

PARAEDUCATOR HANDBOOK 2007-2008

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PARAEDUCATOR HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION FROM THE SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Dear Paraeducator:

August 2007

Welcome to the Sevier County Department of Special Education and to the Sevier County School System. The term "paraeducator" refers to staff members who work as either educational attendants or teaching assistants, often referred to by the shortened form, "para." As a paraeducator, you will be assisting with our special needs students in a variety of ways. Each para has different duties and responsibilities based upon the needs of the students with whom they work. Each student we serve is unique, and in their own way contributes to the uniqueness of each of the classrooms in the twenty-five schools we serve. Because of the nature of your job, it is not uncommon to be overwhelmed at times. Being a paraeducator is an extremely important position.

Hopefully, this handbook will serve as a resource for you. Also see <http://www.slc.sevier.org/TAs.htm>. You should ask the teachers, consulting teachers, or me any questions as they occur to you, though. Your work is valued and appreciated. We could not serve our students without you!

Sincerely,

Sandy

Dr. Sandy Enloe

Director, Sevier County Special Education

STAFF RESOURCE LIST

- Dr. Sandy Enloe- Director, Special Education
- Dr. Fran Harmon-Early Childhood Supervisor -(865) 428-5793
 - 550 Eastgate Rd., Sevierville
- Dr. Kaye Thomas-VP at PFMS and TCAP Alt Coordinator
- Dr. Jeff Romanczuk-SpEd Reporting and Para Coordinator
- Mrs. Nancy Wohl- Speech Language Pathology Coordinator
- Mr. Mike Buckley- Psychologist Coordinator
- Mrs. Karen Corum- Autism and Behavior Specialist

- Ms. Debbie Mathews- Secretary/Bookkeeper
- Mrs. Marla Whaley- Homebound Coordinator, IMC Coordinator, and TLC Guidance
- Ms. Rebecca Campbell- Census Management and Transportation Coordinator
- Mrs. Theresa McCroskey - Census Management

All of the above (but Fran Harmon) can be reached at
 (865) 453-1036-453-1037
 320 Cedar St., Sevierville, TN 37862
 (All staff email addresses are firstnamelastname@sevier.org)

Other resources within your school or system:

- Consulting Teacher
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- School Psychologist
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Hearing Specialist
- Vision Specialist

YOUR JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

To promote the success of any special program, a team approach must be accepted and implemented by all personnel, regular and special, that serve exceptional children. The various stages of planning, implementing, and administering special services requires that all personnel agree that the express purpose of all special programs is that of serving the exceptional child and that all considerations be directed toward the welfare of the exceptional child whether he be a homebound student, an out of district transfer student, a special class student, or one served by an itinerant teacher. It is expected that the exceptional child be a recipient of all privileges and services granted other students and by the same token it is expected that he/she be charged with all the responsibilities of student life that he/she is capable of handling.

DEFINITION: A paraeducator is a person hired to assist a certified teacher in the instruction of exceptional children or in provision of services necessary to provide the child a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

PURPOSE: To improve the quality of the educational program offered exceptional children by freeing the instructor to:

- Diagnose the needs of children with devices and unique learning styles
- Plan and implement activities to meet the needs of a broad range of exceptional children
- Evaluate and redirect instructional programs as needed.

PARAEDUCATORS MAY:

- Assist individual students in performing activities as directed
- Assist with personal care of students
- Supervise children in hallway, lunchroom, and playground situations
- Assist in monitoring supplementary work and independent study
- Reinforce learning in small groups or with individuals while the teacher works with other students
- Assist in educational demonstrations for the class or small groups
- Provide assistance with individualized programmed materials
- Assist in carrying out programs of support staff (SLP, OT, PT, Hearing or Vision Specialists)
- Score objective tests and papers and maintain appropriate records
- Assist the teacher in observing, recording, and charting behavior
- Assist in preparation/production of instructional materials
- Carry out instructional programs designed by the teacher
- Work with the teacher to develop classroom schedules
- Carry out tutoring activities designed by the teacher
- Implement behavior management plan consistent with teacher implementation/instruction
- Operate and maintain classroom equipment including film projectors, overhead projectors, etc.
- Perform clerical tasks, i.e., typing and duplicating
- Attend the IEP meeting, if requested

