

Paraeducator Role: Instructional Support for Learners with Significant disabilities

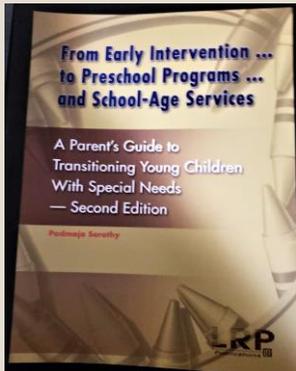


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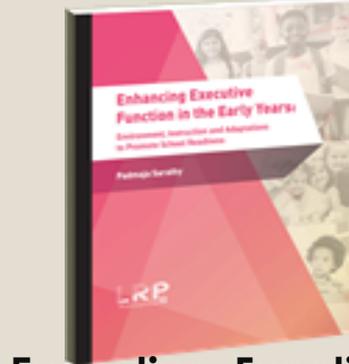
AbleNet University Webinar
September 9, 2021

Session Focus and Objectives

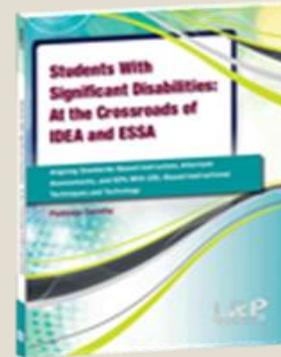
- **Gain skills in how to deliver student-specific instructional support for learners experiencing significant cognitive, communication, behavioral, and motor needs:**
 - **Understanding student's strengths, preferences and needs**
 - **Using appropriate level of prompts and cues**
 - **Maximizing learning opportunities for the students**
 - **Assisting with monitoring student**
 - **Enabling self-dependence in students**



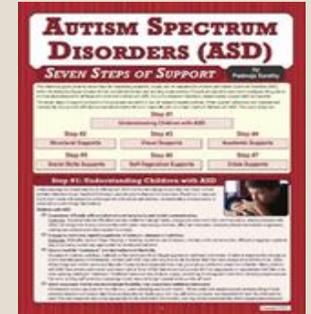
Early Childhood Transition Guide



Executive Function

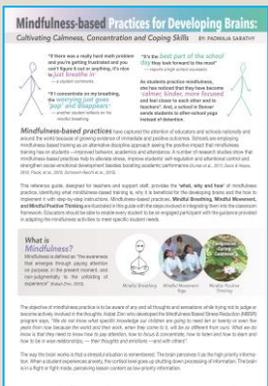


Severe & Multiple Disabilities

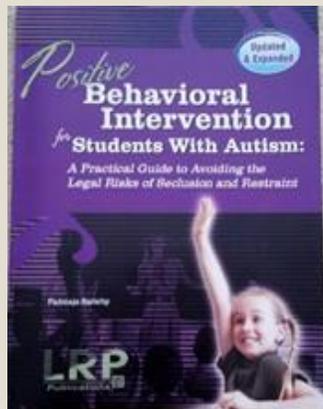


Padmaja's Sarathy' Books and Publications

- ❑ Autism: Support Strategies & Interventions, Autism Seven Steps of Support; Music CD – Transitions
- ❑ Behavior Guide (Preventive and Positive Approaches) and Mindfulness Guide
- ❑ Early Childhood: Transition; Parenting Guide; Executive Function - Early Years; and STEM Teaching Strategies
- ❑ Paraeducator Training Guide and DVD
- ❑ Severe and Multiple Disabilities; Significant Disabilities and ESSA



