by student's engagement. |
| **3B** | **Assumes additional responsibilities.** | Does not assume non-instructional responsibility. Does not exercise responsibility for student management throughout the school learning environment and community. | Rarely assumes non-instructional responsibility and inconsistently exercises responsibility for student management throughout the school learning environment and community. | Assumes non-instructional responsibilities. Exercises responsibility for student management throughout the school learning environment and community. | Enthusiastically participates and takes leadership role in more than two SSD and/or community activities related to specific field. |
| **3C** | **Assumes role of substitute teacher (if applicable).** | Does not follow substitute plan provided by the teacher. Does not record student data as directed. Does not maintain student records. | Inconsistently follows substitute plan provided by the teacher. Inconsistently records student data as directed. Inconsistently maintains student records. | Follows substitute plan provided by the teacher. Consistently records student data as directed (attendance, grades, etc.). Maintains student records. | Follows substitute plan provided by the teacher and builds upon teachable moments relating to lesson plan. Records/relays additional pertinent information to the teacher regarding individual student performance. |

**Standard 4: The Employee demonstrates dependability.**

| | Criteria | Unsatisfactory | Needs Improvement | Proficient | Superior |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4A | **Adheres to District attendance policies and procedures.** | Does not follow procedures for attendance reporting/late arrival. | Inconsistently follows procedures for attendance reporting/late arrival. | Follows procedures for attendance reporting/late arrival. When possible, plans ahead of time when requesting leave. | Follows procedures for attendance reporting/late arrivals. Schedules personal/sick leave taking into consideration student/staffing needs. |
| 4B | **Consistently arrives on time to work.** | Frequently absent and/or reports to work late or leaves early. Patterns of absenteeism apparent. | Absenteeism and late arrivals occur occasionally. Patterns of absenteeism emerging. | Consistently arrives on time and is ready to begin work at the designated start time. | Rarely absent or late. |
| 4C | **Demonstrates accountability and responsibility for all job functions, as well as District property, classroom equipment and supplies.** | Does not accept responsibility for actions and/or district property, classroom equipment and supplies. Does not follow task through to completion. | May avoid responsibility for actions and/or district property, classroom equipment and supplies. Satisfied to meet only minimum requirements of the job. Follows projects and tasks through to completion with some assistance. | Takes control of a project or assignment and follows through until completion. Demonstrates accountability and responsibility for all job functions, as well as district property, classroom equipment and supplies. | Readily accepts responsibility and is accountable for all actions, as well as district property, classroom equipment and supplies. Consistently gets the job done on time, without regard to the circumstances. Takes responsibility for additional job functions as needed. |

**Standard 5: The Employee demonstrates initiative.**

| | Criteria | Unsatisfactory | Needs Improvement | Proficient | Superior |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5A | **Demonstrates initiative and insight to work.** | Demonstrates little personal initiative or insight. Must be told what needs to be done. | Occasionally identifies problem areas and suggests original solutions. | Applies independent and original thought to introduce new concepts and processes. Follows schedules independently. | Applies independent and original thought to introduce new concepts and processes. |
| 5B | **Maintains a proper balance of time for all requirements of job.** | Displays an inability to schedule time effectively | May not effectively schedule time without managerial intervention. | Maintains a proper balance of time for all requirements of day-to-day job with minimum managerial intervention. Adjusts schedule as needed to maintain a proper balance of time. | Maintains a proper balance of time for all requirements of day-to-day job independently. |
| 5C | **Prioritizes assignments.** | Displays an inability to prioritize assignments to ensure job responsibilities are met. | May not prioritize assignments appropriately on a consistent basis without managerial intervention. | Effectively schedules time and prioritize assignments appropriately. | Effectively schedules time and prioritizes assignments appropriately independently. |

**Standard 6: The Employee demonstrates adaptability.**

| | Criteria | Unsatisfactory | Needs Improvement | Proficient | Superior |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6A | **Exhibits flexibility and adaptability to change in the workplace.** | Does not handle change or constructive criticism positively. Does not attempt to make adjustments to sessions/activities and accommodate student needs. Performs ineffectively in stressful situations. | Shows some reluctance to change or to take constructive criticism. Attempts to make adjustments to sessions/activities to accommodate students, but may not always be effective. Occasionally has difficulty coping with stressful situations. | Adapts quickly to change or to constructive criticism. Makes appropriate adjustments to sessions/activities to accommodate students. Demonstrates good judgment in difficult or stressful situations. | Maximizes opportunities created by change or constructive criticism in order to enhance the therapeutic process/learning process. Remains calm and uses good judgment and rational in difficult or stressful situations. Diffuses stressful situations with others. |

**Standard 7: The Employee demonstrates effective communication skills.**

| | Criteria | Unsatisfactory | Needs Improvement | Proficient | Superior |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7A | **Uses effective oral communication skills.** | Has difficulty expressing oneself orally. Vocabulary is inappropriate to the situation. Does not use effective questioning and dialogue techniques. | Generally communicates effectively with others. Vocabulary is generally appropriate to the situation. Limited use of effective questioning and dialogue techniques. | Communicates effectively with others orally. Asks clarifying questions and seeks to understand. Articulates ideas in a clear, concise manner. | Demonstrates outstanding oral communication with others. Demonstrates a high level of articulation. Uses articulation skills to explain complex ideas to others. |
| 7B | **Uses effective written communication skills.** | Has difficulty expressing oneself in writing. Records and/or reports are poorly prepared. | Records and reports are prepared inconsistently. | Communicates effectively with others in writing. Records and reports are written clearly and neatly. | Records and reports are professional and descriptive, yet concise and easily understood. Record keeping and report preparation is a model for others. |

**Standard 8: The Employee demonstrates problem solving and decision-making.**

| | Criteria | Unsatisfactory | Needs Improvement | Proficient | Superior |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8A | **Makes effective decisions within appropriate scope of responsibility.** | Does not make effective decisions within the appropriate scope of responsibilities. Frequently requires immediate supervisor assistance. | Inconsistently makes effective decisions within the appropriate scope of responsibilities. Requires regular assistance from immediate supervisor. | Generally makes effective decisions within the appropriate scope of responsibilities. Generally insightful yet occasionally requires immediate supervisor assistance. | Makes effective decisions within the appropriate scope of responsibilities. Actively contributes to the decision making process through team meetings. |
| 8B | **Applies a problem-solving approach when handling situations.** | Inappropriately deals with areas of concern. Does not utilize appropriate channels for resolving concern/problems. | Inconsistently utilizes a problem-solving approach in dealing with situations. Needs regular direction to utilize appropriate channels for resolving concerns/problems. | Utilizes problem-solving approach in dealing with situations. Utilizes appropriate channels for resolving concerns/problems. | Demonstrates outstanding problem-solving skills. Is sought out by others to assist with problem-solving. |

**Standard 9: The Employee motivates students.**

| | Criteria | Unsatisfactory | Needs Improvement | Proficient | Superior |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9A | **Uses effective techniques and activities to promote participation.** | Requires frequent supervision to use techniques, activities, and/or rein forcers to promote student participation. Does not communicate expectations for learning and achieving. Does not assist the teacher in maintaining a safe, healthy classroom environment. | Requires reminders to use techniques, activities, and/or reinforcers to promote student participation as directed by therapist/teacher. Sometimes communicates expectations for learning and achieving. | Uses effective techniques, activities, and/or rein forcers to promote student participation. Asks questions as needed. Assists the teacher in maintaining a safe, healthy classroom environment. Regularly communicates expectations for learning and achieving. | Inspires students and others to achieve full potential. Assists the teacher in assessing and adjusting the learning environment as necessary. |
| 9B | **Encourages and involves students.** | Does not encourage or involve students. Does not utilize student communication system and/or adaptive equipment to promote engagement. | Inconsistently encourages and involves students. Infrequently utilizes student communication system and/or adaptive equipment to promote engagement/ | Encourages and involves students. Provides for student interaction. Provides activities which promote student independences. Utilizes the students' communication system and/or adaptive equipment to promote engagement. | Develops student strengths and makes recommendations which promote student involvement. |
| 9C | **Positively responds to students.** | Inconsistently positively responds to students. Does not demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, gender, intellectual and physical ability differences in classroom communication and in response to students' communications. | Usually positively responds to students. Demonstrates limited sensitivity to cultural, gender, intellectual and physical ability differences in classroom communication and in response to students' communications. | Regularly positively responds to students. Makes an effort to know each student as an individual. Gives constructive criticism and praise when appropriate. Demonstrates sensitivity to cultural, gender, intellectual and physical ability differences in classroom communication and in response to students' communication. | Is sought out by students due to positive reinforcement and consistent positive response. Actively pursues increased understanding and sensitivity to cultural, gender, intellectual and physical ability differences in classroom communication and in response to students' communication. |

| Standard 10: The Employee demonstrates effective skills in behavior intervention. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Criteria** | **Unsatisfactory** | **Needs Improvement** | **Proficient** | **Superior** |
| **10A** | **Employs a variety of behavioral intervention techniques appropriate to student (s') individual needs.** | Does not employ a variety of behavioral intervention techniques appropriate to a student individual needs and or classroom setting. Does not or inappropriately intervene during inappropriate behavior. | Inconsistently employs a variety of behavioral intervention techniques appropriate to a student individual needs and or classroom setting. Inconsistently uses established effective techniques to maintain positive behaviors. | Employs a variety of behavioral intervention techniques appropriate to students' individual needs and or classroom setting. Makes effective use of preventive strategies. | Employs a variety of behavioral intervention techniques that promotes maximum student involvement in instructional activities. Able to de-escalate/ diffuse crisis situations. |
| **10B** | **Follows individual behavior plans/ classroom rules.** | Does not follow individual behavior plans/classroom rules. Does not implement and enforce classroom rules & routines. | Inconsistently follows individual behavior plans/classroom rules. Inconsistently implements and enforces classroom rules & routines. | Follows individual behavior plans/classroom rules. Implements and enforces classroom rules & routines consistently. | Anticipates student support needs. Assists in the development of classroom rule & routines. |
| **10C** | **Provides input into the development of behavior plans.** | Does not provide input into the development of behavior plans. Provide inaccurate information regarding student social, emotional, behavioral support needs. | Inconsistently provides information regarding student social, emotional, behavioral support needs. | Provides information regarding student social, emotional, behavioral support needs to be utilized in the development of behavior plans. | Provides innovative input into the development and implementation of behavior plans. |
| **10D** | **Requires minimal intervention from staff.** | Requires frequent intervention from staff. Does not review individual/group plans regularly. | Requires repeated intervention from staff. Requires reminders to review individual/group plans regularly. Infrequently provides information regarding a student's social, emotional, behavioral support needs. | Requires minimal intervention from staff. Reviews individual/group plans on a regular basis. Communicates regularly with student team regarding social, emotional, behavioral support needs. | Serves as a resource to others. Offers suggestions, ideas based upon data collection. |