PARAEDUCATORS MAY **NOT**:

- Be solely responsible for a special education instructional or related service
- Be responsible for selecting or administering formal diagnostic or psychological instruments or for interpreting the results of those instruments

- Be responsible for selecting, programming or prescribing educational activities or materials for the students without the supervision and guidance of the teacher
- Be solely responsible for preparing lesson plans or initiating original concept instruction
- Be assigned to implement the individual education program for disabled students without direct supervision and involvement from the professional
- Be employed in lieu of certified special education personnel
- Be used as a substitute teacher, unless the paraeducator possesses the appropriate highly qualified certification
- Perform nursing procedures or administer medications without appropriate supervision from an approved health care professional

INFORMATION TO ASK YOUR SUPERVISING TEACHER

- Ask what hours and days you will be working. (Ask for a school calendar or get one at <http://www.slc.sevier.org/cal.htm>.)
- What records are you responsible for keeping?
- What special services are available to the classroom and the school in which you work?
- What schedules are you responsible for following?
- When do students arrive and depart?
- What are the playground rules and regulations?
- For what lunchtime activities such as music, art, will you be responsible?
- Where are the supplies kept and how are they obtained?
- How much time will you spend in inclusion classrooms?
- How much time in the special education classroom?
- What is the line of communication and authority you are to follow?
- With whom should you discuss a problem concerning relationships? A problem concerning school policy?
- What should be my response when a parent raises questions on their child's functioning in the classroom?
- What is expected of you in terms of student discipline?
- What course should you follow if you feel that you do not have enough to do? How does your teacher view the teacher/paraeducator relationship?
- What pupil records are available to you?
- What is expected of you in terms of confidentiality of student records?

TIPS

This is a short list. See <http://www.slc.sevier.org/TAs.htm> for more information. At the end of the top section, "Paraeducators," are several different paraeducator job descriptions and evaluation forms. Also see "Guidelines for the Determination of Paraprofessional (Attendant) Support Through the IEP," which is seventh link from the top on the paraeducator page, <http://www.slc.sevier.org/paras121.doc> .

- Share in the responsibility of discipline
- Bear in mind that teaching is a learned profession. It takes time to learn the work.
- Have patience and understanding toward the teacher and students.
- Let your teacher know your interests, hobbies, background and experience. You may be able to contribute much to special class projects and special interest centers.
- Support the special education program verbally, enthusiastically, and actively, and by your involvement in system and area events whenever possible.
- Support your supervising teacher in every way possible!

INTRODUCTION TO EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS' SPECIAL NEEDS

The following information is meant to serve only as an overall introduction to special needs students. Each student is first an individual with individual needs. Not all students will fit into all the descriptions nor will they be educated in the same way. Talk in depth with your supervising teacher to learn the best way to work with each student. The overall goal of each student is to develop skills that will enable them to function effectively in society and their environment.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Treat each child as an individual.
- Be kind, consistent and firm.
- Allow each child to be as independent as possible.
- Be positive with each child!
- Give many verbal and nonverbal praises.

Ask your teacher to demonstrate new tasks or skills: observe the teacher, then have the teacher observe you until both of you are comfortable with that skill.

SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF DISABILITY

Definition of a child or youth with a disability: The federal definition of a child or youth with a disability means a child or youth who has been evaluated as having autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment including blindness, and who, because of that disability, needs special education and related services.

AUTISM

Autism is a developmental disability which usually affects communication and social interaction. The cause of autism is unknown, however, the number of children diagnosed with autism has greatly increased over the last decade. Other terms of classifications for autism may include Asperger's (a high functioning autism) or pervasive developmental disorder.

General Characteristics

- Difficulty with social interactions (playing or relating to children and adults)
- Engage in repetitive activities (repeating phrase or story, performing same motor task over and over)
- Resistive to changes in routine
- Unusual responses to environment (sensitive to sounds, lights)
- Varying levels of intelligence (Many children with autism are average or above average intelligence, some also have mental retardation. Even within a child with autism, the intelligence levels can vary. He may be great at spatial relationships [puzzles, geometry, etc.], but not be able to read even sight words.)

