

Appropriate Paraeducator Services Matrix

The *Appropriate Paraeducator Services Matrix* is intended to provide guidance regarding paraeducator roles to Iowa educational practitioners (administrators, teachers, paraeducators, etc.) who provide services to PK-12 students in general and special education programs. The matrix outlines appropriate services for paraeducators in classrooms in which they are the only assistant to a teacher, in classrooms in which they are among multiple assistants to a teacher, in behavior settings, in community-based settings, or in assignments in which they travel among classrooms to assist a student or groups of students. This document does not include guidance for paraeducators in support and related services such as Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTA), Speech-Language Pathologist Assistants (SLPA), Physical Therapy Assistants (PTA), and other such roles. The *Appropriate Paraeducator Services Matrix* is intended to supplement information found in the *Guide to Effective Paraeducator Practices II* that can be found at the following web site: http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=773&Itemid=1297.

Important Notes

- All paraeducators need to be provided training that results in the skills necessary to carry out their primary assignment. For example, as the chart below indicates, paraeducators can implement student behavior plans IF they are appropriately trained to do so. If not, it is inappropriate to give paraeducators that duty.
- Key supports that are needed from administrators and teachers in order to ensure that paraeducators are providing appropriate services are outlined in the chart below. Additional information regarding these supports can be found in the *Guide to Effective Paraeducator Practices II* referenced above.

Administrator and Teacher Supports To Ensure Appropriate Paraeducator Services	
<p>Administrators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring training and support for teachers who supervise paraeducators • Ensuring paraeducator training and support designed specifically for their assignments • Establishing schedules that are designed to ensure appropriate supervision for paraeducators • Being knowledgeable about paraeducator roles and duties • Communicating clear information to parents regarding roles and duties of paraeducators 	<p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing clear directions, appropriate training, and appropriate supports for paraeducator duties • Providing appropriate supervision for paraeducators • Communicating regularly with paraeducators regarding teacher and paraeducator roles. • Communicating clear information to parents regarding roles and duties of paraeducators

Appropriate Paraeducator Duties	Inappropriate Paraeducator Duties
<i>Instruction</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforcing application of skills on previously introduced concepts. Paraeducators should be trained in how to follow, but not go beyond, teacher directions in practice and drilling sessions. ● Reinforcing previously provided “specially designed instruction” ● Generalizing accommodations in response to immediate needs. Paraeducators can build on skills that have been introduced to students. For example, if a student has been introduced to and trained in the use of a particular strategy, that strategy can be generalized to other subject areas or social settings with the assistance of the paraeducator. Or, if a paraeducator has been trained to verbally model grammatical correctness, that modeling can be generalized to several settings. ● Facilitating teacher instructions in small group activities ● Constructing instruction materials: Paraeducators can construct flash cards, games for review, or other review materials under the supervision of a teacher. ● Assisting teacher in modifying or adapting instructional strategies and materials according to the needs of the learner. ● Supervising students in work settings. Paraeducators can oversee implementation of a licensed professional’s (work experience coordinator, etc.) program for students in community or work settings, including providing feedback to students as directed by the licensed professional. They can also collect and record assessment data in those settings as directed by the licensed professional, and share that information with the licensed professional who assesses and plans for continuing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introducing new skills and concepts that go beyond teacher directions ● Providing “specially designed instruction” ● Planning instruction or selecting instructional materials ● Setting goals for students and/or classes ● Designing instructional materials ● Modifying the content of instructional materials ● Varying any component of scripted programming or making assessments and instructional decisions regarding student responses in a scripted program ● Designing student outcomes and expectations in work settings. Working with employers or other work site supervisors to design student learning outcomes, student expectations, and other developmental components of the student’s work setting program.

