

This newsletter is a means of connecting teachers and paraprofessionals as they learn new ideas together that support the students they serve.



In our January newsletter we will continue our discussion of behavior with a focus on strategies to support, prevent and correct misbehaviors.

In mid-November the **Autism Certification Center** will present the *ASD Strategies in Action* project. This online training is a series demonstrating evidence-based practices that can be used in the home, school, and workplace of individuals with autism spectrum disorders. The video clips are relevant to family members and direct service providers including paraprofessionals, support staff, and professionals. This project is powered by OCALI in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, Ohio Department of Education, and the Governor's Office of Health Transformation. For more information and video clips to peak your interest, check out the website at <http://www.autismcertificationcenter.org/>.

## Professional Development and the Ohio Operating Standards

*Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities* (effective July 1, 2014) states: "Paraprofessional services include services provided by school, county board of DD, and other educational agency employees who are **adequately trained to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities. Paraprofessionals work under the supervision of teachers, intervention specialists, and/or related service providers.** Other titles used to identify these service providers include teacher assistants, educational aides, school psychology aides, occupational therapy assistants, physical therapist assistants, and job coaches" (p.29).

Furthermore, "Paraprofessionals providing services to children with disabilities shall hold an educational aide permit or associate license and meets requirements under paragraph (I) of rule 3301-24-05 of the Administrative Code" (p. 152). School districts are responsible for a "planned sequence of continuing education and annual training opportunities to enable the paraprofessional to continue **to develop the knowledge and skills that are specific to the students with whom the paraprofessional works,** including following lesson plans, implementing follow-up instructional procedures and activities, supporting effective classroom organization and behavior management, and working effectively with teachers and as part of an instructional team" (p.152).

Based upon the direction of the Ohio Department of Education, the content of the State Support Team 9 Newsletters and sponsored professional development opportunities were revised. The revisions are aimed at assisting **paraprofessionals as a collaborative team member to develop both the knowledge and skills** to implement effective, research-based instructional procedures, support effective classroom organization including behavior management techniques, and work effectively with an instructional team to provide services to children with disabilities. Standards for the knowledge and skills needed by ALL paraprofessionals supporting students with disabilities are available from the Council for Exceptional Children (<http://www.cec.sped.org/Standards/Paraeducator-Preparation-Guidelines>).

The hope is for **teacher-paraprofessional teams** to utilize these newsletters as a resource for discussing new **knowledge** then utilize the suggested resources and websites to develop the **skills** of the paraprofessional specific to the students and work setting they serve. Discussion questions are provided within each section for teams to share ideas. At the end of the newsletter is a set of resources for further learning and discussions. We appreciate comments and suggestions to the newsletter.

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## Student Profiles

When paraprofessionals support learners with disabilities, it is helpful that they understand the **learner's preferences, interests, strengths, and needs** along with the impact of these needs on the student's performance in the general curriculum. **Student profiles** may

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include components from an IEP and knowledge that a team compiles from records, progress reports, and team discussions. Remember that information about a student is **confidential** including items within a student profile. Relevant information to the paraprofessional may include:

- Student goals defined by the IEP team,
- **Level of prompts needed for each goal** (verbal, model, gesture, visual prompt, physical prompt),
- Skills student complete independently,
- **Tasks challenging for the student,**
- Medical/health needs,
- **Seating arrangements that promote effective learning** (front/back of classroom, next to teacher's desk, adapted cushion/chair),
- Communication skills or how student communicates with others,
- **Behavior plan and triggers that may prompt a behavior issue,**
- Accommodations/modifications required by IEP, and
- **Items/Activities that reinforce/motivate the student.**

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## Classroom Management Practices

*PBIS:* With the focus in our schools on **Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports** to improve both academic and behavior outcomes of students by teaching socially appropriate social skills, teams need to consider information to share with paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals as support personnel assist teams to create positive learning environments and utilize effective strategies to re-teach, reinforce, and support students in learning new behaviors. They may serve as 'independence coaches' prompting behaviors then fading their support with a variety of students in multiple settings throughout the day. Knowing the classroom management system and the supervising teacher's expectations for student behaviors is critical as the paraprofessional interacts with individual students and groups of students.

Assisting the paraprofessional in her/his role on the team means sharing critical components of the school and classroom management systems such as the school-wide expectations (walk quietly in the hallways, honor personal space of one arm's length, use socially appropriate language) and classroom rules (raise your hand for help, be seated for roll call before the tardy bell rings, turn in assignments on time). Understanding the individual classroom management systems provides consistency between the teacher-paraprofessional team to reinforce actions, monitor the classroom setting, and define the limits of expectations for all students.

**Discussion Points:** What are this school expectations for behaviors? What are the supervising teacher's expectations? Are the expectations different when students are working with the paraprofessional? What are the expectations for small group work or independent work (assigned roles within the group, talk with a peer before asking an adult)? What class or individual reinforcement system is used? What behaviors do we ignore? When do we intervene with a student's actions?