General Teaching Strategies

- Need highly structured and predictable schedule
- Student needs time to prepare if schedule changes

- Be consistent with student

EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE (ED)

A child with an emotional disturbance has difficulty learning due to an extreme behavior or mental illness. Students' behaviors may either be aggressive in nature (striking out, uncooperative) or conflicts such as depression or anxiety which may cause the student to withdraw. It is often difficult to determine the cause of an emotional disturbance.

General Characteristics

- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings
- May seek attention by aggression
- Uncooperative
- Often have trouble getting or keeping friends
- Resists authority

General Teaching Strategies

- Be very consistent when dealing with behaviors
- Check with teacher that you know what to do when behaviors occur
- NEVER use physical restraint unless you have had Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training within the past year and are approved to do so by your supervising teacher
- Remember, the student misbehaves because he/she has a disability; the student may or may not be able to voluntarily control the behavior
- Help the student to determine good or inappropriate behavior
- Use humor to deal with problems
- Don't hold grudges, start each day with a "clean slate"
- Continue to show respect to student in spite of continued behaviors

HEARING IMPAIRMENT (HI) and DEAFNESS

There is a wide range of hearing loss. Some children may only hear very loud sounds while others hear normally except for specific low or high pitches. The term deaf implies that a person has a very severe hearing loss and relies primarily on lip reading or sign language for communication.

General Characteristics

- Language and speech delay, different voice characteristics
- May misunderstand information presented
- Difficulty understanding concepts that are not concrete; takes things literally.

General Teaching Strategies

- Use as many visual cues as possible
- Speak clearly and at a normal pace
- Face the student when talking
- Get the child's attention before speaking
- Make sure child is seated close to speaker

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY (SLD)

Poor achievement in one or more academic areas such as reading, speaking, thinking, memory, spelling or math. Students may have difficulty processing information either visually or through spoken language. The learning disability is usually a lifelong condition.

General Characteristics

- Usually average to above average intelligence
- Distractible
- Low self-esteem
- Easily frustrated

General Teaching Strategies

- Teach the student compensation strategies
- Allow extra time
- Use the students' strengths to work on difficult areas

MENTAL RETARDATION (MR)

A child with significant overall delays in thinking, communication and life skills.

General Characteristics

- Requires more time and repetition to learn things
- Immature for age

General Teaching Strategies

- Keep instructions concrete
- Provide lots of practice opportunities
- Demonstrate to student, don't just tell
- Allow student to be as independent as possible
- Give lots of praise

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (MD)

Students with a combination of several disabilities, severe in nature, such as mental retardation and a physical or sensory (hearing or vision) disability.

General Characteristics

- Low cognitive ability
- Often needs assistance in daily activities or tasks (eating, toileting, mobility)
- Goals primarily non-academic (life skills)

General Teaching Strategies

- Respect each students' dignity
- Learn how each student communicates
- Celebrate current skills and accomplishments

ORTHOPEDIC (PHYSICAL) IMPAIRMENT

Physical (motor) difficulties in mobility, writing, sitting; common physical disabilities are cerebral palsy and spina bifida.

General Characteristics

- Hard to control limbs
- Involuntary movements

- May need assistance with toileting, eating and general life skills

Teaching Strategies

- Remove or accommodate barriers for student
- Allow students to be as independent as possible
- Speak to person at eye level (that is, sit down if they are in wheelchair)

SPEECH/LANGUAGE (SL) IMPAIRMENTS

Language or speech difficulty understanding or expressing, stuttering or unusual voice characteristics.

General Characteristics

- Delay in language concepts (sentence length, vocabulary)
- Hard for others to understand

Teaching Strategies

- Model good speech and language at or slightly above student's level
- Don't talk for student
- Encourage student
- Ask student to repeat if you did not understand

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (VI), BLINDNESS, and DEAFBLINDNESS

A significant impairment of vision.

General Characteristics

- May tire easily
- May need assistance in moving from place to place

Teaching Strategies

- Don't lead child if assisting in walking
- Let the student take hold of your arm
- Speak directly to the child and let child know who you are if unfamiliar

- May need magnifying glass, large print books or Braille

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in a partial or total impairment in mental functioning that adversely affects educational performance.