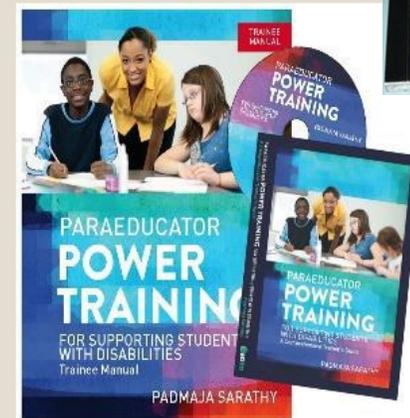
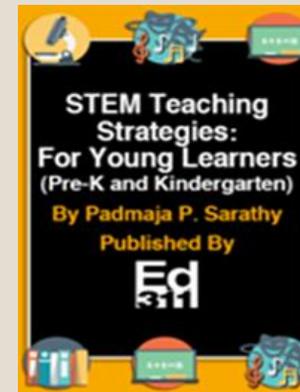
Mindfulness Guide



Autism Spectrum Disorders New- Second Edition

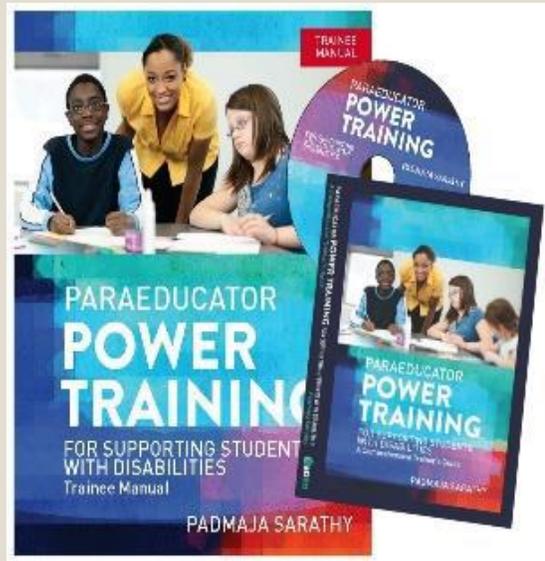


Behavior Guide

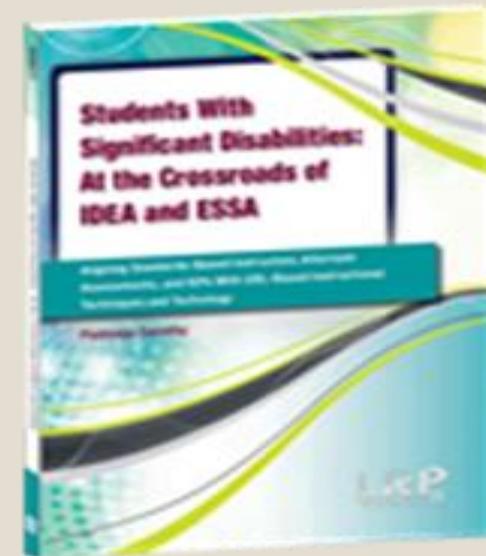
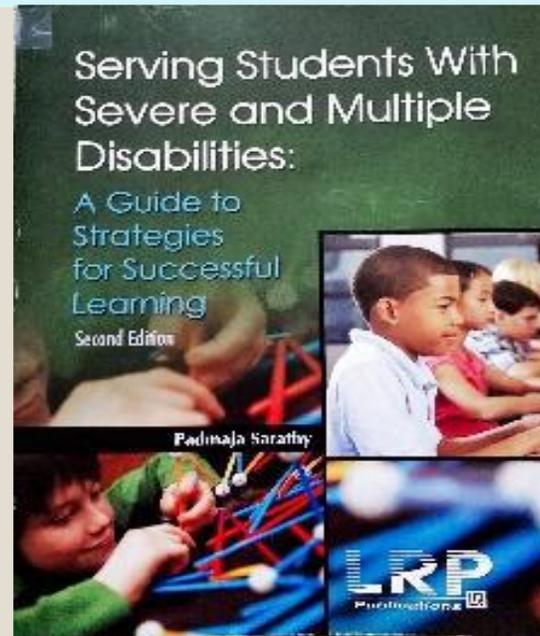


Transitions

This webinar draws information from the following books:



Paraeducator Power Training DVD & Manual



Students with Significant Disabilities: At the Crossroads of IDEA and ESSA

Paraeducator Support Role

Serving Students with Significant Disabilities

Paraeducators spend significant amount of time in close proximity to students with severe disabilities.