| Standard 11: The Employee demonstrates therapeutic implementation. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Criteria** | **Unsatisfactory** | **Needs Improvement** | **Proficient** | **Superior** |
| **11A** | **Effectively Implements therapy programs.** | Unable to effectively implement therapy programs according to treatment plans. | Implement therapy programs according to treatment plans with additional instruction and/or assistance from the therapist. | Effectively implement therapy programs according to treatment plans | Implement therapy programs according to treatment plans with creativity and resourcefulness. |
| **11B** | **Demonstrates knowledge of Therapeutic Process.** | Displays a limited knowledge and practice of the therapeutic process, techniques, and/or theories. | Displays a basic knowledge and practice of the therapeutic process, techniques, and/or theories. | Displays a solid knowledge and practice of the therapeutic process, techniques, and/or theories as related to the disabilities of the students. | Displays an extensive knowledge and practice of the therapeutic process, techniques, and/or theories as related to the disabilities of the students. Actively pursues such to enhance professional knowledge and skills. |
| **11C** | **Makes equipment modifications.** | Unable to effectively assist in the fabrication, modification and/or adjustments of adaptive equipment and educational aids for students. | Participates in the fabrication, modification and/or adjustments of adaptive equipment and educational aids for students with some assistance from therapist. | Assists in the fabrication, modification and/or adjustments of adaptive equipment and educational aids for students. | Demonstrates initiative and contributes ideas to the process of fabricating, modifying and/or adjusting adaptive equipment and educational aids for students following therapist(s) approval. |
| **11D** | **Performs appropriate duties (documentations, meetings and consultations).** | Does not perform appropriate duties as assigned by therapist(s) in a timely manner and are typically of poor quality. | Occasionally performs appropriate duties as assigned by therapist in a timely manner. May require additional time and support to meet quality requirements and ensure accuracy. | Performs appropriate duties as assigned by therapist in accordance with established schedules while meeting quality requirements. | Appropriate duties are always completed prior to deadline and exceed quality standards that have been established by the therapist(s). |

## Following an Evaluation

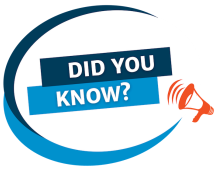
After the Evaluation Report has been completed, a conference between the instructional support staff, supervising teacher, and the administrator will occur. The instructional support staff and administrator will sign the Evaluation Report indicating the document has been read and discussed. Any party will have the opportunity to make written comments on the Form. Additional comments may be attached to the original copy of the Evaluation Report if they are submitted within 10 days of the Evaluation Conference.

## Appeal Process

The instructional support staff may appeal their evaluation if the procedures outlined in the evaluation process have not been followed. All appeals must be submitted in writing within seven working days after receipt of the evaluation documentation.

The following steps must be taken to submit an appeal:

1. The instructional support staff member must identify the reason for the request, including an explanation of the information supporting the appeal
2. When a complete appeal is submitted, the director will schedule a conference with the administrator and/or supervisor and the instructional support staff member within seven working days of receipt
3. The director will notify the instructional support staff member of his/her decision within seven working days
4. If the employee is not in agreement with the decision or timelines are not followed, he/she may appeal to the director of HR or his/her designee within seven working days
5. The director or HR or his/her designee will notify the employee of the decision within seven working days




Paraprofessionals may request association (SEEA) representation at the appeal meeting(s), if said representation can occur in a timely manner.

## TalentEd

TalentEd is a performance management software specifically designed for K-12 institutions. Supervisors use this platform to log staff performance reviews, employee goals, and improvement plans. Complete the following steps to setup your TalentEd account:

1. Go to https://ssd.tedk12.com/sso/Account/Login
2. Click “Logging in for the first time?”
3. Enter your email: username@ssdmo.org
4. You will receive an email in your SSD account that will prompt you to set up your account on TalentEd/PowerSchool
5. Set up your TalentEd/PowerSchool account and login

## Procedures for Reporting Workers' Compensation Injuries

All employees are covered by Workers' Compensation insurance and will receive benefits in accordance with current Missouri law. Employees must comply with the guidelines listed below.

### Reporting an Injury

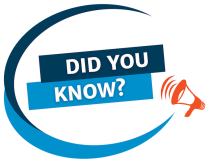
You must report all work-related injuries immediately (within 24 hours) to your SSD supervisor, SSD administrator (SSD principal, special education coordinator, department head, or manager), nurse or director's secretary. It is your responsibility to complete the Employee Injury/Accident Report and submit it to the Insurance & Benefits department within 24 hours of the injury. Routing information is at the bottom of the Report.

**Note:** Post-accident investigations are conducted in the event of an employee injury.

### Medical Treatment

Eligible medical expenses incurred because of a work-related injury/accident will be paid by Workers' Compensation benefits through Brentwood Services Administrators, Inc. ("Brentwood") as long as you obtain services from SSD-approved providers and follow SSD's Workers' Compensation guidelines.

Authorization for medical care must be obtained from SSD's Insurance & Benefits department at 314-989-8456 or Brentwood at 636-812-9927. If you have a life-threatening injury/accident, call 911. If you require medical attention after regular business hours, please visit an urgent care or, if serious, the nearest emergency room.




If you choose to seek treatment with your own physician, Workers' Compensation benefits will not cover the expenses and you will be responsible for payment.

It is your responsibility to keep scheduled doctor and/or physical therapy appointments and to follow the physician's order(s). Failure to do so may impact your Workers' Compensation benefits. After each appointment, provide the physician's work status report to your SSD administrator and SSD's Insurance & Benefits department via email at workcomp@ssdmo.org or fax to 314-989-8441.

## Prescriptions

If you receive a prescription from an SSD-approved Workers' Compensation provider, you may have it filled at no cost to you. Notify the pharmacist that the prescription is for a work-related injury covered by Brentwood Services, through Carlisle Medical. The pharmacy will need the following: PCN# CAR, BIN# 019132, Group# F7761, and the Member ID which is AW5P (plus your social security number). In the event that you did not have this information and paid upfront for your prescription(s), you may be reimbursed through Brentwood.

All SSD policies, including attendance, apply while working on a light-duty basis. If you miss work to seek approved medical care related to your injury, it is your responsibility to report your work hours accurately.

If you have any questions, contact SSD's Insurance & Benefits department at 314-989-8456.

Additional information is detailed in the Workers' Compensation FAQ document.

# STUDENTS

## Child Development Rubric

Children typically develop in predictable stages of cognitive, physical/sensory, social/emotional and language development. This development does not necessarily proceed evenly and is affected by such factors as heredity and the environment. The following chart describes some general characteristics of developing children:

| | |
|---|---|
| **3 Years Old** | **Movement/Physical Development**<br>● Climbs well<br>● Runs easily<br>● Pedals a tricycle<br>● Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step<br>**Social/Emotional**<br>● Copies adults and friends<br>● Shows affection for friends without prompting<br>● Shows a wide range of emotions<br>● Separates easily from parents<br>● Dresses/undresses self<br>● Takes turns in games<br>● Shows concern for a crying friend<br>● Understands the idea of "mine" and "his/hers"<br>● May get upset wit major changes in routine<br>**Cognitive**<br>● Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts<br>● Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people<br>● Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces<br>● Understands what "two" means<br>● Copies a circle with a pencil or crayon<br>● Turns book pages one at a time<br>● Builds towers of more than 6 blocks<br>● Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle<br>**Language/Communication**<br>● Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps<br>● Can name most familiar things<br>● Says first name, age, sex<br>● Names a friend<br>● Understands works like "in," "on," and "under"<br>● Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, cats, dogs)<br>● Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time<br>● Carries on a conversation using 2-3 sentences |

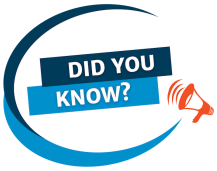
| | |
|---|---|
| **4 Years Old** | **Movement/Physical Development**<br>• Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds<br>• Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food<br>• Catches a bounced ball most of the time<br>**Social/Emotional**<br>• Enjoys doing new things<br>• Is more and more creative with make-believe play<br>• Would rather play with other children than by themself<br>• Cooperates with other children<br>• Often cannot tell what is real and what's make-believe<br>• Talks about what they like and what they are interested in<br>• Plays "mom" and "dad"<br>**Cognitive**<br>• Names some colors and some numbers<br>• Understands the idea of counting<br>• Starts to understand time<br>• Remembers parts of a story<br>• Understands the idea of "same" and "different"<br>• Uses scissors<br>• Draw a person with 2-4 body parts<br>• Starts to copy some capital letters<br>• Plays board or card games<br>• Tells you what they think is going to happen next in a book<br>**Language/Communication**<br>• Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using "he" or "she"<br>• Can say first and last name<br>• Tells stories<br>• Sings a song or says a poem from memory, such as "Itsy Bitsy Spider" or "Wheels on the Bus" |
| **5 Years Old** | **Movement/Physical Development**<br>• Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longers<br>• Hops, may be able to skip<br>• Uses a fork and spoon, and sometimes a table knife<br>• Can do a somersault<br>• Swings and climbs<br>• Can use the toilet on their own<br>**Social/Emotional**<br>• Wants to please friends<br>• Wants to be like friends<br>• More likely to agree wit the rules<br>• Is aware of gender<br>• Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Likes to sing, dance, and act<br>• Can tell what's real and what's make-believe<br>• Shows more independence<br>**Cognitive**<br>• Counts 10 or more things<br>• Can draw a person with at least 6 body parts<br>• Can print some letters or numbers<br>• Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes<br>• Knows about things used every day, like money and food<br>**Language/Communication**<br>• Speaks very clearly<br>• Tells a simple story using full sentences<br>• Uses future tense<br>• Says name and address |
| 6-8 Years Old | **Movement/Physical Development**<br>• Can dress themselves<br>• Can catch a ball more easily using only their hands<br>• Can tie their shoes<br>**Social/Emotional**<br>• Show more independence from parents and family<br>• Understands more about their place in the world<br>• Pays more attention to friendships and teamwork<br>• Wants to be liked and accepted by friends<br>• Critical time for developing confidence<br>• Starts to think about the future<br>**Cognitive**<br>• Shows rapid development of mental skills<br>• Learns better ways to describe experiences and talk about thoughts and feelings<br>• Has less focus on one's self and more concern for others<br>**Language/Communication**<br>• Grammar and pronunciation become normal<br>• A 6 year old can follow a series of 3 commands in a row |
| 9-11 Years Old | **Movement/Physical Development**<br>• Highly active<br>• Becomes more aware of their body as puberty approaches<br>• Wants to be more daring and adventurous<br>**Social/Emotional**<br>• Starts to form stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships<br>• Becomes more emotionally important to have friends, especially of the same sex |

| | |
|---|---|
| | **Cognitive**<br>• Faces more academic challenges at school<br>• Becomes more independent from family<br>• By age 9, can focus attention for about 1 hour<br>• Begins to see point of view of others more clearly<br>• Increase attention span<br>**Language/Communication**<br>• A 10 year old can follow 5 commands in a row |