General Characteristics

- May tire easily or get frequent headaches
- Lack of coordinated body movements
- Seizures or muscle spasms
- Impairment in acquiring or retaining new information

Teaching Strategies

- Limit the amount of information you give at one time
- Use a mix of printed information with explanatory pictures and examples
- Roleplay rather than lecture to present new information
- Repeat directions and key points as often as needed

In addition to the federally recognized disabilities above, the State of Tennessee adds Intellectually Gifted, Functionally Delayed, and Developmentally Delayed. Since paras rarely work with Gifted students, no characteristics or teaching strategies are suggested in this booklet to cover this disability. See <http://www.slc.sevier.org/giftal.htm> for more on Giftedness.

FUNCTIONAL DELAY

A significant disability in intellectual functioning in school settings without significant impact in home or community settings. (This category used to be called "mild mental retardation" several years ago.)

General Characteristics

- Very limited math calculation/problem solving skills (consistently scores at or near the bottom of the class on math tests)

- Problems with reading flow and understanding
- Adaptive skills and abilities outside of school that are at or near age/grade appropriate levels

Teaching Strategies

- Use shorter sentences in writing intended for them to read independently
- Use story plot outlines to accompany the text
- Limit the number of math problems that are assigned at one time
- Tape record work/test directions, or allow peers to read the directions to the student
- Ask the student to repeat directions and information back to you to check for understanding

DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

Limited to describing children from 3 to 9 years old with physical, communicative, cognitive, and/or adaptive delays that are two or more years behind their same-aged peers. If another disability category more clearly describes the child's condition, that disability will tend to be used rather than developmental delay (even before the child turns 10 years old).

General Characteristics

- An uneven or unsteady growth in developmental abilities since birth
- Social immaturity in turn-taking, sharing, etc.
- Uneven receptive and expressive language; usually, these children can understand spoken language far better than they can speak it

Teaching Strategies

- Use a "peer buddy" for group work or seat the child near a staff member
- Make sure the student is in a comfortable position during activities (not "W" sitting, sitting on legs, or sitting/standing on turned feet)
- Avoid paper/pencil tasks in favor of "hands on" activities

Not covered above are other health impairments that can impact a child's ability to learn. Impairments such as Attention Deficit Disorder, certain

allergies, asthma, and perhaps diabetes. These may be dealt with as an Other-Health Impairment category (for which the student is deemed special education eligible and has an IEP). More likely, though, such issues are handled by the student having a "Section 504" Plan, named after the section of the vocational/rehabilitation law that covers educational issues. A 504 Plan is not an IEP and the student is not a special education student.

Other information on specific teaching strategies for certain disabilities can be found at the bottom of the Inclusion/Resource link, under the heading "Accommodations, Adaptations, and Modifications."

FERPA-Confidentiality of Student Records

This is an extremely important component of the law. There are many Federal laws and state statutes that protect the privacy of educational records. The main Federal law pertaining to student records is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Information or records falling under this law must remain confidential. Significant penalties can occur from failure to comply with the privacy act. Many school staff fail to realize that even conversations with nonschool personnel or school personnel without an educational involvement with a specific child can be a violation of this act.

FERPA requires that the Sevier County School System obtain the written consent of parents prior to disclosure of personally identifiable information from a child's education records. Parents should be encouraged to carefully review the FERPA Act Notice for Directory Information which is distributed for parental signature at each school annually.

Information and records covered under this act may include but not be limited to:

- Personal and family data
- Evaluation and test data
- Psychological, medical and anecdotal reports
- Records of school achievement and progress reports
- Disability information
- Copies of correspondence concerning student
- Records of conferences with students and/or parents

Discussing specific facts about the students with which you work is a violation of the students' confidentiality rights. Remember that matters regarding students are confidential and cannot be a topic of public discussion, not even in the teacher's lounge, not at the grocery store, and not with other paraeducators who do not work with the student. Even if you do not mention a student's name, talking about an incident can give identifiable information. Especially important is the confidentiality of all students within the program. Do not share specific information about a student or the program with parents. That is the specific responsibility of the teacher and could lead to dismissal or other actions if violated.

