

Preparing Paraprofessionals for PPT's

Dr. Sheila Blachman

October 27, 2015

C.E.S.

Today's Agenda:

- Understanding the IEP
- Preparing for the PPT
 - data collection
 - concerns and issues
 - recommendations
- During the PPT
 - professional skills
 - communication skills
 - listening skills
- After the meeting
 - follow through on IEP
 - progress monitoring

Role of the Paraprofessional:

Paraprofessionals are to
assist and support the teacher
in delivering services
to students with disabilities.

NCLB: Paraprofessionals providing instructional support must work under the direct supervision of a teacher. A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) if the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher. As a result, a program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not permitted.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Part B, Section 612 State Eligibility Allows paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised in accordance with state law, regulation and policy in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.

Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation

Sec. 10-155j - **Development of paraprofessionals**

The Department of Education, through the State Education Resource Center and within available appropriations for such purposes, shall promote and encourage professional development activities for school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. Such activities may include, but shall not be limited to, providing local and regional boards of education with training modules and curricula for professional development for paraprofessionals and assisting boards of education in the effective use of paraprofessionals and the development of strategies to improve communication between teachers and paraprofessionals in the provision of effective student instruction.

New legislation:

Effective July 1, 2015

Section 277 of Special Session Public Act 15-5:

Parents and guardians have the right to have the school paraprofessional assigned to their child, if any, be present at, and to participate in, all portions of a planning and placement team (“PPT”) meeting at which the child’s educational program is developed, reviewed or revised.

Understanding the IEP:

- Present Levels of Performance
- Goals and Objectives
- Accommodations and Modifications
- Special Education Services
- Other considerations

Present Levels of Performance:

- Updated levels of performance per academic area of need.
- Student's strengths.
- Specific areas of weakness within academic areas.
- Based on data collection or testing.
- All concerns must have corresponding objectives.
- Include behavioral, social, communication levels of performance.

Goals and Objectives:

- Goals and objectives must correlate to PLOP.
- Goals and objectives must meet each student at their instructional level.
- OBSERVABLE
- MEASURABLE
- Includes measurement of one skill, with objectives sequentially building on one another.

Accommodations and Modifications:

- The purpose of accommodations and modifications is to support learning, while promoting independent, self-reliant learners.
- As needed, based on our knowledge of the students' individual needs.
- If listed, must be available in all school settings.
- Can “test out” an accommodation for 2 weeks, and then recommend changes to the IEP.
- Don't include accommodations or modifications in case student will need it at a later date.

Special Education Services:

- Special education teacher
- Related service providers, including Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical therapy (PT), Speech/Language Services (SL).
- Also includes Social Work/School Psych services.
- Paraprofessional services
- Clearly indicate **Service Provider** in each setting.
- Clearly indicate **Site** for each service.

3 Examples:

Reporting of
Special Education Service Hours

Other areas for consideration at the PPT:

- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA) that lead to the development of Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)
- Statewide assessments
- Transportation
- Extended School year (ESY)
- Assistive Technology
- Transitions
- Extracurricular activities

Preparing for the PPT:

Data Collection

- ◆ Coded Progress on Goals and Objectives
- ◆ Aimsweb data
- ◆ Classroom assessments
- ◆ District-wide assessments
- ◆ Behavioral data
- ◆ Report cards
- ◆ Other school data (e.g., suspensions)
- ◆ Evaluations
- ◆ Reports from school staff

Concerns and issues:

- Pre-PPT meeting for all school staff:
 - ❖ Develop drafts of all proposals of changes to the IEP.
 - ❖ Discuss/develop proposed updates to goals and objectives.
 - ❖ Discuss all concerns...
- No surprises!

Recommendations:

- Draft of proposed revised goals and objectives
- Determination of recommended changes to the IEP (e.g., service hours).
- Determination of recommendations that will be made (e.g., permission to conduct an FBA).
- **Data-driven decisions!**

During the PPT:

- Professional Skills
- Communication Skills
- Listening Skills

But first, A few words about Confidentiality:

- NEVER discuss a student with anyone except those directly involved with the student and their care (i.e. nurse, special education teacher, therapist)
- Should a discussion need to occur regarding the student and their care **MAKE SURE:** It occurs in a private area with doors closed and not where others may hear what is discussed.
- **Discussions should never occur in public places, e.g., grocery store, soccer field, or on a cell phone after school hours.**

More on Professional Communication with Parents...

- Paraprofessionals should not be texting/emailing/calling parents!
- Paraprofessionals should not be encouraging parents to communicate with them outside school.
- Paraprofessionals should not initiate, or respond to, social media interactions by parents/students.

Professional Skills:

- Attire
- Punctuality
- Behavior in meetings: it is important to engage in respectful behavior during all school meetings, including PPTs. No one should be checking cell phones or computers unless there is an emergency.

Communication Skills:

- Use appropriate language and tone of voice
- Stay on topic
- Refer to other teachers as Mr./Mrs.
- Don't interrupt
- Answer questions clearly and concisely
- Don't tell stories

Listening Skills:

- Active listening by focusing on the speaker.
- Make Eye Contact with the speaker.
- Exhibit Affirmative Nods and Appropriate Facial Expressions (nonverbal signs of listening).
- Avoid Distracting Actions or Gestures: Do not look at other people, play with pens or pencils, or shuffle papers.
- Ask Questions for clarification. This facilitates understanding, and lets the speaker know that the listener is engaged.
- Paraphrase to allow the listener to verify that the message was received correctly.
- Avoid Interrupting the speaker, and do not anticipate what he/she will say.
- Do Not Talk Too Much: An active listener recognizes that it is impossible to talk and listen acutely at the same time.

The Role of the Para During the PPT:

- Although parents are inviting their one-on-one paraprofessionals to PPTs, the paraprofessional is an employee of the school district.
- The certified staff (special education teacher) should be aware of ALL information of which the paraprofessional has knowledge.
- Collaborative Support for the Team!

After the PPT:

- Progress Monitoring on acquisition of goals and objectives
- Follow through on all aspects of the IEP, including behavioral management, accommodation and modifications, and data collection, under the direction of the teacher.

Questions & Answers???

smbalachman@gmail.com