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## ABC Cycle of Behavior

*Behavior:* When discussing the prevention and correction of behavior issues, it is critical to understand the **ABC cycle (A=antecedent, B=behavior, C=consequence)**. To begin, a clear description of the behavior of concern is necessary. This means defining the **behavior as an observable action that can be measured (counted or timed)**. The behavior is defined clearly so that a person could recognize the behavior without doubt (stranger test).

**Discussion Points:** Determine whether these behavior are **clearly defined (observable) and measurable (can be counted or timed)**: 1) Chuck is disruptive in class; 2) Halle rips her paper; 3) Susan put her coat on backwards; 4) Mickey is defiant in music class; 5) Cade turned in his homework assignment.

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**Antecedent & Consequence:** After defining the behavior, determine the **antecedent** by carefully observing what **event or action preceded the behavior** (trigger or antecedent). Also determine the **consequence** of the behavior or the **response, action or event occurring after the behavior**. Example antecedents to behaviors # 2, 3, 5 above are: 2) teacher asks students to begin their math worksheet with mixed math facts; 3) teacher announces recess time; 5) teacher requests all homework assignments to be given to her when leaving the classroom. Possible **consequences** to these behaviors: 2) Halle rips her paper and is sent to the time out chair; 2) Susan puts her coat on backwards and an adult helps her take it off and puts it on so it fits properly then zips it up; 5) Cade is acknowledged with a smile from the teacher and nod of her head.

**Function of Behavior:** The behaviors of a student serve a **function or purpose** and are repeated when that function pays off for the student. The **function is to gain** (ex: attention, praise, activities, tangible items, sensory stimulation, power) **or avoid** these same features. Knowing the function of the behavior helps the team determine a **replacement behavior** to teach and **strategies to support the student & prevent the socially unacceptable behavior from occurring**. For example, individuals work (behavior) to pay bills (antecedent or prompt for the behavior) and receive a pay check (consequence) therefore they gain financial resources to pay bills & buy desired items (function). In contrast, some individuals steal money (behavior) to buy a lunch ticket (consequence) to stop their hunger (antecedent). The function of the behavior in both situations is to gain financial resources but the behavior in the second situation is not socially acceptable in our schools. **Teaching the student** to request lunch money using a lunch debit when she forgot her money at home would serve as a replacement behavior. **Strategies to support the student** would be reminder note before leaving the house in the morning and a check-in at the start of the school day to write a debit note to purchase a lunch when money was forgotten.

**Discussion Points:** After the teacher has clearly defined a behavior of a student, observe the student and share ideas on the antecedent, consequence, and possible function of a student's behavior. What data collection tools are useful? How can this information assist the team in re-teaching socially appropriate social skills?

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## Resources

*In order for teacher-paraprofessional teams to collaboratively learn as they provide services to students with disabilities, resources are critical. In this section a variety of resources are provided with a brief description of each. Note that these resources are from credible websites and typically directed toward licensed professionals. Use by a teacher-paraprofessional team needs to be determined by individual district personnel.*

### – Tip Sheets

The Center for Early Education and Development, College of Education & Human Development, University of Minnesota <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/publications/tipsheets/default.html>

Tip sheets (2-6 pages) for early childhood (infant/toddler, preschool, early childhood) and school-age youth are available on multiple topics related to behavior such as challenging behaviors, communication alternatives to challenging behavior, contingency contracts, and positive reinforcement.

### – Information Booklet

*Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction - Scaffolding Behavior for Student Success: Moving Beyond Seclusion and Restraint* booklet (22 pages) provides background information on these topics: creating a positive learning environment; use of functional behavior assessments; principles of behavior change including the acting-out cycle; and positive behavior interventions and support. <http://www.sped.dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/.../ebd-scaffold-behav.pdf>

### – Articles, Case Studies, Teacher Forms

*Special Connections, The University of Kansas* – <http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/> This website offers resources specific to behavior plans including web-based information, case studies for discussion, and teacher tools (forms, examples of completed forms, links to additional information). Topics relevant to behavior planning include 1) classroom and group support, 2) functional behavior assessment, 3) positive behavior support interventions, 4) positive behavior support planning, and 5) school-wide environmental support. [http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/~kuurl/cgi-bin/drupal/?q=behavior\\_plans](http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/~kuurl/cgi-bin/drupal/?q=behavior_plans) \

### – Modules, Articles, Video Clips

*The Iris Center* – <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/> This website contains a variety of resources on multiple topics relevant to the education of students with disabilities. From the home page link to Resources then Iris Resource Locator to find selected topics of interest. Modules, case studies, activities, information briefs, and short video vignettes are accessible depending upon the topic. <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/iris-resource-locator/>

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Send comments and questions for future topics to Denise Uitto at [edconnectlearning@gmail.com](mailto:edconnectlearning@gmail.com) for publishing in an upcoming edition of this newsletter.

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