When concerns are voiced, leave visiting with, talking to, or writing to parents and school personnel to your supervising teacher or other school or department staff members. **If parents ask you questions about their child's educational program or school policy, a simple response is "You'll need to visit with Mrs. -----about that."**

Become aware of the specific needs of the students you are assigned to. Understanding program goals (I EP) helps eliminate confusion and provides a better understanding of what the expectations are for the student. It is important to know specifically what the students' limitations are. At the same time, however, it is equally important to know what the students' abilities are. It is very important for our students to be as independent as they can possibly be. Hovering over them and doing too much for them can hinder their progress toward independence. You are always encouraged to give verbal praise to children or high fives for good work. Do be very careful in regard to age appropriate hugging and touching. Grabbing student's arms or hands or any physical reprimanding should never occur unless you are TCI trained and it has been prior approved by your teacher. Also, never verbally berate a child or call them negative names. If in doubt, ask your teacher.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. ABSENCES

Attendance and punctuality convey how seriously you take your job. Your supervising teacher and the students you work with count on you being at work and on time every day. If you will be absent from work for any reason, please call your supervising teacher and your building to notify them before the school day begins.

2. AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Paraeducators are not required to participate in any after school activities; however, you are welcome to attend any school function and are encouraged to do so, especially if your students are involved. Attendance at functions such as Open House for your school certainly would be encouraged.

3. DRESS CODE

Dress appropriately and professionally at all times. Since there are twenty-five schools that the department serves, there will be a difference in the specifics of the dress code from school to school. You will probably find blouse/pants and dresses appropriate for most programs. Check with your building on whether jeans are within the dress code. Dress code may depend on the type of program to which you are assigned.

4. EVALUATION

Supervising teachers will evaluate paraeducators at least twice a year. When the evaluation form is completed, the teacher will discuss the evaluation with the paraeducator and make suggestions for improvement. The paraeducator signs the evaluation form to show that he/she has conferred with the supervising teacher about the evaluation. The signature simply notes the fact that the conference was held, not that the paraeducator agrees with the evaluation. Space is left on the form for comments by the paraeducator. The paraeducator receives one copy of the form, the remaining copies are kept on file by the supervising teacher, the building principal, and the Special Education Department in Sevierville.

In the event your supervising teacher is absent, and no substitute can be found, you must be assigned to and report to the principal of your school building or his or her designee. He/she in a sense, becomes your supervising teacher, and you should ask him/her questions in regard to difficult situations, and follow his/her directions at all times.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that all school notify parents of all children that they have a right to request and receive timely information on the professional qualifications of the teachers and paraprofessionals working with their children.

5. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If work problems arise, an initial attempt should be made to alleviate them with your supervising teacher. If the problem is not resolved through this discussion, it should be brought to the attention of your consulting teacher and/or building principal. If a satisfactory resolution still has not been reached, feel free to bring it to the attention of Dr. Romanczuk, who coordinates paraeducator placements, or Dr. Enloe.

If your grievance is with the Special Education Department, inquiries or grievances should be directed to Larry Stott, Title VI Coordinator at Central Office, 226 Cedar Street in Sevierville, Tennessee, 37862.

6. INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS (IEP)

Each special student has an IEP that the teacher uses as a guide for that child's school activities. This program was developed in a combined meeting of a school administrator, the child's teacher(s), the child's parents, support personnel, and other professionals. It is usually written for one year, and periodically reviewed throughout the year (for example, once each 6-week grading period) by the teacher to note progress. The program is reviewed at a meeting each year by the teacher, other appropriate personnel, a school administrator, and the child's parents to assess progress made and to formulate goals for the next year. Paraeducators may or may attend the meetings, but more likely the classroom teacher will seek your input prior to the IEP meeting. You will be carrying out learning activities and recording progress concerning IEP goals and objectives.

