Effective Paraprofessional-Teacher Communication & Collaboration

Presented by

Project SUCCESS

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Project SUCCESS supports districts to ensure that students with significant intellectual disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options by providing ongoing and job-embedded professional development focused on academic instruction, communication, and employability skills.

Topics Frequently Covered:	⚫ Unpacking Standards	🔵 Curriculum Mapping	🟡 Goal Writing	🟢 Formative Assessment	🔴 Certificate of Completion
Types of Support:	🔴 On-site FD	🟡 Summer Institutes	🟢 Webinars	🔵 State/National Conferences	⚫ Online Tools and Resources
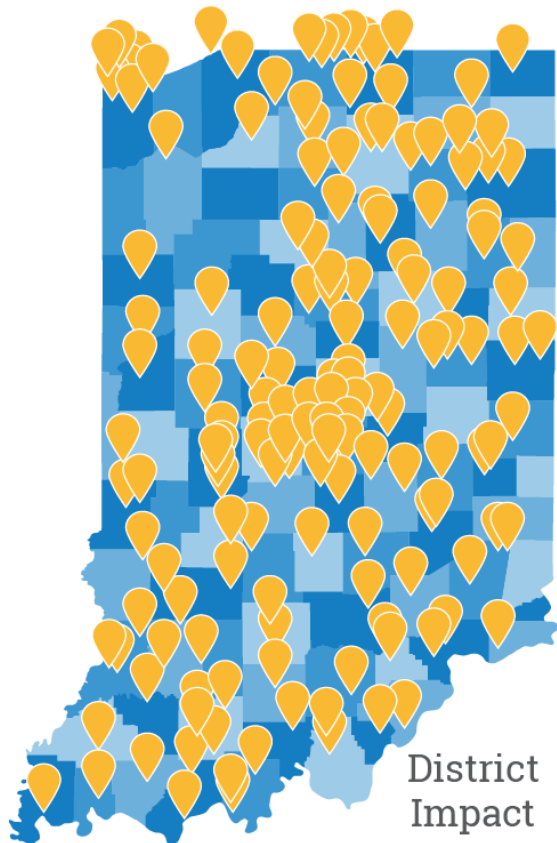
441 participants at our 2019 Regional Trainings

11 schools selected as 2019-2020 Model Sites

32,515 views/downloads of Content Connector resources

36,112 views/downloads of curriculum and instructional resources

8,987 **Attend or view** webinars

District Impact

"As a result of partnering with Project SUCCESS, my students are achieving at a much higher level as I am providing access and exposure to grade-level content connectors and curriculum."

Session Overview

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Webinar Activities Form #2

Pre-Webinar Assessment

Rate yourself on each of the following statements:

- I communicate effectively with the supervising teacher(s) with whom I work.
- I communicate effectively with the students in my classroom.
- I understand what information is appropriate to share with parents.
- I communicate effectively with students from diverse backgrounds.
- I understand different styles and methods of communication and can apply this knowledge in my role.

"You never know when a moment and a few sincere words can have an impact on a life."

~Zig Ziglar

Today's Objectives

Paraprofessionals who participate in this webinar will be able to:

1. Recognize different types of communication, including verbal and nonverbal.

2. Implement strategies for effectively communicating with teachers.

3. Maintain regular communication with teachers.

4. Reflect on their current level of effectiveness and explore for continually improving communication in your role.

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Section I: Overview of Communication

Checking in…

How do you typically communicate with the classroom teacher(s)?

What do you notice about how students communicate?

What is *communication?*

Communication is:

- ▶ The exchange of messages.
- ▶ Takes the form of speaking, writing, body language, signs, or electronic communication.
- ▶ Has two parts: sending a message and receiving a message.
- ▶ May look different for students with disabilities.

Why is communication so important?

As a paraprofessional, you are expected to communicate effectively with students, your supervising teacher, and various other school staff daily. Communication is critical for the following reasons:

▶ Communication between paraprofessionals and the classroom teacher impacts the overall success of services and student outcomes.

▶ Effective communication with students plays an important role in academic instruction and behavior support

▶ Clear and consistent communication related to data collection ensures your classroom teacher understands progress toward goals to make informed instructional decisions.

Non-verbal Communication

- ▶ Nonverbal communication is an exchange between people that does not have a direct verbal translation.

- ▶ Non-verbal communication, informally referred to as body language, plays an important role in how we communicate with people and in understanding others.

Communication is…

Sending

Speaking clearly, Talking in common language

Sending

Texting messages using words & symbols

Sending

Gazing or using sound to produce language

Communication is...

Receiving

Listening attentively, Watching facial expressions, body language, & gestures

Receiving

Reading closely, interpreting meaning using context

Receiving

Listening patiently, Watching for visual cues, Verbally reflecting back language

Checking in…

What skills do you use when communicating with teachers? Students?

Name one way you can check to see if you are communicating effectively.

Section II: Effective Communication

Effective Communication & Collaboration

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Indiana DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Exploring Communication Styles

4 Communication Styles

- Passive
- Aggressive
- Passive-Aggressive
- Assertive

Exploring Communication Styles

Exploring Communication Styles

4 Communication Styles

- Passive
  - I lose.
  - Soft; lack of eye contact; fail to express need; keep the peace
  - "It really doesn't matter that much."

