

## Paraprofessional Meeting Agenda & Topics

### Prior to Meeting/ Start of the School Year

- Understand para roles, contractual duties, and responsibilities in your building (bus duties, hours, break times, time off requests, etc.) and have them printed and posted.
- Talk to general education teachers about para roles and individual names so that they can introduce them accordingly in the general education setting.
- Set up a designated space for paras as a “home base” with access to the school calendar, tools, student schedules and accommodations needed, daily schedules, communication boards, daily changes, and training opportunities.
- Set up an organizational system that paras can easily access for supplies and to support with resource creation, lamination, cutting, making copies, or other tasks if they have unplanned spare time due to schedule changes.
- Implement a communication system through a message board to notify paraprofessionals of schedule changes or other important topics and for paras to communicate with you and each other throughout the day.

### Recommended Meeting Structure and Agenda Items

The following agenda provides a sample structure for special education teachers to use when building their agendas for regularly scheduled meetings with paraprofessionals. Use the [Paraprofessional Meeting Agenda Template](#) to build your own meeting agendas!

#### 1. Mindset Measure or Check-in (2-3 minutes)

Fist-to-5: Ask everyone to show how they are doing by the number of fingers they show (0=poor-5=great) Propose a question and go around allowing everyone to respond.

Examples:

- Communication preferences (phone call, email, text, in person?)
- What was your favorite part of summer or other break?
- What book or show are you into right now?
- What are you hoping to gain from this meeting?
- What part of your job/ role makes you want to come to work every day?
- What has been a professional challenge in the past year that you are hoping gets resolved?



#### 2. Celebrations (2-5 minutes)

Take time to mention and celebrate, possibly by bringing treats and/or cards for birthdays, babies, marriages, new hires, successes, student-specific celebrations, para appreciation week, team celebrations, etc. Paras should also be given time to share any success they have had with students.




### 3. Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations Reminders (2-5 minutes)


Address any questions or issues related to roles, responsibilities, or meeting expectations to set the tone for learning and collaboration. Remind the team that everyone is here to support students as a team.


Examples:


- Create a visual guide outlining the paraprofessional responsibilities, sped teacher responsibilities, and general education teacher responsibilities when it comes to working with students
- Have discussions and meetings to discuss the role that paras have within the special education classroom
- Explicitly say what you'd like help with and what you would like to do on your own

### 4. Chose one of the following learning topics:

Topic	Description/ Examples	Time
<b>Accommodations vs. Modifications in the General Education Setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review students that paras will be working within the classroom/ school setting and review common supports in the IEPs</li> <li>• Define and discuss the difference between accommodations and modifications</li> <li>• Review the difference between helping and hovering in the general education setting</li> <li>• Ask and answer questions about potential resources and what roles paraprofessionals will have in implementing accommodations without modifying the work</li> </ul>	25 minutes  
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that a student's status as a special education student is confidential and paras and educational staff are on a "need to know" basis with personal information that gets shared about their needs, goals, progress, family history, etc.</li> <li>• Remind staff that information shared outside of what educators need to know is illegal and can be damaging to a student and their family</li> <li>• IEPs are confidential documents that need to be locked up. Please don't leave information out in the school setting that can identify a student as having an IEP</li> <li>• Ask and answer questions about what information should and should not be shared and the appropriate ways/ times to communicate about students in the</li> </ul>	10 minutes