7. INSERVICE

In-service meetings for paraeducators are held periodically throughout the school year. They may be scheduled for either full or half days, and are designed to provide information paraeducators might need related to their assignment. You will be notified well in advance as to when in-service meetings will be held. The consulting teacher is the person in charge of in-service. Each para (full or part time) is required to attend at least 6 non-school day hours of in-service training during the school year if beginning the job in August. A record of this will be kept by the consulting teacher and provided to the department office. These training sessions could include mandatory Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Training and CPR training conducted prior to the beginning of school. Those

working in CDC setting or with students diagnosed with emotional disturbance require annual CPR training.

8. INSURANCE

Paraeducators employed on a full time basis may participate in the program for Health Insurance, Dental Insurance and Group Term Life Insurance. Liability insurance is carried by the Sevier County Board of Education to cover all paraeducators while on the job.

9. LEAVE REQUESTS

Three kinds of leave are recognized in Sevier County for personal, sick, and bereavement purposes.

a. **PERSONAL LEAVE** - Paraeducators have two (2) days personal leave with pay. Personal leave should be used to conduct personal business and not to extend a holiday or vacation period. If time off is needed for personal reasons, this should be discussed with the supervising teacher and building principal prior to taking this day off. In specific cases, other time off might be granted, but without pay. Personal leave may be taken after the first 100 days worked. The second day may be taken after the first 150 days worked.

b. **SICK LEAVE** - Paraeducators are given ten (10) sick leave days per year, which accumulate from year to year. The sick leave days are accumulated at the rate of one day for every month worked. Cumulative days can be used at any time for the personal illness or disability of the employee. Sick days must be used in half or whole day increments.

c. **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE** - The paraeducator may use a maximum of three (3) days, during any contract year, on account of death of members of the immediate family. The immediate family shall mean the husband, wife, mother(in-law), father (in-law), sister (in-law), daughter (in-law), son (in-law), grandparents, grandchildren, stepchildren, or any other person living in the immediate household.

10. LEAVING YOUR BUILDING DURING THE DAY

Do not leave your building during the day without first clearing it through your supervising teacher and your school principal. If leaving for a particular

reason is part of your regular work schedule, let your teacher and /or building secretary know when you leave the building.

11. PAY PERIODS

Paraeducators shall be paid monthly for hours worked during the pay periods. Checks will be issued on the workday closest to the 15th of each month from September through June. Checks will be sent to the paraeducator's school unless other arrangements have been made by the paraeducator. Direct deposit is also available and strongly encouraged.

12. RENEWAL

If evaluations are good, paraeducators can be reasonably certain of retaining their position for the next school year unless a change in student population does not warrant the position. If this should happen, the paraeducators will be given first chance at other paraeducator positions that are open. **All paraeducators with a bus license or who drive a bus in addition to their assignment will be given first priority in assignments and will be given first priority in working extended year in June and July.** It is strongly recommended that every paraeducator who is physically able contact Ms. Rebecca Campbell, Transportation Coordinator for Special Education, and get the application packet and other information on obtaining a bus license.

13. LEAVE OF ABSENCE OR VOLUNTARY TERMINATION

If you must take an extended absence from your parapro assignment, at least two weeks prior to the scheduled start date, please inform your building principal and consulting special education teacher. Also inform the Special Education Department in writing. A short letter giving the intended departure and return dates (and as much of the reason as you care to explain) are all that is necessary.

If you want to resign from your current Sevier County Schools position and consideration for any other position, please inform your building principal and special education consulting teacher. Also inform the Special Education Department in writing at least two work weeks prior to your projected last day. Indicate on this letter your intended final work day.

14. RETIREMENT

All certified and non-certified employees are automatically members of TCRS (Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System). The school system and state provide specified amounts in each full time employee's account. Upon retirement, the employee may withdraw their benefits based upon one of several options.

Money may be withdrawn earlier if the employee leaves the position and does not work elsewhere for a TCRS employer.

14. SIGN-IN SHEETS

All employees in the school system must sign in and out each day. These sheets are submitted each week to the central office payroll department and are used to determine the employee's monthly check. In addition, all bus drivers and attendants are to keep a weekly log of attendance on the bus. If a bus attendant is not at the scheduled pickup point on time and the bus must leave to meet its daily schedule, the attendant will be docked that day of work. If a pattern of late arrival or not attending develops, the attendant will be removed from the position.