**Reteaching Skills
Academic and
functional
objectives**

**Ensuring consistent
use of personalized
adaptations**

**Making effective
use of prompts and
cues**

**Having
positive
perceptions
of students**

**Minimizing intrusive
support &
maximizing
discreet support**

**Enabling and
advancing student
self-dependence**

**Monitoring
and close
supervision
of students**

**Have high expectations for students
and pursue them intensively.**

Understanding Learner Characteristics: Student with diverse, complex and significant Needs

What can the student do currently?

- Paraeducator can help observe, monitor the student in different settings, and provide helpful data to the team to plan learning objectives personalized supports.
- **Academic strengths and skills?**
 - Recognizes some sight words/matches words?
 - Matches numerals with corresponding sets of objects? identifies numerals?
 - Understanding of money/measurement concept?
 - Recalls some facts/basic information previously learned?
 - Answers 'What' 'Where' and 'When' questions?
- **Communication strengths and skills?**
 - Communicates using phrases/words/yes-no responses/vocalizations? Facial expressions?
 - Able to makes a choice between 2 items (pictures/concrete objects)?
 - Activates an AT device to obtain something or to respond to questions?

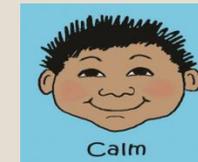
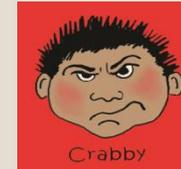
Understanding Learner Characteristics: Student with diverse, complex and significant Needs

What can the student do currently?

I Like	I Dislike

- **Social-emotional strengths and skills**

- Friendly towards peers and adults?
- Engages with peers?
- Shows facial expressions.
- Smiles in response to social, visual, auditory, and/or tactile input. Shows change in affect?



- **Motor strengths and skills?**

- Can easily grasp objects, activate switches
- Can activate the keys computer keyboard.
- Feeds self independently.
- Reaches for an object with hand or eye gaze or body movement or body orientation.



- **What are some motivators specific to the student?**



Two Different Perspectives



A high school special education teacher, describes a 16-year-old student in his class:

“Mark is very good with his hands. Once you give him a model and step-by-step picture directions, he follows them meticulously. We make these topiaries as part of our vocational instruction. He makes them almost perfectly; they look as though they are professionally made.”

“Mark stole everyone’s heart at the recent Spring Recital, delivering his lines without missing a single word! He has his moments of agitation, but he is a great kid.”

Recalling her experiences, Mark’s special education teacher (from middle school) remarked,

“Mark, he doesn’t really communicate; he is almost non-verbal. He uses a few words and phrases here and there. But his real problem is his behavior. He was constantly in trouble. He had angry outbursts all day long, and sometimes he got quite violent.

I wonder how he is doing in high school now!”

Learner Scenario 1 – Strengths, Preferences and Needs

Strengths and Preferences:

- Kara enjoys doing word searches; searches, finds, and circles words, completing multiple pages effortlessly.
- Accesses computer to do puzzles
- Demonstrating good fine motor control.

Concerns:

- Exhibits limited engagement with peers or adults or in communication exchange.
- Experiences difficulty attending to lesson during small-group instruction.
- Likes to pace around the room and tries to leave the classroom.

Needs:

- Increase her participation and engagement in teacher-directed activities.
- Learn to respond to adult questions with verbal expression paired with pictures/AT support.
- Expand her preferred sphere of activities.

Learning Goals

- Increase verbal communication and conversation skills.
- Advance content-area skills with involvement in academic instruction and group activities.
- Expand range of interests beyond “word searches.”
- Improve social skills to build relationships with same-age peers.
- Gain self-regulation and calming and practice it consistently.
- Strengthen and advance computer skills to prepare for future work environment.