## General Characteristics of Students with Disabilities

While it is important to have an understanding of the definitions of the educational diagnoses that allow a student to receive special education services, it is important to pay particular attention to the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) in their IEP for the learning styles specific to the student(s) you are supporting. Consult the earlier sections of the handbook for more information on PLAAFP.




Under IDEA, a child may not be identified as a "child with a disability" just because they do not speak/understand English well or because they have not had enough instruction in math or reading.

The information outlined in the sections that follow are meant to provide an introduction to the range of disabilities students receiving SSD services may have.

## Autism (AU)

"Autism" is a developmental disability, generally evident before age 3, that significantly affects verbal or nonverbal communication and social interaction. Other characteristics often associated with autism are:

- Engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements
- Resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines
- Unusual responses to sensory experiences
- Disturbance of developmental rates and sequences- the order and rate of skill acquisition frequently does not follow normal development patterns

The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disability as defined in this document.

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**

A child displays autism when through evaluation that includes a review of medical records, observation of the child's behavior across multiple environments, and in-depth social history, the following behaviors are documented:

- Disturbances of speech, language-cognitive, and nonverbal communication in one or more of the following ways:
    - The child displays abnormalities that extend beyond speech to many aspects of the communication process
    - Communicative language may be absent or, if present, language may lack communicative intent.
    - Characteristics may involve both deviance and delay.
    - There is a basic deficit in the capacity to use language for social communication, both receptively and expressively
- Disturbance of the capacity to relate appropriately to people, events, or objects in one or more of the following ways:
    - There is a basic deficit in the capacity to form relationships with people
    - The capacity to use objects in an age-appropriate or functional manner may be absent, arrested, or delayed
    - The child may seek consistency in environmental events to the point of exhibiting rigidity in routines

AND, if appropriate,

- Deficits in the child's developmental rates and sequences through one or more of the following:
    - Delays, arrests or regressions in physical, social or learning skills
    - Areas of precocious development with other skill areas at normal or extremely depressed rates
    - Skill acquisition does not follow normal developmental patterns
- Deficits in the child's responses to sensory stimuli through one or more of the following:
    - Behavior ranges from hyperactive to unresponsive to people and objects and can alternate between these states over periods ranging from hours to months
    - Disturbances in auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and kinesthetic responses
    - Responds to stimulation inappropriately and in repetitive or non-meaningful ways

## Deaf/Blindness (DB)

"Deaf/Blindness" means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs

that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**
A child is deaf/blind when:

- Both visual and hearing impairments are present as described in the criteria for
- Hearing Impairment/Deafness and Visual Impairment/Blindness; and,
- The impairments together cause severe communication, developmental, and educational needs

## Emotional Disturbance (ED)

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

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or social problems.

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**
A child displays an emotional disturbance when:

- Through evaluation procedures that must include observation of behavior in different environments, and an in-depth social history the child displays an emotional disturbance that has existed to a marked degree over an extended period of time.
    - In most cases, an extended period of time would be a range from 2 through 9 months depending upon the age of the child and the type of behavior occurring. For example, a shorter duration of disturbance that interrupts the learning process in a younger student might constitute an extended period of time.
    - Difficulties may have occurred prior to the referral for evaluation
- The emotional disturbance adversely affects the child's educational performance

NOTE: Manifestations of an emotional disturbance can be observed along a continuum ranging from normal behavior to severely disordered behavior. The term includes

schizophrenia but does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined they have an emotional disturbance.

Children who experience and demonstrate problems of everyday living and/or those who develop transient symptoms due to a specific crisis or stressful experience are not considered to have an emotional disturbance.

## Hearing Impairment and Deafness (HI)

"Hearing Impairment" means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance, but is not included in the following definition for deafness.

"Deafness" means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing with or without amplification that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**

A child displays a hearing impairment when:

- A hearing impairment has been diagnosed by an audiologist
- The hearing impairment adversely affects the child's educational performance; a description of education concerns is identified in a comprehensive education evaluation

The following are SSD services provided by an itinerant teacher or in a center-based program:

- Audiologist
- Interpreters
- Speech-to-text captionists
- Speech and language pathologists

## Intellectual Disability (ID)

"Intellectual Disability" means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**

A child displays an intellectual disability when:

- The child performs 2.0 standard deviations below their peers of equivalent age, ethnic, and cultural background when measured by standardized instruments of cognitive ability

- The child displays adaptive behavior consistent with measured cognitive abilities.[8] There should be a significant positive correlation between the student's IQ and adaptive behavior. If not, the multidisciplinary team must give careful consideration to other evaluative information and utilize professional judgment to determine the student's level of cognitive and adaptive functioning.
- The cognitive disability adversely affects the child's educational performance.
- A child may also be deemed eligible if the child displays, through formal and informal assessment, a significant discrepancy even though the deviations do not fall below the criterion range. In such cases, sufficient data must be present in the evaluation report to document the existence of a significant discrepancy.

## Multiple Disabilities (MD)

"Multiple Disabilities" means concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability- orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf/blindness.

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**

A child displays multiple disabilities when:

- Concomitant impairments occur
- The impairments together cause severe educational needs that cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely designed for one of the impairments

## Orthopedic Impairment (OI)

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

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**

A child displays a physical impairment when:

- An orthopedic impairment has been diagnosed by a licensed physician

[8] Adaptive behavior refers to the effectiveness with which a student meets the standards of personal independence and social responsibility expected of his/her age and cultural group.

- The physical impairment adversely affects the child's educational performance

OI itinerants services students with orthopedic impairments either directly or consultatively as well as providing consultative services teaching staff how to modify facilities and instruction.

## Other Health Impairment (OHI)

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

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**

A child displays a physical impairment when:

- A health impairment has been diagnosed by a licensed physician, licensed psychologist, licensed professional counselor, or licensed clinical social worker
- The health impairment adversely affects the child's educational performance

## Specific Learning Disability (LD)

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

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**

A child has a specific learning disability when:

- The child does not achieve commensurate with his or her age and ability levels in one or more areas listed below, when provided with learning experiences appropriate for the child's age and ability level
- The child displays observable characteristics that indicate deficits in basic psychological processing in one or more of the following academic areas:

    - Basic reading skill
    - Oral expression
    - Reading fluency
    - Reading comprehension
    - Listening comprehension
    - Written expression
    - Mathematical reasoning
    - Mathematics calculation
- The child's learning disability is not primarily the result of: a vision, hearing, or motor disability; an intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage

In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a responsible public agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, researched-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures or may require a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability (of 1.5 standard deviations).

## Speech or Language Impairment (S/LI)

"Speech or Language Impairment" means a communication disorder such as: stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility - Language**

A language disorder is present when:

- There is a lack of response to evidence-based interventions designed to support academic progress in the general education curriculum and the adverse effect on educational performance caused by the language impairment
- The child consistently displays inappropriate or inadequate language that impairs communication in the educational environment as documented by structured qualitative procedures such as:
    - Language sampling
    - Classroom observations
    - Curriculum-based assessments
    - Teacher and parent checklists/interviews
    - Other clinical tasks
- The child's language functioning is significantly below age expectations is defined as 1.75 or more standard deviations below the mean for students who are kindergarten-age eligible and older. One composite score must meet the 1.75 or more standard deviation criterion. Children ages 3 through 5 years, not kindergarten eligible, shall use YCDD criteria.
- The language disorder is not a result of dialectal differences or second language influence

**Criteria for Determination of Initial Eligibility - Sound System Disorder**

A Sound System Disorder, which includes articulation and/or phonology, is present when:

- The student exhibits a delay of correct sound production based on accepted normative data. The child's sound system is evaluated based on a single word test and/or a sentence/phrase repetition task and a connected speech sample.
- Consideration must be given to the type of error recorded (substitutions, omissions, distortions, and/or additions). These errors may be described as single sound errors or errors in phonological patterns.
- A Sound System Disorder may also be present if multiple errors in the child's speech compromise intelligibility and/or listener perception even though the recorded errors are considered within normal developmental guidelines.
- The Sound System Disorder adversely affects the child's educational performance as documented by lack of a response to evidence-based interventions
- The sound system disorder is not a result of dialectal differences or second language influence. The evaluation report must include sufficient data to document the existence of the Sound System Disorder and if during the collection and analysis of the data, the child's language abilities appear to be impaired, a language evaluation will need to be completed prior to a designation of language disorder.

