

Ten Tips for Paraeducators

Classroom aides can support teaching, foster student independence, and discourage learned helplessness.

Facilitate peer relationships.



Remind others to communicate directly with the student. Let students choose their own seat or place in the classroom. Give students the space and freedom to socialize and develop friendships.

Let students make mistakes and take risks.



Everyone learns from mistakes. Allow natural consequences to be part of the student's classroom experience.

Give as few prompts as possible.



Foster independence. Fade out hand-over-hand assistance and use it to teach a task, not to complete a task. Resist the temptation to give verbal directions for every aspect of a task.

Multi-task in the classroom.



Use class lectures as an opportunity to program a student's communication device, plan accommodations or modifications, and develop curriculum materials. Time away from the student's side promotes independence.

Watch your voice and volume.



Discussions with other adults or students during instruction can be disruptive to the class. Save important discussions for after class.

Help students create authentic work!



Students learn when they actively participate in assignments. Avoid completing assignments, taking tests, or answering questions for students. Show caregivers their child's genuine work and progress.

Ask for help.



You are not alone. Ask for direction in the classroom. Request assistance with disciplinary issues. Leave decisions about content and curriculum modifications or accommodations to the teacher.

Maintain student dignity!



Assume the student can do it! Be discreet about the student's physical needs. Schedule tube feedings, splint adjustments, stretching exercises and toileting for in between classes.

Let students to make choices.



Give students the ability to control their lives and interact with the environment. Offer choices to the student no matter how insignificant they may seem.

Communicate and consult with caregivers.



Listen to what families have to say and keep them informed. Learn the strategies that work at home and can work at school.