Exploring Communication Styles

4 Communication Styles

- Aggressive
  - I win.
  - Loud, commands; intense eye contact; fail to listen; command respect
  - "I'm right and you're wrong."

Exploring Communication Styles

4 Communication Styles

- Passive-Aggressive
  - We both lose.
  - Appear passive; lack of open communication; deceptively cooperative
  - "That's fine with me, but don't be surprised if someone else gets mad."

Exploring Communication Styles

4 Communication Styles

- Assertive
  - We both win.
  - Express needs while considering others' needs; aim for a win; I statements
  - "We are entitled to express ourselves respectfully to one another."

Positive Communication Strategies

Passive
Let's just go with your ideas. Mine wouldn't work anyway.

Aggressive
We shouldn't do that. It's a terrible idea.

Passive-Aggressive
That idea is alright, even if it isn't likely to work.

What would the *assertive* way of expressing your ideas sound like?

Positive Communication Strategies

How can you maintain trusted communication?

- **Maintain confidentiality.**
- **Maintain standard of conduct that is expected of all school employees.**
- **Ask questions any time you need clarification.**

Positive Communication Strategies

Students

Speak from your motivation to help students succeed and belief in ability, rather than deficit language.

Teachers

Speak from partnership with the teacher in helping students learn, rather than speaking from opposition or defiance.

Parents & Families

Speak from partnership with the parent in seeing the student reach their potential, rather than trying to undermine their parental relationships.

Communicate Effectively

Use Assertive communication strategies and language to achieve a win-win.

Communicate from a place of partnership to engage collaborators on behalf of students.

Checking in…

What is your go-to communication style?

What communication styles do you see in others?

Section III: Communication Tools

Effective Communication & Collaboration

Tips for Clear Communication with Teachers

- Set an established time each week to discuss student learning, instructional strategies, and student needs.

- Use an agenda to organize the meeting.

- If you are unable to meet in person, create an ongoing communication protocol (ie keep a communication journal. Student data binders or send an email) This needs to be an established and agreed upon form of communication with teacher.

- If you have a question and concern, please ask the teacher or schedule a time to have a conversation. Break downs in communication impact student learning and the classroom environment.

- Address all concerns professionally.

Exploring Classroom Identity

Collaboration with Colleagues

Virtual Learning Resource: Use the guiding questions below to help prepare for collaborative opportunities with colleagues (including paraprofessionals). Teacher tool.

Tip: Share this with your teacher as a resource.

Collaboration with Colleagues
Use the guiding questions below to help prepare for collaborative opportunities with colleagues.

Considerations	Example	My Plan
What virtual platform will you use to collaborate?	Video chat, phone call, email	
How often will you meet with general educators, related service providers, leadership, and paraprofessionals?	Daily, weekly, bi-weekly	
What is the focus and desired outcomes with the collaborative meeting?	Curriculum maps, curriculum planning, curriculum modifications, instructional strategies, behavior modifications	
Where will you store meeting agendas? Who is responsible for updating the agenda?	LMS, Google Drive, Google Classroom	
How will you handle outstanding agenda items?	Save for next week, follow up in email, schedule another collaborative session	

Exploring Classroom Identity

Rolling Agenda Template

Using a single, ongoing (or "rolling") document for meeting notes and action items helps teams stay organized, collaborative, and accountable—and prevents important information from being lost in inboxes and busy schedules. Here's a simple template to help you get started. Teacher tool and communication tool with paraprofessionals.

Tip: Review to prepare for meetings with the teacher.

Rolling Agenda Template
Using a single, ongoing (or "rolling") document for meeting notes and action items helps teams stay organized, collaborative, and accountable—and prevents important information from being lost in inboxes and busy schedules. Here's a simple template to help you get started.

Meeting Date	Goals & Agenda Items

Meeting Notes Section

Agenda Items	Notes	Questions/Parking Lot

Meeting Notes Section

Who	Will Do What	By When

Back to School Series: Virtual Learning Plan   August 2020

Exploring Classroom Identity

Teacher & Para Consensus

The Teacher and Paraprofessional Consensus Template allows for collaboration, between teachers and paraprofessionals, to develop a vision and mission for every student, as well as develop short team and long terms objectives for accomplishing the mission.

Tip: Use this as a tool for teacher feedback on your role.

Teacher and Paraprofessional Consensus Template — Project SUCCESS

Team Vision and Mission

Guiding Questions	Teacher Ideas	Paraprofessional Ideas	Consensus
What is our vision for every student we support?			
What is our mission? What actions steps will we take to accomplish our vision?			
What are our short-term goals to accomplish our vision and mission?			
What are our long-term goals to accomplish our vision and mission?			

Exploring Classroom Identity

Elem/Middle/High Student Log

Note catcher/data form for a paraprofessional supporting a student in the general education setting. This facilitates conversation with both the general educator and special educator from the paraprofessional's perspective.

Tip: Partner with the teacher to track student progress.

Checking in…

Which tool do think will be most helpful to you in your role as paraprofessional?

Contact me:
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Visit our website:
www.projectsuccessindiana.com/paraeducator-webinar-series

Understanding Culture & Bias

August 26, 2020

Thank You!

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