Techniques and Tools

- **Use of video self-modeling technique;**
 - **To learn desired classroom behaviors and to eliminate her screaming episodes.**
- **Use of Social stories:**
 - **to identify and understand acceptable/unacceptable behavior**
- **Capitalize on her word-search skills to involve her in writing activities.**

Paraeducator can support Kara to...

- **Understand and follow a visual sequence of multiple steps/activities aided with pictures and text.**
- **Use writing process to compose persuasive text with main idea and supporting details (aided with word bank and picture supports).**
- **Assist & monitor her to stay on task for a specified time period.**
- **Guide her to request help when encountering problem.**
- **Exercise self-control and stop engaging in inappropriate behaviors with picture cues, redirection and reteaching.**
- **Assist with monitoring progress with data gathering.**

Personalized Delivery - Student Scenario

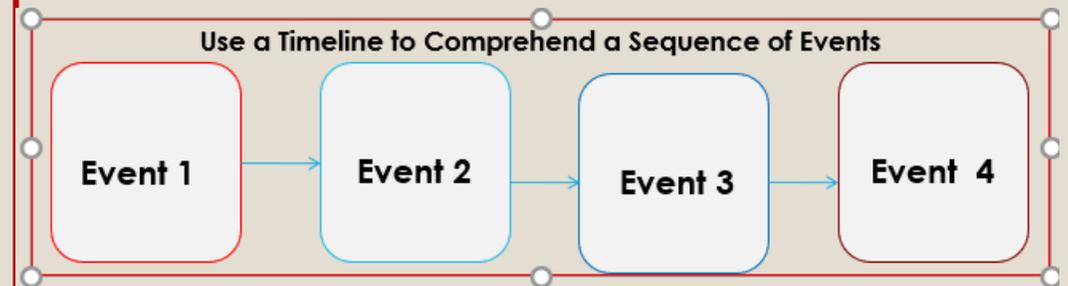
- Simone has Cerebral palsy and her communication and motor difficulties present some challenges to her active participation. Due to her motor difficulties, she needs adaptations to hold a pencil crayon or brush.
- Friendly by nature, she smiles a lot. She uses a few gestures to communicate but does not use words.
- She has limited attention span, gets distracted and experiences difficulty with recall.

Adaptations and Supports

- Use of **real concrete items** to represent concepts.
- Presenting **limited text and information** at a given time.
- An **adapted book fastened with picture/object** supports
- Lots of **hands-on activities**, a **choice board** (a mini-board) with real items linking to concepts & to attract and sustain attention
- **Use of AT for communication** and engagement (A few examples are: Proximity switch, iTalk2Communicator, TalkingBrix Communicator, Talk Book Four, etc.)
- **Adapted cuff** to grasp writing tool, spoon, pencil, brush, etc.



Adapted Cuff



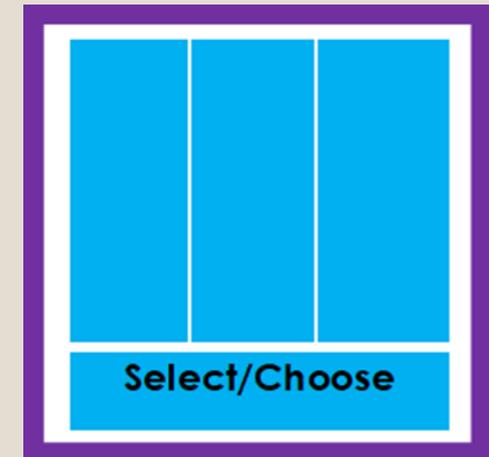
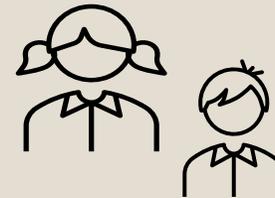
Personalized Delivery - Student Scenario (Continued)

Paraeducator Support

- Provide her **multiple opportunities to make choices** throughout the day.
- Use **adaptations and support tools consistently**.
- Use **hierarchy of prompts** when reteaching concepts.
- **Promote her self-dependence** - wean her gradually from total prompting.
- **Peer support** - Her peers may need guidance on when to and when not to prompt her.
- Use **partial participation** technique to maximize student to perform the task.
- Avoid **performing the task** for the student.



