

## **Paraeducator Planning Process and Instrument**

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This planning process applies to any student who requires paraeducator support for 50% or greater during the day. The student's IEP team develops the plan annually in sync with his/her annual review and teams reconvene to discuss any amendments to the plan should the student's support needs change over the course of the year. The process is founded on the following assumptions that we have about paraeducators and the services they provide:

- paraeducators are valuable members of the educational community and a necessary resource for students,
- paraeducators are not surrogate teachers,
- the intent of support services is to promote independence, not dependence, and
- paraeducator assignments should be based on need, as specified by the IEP team, consistent with law and local policy.

What follows is a decision making model that attempts to have all stakeholders on the same page and focused on goals that are objectively determined. Its focus is to determine the role of the paraeducator in relation to: the specific support needs of the student, how independence can be progressively furthered, what natural supports are to be used to support the student, and how social acceptance can be increased. All of this can be accomplished via a progressive planning matrix that helps those involved recognize and "protect" the essential components of successful inclusion.

The instrument is divided into three parts and is completed by the IEP team that should always include the paraeducator, where applicable.

1. The Intensive Needs Checklist is designed to assist in developing an overview of the student's needs in direct relation to the classroom environment. Completion of the checklist helps focus discussion, especially on more critical issues such as safety (see Figure 1).
2. The Student's Abilities and Assistance Needs Matrix focuses specifically on what the student can, or cannot, do and the extent to which he/she needs assistance. The objective is to systematically review the student's entire day (see Figure 2).
3. The Plan for Paraeducator Assistance identifies where, when and how the paraeducator will provide support and how independence will be encouraged (see Figure 3).

**For additional information and/or references regarding development of the process and forms, contact Pat Mueller at [Evrgrneduc1@aol.com](mailto:Evrgrneduc1@aol.com).**