15. WORK SCHEDULE

Paraeducators work only those days when school is in session with students present. It is expected that they will report to work at the time specified by the supervising teacher. The Superintendent or Director must approve any additional working days.

16. ON THE JOB MEDICAL PROBLEMS

a. FIRST AID

Paraeducators should learn the location of the first aid equipment and supplies and become familiar with the first aid procedures within the school and program. You may be required to administer minor first aid for your students: treating scratches, scrapes, burns, splinters, and the like. Be sure your teacher is aware of anything of a serious nature. In most school buildings, the school nurse, if one has been assigned, handles all such problems.

b. SEIZURES

Paraeducators should learn the procedure to follow if a child has a seizure, for many special students are subject to seizures. Talk with your teacher about specific procedures regarding seizures. In general, a student having a seizure should be kept from harming himself or others, but should be allowed to have the seizure without being restricted. Adults should make sure students are not choking during the seizure, but should keep hands and objects out of the student's mouth. When the seizure is over, the student should be kept warm and quiet and allowed to lie down and rest. Your teacher should make contact with

the principal, parents, and possible medical personnel. In most schools, the school nurse (if available) should handle the situation.

c. ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS TO STUDENTS

NO MEDICATION SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY ANY SCHOOL PERSONNEL WITHOUT A WRITTEN ORDER FROM A PHYSICIAN and a note describing the school-day dose signed by a parent or guardian. Included are all prescription and non-prescription medications, such as aspirin, ointments, drops, etc. If the child is mature enough to assume the responsibility of taking his/her own medication during school time, the school must be informed by the parent of the name of the medication and instructions for it and it must be sent in its original packaging. Prescription medications must be in the original container provided by the pharmacy. If at all possible, medication should be administered outside of school hours.

If the building uses a medication log, the one who gave the student the dose, needs to remember to complete the log entry immediately afterward. It should usually be the school nurse. The teacher may do this if the school nurse is not available. However, the paras need be familiar with what medications students are taking and at what times.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TERMINOLOGY

ADAPTIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The purpose of the Adaptive Physical Education is to assist school personnel and parents in providing an appropriate program for the improvement of health and physical fitness for children with special needs.

HEARING SPECIALIST

A Hearing Specialist is employed to serve and identify students who have hearing loss. Diagnostic equipment is used to evaluate hearing. Audiological testing differs significantly from hearing screenings performed in the schools. Assessment of hearing is performed to determine type and severity of hearing loss. Consultations with school personnel, medical personnel and parents follow the assessment process. The audiologist determines selection and use of amplification devices. From assessment and observation, the audiologist determines the affect a hearing loss will have on education and communication skills.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Special education children three through five years of age will receive special education programming from an Early Childhood special education team. Center-based programs (Trula Lawson Early Childhood Center) will provide instruction with developmentally appropriate intervention services designed to meet the unique needs of the child. Integration opportunities exist with peer models and regular education students.

HOME/SCHOOL COORDINATOR (SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER)

The school social worker assists in mobilizing family and community resources to promote the educational growth of children and provides a liaison between home, school and community. Support and assistance is provided to the school staff and the home in the solution of mutual concerns and to the child and his/her advocate.

IAES/PARKWAY ACADEMY

Parkway Academy operates as the system's Interim Alternative Education Setting. Primarily, Parkway is a therapeutic program that operates for students whose behavior precludes their ability to be served for periods of time (generally, 45 days or less) in their home schools. Parkway provides Licensed Clinical Social Workers who provide counseling to students in order to address the issues that resulted in their placement at Parkway.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

The school psychologist serves as a resource person and advisor to other school personnel in understanding the relationship among such psychological concepts as abilities, achievements, emotions, behavior patterns and developmental processes. He/she promotes an understanding of mental health concepts and their application to the school setting with emphasis on preventative value of a wholesome environment.

The school psychologist engages in various psychometric testing techniques to learn more about the child and his/her suspected problem areas. He/she is an advisor to the school regarding the child's placement and appropriate programming. He/she confers with parents and teachers about the problem at

hand, and knows local, community and state resources. He/she may work in therapeutic roles with special education students.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program operates as a cooperative grant program between Vocational Rehabilitation and the Sevier County School District. The purpose is to provide on-the-job training for disabled students and assistance upon graduation from the school system. Secondary MR or severely disabled students will receive priority for services followed by severely learning disabled and disadvantaged students. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and schoolwork-based training coordinator are responsible for job training, follow-up, evaluation, and coordination of the academic curriculum with job training requirements.