Response tool



Shaping Response & Support to Match Learner Characteristics

◦ Understanding:

A student who has significant disabilities that you support is not focusing attention to the task. He is not looking at the two answer choices in front of him but instead keeps looking at (you) the para.

◦ Shaping your response:

Avoid providing total prompting by taking his fingers, assisting with the (correct) choice and then following up with a “Good job”.

Find concrete items or photos to reteach the concept. Get the student's attention through shining a flashlight on the object/photo.

Understanding: The student is still struggling with recalling the words that you have been practicing for a while.

◦ Shaping your response:

- **Limit the number of words** that you reteach per session.
- **Make the sessions shorter** to sustain student interest, motivation & attention.
- **Pair the words with photos or action or role play** to connect with the student and make it more meaningful.



tree



apple



leaves



Responding to Learner Characteristics: **Engage the Learner**

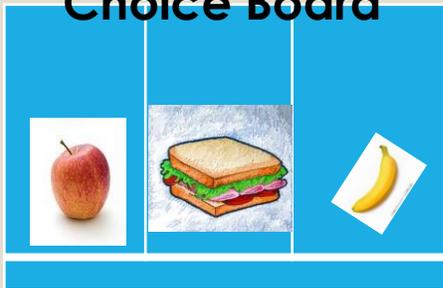
- Draw student's attention with hands-on activities with multi-sensory features.
- Use of real life activities (From research on personal aspects of science found for students with significant cognitive disabilities)
- Engage student's attention by tapping on the picture and/or object associated with the lesson/concept/story (attached to a mini white board).
- Maintain attention by illuminating the pictures and key words in the adapted book with shining a light from behind.



Pursue Personalized Adaptations and Supports

- **Familiarize students with the materials.** (touch, look, listen and smell)
- **Position students appropriately** to suit the specific activity.
- **Stabilize materials:** Objects/book/card, etc. on the table surface or on a mini-white board or in a tray attached with Velcro/ tape.
- **Attach objects/pictures on eye-gaze board,** if appropriate.
- **Use an adaptive grip to grasp/hold objects** with a Velcroed glove or Velcro wrist band (for students with limited motor control).
- **Provide tactile, visual and verbal** supports that are student-specific.

