

Tips for Working with Your Paraprofessional



- Meet with the paraprofessional and get to know him or her and his or her experiences, strengths, and needs. During this time, discuss expectations, both the paraprofessional's expectations and your own.
- Help your paraprofessional to get to know the school by giving him or her a complete tour and introducing him or her the school personnel.
- Make a commitment to treat your paraprofessional as a partner in the teaching/learning process. Recognize his or her experiences, skills, strengths, and needs.
- Collaborate with your paraprofessional to develop and implement classroom routines and protocols.
- Clearly explain to your paraprofessional how you would like him or her to be included in lesson planning and delivery.
- Encourage your paraprofessional to support instruction and student learning by making materials available to him or her ahead of time. Explain where classroom resources and materials are kept.
- Set clear roles and responsibilities for ongoing communication and for classroom work. Check in with your paraprofessional often to openly discuss roles and goals.

Sources: Liston, A. G., Nevin, A., & Malian, I. (2009). What do paraeducators in inclusive classrooms say about their work? Analysis of national survey data and follow-up interviews in California. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, 5(5), Article 1. Retrieved from

<http://escholarship.bc.edu/education/tecplus/vol5/iss5/art1>

Law, B. & Eckes, M. (2010). *Teacher tips: Effective collaboration with ELL paraprofessionals*. Retrieved from <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/49117/>
PETALLs newsletter, 6, July/August, 2013.

- Clearly explain your philosophy and expectations for classroom climate and rules, including the level of student talk, movement, and so on. Be explicit about the routines you have established for your classroom.
- Discuss pedagogy and instructional methods and ensure that the paraprofessional feels competent with the instructional method.
- Encourage your paraprofessional to interact with individual students. This enables him or her to develop supportive relationships with students. Encourage your paraprofessional for observations about the progress and behaviors of the students with whom he or she works and provide you with insights.
- Utilize your paraprofessional as a liaison to parents and community.
- Provide clear and ongoing training to your paraprofessional that is based on his or her strengths and needs and on the lessons he or she will teach.
- Provide ongoing and supportive feedback to your paraprofessional; discuss what has gone well and what can be improved.
- Participate in selected professional development activities together (e.g., to learn a new instructional technique, improve collaborative skills, etc.).

Sources: Liston, A. G., Nevin, A., & Malian, I. (2009). What do paraeducators in inclusive classrooms say about their work? Analysis of national survey data and follow-up interviews in California. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, 5(5), Article 1. Retrieved from <http://escholarship.bc.edu/education/tecplus/vol5/iss5/art1>

Law, B. & Eckes, M. (2010). *Teacher tips: Effective collaboration with ELL paraprofessionals*. Retrieved from <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/49117/>
PETALLs newsletter, 6, July/August, 2013.