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility – Fluency**

A fluency disorder is present when:

- The child consistently exhibits one or more of the following symptomatic behaviors of dysfluency:
    - Sound, syllabic, or word repetition
    - Prolongations of sounds, syllables, or words
    - Avoidance
    - Blockage
    - Hesitations
- The child's fluency is significantly below the norm as measured by speech sampling in a variety of contexts. A significant discrepancy is defined as five or more disfluencies per minute or a 10% disfluency rate, and distracting to the listener.
- The fluency disorder adversely affects the child's educational performance as documented by lack of a response to evidence-based interventions

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility – Voice**

A voice disorder is present when:

- The student consistently exhibits deviations in one or more of the parameters of voice: pitch, quality, or volume

- The student's voice is discrepant from the norm as related to his/her age, sex, and culture and is distracting to the listener
- The voice disorder is not the result of a temporary problem such as normal voice changes, allergies, colds, or a medical condition that contraindicates voice therapy intervention
- The voice disorder adversely affects the child's educational performance as documented by lack of a response to evidence-based interventions

## Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

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

Orthopedic impairment itinerant teachers also service students with an educational disability of Traumatic Brain Injury either directly or consultatively. The teachers can help students transition back into school and provide support to parents and school staff throughout this process.

**Initial Eligibility Criteria for Traumatic Brain Injury**

- A traumatic brain injury/head injury has been diagnosed by a licensed physician or through a neuropsychological assessment
- The student's education performance is adversely affected by deficits in acquisition, retention, and/or generalization of skills. Students with a brain injury may have rapidly changing profiles, therefore, educational assessment should include current documentation of the student's functional capabilities and indicate deficits in one or more of the following areas:
    - Building or maintaining social competence
    - Performance of functional daily living skills across settings
    - The ability to acquire and retain new skills
    - The ability to retrieve prior information

NOTE: A child may also be deemed eligible if the child displays characteristics of TBI even though a medical diagnosis of head injury has not been made by a physician. In such cases, substantial data to document the medical basis for a head injury must be present in the evaluation report.

## Visual Impairment/Blindness (VI)

Visual Impairment, including partial sight or blindness, means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Vision itinerant teachers support students in accessing curriculum via modified materials (like braille, large print, audio/digital text) and/or specialized instruction in travel skills (like orientation and mobility).

**Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility**

- Through the public agency's use of a variety of assessment tools and strategies, the relevant functional, developmental, medical (optometrist/ophthalmologist exam results), and academic information finds the child's visual impairment affects their educational needs/educational performance.
- There is nothing in the IDEA or the Part B DESE regulations that would prevent a public agency from obtaining a medical diagnosis prior to determining whether the child has a disability needing special education services.

Please contact the Vision Impairment/Blind department when concerns exist and/or to learn more about available supports/services.

## Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD)

"Young Child with a Developmental Delay"[9] means a child ages 3 through 5 who is experiencing developmental delays, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas:

- Physical development
- Cognitive development
- Communication development
- Social or emotional development, or adaptive development
- In need of special education and related services

**Criteria for Initial Eligibility for Young Children with a Developmental Delay**

A child has a developmental delay when:

- For children ages 3-5 (not kindergarten-age eligible)
    - The child's development is at or below 1.5 standard deviation (or equivalent levels) of the mean in any TWO areas of development OR at or below 2.0 standard deviations (or equivalent levels) in any ONE area of development.

[9] Local Education Agencies (LEA) in Missouri are not required to adopt and use the term "Young Child with a Developmental Delay" (YCDD) for any children in their jurisdiction. However, if an LEA uses the term YCDD. the LEA must conform to both the state's definition of the term and the age range.

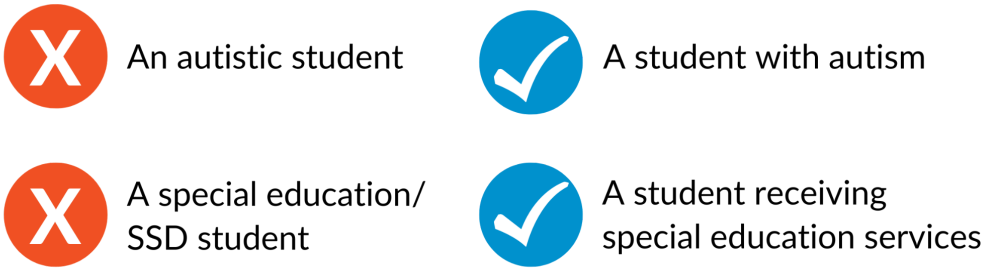
    - Areas of development that can be used to determine eligibility include physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, or adaptive.
- For children age 5 (kindergarten eligible)
    - A child kindergarten age eligible may continue eligibility as YCDD if they were identified as such prior to attaining kindergarten age eligibility.

## People First Language

The language a society uses to refer to persons with disabilities shapes its beliefs and ideas about them. Words are powerful. Old, inaccurate, and inappropriate descriptors perpetuate negative stereotypes and attitudinal barriers. When we describe people by their labels of medical diagnoses, we devalue and disrespect them as individuals.

In contrast, using thoughtful terminology can foster positive attitudes about persons with disabilities. One of the major improvements in communicating with and about people with disabilities is "People First Language." This approach emphasizes the person, not the disability. By placing the person first, the disability is no longer the primary, defining characteristic of an individual, but one of several aspects of the whole person.

# Examples:




## Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors

Paraprofessionals have an important role in supporting students with challenging behaviors. Many times they are relied upon to prevent and de-escalate challenging behaviors. Having a good understanding of the ways the classroom can positively support behavior, why those behaviors might occur, and how to respond will lead to better student engagement.

### Understanding the Communicative Function of Behavior

All behaviors communicate something. It is important to remember when you see challenging behaviors, students may be using the only way they know, or the only way that works, to get their needs met.
Remember:

- Behaviors are learned, therefore they can be taught
- Behaviors are the student's way to communicate needs and feelings
- When a student displays challenging behaviors, look at the whole situation and take it to the team
- Model appropriate behavior
- Always maintain the student's dignity and respect
- Work with the teacher to determine whether it is necessary to get additional information to help the team plan (e.g., functional assessment data, behavior data)

## The Power of Praise: Increasing the Positive to Redirection Ratio

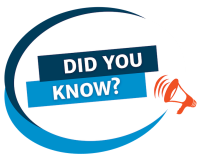
Praise can serve as positive reinforcement and increase the likelihood of student engagement. Paraprofessionals who make effective use of praise improve the classroom atmosphere and reduce behavior disruptions so that all students benefit from a positive educational experience.

Praise is any verbal or non-verbal action that indicates approval of or satisfaction with student behavior. Examples include:

- "That's good work!"
- I appreciate your time on-task."
- "You must feel proud of yourself for your effort."

**Tips on Giving Praise**

- **Be sure to use behavior specific praise:** Do not assume that students know what it is they are doing right that has resulted in praise.
- **Describe the behavior highlights and emphasize the behavior that is being reinforced:** If the behavior has several steps, describing it helps to review the specific expectations for the student.
- **Keep the student's needs in mind when using praise:** Your level of excitement and the type of language you use may need to be adjusted based on the student (e.g., age, comprehension levels, etc.). Some students may prefer praise be provided individually versus in front of the whole class.




For every direction statement or correction a paraprofessional makes during an hour, they should make at least four positive statements (4:1 ratio).

One way to be sure that you are giving at least four times as much positive feedback (as compared to redirections) is to monitor your interactions at least one day per week. Simply keep a card on a clipboard or in your pocket and record each interaction you have as either (+) or (-). From there, you can see whether you need to be more conscious about the number of positive interactions you are offering students.

## Universal Supports/Critical Classroom Components to Decrease the Likelihood of Challenging Behavior and Promote Positive Behaviors

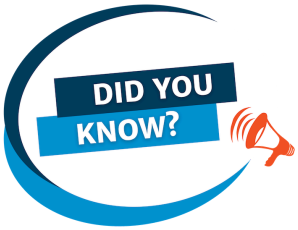
Students learn positive behaviors through instruction, practice, and encouragement. The best way to decrease challenging behaviors is to prevent them by using certain practices and structures in the classroom, known as universal supports/critical classroom components. The classrooms you are a part of will create environments that:

- Effectively design the physical environment
- Develop and teach classroom routines
- Post design and teach positive classroom expectations and rules
- Provide high rates of opportunities to respond
- Use prompts and active supervision
- Acknowledge and respond to behavior

Paraprofessionals will work with your classroom teacher to ensure the universal supports in the classroom/building are actively being upheld to meet the needs of all students.

## Tips for Addressing Challenging Behavior

A student's willingness to participate in schoolwork and activities can be increased simply by the way a request is made. Below are several general examples and non-examples of effective techniques for increasing a student's willingness to participate, and addressing challenging behaviors. Keep in mind, if a student has a behavior intervention plan, that plan would surpass these tips by offering student-specific interventions the IEP team has identified based on the function of the student's behavior.




Behavior is typically motivated by one of the following four reasons:

- End/avoid something that is seen as unenjoyable
- Attention-seeking
- To allow access to an activity or item
- It feels good and/or relieves something that feels bad

Identifying the motivation for behavior is referred to as "the function of a behavior."

**Technique #1: Establish Relationships**
Establishing relationships with students is essential for de-escalating challenging behaviors. This should be the first thing you do with any student you are working with, by:

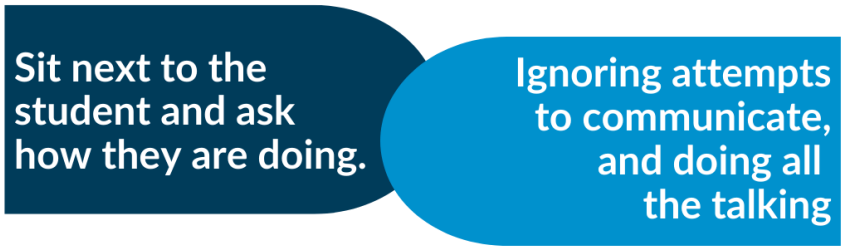
- Finding out what they like
- Taking time to engage in activities of interest along with the work for the day
- Understanding their cultural background and how they can best be supported

**Technique #2: Use Positive and Descriptive Requests**
Requests that are positive and describe the behavior you want are better than general requests or those that highlight undesirable behaviors.