	<p>school setting (person first language, students are general education students first)</p>	
<p><b>Common Disabilities and Characteristics</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce each of the most common disability types with some brief definitions and examples of common characteristics and supports</li> <li>• Discuss additional resources (such as positive behavior support plans or visual schedules) that are common for each disability and related service providers that might be involved with certain students (ex. speech language pathologists, occupational therapists)</li> <li>• Provide a handout or powerpoint for a visual to accompany the learning</li> <li>• Have paraprofessionals share experiences and strategies they have used in supporting students with the various disabilities and facilitate a collaborative conversation to support current student needs</li> </ul>	<p>20 minutes</p>
<p><b>FAPE, LRE and Instructional Setting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define each of these terms and explain how they impact the para's role and responsibilities</li> <li>• Remind paras that adhering to the schedule and keeping a student in each class as much as is stated on their IEP is not only best practice, but a legal obligation</li> <li>• Support paras with any struggles they are having with following their schedule and problem solve for solutions</li> </ul>	<p>15 minutes</p>
<p><b>Assistive Technology and Sensory/ Calming Tools</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss different technology and tools available for students and discuss how tools become available through the IEP team process.</li> <li>• Have the Occupational Therapist (OT) speak to their role and how they can support paras.</li> <li>• Discuss appropriate use (how, where, and when)</li> <li>• Identify any challenges with tools and technology</li> <li>• Provide any needed training on student-specific assistive technology (ex. Augmentative communication device or text-to-speech technology on a Chromebook)</li> </ul>	<p>10 minutes</p>

<b>Non-Verbal Cues and Wait Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate use of visual schedules, first-then charts, and other visual aids and apply the use to various situations</li> <li>• Discuss non-verabl cues and appropriate use in the classroom setting (proximity to a student, tapping on a student desk, marks on a behavior chart)</li> <li>• Explain how using wait time and visuals can be beneficial for students with slower processing speed and can help students who tend to escalate when given verbal directions</li> <li>• Explain how these supports can also benefit student who are bilingual or are learning English</li> </ul>	10 minutes
<b>Technology Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate and provide instruction on using iPad, Chromebook, copying and pasting images from the internet, using any of the online platforms teachers are using in their classrooms (ex. Google Classroom)</li> <li>• Create a resource for support with common technology issues on the team</li> <li>• Make sure paras have the required passwords to access the accounts</li> <li>• provide practice opportunities/ time</li> </ul>	15 minutes  
<b>Common Academic Support Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review curriculum and resources used</li> <li>• Explain the importance of having high expectations and holding students accountable</li> <li>• Model Guided Practice (I do, we do, you do)</li> <li>• Explain the importance of fostering independence</li> <li>• Model and allow practice with using questioning</li> <li>• Remind to use frequent verbal praise for small successes as a motivational strategy</li> <li>• Give concrete examples of how to give students choices to motivate them while learning (“Do you want to use a pencil or pen?” and NOT “Do you want to finish this now or during your lunch?”)</li> </ul>	20 minutes
<b>Common Behavior Management Strategies and Tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give paraprofessionals explicit directions on working with students who have behavior needs</li> <li>• Review any reward systems you have in place</li> <li>• Discuss what is working and what is not working</li> <li>• Review de-escalation strategies and crisis intervention training</li> <li>• Explain the power of positive verbal praise</li> </ul>	20 minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and how it impacts students</li> <li>• Discuss impulsivity and how it impacts students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)</li> <li>• Discuss how to avoid power struggles</li> <li>• Practice following through on verbalized rewards and consequences</li> <li>• Provide a visual with various behaviors and corresponding strategies to try</li> <li>• Use handouts with examples to talk through problem solving specific situations such as task avoidance</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Data Collection and Reporting</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain why data collection is needed for students with IEPs</li> <li>• Define the para's role in collecting and reporting data and communicate how you will be having them report data (behavior charts, Google Form, observational notes, ect.)</li> <li>• Provide tools and resources needed to keep data collection organized and consistent</li> <li>• Review examples of completed data collection forms to show what you are looking for</li> <li>• Provide feedback on data collection and reporting</li> <li>• Review various behavior tracking data collection forms and their uses (ex., ABC Data Collection form)</li> </ul>	15 minutes

**5. Feedback and Planning (1-3 minutes)**

Get feedback from the group about the learning topic and the confidence level they feel in implementing and applying the information. Then, identify any further training or resources needed as a follow-up or identify the next topic the team wants to address or learn more about at the next meeting.

Examples:

- Crisis intervention training
- Annual required para training
- Seizure training or other medical training
- Technology/ device/ student-specific training
- Phonics training
- Math strategies