Choice Board



Adapted Response Tool



Assistive Technology



Dycem mat

Adapted Tools and Techniques

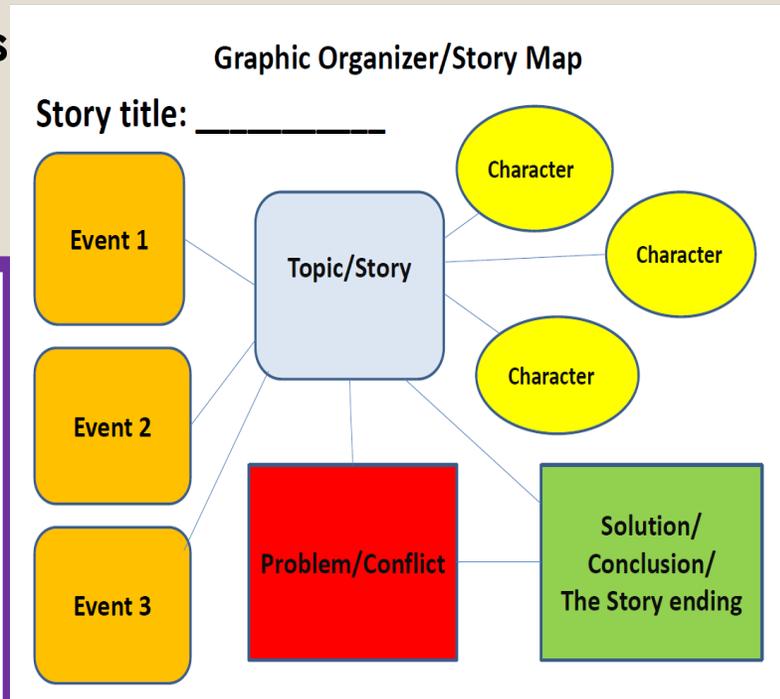
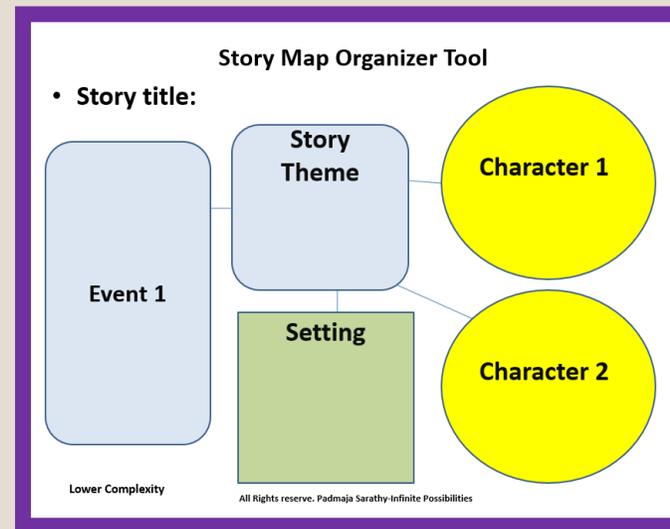
- Have students interact with items on the board.
- Get them to actively engage in learning and to show their understanding and communicate their response.



Objects/pictures to manipulate

Story-Comprehension -Tools

A Story Organizer at a lower complexity level



A Story Organizer at a higher complexity level

Responding to Learner with Personalized Support

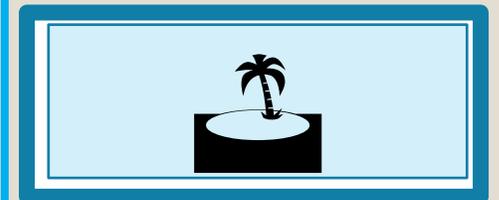
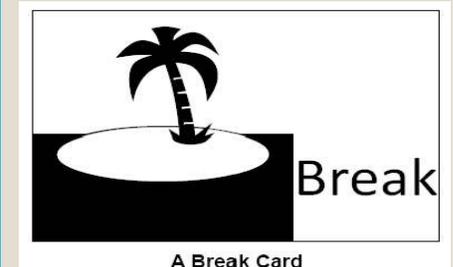
- **Understanding:**

If a student with autism spectrum disorders is closing his/her ears during instruction, refusing to transition to another class or suddenly lashing out at you, understand that it is not intentional or malicious behavior, but a part of the disability.

- **Shaping your response:**

You might ask the student (very discreetly) to take a break and to go to a quiet place to calm down when he/she appears agitated. You will have to make prior arrangement with the teacher to designate a quiet place to calm down in the classroom.

Unleash your creativity and make those “Aha” moments happen for the students!



**A Designated
'Safe Space'**

Instructional Delivery: Systematic Instruction and Prompts

- **Use systematic instruction (an evidence-based practice) to reinforce academic and functional skills.**
- Make effective **use of prompts** when presenting information. Gradually fade the prompts.
 - Use **system of least prompts, time delay and error correction**.
 - Limit the amount of totally hand-over-hand activity – the adult controls, manipulates and performs the activity for the student.
- **Break down complex tasks** into smaller parts to teach new concepts and to increase student's success with learning – Pursue task-analytic instruction.
- **Reteach, repeat and provide lots of opportunities to practice.**
 - Same lesson across days and use of consistent language.
 - Ask for guidance from the teachers as needed.