**Technique #3: Actively Listen**
Listening to students and engaging with them in an authentic manner will help deescalate challenging behavior. You can do this by:

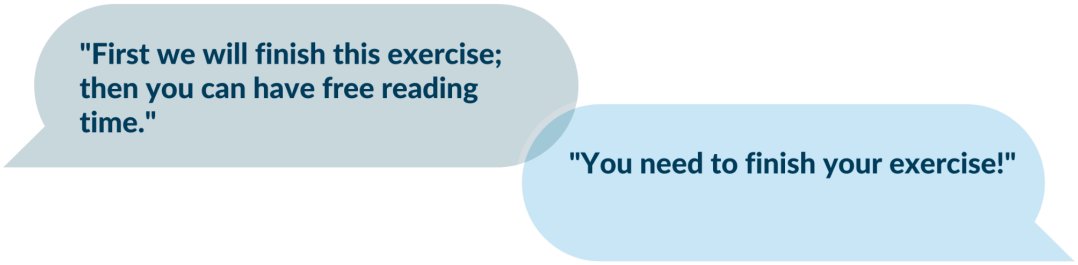
- Giving your undivided attention to students
- Ensuring you are supportive and nonjudgmental
- Offering choices of positive actions the students could take




**Technique #4: Set Limits**
Use statements that identify what a student will need to do first, in order to move on to the next activity. This is not the only approach that can help clarify expectations for students. Other strategies include:

- *Visual supports*: The use of visual supports can provide predictability, assist in reminding students of expectations, and help paraprofessionals avoid a power struggle
- *Allow for processing time*: Students may need additional time to respond depending on factors such as age, developmental level, and disability

- *Prompts*: Gesturing, modeling, and other prompts can be helpful to increase student responses



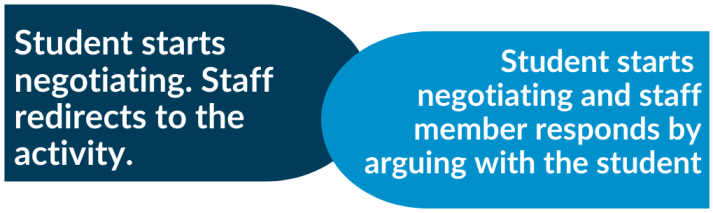

**Technique #5: Avoid Making Requests with Questions**
Direct requests increase the likelihood of a response.



**Technique #6: Avoid Power Struggles**

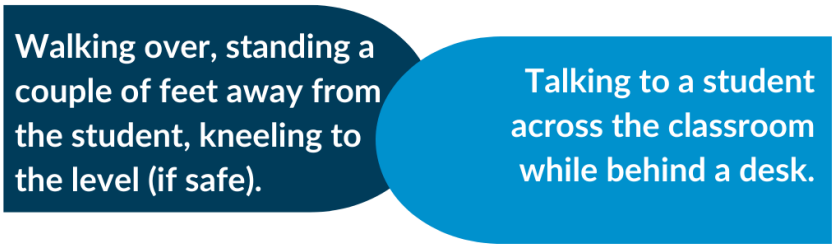
Students may avoid tasks by pulling the staff person into a power struggle (e.g., changing the topic, asking why, negotiating). Instead of following their lead:

- Take a step back and listen to what the student may be trying to communicate
- Redirect back to the topic
- Offer choices and options
- Consider a reasonable middle ground
- Focus on solutions



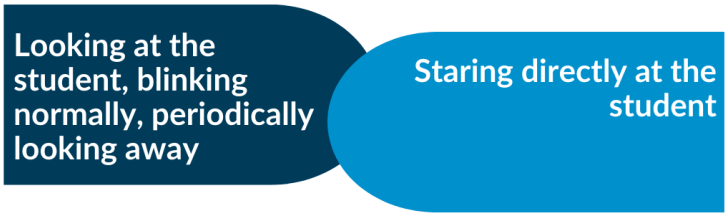

**Technique #7: Be on the Same Level as the Student (i.e., Distance/ Proximity)**

Move to a position that is on the student's level when asking a student to engage in an activity or task. Ensure you are close enough, so the student is aware you are speaking to them while respecting their personal space. An invasion of a student's personal space could increase the likelihood of challenging behaviors.




**Technique #8: Be Aware of Your Non-Verbal Behavior**

Maintain a neutral affect and body positioning when working with students. Looking students directly in the eye can be interpreted as a threat to some students and may escalate challenging behavior. There may also be cultural factors that impact how one perceives eye contact. Rather than requesting eye contact when giving a direction, acknowledge the various ways different students may signal they are paying attention (e.g., body orientation, nodding, looking towards the staff member talking to them).



**Technique #9: Be Aware of Your Own Stress Level**
Adults can become anxious when students are not engaging in tasks or activities. If you notice your anxiety level increasing, take a deep breath, think about what might be contributing to the way you are feeling, recognize the only behavior you can change is your own, and maintain a neutral facial expression and tone.

Be calm, not emotional. Use an appropriate tone, volume, and cadence when speaking with a student.

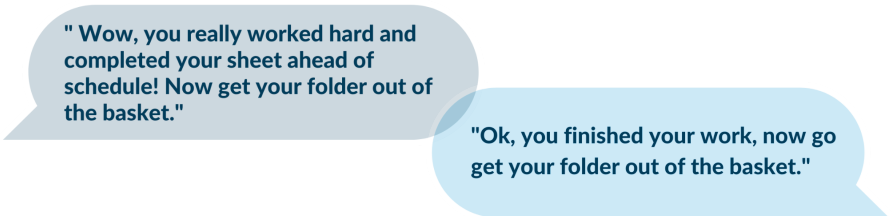
- Your tone should be neutral.
- Your cadence should be at an even rate and rhythm
- Your volume should be appropriate for the location (i.e., inside, outside).

Yelling, threatening gestures, grimacing, guilt-inducing statements, rough handling, negative comments about the student or his/her family only reduce the likelihood a student will respond back in a positive manner and could result in escalated challenging behavior.

Emotional reactions from staff can also result in corrective action for that staff member. Remember, you are a model for how a student interacts with you and others. It's important to not take challenging behavior personally. Remember, if you don't know what to do, ask for help.




**Technique #10: Provide Reinforcement**
It can be more difficult to remember to reinforce positive behavior than to acknowledge behaviors we do not want to continue. Providing verbal praise, tokens, gestures, and other potential forms of reinforcement for student engagement is essential for increasing future engagement. What might reinforce positive engagement is determined by the student. It is important to find out what the student liked in order to determine what will motivate them.



## Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA) and Behavioral Improvement Plans (BIP)

**Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA)**

If a student consistently displays challenging behaviors that interfere with their learning or someone else's learning, the team should consider conducting a functional assessment and developing a behavior intervention plan to address these challenging behaviors.

An FBA is a systematic process for describing challenging behavior and identifying the environmental factors and surrounding events associated with challenging behavior. The team that works closely with the child exhibiting challenging behavior:

1. Observes the behavior
2. Identifies and defines its problematic characteristics
3. Identifies which actions or events precede (antecedents) and follow the behavior
4. Identifies which actions or events follow the behavior (consequences)
5. Determines how often the behavior occurs

The results of the FBA are then used to develop an effective and efficient intervention plan.

**Behavioral Improvement Plans (BIP)**

A behavior plan is a detailed and formal plan that includes the following information:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Definition of behaviors being monitored for reduction** | A clear, observable, measurable definition of the target behavior(s) |
| **Hypothesis of the function of behavior** | A summary statement that provides information on why the student is engaging in the challenging behavior |
| **Progress monitoring goal** | A specific and measurable goal that is based on baseline data so the team can track progress |
| **Alternative replacement behaviors** | A behavior that can be taught to the student which serves the same function as the challenging behavior and allows the student to communicate the same need in a more acceptable manner |
| **Strategies to teach alternative replacement behavior** | An explanation of how the replacement behavior will be taught during the school day |
| **Strategies to prevent problem behavior** | Antecedent or preventative strategies that could involve changes to the environment or to the academic material to prevent the occurences of |

| | |
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| | the problem behavior (e.g. advance warnings, preferential seating, use of sound-blocking headphones, timers, etc.) |
| **Strategies to reduce reinforcement of problem behaviors** | Consequence strategies outline what steps will be taken when the problem behavior occurs, to reduce the likelihood that the problem behavior will be reinforced by staff and therefore continue to occur |
| **Strategies to reinforce alternative replacement behaviors** | Specifies how staff will respond when the student is engaging in alternative replacement behavior |
| **Crisis plan** | Actions staff will take to prevent physical harm to the student or others when the student is engaging in dangerous behaviors and other intervention strategies in the plan are no longer working |
| **Monitoring and evaluation** | Outline the data that will be collected, when the team will meet to review the plan, staff training |

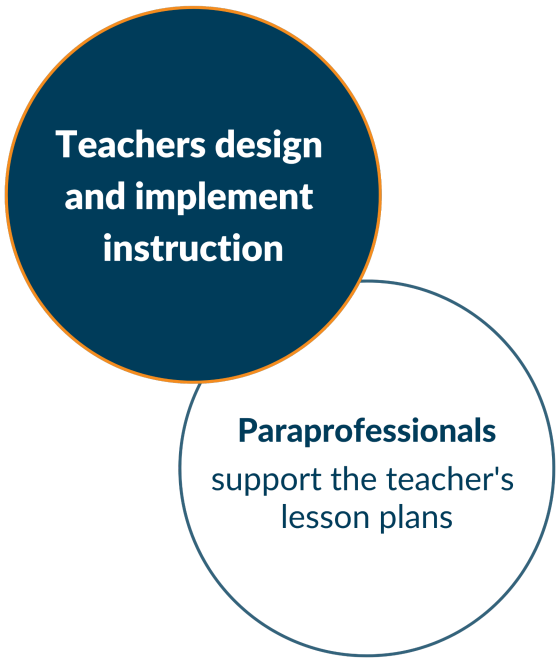
**If you are supporting a student with a Behavior Intervention Plan,** read and review the plan with the teacher before providing support to the student. Training on plans is key to ensuring consistent implementation!

**If a crisis plan includes physical intervention,** any staff engaging in the physical intervention should be trained in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) by one of the school district's certified trainers. After the initial full training, refresher training will need to be completed on an annual basis. Using physical interventions for noncompliance is against Board Policy JGGA.

## Supporting Instruction

In order to meet the unique needs of students through specialized instruction, teachers often rely on help from paraprofessionals. This could include providing support in the classroom, at home, in a hospital, or an institution.

You are a vital part of the team that is responsible for student learning. Paraprofessionals work under the direction of a certified teacher/staff member, and your responsibilities are divided up in the following ways:




In this guide, the term "instructor" refers to anyone providing instruction (e.g. teacher, paraprofessional, intern, related services provider).

Nevertheless, while a paraprofessional may assist with instruction, teachers are ultimately responsible for developing lesson plans and teaching students.