Appropriate Paraeducator Duties	Inappropriate Paraeducator Duties
<i>Assessment</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collecting data. Based on direction from the teacher, a paraeducator can observe and document student social, behavioral or academic performance, if appropriately trained. The data are shared with the teacher who makes decisions on instructional needs. ● Recording and charting data ● “Checking” papers. Paraeducators can check student work for which an answer key has been provided. ● Reading tests to students. Paraeducators need to be trained in appropriate test reading procedures. <i>Important note:</i> Districts should consider technology such as text readers or other alternatives to provide support to students who need reading accommodations in tests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing assessment materials ● Modifying the content of instructional materials ● Error analysis (See note on “checking” papers in <i>Appropriate Column</i>) ● Grading (See note on “checking” papers in <i>Appropriate Column</i>) ● Administer standardized, diagnostic assessments such as Basic Reading Inventory

<i>Student Behavior</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementing student behavior plans. Paraeducators need to be trained in how to follow, but not go beyond, teacher directions in implementing behavior plans. ● Implementing building-wide or classroom behavioral expectations such as PBS if appropriately trained ● Supervising students during recess, bus duty, transportation, lunch duty, study hall, and other such periods of the day in which students have unstructured time. Paraeducators can also supervise hallways and accompany students going to classrooms or other sites in the school building (gymnasium, library, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing and evaluating student behavior goals and plans ● Developing and evaluating building-wide and classroom behavioral expectations

Appropriate Paraeducator Duties	Inappropriate Paraeducator Duties
<i>Family and Parent Interactions</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions with family members. Paraeducators may provide information regarding daily routines and upcoming events. If questions related to progress, instruction or specific student needs arise, the paraeducator should direct the family to the teacher. • Input into individualized education program planning: Paraeducators may be a source of information regarding student response to instruction and behavior programs by sharing information gathered through observations of the student, if paraeducators have been trained in appropriate observation procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions with family members. Paraeducators should not discuss student progress, student needs, and other educational program components with family members.
<i>Organizational Duties</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining an inventory and ordering supplies as directed by the teacher • Maintaining an orderly, healthy, and safe environment • Setting up and maintaining learning environments, learning centers and adaptive equipment as directed by the teacher • Recording activities for documentation (implementation log) • Copying and disseminating instructional/assessment materials • Modifying the format of instructional materials (change to larger type, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an inventory and making fiscal and organizational decisions on needed supplies • Developing plans and routines for orderly, healthy, and safe environments • Designing learning environments, learning centers, and adaptive equipment

Appropriate Paraeducator Duties	Inappropriate Paraeducator Duties
Health Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Under the direction and monitoring of a health professional or health plan supervisor, a paraeducator with appropriate training may assist with the implementation of a health plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist with implementation of health plan without appropriate training ● Develop or modify a health plan
<p><i>Time Unsupervised (i.e., Indirect Supervision)</i></p> <p><i>The general guidelines below regarding unsupervised time are intended to be balanced with guidance in the above categories. Decisions regarding unsupervised time need to be based not only on the amount of time, but also on the appropriateness of a paraeducator's duties during that time.</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Short Periods. Paraeducators can be left unsupervised by a licensed professional during short periods of time as long as the focus of the unsupervised time is to reinforce lessons that have been designed and introduced by the teacher. ● Periodic and infrequent longer periods. Paraeducators can be left unsupervised by a licensed professional for occasional longer periods of time if the paraeducator has been trained in and can demonstrate the following skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowing when and under what circumstances the teacher must be summoned for instructional or behavioral issues ○ Knowledge and demonstration of procedures for emergency situations ● Time and specific duties need to be articulated and documented. Parents need clear information regarding a paraeducator's specific schedule and duties with their child. That information needs to be provided in a schedule or some other form of documentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Class periods on a regular basis. Paraeducators should not take the place of a teacher who is out of the classroom for daily or regularly scheduled periods. ● Should not be viewed as a substitute. Paraeducators should not regularly serve as an alternate for a special education teacher when the special education teacher is co-teaching in a general education classroom or some other regularly scheduled occurrence. *

* A paraeducator who holds a substitute authorization is allowed to substitute during a teacher's absence only in the special education classroom in which the paraeducator is employed [282—14.143(272)]. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The substitute authorization is not intended to replace daily or regularly planned instruction.