Using Appropriate Level of Prompts and Cues

Hierarchy of Prompts - Independent performance without any assistance is the goal.

<u>Full Physical Prompt - Example:</u>	The teacher/para takes the student's hand and physically guides her to hang the coat on the hook or guides her to bring the mat to circle.
<u>Partial Physical Prompt - Example:</u>	The teacher/para may guide student's elbow to hang the coat on the coat hook.
<u>Gesture Prompt: Example:</u>	The teacher/para points to the coat and then the hook gesturing what is expected of the student, or the para looks at the student and then the coat hook.
<u>Modeling: Example:</u>	The instructor demonstrates what the student is supposed to do, part/all the action. The para models how a student should hang his coat on the coat hook.
<u>Verbal Prompt: Examples are:</u>	The instructor provides a verbal direction that tells the student exactly what to do to perform the task. "Line up for recess" or "Hang up your coat".
<u>Verbal Cue (Indirect Verbal Prompt):</u>	The instructor provides a verbal hint or cue about the next step or reminds the student to move on to the next step. Example of giving verbal cue: "What do you do next?"

Watch your prompts!

- Be alert to the prompts provided through your body language or facial expressions or the way the questions are phrased and/or by the tone of your voice.
- Do not inadvertently communicate to the student that his/her response is a correct/incorrect response.
- The student needs to develop confidence in his own ability and to think for himself, instead of watching adult reactions to shape his responses.
(Sarathy, 2012)



Maximizing Learning Opportunities for Students Personalized Adaptations and Supports

- For a student with problem behaviors (likes to wander around the classroom) support with a monitoring chart.

For a student who reaches across and engages in inappropriate behaviors towards others , teach how to maintain 'Personal Space'.



Teach 'hands to self'.
Create Visual Boundary.

Rules to Remember: When working at your desk

	Work quietly.
	Quiet voice
	Raise hand for help.
	Finish the task.
First -Then  	Check your schedule for next activity when finished.

Assisting with Monitoring and Supporting Student Success

- Partner with the teacher to strategically monitor and supervise students: Provide zone monitoring; Scan and move frequently.
- Watch for triggers and respond to challenging behaviors in proactive ways.
- Cue students to rules as you accompany them.
- Work collaboratively with the teachers to create a climate of cooperation focused on student needs.
- Facilitate opportunities for the student to interact with the classroom teacher, and other students in the inclusive general education setting.
- Build collaborative relationships for student success.

Paraeducators can play a powerful role in reducing or eliminating problem behaviors.



Rules Cue Cards

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Enabling Student Self-dependence

To ensure the appropriate level of support, here are some questions to consider:

- **What can the student do without assistance?**
- **What can't the student do, requiring an accommodation to complete?**
- **What can't the student do, requiring assistance?**
- **What areas can you identify to promote social acceptance and peer support?**
- **What areas you will target for independence (identified in student's IEP)?**
(Murphy and Mueller, 2001)
- *Working together with the team, support student's development of independence and reduce his/her need for adult help to perform tasks.*

Are We Enabling Student Self-dependence?

For students with significant cognitive, communication, motor and behavioral needs

"I find it a lot easier and faster to feed him instead of waiting for him to feed himself and then have to clear up the mess he makes."

"I find she does not always press the right picture on the keyboard (the iPad) and is slow to make the requests or gain attention. So, I prefer to take her hand and press it for him."

**To reflect...
Are we
enabling or
hindering the
growth of
self-
dependence?**

"She does not use any words. I support her with talking on her behalf so that her peers and other can easily understand what she is trying to say. It goes much faster that way."

"I prefer to hold his hand while walking to the gym or cafeteria or to the bus so that I can be sure he does not run away from me."