## Assist in Delivering Instruction According to the Supervisor's Plans

In order to be effective as a paraprofessional, it is a good idea for you first to have a basic knowledge of instructional strategies. One of the most important things to remember is that students in special education need direct, explicit instruction.

**Direct Explicit Instruction**

Direct, explicit instruction refers to instructor-directed use of sequenced and structured materials that generate high levels of student engagement within academically focused situations.

- Learning goals and expectations are made clear to students
- The instructor follows a lesson structure which gives students many opportunities to respond and receive feedback on their responses

What does this look like in practice?

- Instructors tell students what they need to know (teaches the skill), and then models how to perform a task using the skill

- After the instructor has determined the student(s) understand the learned skill, they continue to practice with students until they can complete the task on their own

The actual lesson is structured in a way that reflects an Effective Teaching Cycle, which follows this sequence:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Opening** | 1. Gain student(s)' attention<br>2. Present an overview of the lesson<br>3. Share expectations<br>4. Provide a rationale for why the lesson is important<br>5. Activate student background knowledge<br>6. Provide a review of any concepts that are important for the current lesson |
| **Lesson and Demonstration**<br>**"I Do"** | The instructor may spend a small portion of the time lecturing or describing procedures. After the new material is discussed, the instructor models the new skill or strategy from beginning to end.<br><br>When modeling skills or behaviors for students, the instructor should:<br>● Tell the student what step in the skill sequence is being modeled<br>● Clearly and unambiguously perform the skill<br>● Check for understanding<br>● Include 'non-examples' only after students are clear on the concept being modeled<br>● Always finish with a correct model. Students tend to remember the last piece of information given.<br><br>Once the skill is demonstrated, the instructor will tell the students(s) to imitate or practice the skill. |
| **Guided Practice**<br>**"We Do"** | In this section of the lesson, students practice new skills with assistance.<br><br>During this stage of the lesson, instructors should:<br>● Encourage students to verbalize their actions as they progress through the skill<br>● Closely observe students as they perform the skill so errors can be prevented<br>● Give ample opportunities for students to perform |

| | |
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| | the skill correctly<br>● Stop errors immediately and provide corrective feedback<br>○ Corrective feedback is crucial during guided practice. Students need to know what they are doing right as much as they need to know what they are doing wrong. If students make an error, the instructor needs to model the skill again, and then have the student complete the skill correctly.<br>● If the student is correct, it is important to make sure you praise them[10]. |
| **Independent Practice "You Do"** | *Note: Proceed with this step ONLY after the students have completed the guided practice successfully.*<br><br>At this stage of the lesson, the student must perform the skill without instructor assistance. If a student needs assistance, take note. This may mean that the instructor needs to re-teach the skill and/or because the student requires more practice to master the skill. |
| **Closing** | The closing review the content covered during the lesson and lets students know what to expect next lesson. It is structured in the following ways:<br>1. Review critical content<br>2. Review the learning objective<br>3. Student reflection<br>4. Data collection<br>5. Preview the content for the next lesson |

There is more to an effective lesson than just the content and sequence in which it is covered. Some other important considerations include:

**Instructional Pacing**

Students will understand the material and stay engaged if the instructor presents the material at a speed that is neither too fast nor too slow. Research shows that students learn best with moderately paced instruction.

When you are teaching, you need to observe the students. If they seem to be losing interest, appear frustrated or confused, it may be due to your

[10] See the Power of Praise section for ideas on how to praise students.

instructional pacing. Sometimes it is difficult to determine if your instructional pace is appropriate for your students. Ask your supervising teacher to observe you while you teach and give you feedback.

**Active Student Response (ASR)**
Active student response (ASR) occurs when you can hear or see a student responding to a prompt or question (e.g., words read aloud, questions answered). Research shows that lessons high in ASR produce higher student achievement.

Ways to increase student response include:

- *Choral responding*: Students respond orally in unison to each of the questions, problems or items presented by the instruction. This approach is appropriate for a curriculum that has one correct and relatively short answer and is suitable for fast presentation.
    - *Instructions*: Inform students of the type of response desired and provide a model. You need to provide a 'thinking pause' then give a clear signal or cue such as a snap or a "get ready." As with any other activity, you need to give immediate feedback. If all students make a correct response, give them praise. If some of the students make an error, state the correct answer with the questions ("yes, this apple is red") ask the same item a few trials later.
- *Peer tutoring*: The delivery of instruction by one student to another. Students typically use flashcards to practice and test their partner's knowledge- alternating between the role of tutee and tutor. This approach provides frequent opportunities to respond, a rapid teaching pace, immediate error correction, praise for correct responses, and reinforcement for correcting errors. Peer tutoring can be used class-wide and with either same grade or cross-age partners.

## Taking Data

Paraprofessionals may be asked to take data on student behavior and responses to instruction. Data might be taken continuously throughout the day or during pre-established timeframes.

Occasionally, paraprofessionals may also be asked to help enter data into graphs or systems that allow a visual analysis of the data. This data assists the educational team in monitoring student progress and determining whether instruction, behavior intervention plans, and other supports are increasing student achievement.

It is important to collect data accurately, as it is often shared with educational teams to inform decisions about future instruction and support.

Different types of data collection include:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Event Recording* | A frequency or count of how often something occurs |
| *Duration Recording* | The length of time the item being measured occurs |
| *Latency Recording* | The length of time it takes to respond |
| *Interval Recording* | The presence or absence of a skill during a specific time interval |
| *Momentary Time Sample* | The presence or absence of a skill at a specific time |
| *Permanent Products* | A completed product, such as the number of math problems a student completes |

## Fading Supports

One of the challenges facing paraprofessionals is how to effectively support student learning while building student independence. What is the difference between independence and interdependence? Why do we want to think about this?

We can unintentionally harm students in the following ways by not fading adult supports, thereby:

- Creating unnecessary dependence
- Interfering with peer interactions
- Contributing to a feeling of stigmatization
- Limiting access to competent instruction
- Loss of personal control for the student
- Creating 'learned helplessness' by providing constant verbal cueing that doesn't require students to developing their thinking skills

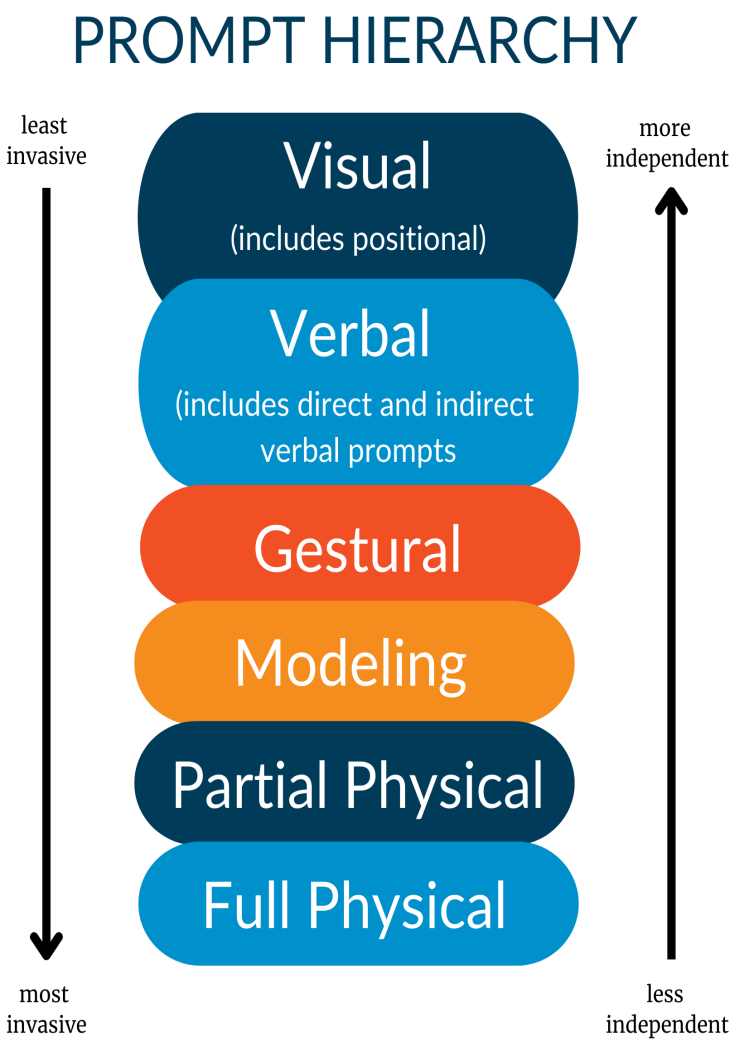
It is a constant balancing act.

- When do we fade prompts? When do we support more? When is just enough?
- Do we have the student complete the worksheet while everyone else is into the next section of the class?
- Do we expect the student to tie his shoelaces completely on their own or let them 'miss' part of the physical education class until their shoes get tied?

Typically, it is not all or none. Think of it as a continuum where students might be able to complete parts of the task or goal without any supports. When the balance is not there, student's achievement may not be optimal, and they may become prompt dependent or have "learned helplessness".

When providing supports, staff need to:

- Strive for students to be as independent as possible whether it is in the lunchroom, the classroom, job site, and/or community
- Have clear goals and expectations with a plan (i.e., how to manage and then evaluate and most importantly work with the student to set the stage for learning)
- Provide students with opportunities to experience success while keeping the students safe
- Arrange or 'set the environment' so that the student can do it him/herself
- Reinforce the small steps and know when to fade the support systematically, always keeping the goal in mind




A prompt hierarchy helps us think through the types of prompts that should be prioritized when working with a student, so that the least invasive strategies are used whenever possible.

**Questions to help you determine whether you are using the right type of prompt:**

- Is the student as independent as they could be?
- Is the student ready to learn and does he/she take charge of his/her learning?
- Does the student need prompts?
- Is there a plan to fade/reduce prompts?

**Tips for building independence:**

- Less cues/prompting/audible supports
- Less intrusive supports
- Facilitating peer-to-peer interactions
- Silence is the most important accommodation
- Visual learners need more processing time than the typical 2 seconds

Remember, it is important that decisions concerning the type of support you provide to a student should be discussed with the teacher. If you are in the general education classroom, you should be talking with the teacher of that classroom. In addition, it is also great to discuss supports and independence with the special education teacher.