WAYS TO SAY "GOOD FOR YOU" By Edward S. Kubany

- That's really nice.
- Thank you very much.
- Wow!
- I like the way you're working.
- Keep up the good work.
- That's quite an improvement.
- Much better.
- Keep it up.
- It's a pleasure to teach when you work like this.
- Good job.
- What neat work.
- You really outdid yourself today.
- This kind of work pleases me very much.
- Congratulations!
- Terrific!
- I'll bet your mom and dad would be proud to see the job you did on this.
- Beautiful!
- I'm very proud of the way you're working.
- Excellent work.
- I appreciate your help.
- Very good.
- Marvelous.

- Right on.
- Sharp.
- My goodness, how impressive.
- You're on the right track.
- I like the way Tom is working.
- John is ready on time.
- Mary is waiting so well.
- Dick got right to his cleaning up.
- Ann is paying attention.
- You put a lot of work into this.
- That's clever.
- Good thinking!
- That's a good way to look at it.
- You figured it out.
- Clifford has finished. Super.
- That's a good point.
- You've got it.
- Out of sight.
- You make it look easy.
- I like the way you think of others.
- You helped me get the right answer.
- You make my day a little brighter.
- I'm so glad you're in this class.
- Will you help me again? You did so well.
- Happiness is having students like you around.
- You make me feel good.
- Students like to have you around.
- Far out!

What kind of communicator are you?

No matter how well a program is designed, success depends on good communication between the teacher and the para. Poor communication skills and negative statements are at the heart of most problems. The learning process is totally dependent upon the staff establishing and maintaining good lines of daily communication. However, communication with students and staff goes beyond verbal interaction and also includes nonverbal interaction. Research

has concluded that approximately 80% of communication is nonverbal. Your actions may actually speak more loudly than your words.

Do you . . .

- maintain eye contact while listening?
- maintain a forward posture while listening?
- use non-interruptive acknowledgments, such as head nodding?
- display positive genuine facial expressions to demonstrate interest?
- avoid cutting off individuals who are speaking?
- use appropriate voice, tone and loudness in conversations?
- avoid leaning back with arms crossed while listening?

Others' perceptions of your attitude often is developed from verbal and nonverbal cues. The success of the paraeducator is often tied to others' perceptions of your attitude. A positive attitude can be conveyed in many ways. For example, just remembering to smile and being friendly towards others can make a difference as well as looking for ways to assist others. When working with students, having a sense of humor, praising their positive efforts, and using positive statements show students that you care about them and that you enjoy what you are doing.

Be willing to take initiative. Show responsibility by looking ahead at what needs to be done and not forcing the teacher to always plan tasks for you. Become eager to assist the teacher, don't sit back and watch. Listen to directions and follow them. If you are unclear about what is being asked, ask questions! Never resort to your own methods unless discussed with the teacher first. Work only on teaching concepts the teacher has set for the student. Never show disapproval of a task assigned to you in front of the student or students. Do it and wait until you can talk with the teacher about it privately.

All employees convey an image of the Sevier County School System to other professionals, to parents, and to the community as a whole. We want this to be a favorable image. The paraeducator is as much a part of creating this image as is the certified staff member. Therefore, your actions, speech, and dress should be appropriate and professional at all times. Show your support for the special education program as well as your supervising teacher verbally, enthusiastically, and actively, and by your involvement in school system events whenever possible.

The Sevier County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status in provision of educational opportunities, programs, activities, or employment opportunities and benefits.

I have received a copy of the Paraeducator Handbook for the Sevier County School System's Department of Special Education. I read and understand the contents.

Signature

Paraprofessional's Printed Name

Date

Assigned School

After you have read the document and have had any areas of concern addressed for parts that were not clear to you, please complete the lines above, tear off the last page, and return it to Dr. Romanczuk at the SpEd Dept.