Enable Students' Self-dependence: **Build Communication Skills**

- Encourage and expand your students' request making skills.
- Teach how to reject or make a protest in socially acceptable ways.
- Coach several ways to gain the attention of a communication partner.
- Encourage student to use social greetings to engage with peers and adults.
- Offer diverse ways to comment about things.
- **Ask for confirmation giving a choice.** *(By June E. Downing, Amy Hanreddy, & Kathryn D. Peckham-Hardin, July 2019)*

Name of Student:

Uses the following **Form of Communication** in response to stimuli: **Verbal response**
 Eye gaze **Gestures** **Signs** **Vocalizations** **Body orientation** **Pointing gesture**
 Facial Expression

The Function of the Communication is to: **Name** **Request** **Protest** **Get help** **Make a choice** **Show interest in an object, person, or an activity** **Social interaction** **Convey social greetings**



Enabling Student Self-dependence

Minimize Proximity, Maximize Discreet Support



- **Move out of the way when students are engaged in interaction/ conversations with peers.**
Encourage the student to seek help from a peer, a natural support that is readily available in the classroom, cafeteria, gym, bus ramp, etc.
- **Do not sit or have a seat placed next to or in the proximity of the student being supported.**
- **Avoid carrying materials for the student or writing her name on the paper or completing her work.**
- **Limit the amount of adult talk and draw out student to talk/communicate.**
- **Ask for permission to physically guide a student if you are providing hand-over-hand assistance.**



No Yes



Create your “magical moments” with your students!

Ms. Murphy, a middle school paraeducator, did not want her assigned group (students with significant disabilities) to sit at a separate table in the cafeteria at lunch time.

In addition to teaching them rules of interaction whenever she got a chance, she also wanted them to socialize and engage with their peers without special needs during lunch.

She would frequently prompt communication between the students by alluding to an incident or a topic of shared interest. And then she would make herself “invisible.”

These were great “Aha” moments for Ms. Murphy!

Paraeducator's Powerful Influence



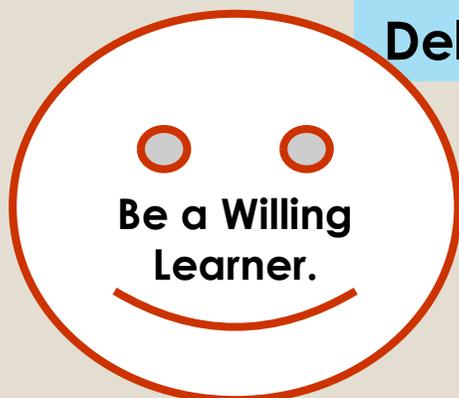
You can enhance the quality of life for the students you support by naming strengths, honoring preferences, and celebrating achievements – big or small.



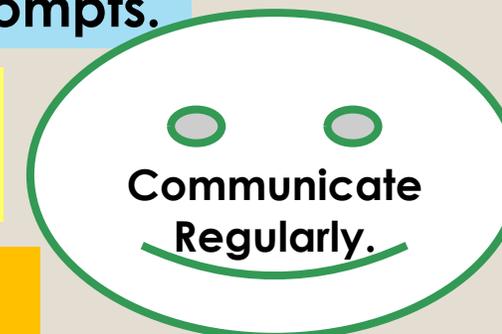
Get to know and connect with the learner.

Use an interactive learning process to sustain children's attention.

Deliver systematic Instruction with system of least prompts.



Teach and model self-calming strategies to develop self-regulation.



Prevent rather than punish.
Focus on redirecting and teaching new skills.



THANKS.

A special thanks to AbleNet University
for hosting the webinar

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Upcoming Webinars:

- ❑ **October 13th, 2021: Engaging and Interactive Literacy Journey for Learners with Severe and Multiple Disabilities**
- ❑ **November 4th, 2021: Making Math Relevant and Meaningful: Hands-on Activities to Engage Learners with Severe and Multiple Disabilities**

Thanks.