# TEAMWORK

## Collaborative Relationships

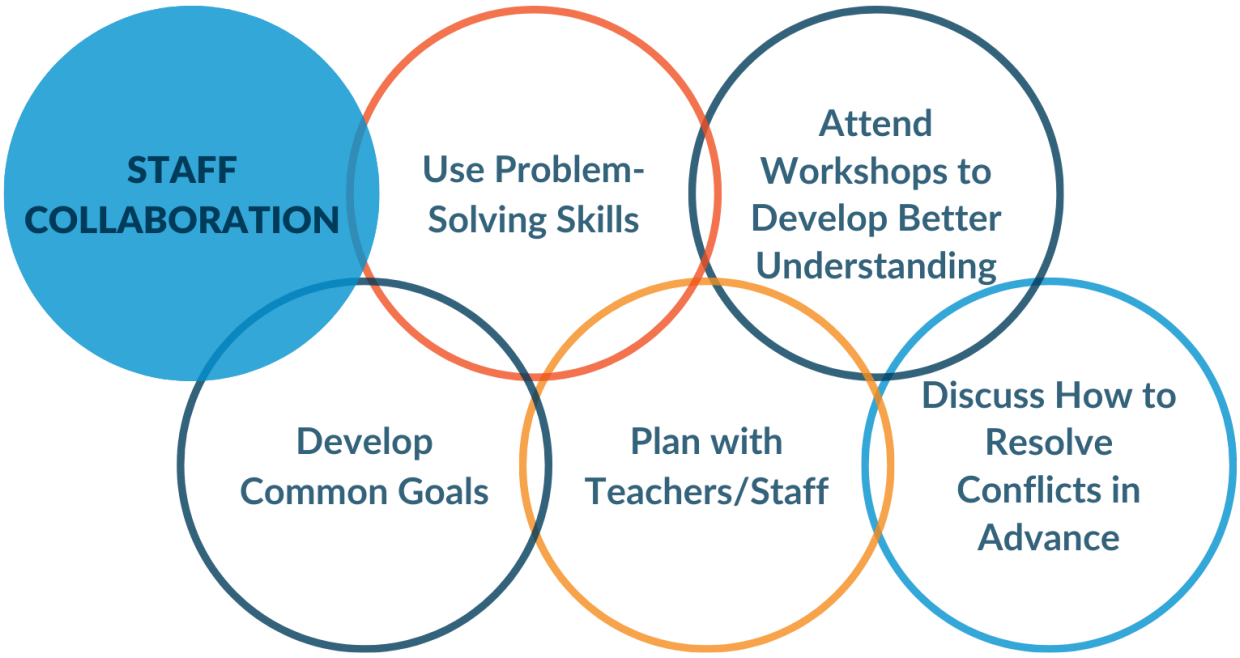
Collaboration in an educational environment is typically an ongoing process whereby educators with different areas of expertise voluntarily work together to create solutions to problems that are impeding students' success, as well as carefully monitoring and refining those solutions.

Central to these relationships are the following beliefs:

- Collaborative relationships are characterized by mutual trust, respect, and open communication
- All participants, students, families, and staff in the collaborative relationship must have equal status
- All educators can learn better ways to teach all students and should continuously be involved in creating and delivering instructional innovations
- Student achievement improves when educators and families work together rather than in isolation

### Teacher - Paraprofessional

There are a variety of ways a paraprofessional can successfully collaborate with staff.




The way paraprofessionals collaborate with instructional staff may look a little different based on the setting they are working in.
While working in a *general education setting* a paraprofessional might collaborate in the following ways:

- Work, meet, and plan with the team that supports the student and serve as a communicator between staff (general education, special education, special area teachers, etc.)
- Work with other students in groups to facilitate communication and social skills with student

While based in a *special education setting* a paraprofessional might collaborate in the following ways:

- Plan and co-teach with special education teacher(s)
- Consult with teacher on skills and practice
- Work with general education teachers when students are integrated into general education classrooms
- Work with small groups of students

## Families

Parents/families are essential members of the IEP team and are included in decisions about eligibility, initial evaluation/reevaluation, development of an IEP, and educational placement. Educational staff should be engaging families as partners in education on an

ongoing basis. Nevertheless, certain rights are afforded to families based on the legislation discussed in legal rights section of this handbook. This includes the right to:

- Be included in all IEP meetings
- Request an evaluation
- A Notice of Action (NOA) if the school wants to evaluate their child, change the educational placement of the child, or refuse a request for an evaluation or change in placement
- Request an Independent Educational Evaluation from the school district if there is disagreement about the evaluation
- Review their child's school records
- Request an IEP meeting
- Request mediation or a due process hearing to resolve differences with the school
- Request an initial evaluation within 60 days of a request to determine the educational needs of the child

Each year, families receive a Procedural Safeguards Notice, explaining all the safeguards related to independent education evaluation, prior written notice, parental consent, access to student records, the opportunity to present and resolve complaints, mediation, due process, child complaints, placement, civil actions, and lawyers' fees. This information is provided in the families' first language.

**Family Communication**

Consistent and effective communication between home and school is a critical part of student success. Families may have a team of individuals supporting their student, communicating between home and school on a frequent basis.

When the student's team includes paraprofessional support, that individual becomes an integral part of the team connecting with families. The previously shared table details home-school communication, specifically between paraprofessionals and families.

**Key Points to Remember When Communicating with Families**

- If a question is brought to you by the family member that is better answered by other staff working with the student, please acknowledge the concern and connect the family member with your supervising teacher.
- When long-term subbing for a teacher-level staff member, paraprofessionals should maintain communication with families similar to teacher-level staff (parent communication log, collection of student data, etc.)

- The kind of (modality) and the amount of contact (daily, weekly, etc.) between paraprofessionals and families should be addressed by the student's team (families, staff, administrators, students, etc.)
- The need for a written communication log will be determined by the student's team

Families are diverse. As you get to know the students you are working with, you will also be learning more about their families. Always remember to respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students and their families.

## Communicating Effectively

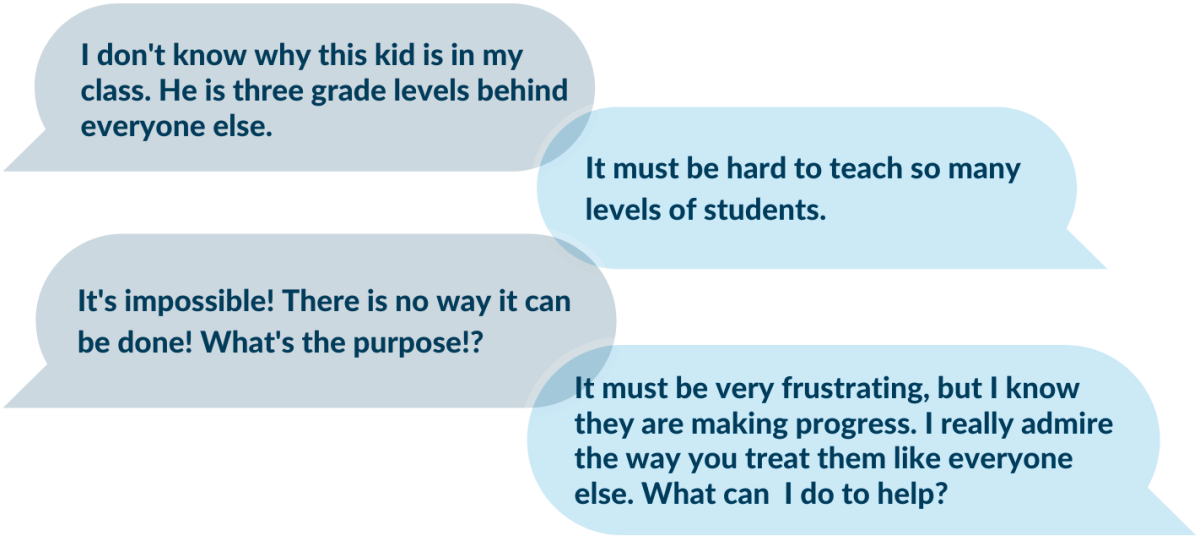
According to Thomas Gordon, author of Teacher Effectiveness Training (T.E.T.), there are thousands of messages we can send to students when we communicate with them. These tend to slow, or completely stop, the existing communication that students need to solve problems and continue in their learning. Examples include:

- Ordering, commanding, directing
- Warning, threatening
- Moralizing, preaching, giving "shoulds" and "oughts"
- Advising, offering solutions or suggestions
- Teaching, lecturing, giving logical arguments

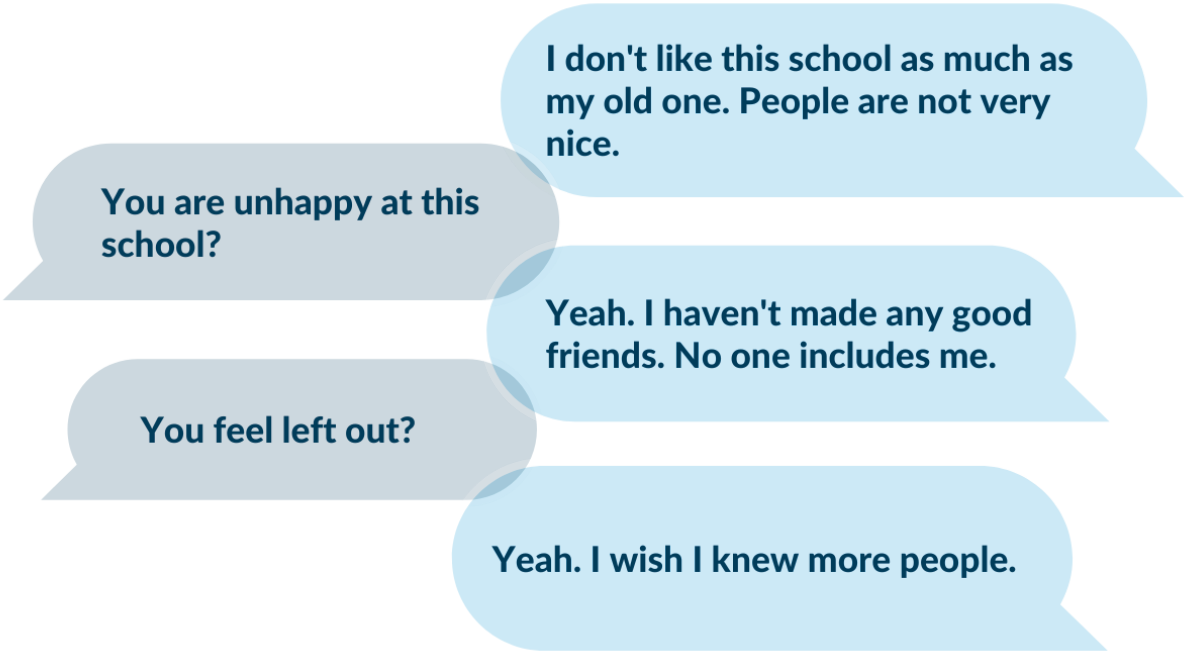
As an alternative to the roadblocks listed above, Thomas Gordon uses the technique of active listening to promote communication. Communication has several avenues that can get crossed if the speaker is not clear with the message or the listener decodes it incorrectly. When we use our words to repeat back what we think the student or adult has just communicated, we are clarifying their message. This feedback is called active listening and it provides many benefits including:

- Helping students deal with and 'defuse' strong feelings
- Helping students understand their own emotions
- Facilitating problem solving
- Keeping responsibility with the student
- Making students more willing to listen to others
- Promoting a closer, more meaningful relationship between staff and student

**Staff example** of active listening by a paraprofessional:



**Student example** of active listening by a paraprofessional:




It is important when we talk with students and adults that we engage in certain behaviors that facilitate openness and acceptance, like attending and responding skills.

**Attending Skills**

- *Posture*: Try to make your posture mirror that of the listener. It is helpful to have your shoulders squared with the other person and on about the same level so you are face-to-face. It is also helpful to have a slightly forward lean toward the listener.
- *Eye Contact*: Eye contact shows that you are interested in what they have to say.
- *Facial Expression*: What is shown on your face should match what is on the other person's mind. Smiling when the person is obviously sad would be an example of an incongruent facial expression.
- *Distance:* Distance from the person shouldn't be too close or too distant; about 3 to 4 feet is the average. Standing too close can make the student uncomfortable while standing too far away can indicate that you are disinterested in what the student is saying.
- *Distracting Behaviors*: Distracting behaviors, such as playing with your hands, staring out the window, or doing something else while listening should be eliminated when talking to students or staff members. Your tone should match the student's. It would be inappropriate to be loud if the student is in a quiet mood.

**Responding Skills**

- *Paraphrasing*: Restating in your own words; checking for accuracy; speaker approves and/or clarifies; reflecting; focus on the emotional side of communication
- *Clarifying*: Requesting more information; questioning and probing; searching for clarity

# PARAPROFESSIONAL RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

## Online Paraprofessional Resources

| Websites Offering More Information on SSD Resources and Supports | |
|---|---|
| **SSD Life** | SSD Life is the District's employee intranet. You'll find features like the latest SSD news, Who's That employee profiles, and a District calendar, as well as a section for accessing your individual and team content located within Microsoft 365 applications. The SSD Life homepage also provides links to each department's site. |
| **Teaching, Learning, and Accountability** | • Curriculum<br>• Professional Learning<br>• Applied Behavior Analysis<br>• Social-Emotional Learning<br>• Autism<br>• Literacy and Mathematics<br>• Research and Evaluation |
| **Family and Community Engagement (FACE)** | • Topic overviews<br>• Agency lists<br>• Brochures<br>• Handbooks<br>• IEP and transition resources |
| **EQUITY** | • Equity Statement<br>• Equity Framework |
| **Let's Talk** | Let's Talk is an online tool that allows you to submit feedback at your convenience directly to the SSD staff member who can help. Once you click on the Let's Talk link, you'll be able to choose an interest area related to the message that you want to submit. Let the District know what's going well, offer suggestions, submit a concern, or make a general comment. |

| Other Resources that Provide Useful Guidance for Paraprofessionals | |
|---|---|
| National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals | Resources for staff working in education, which are design to facilitate learning for students with special needs |
| Inclusive Schools Network: Online Resources for Paraeducators | Resources for building effective teacher-paraprofessional partnerships |
| Stetson & Associations, Inc: Paraeducator Resources | Resources to help paraprofessionals organize their schedule and implement effective strategies with students |
| Council for Exceptional Children | The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. |
| The American Federation of Teachers: Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel | A professional union for educators, which also provides guidance, resources, and advocacy support for school-based staff. |
| Missouri NEA: Education Support Professionals | A professional union that also provides professional development, leadership training, and advocacy support. |

## EdPlus Registration Process for Using SSD Learning Services Credits 2022-2023

Edplus Calendar of Events

**Please note that the directions have changed due to changes with the EdPlus registration process. It is important that these steps are taken to ensure SSD network credits are applied correctly.*

**Step 1:** Supervisor submits request to Director / Principal

**Step 2:**

a. Director / Principal reviews requests for alignment to Region or Building Plan.

b. Director/ Principal emails approved requests to **Tina Maksche (cc Carolyn Parker)** for approval to use Network Credits. Final approval is based upon availability of network credits.

Please include the following information in the email:

1. Staff name(s)
2. SSD Email(s)
3. Staff Phone Number(s)
4. Link to the course(s)/event(s) being requested

**Step 3:** Tina Maksche / Carolyn Parker will register staff in the requested course. Staff will receive a confirmation email via EdPlus.

**Step 4:** Following attendance, the staff member will to:

1. Complete the Professional Learning Evaluation:

   Link: https://forms.gle/TYLh3TQC9Mkdwydb6

2. Add the event to their KickUp Event Log (transcript). Directions: How to Submit an Out of District Event

**Step 5: (if needed)**

Please let Carolyn know if 1) the staff person unregisters and/or 2) the training is canceled by EdPlus.

# Acronyms Used At SSD

## A-E

**ABA** Applied Behavioral Analysis
**ABC** Antecedent – Behavior – Consequence
**AD** Attachment Disorder
**ADA** Americans with Disabilities Act
**ADD** Attention Deficit Disorder
**ADHD** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
**AE** Age Equivalent
**AES** Alternative Educational Setting
**AGLE** Alternative Grade Level Expectations
**APE** Adaptive Physical Education
**AS** Asperger Syndrome
**AU** Autism
**AYP** Annual Yearly Progress
**BIP** Behavior Intervention Plan
**BL** Blind
**BOE** Board of Education
**CA** Chronological Age
**CAP** Career Awareness Pre-vocational Program
**CBI** Curriculum-based Instruction
**CBVI** Community-based Vocational Instruction
**CD** Conduct Disorder
**CEC** Council for Exceptional Children
**CF** Cystic Fibrosis
**CID** Central Institute for the Deaf
**CWC** Class within a Class
**DB** Deaf/Blind
**DCFS** Division of Children and Family Services
**DD** Developmentally Disabled/ Developmental Delayed
**DESE** Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
**DFS** Division of Family Services
**DOB** Date of Birth
**DJO** Deputy Juvenile Officer
**DSHS** Department of Social and Health Services
**DVR** Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
**ECSE** Early Childhood Special Education
**ED** Emotionally Disturbed
**EI** Early Intervention
**ELL** English Language Learner
**EPS** Effective Practice Specialist
**ESL** English Second Language
**ESY** Extended School Year

## F-K

**FA** Functional Assessment
**FAPE** Free Appropriate Public Education
**FAS** Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
**FBA** Functional Behavioral Assessment
**FTE** Full Time Equivalency
**GE** Grade Equivalent
**GED** General Educational Development
**GLE** Grade Level Expectations
**HI** Hearing Impaired
**HOH** Hard of Hearing
**ID** Intellectual Disability
**IDEA** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
**IEP** Individualized Education Program
**IFSP** Individual Family Service Plan
**IHP** Individualized Health Plan
**IQ** Intelligence Quotient
**IRC** Instructional Resource Center (SSD)
**ISS** In-School Suspension
**ITP** Individual Treatment Plan
**JDC** Juvenile Detention Center
**K-12** Kindergarten through Grade Twelve

## L-P

**LCSW** Licensed Clinical Social Worker
**LD** Learning Disabilities
**LEA** Local Educational Agency
**LEP** Limited English Proficiency
**LPN** Licensed Practical Nurse
**LRE** Least Restrictive Environment
**MA** Mental Age
**MACDDS** Missouri Association of County Developmental Disabilities Services
**MAP** Missouri Assessment Program
**MAP-A** Missouri Assessment Program Alternative
**MD** Multiple Disabilities
**MI** Mental Illness
**MI** Multiple Intelligence
**MSIP** Missouri School Improvement Program
**MU** Multiple Disability
**NCLB** No Child Left Behind
**NLD** Nonverbal Learning Disability
**NOS** Not Otherwise Specified
**OCD** Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
**ODD** Oppositional Defiant Disorder
**OH** Orthopedic Disability
**OHI** Other Health Impaired
**OJT** On-the-Job Training
**OT** Occupational Therapy/Therapist
**PBS** Positive Behavior Support
**PBIS** Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports
**PD** Professional Development
**PDC** Professional Development Committee
**PDD** Pervasive Developmental Disorder
**PDD-NOS** Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified
**PE** Physical Education
**PEC** Picture Exchange Communication System
**PI** Physically Impaired
**PLAAP** Present Level of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance
**PLEP** Present Level of Performance
**POS** Purchase of Service
**PS** Partially Sighted
**PT** Physical Therapy/Therapist
**PTSD** Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

## Q-Z

**RAC** Reactive Attachment Disorder
**RN** Registered Nurse
**RPDC** Regional Professional Development Center
**RTI** Response to Intervention
**SDD** Severe Developmental Disability
**SI** Sensory Integration
**SIB** Self-Injurious Behavior
**SLD** Specific Learning Disability
**SNAP** Special Non-Public After-School Project
**SOP** Summary of Performance
**SP** Speech Impaired
**Sp. Ed.** Special Education
**SWEP** Summer Work Experience Program
**TA** Teaching Assistant
**TBI** Traumatic Brain Injury
**TDD** Telephone Device for the Deaf
**TS** Tourette Syndrome
**VI** Visually Impaired
**VR** Vocational Rehabilitation
**VSP** Vocational Skills Program
**WEC** Work Experience Coordinator
**WIC** Women, Infants and Children