

# Paraeducator Pointers



This information is adapted for paraeducators in career and technical education programs from a publication from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education.

## Supporting Teachers and Students

As a paraeducator, you are an integral member of the educational team. Paraeducators work with teachers and other educational professionals in supporting student achievement and building social skills. You have a variety of key responsibilities in the educational setting, which include:

- **Being a member of the team** – Know the roles, responsibilities, and policies of your job in your work setting. Find out what you can and cannot do in your role as an educational paraeducator.
- **Showing respect** – Be respectful when assisting students with their needs.
- **Supporting inclusion of students** – Help students to participate in the general education program as directed by the career and technical or special education teacher. Work with general and special education staff to provide necessary adaptations or supports for students that allow them to participate and engage in learning tasks.
- **Fostering socialization** – Throughout the day, allow and provide opportunities for students to interact with their peers on their own.
- **Promoting independence** – Provide the level of support the students need, and then fade your support, encouraging students to complete tasks independently.
- **Requesting assistance** – Ask for guidance and direction from the career and technical education or special education teacher if you have questions related to any aspect of working with students (e.g., academic, social, behavioral).
- **Maintaining confidentiality** – Respect the privacy of students. Do not share information about students with people outside of the students' educational team. If parents or other adults have questions about a student, refer them to the career and technical or special education teacher.

## Providing Clear Directions

Providing clear directions and helping students comply is essential to maintaining a productive learning environment.

- **Establish eye contact with the student**  
Look at the student and state the student's name when making a request. Example: "John, put your book away and line up at the door."
- **Make requests specific**  
In a calm, clear voice, provide a precise description of what you expect from the student. Example: "Elena, quietly read the first paragraph on page 14."
- **Make one request at a time**  
Do not ask the student to do several things at once. The student may be overwhelmed and may not be able to remember everything. After the student has complied with one request, you may make an additional request.
- **Allow time for compliance**  
State what you want the student to do and give the student three to five seconds to comply. If the student does not comply, restate the request.
- **Praise the student for complying**  
Provide verbal reinforcement when the student complies with your request. This will encourage further compliance in the future.