

Choreographing Effective Paraeducator Support in Inclusive Early Childhood Settings



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Session Focus

- Increase understanding of paraeducator role in delivering effective support to young children in teaming with the teacher to promote the cognitive, communication and social-emotional outcomes
- Deliver support to young children that is:
 - Child-focused.
 - Discreet and unobtrusive
 - Tailored to maximize learning opportunities for children and reduce dependence on the adult

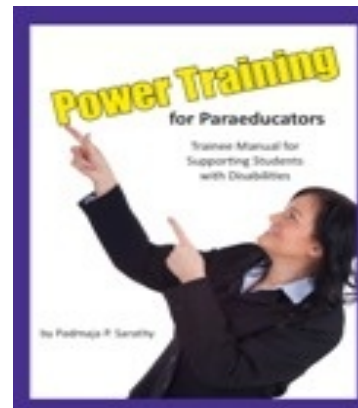
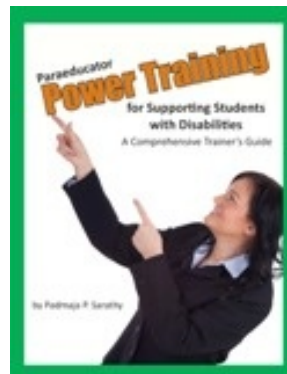
Participant Poll

- **Paraeducator?**
- **Special Education Teacher?**
- **Administrator?**
- **Support Staff?**
- **Other?**



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- **Paraeducator Training DVD and Trainee Manual**
 - ‘Trainer of Trainer ‘ DVD with multiple training units
 - Paraeducator trainee manual with pre and post assessment for each unit, quizzes, checklists and role-play activities
 - **Publisher: Legal Digest (www.ed311.com)**

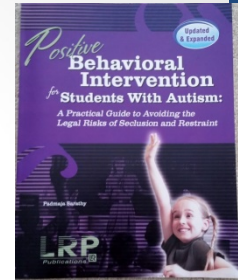


Books and Products

- **Positive Behavior Strategies for Students with ASD:**

A Practical Guide to Avoiding the Legal Risks of Aversives

Publisher: LRP Publications, (www.shoplrp.com)



- **Autism Spectrum Disorders: Seven Steps of Support**

A quick reference guide

Publisher: National Professional Resources, Inc. (www.nprinc.com)

- **Magical Musical Transitions** – A Music CD for assisting children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Marketed by www.nprinc.com)



- **Serving Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities:**

A Guide to Strategies for Successful Learning (Publisher: LRP, www.shoplrp.com)

- ***From Early Intervention... to Preschool Program... and School-Age Services: A Parent's Guide*** (Publisher: LRP Publications, www.shoplrp.com)

- **Together We Succeed: Building a Better System for Transitioning Preschoolers with Disabilities** (Publisher: LRP Publications,)

- A couple of books are be released in 2017.

Need for Professional Training

Paraeducator Support for Young Children In Inclusive Settings

1. Understanding and Responding to Learner Characteristics

2. Providing Personalized Supports under Teacher Direction

Monitoring Behavior & Offering Encouraging Feedback

Facilitating Choice-making & Using AT to maximize active engagement and participation

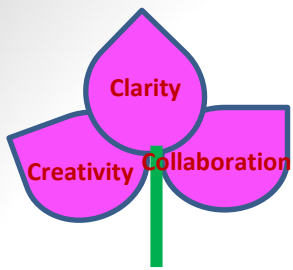
Supporting Systematic Instruction with appropriate level of prompts

Enabling Partial Participation

Research Evidence: Training Needed

Knowledge Is Power

- Paraeducators are hired frequently to provide individualized and intensive support to students with special needs, highlighting the urgent need for training paraeducators.
- When paraeducators were trained, it led to improved outcomes for children in academic engagement, social interactions, inclusion with typical students, student independence, and disruptive behavior (National Resource center for Paraprofessionals. Retrieved on 1/31/2012 from www.paracenter.org/paraeducators/why-train-paraprofessionals).



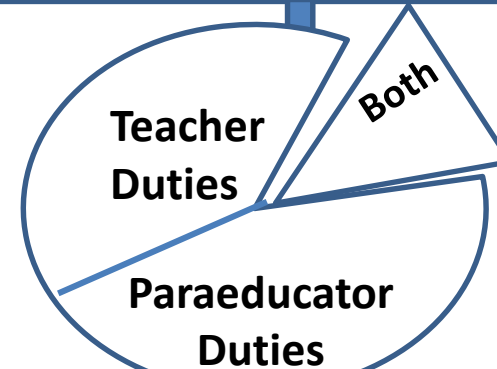
Clarity Role Clarification

**Clarity in Providing
Individual Student Support**

**Paraeducator
Delivering Optimal
Support to
Students**

**Working to Augment Students'
Academic, Social and Behavioral
Growth and Independence**

**Clarity in Paraeducator-Teacher
Role and Responsibilities**



**Paraeducator Working under
the Direction of Teachers**

Role Clarity

- There are generally accepted paraeducator roles and responsibilities that will hold true from school to school. The specific responsibilities and duties assigned to you in your setting, however, may vary.
 - Respect role differences: Recognize that the classroom teacher is the leader. You play an effective support role for students and teachers.
 - Know “what you should do/not do.” Find out your assigned duties from the teacher, the team and the administrator. Clear up any confusion about duties that you are assigned early in the school year.

Paraeducator Duties

Preparation
and
Modification
of Materials

Personal Care

Small-group
and
One-to-one
Instruction

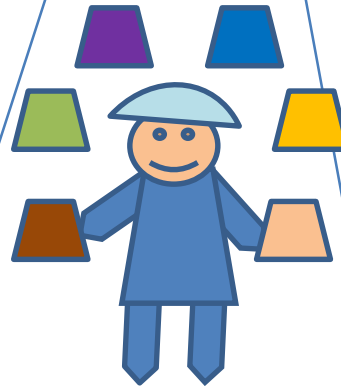
Implementing
Behavior
Plans

Supervision
and
Monitoring
Students

Clerical
and
Housekeeping
Tasks

Meeting with
Teachers

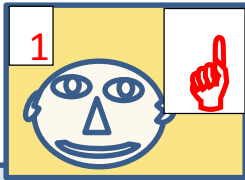
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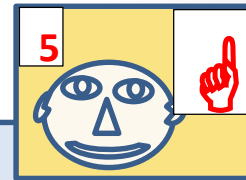
Ethical and Legal Responsibilities

- Practice the standards of professional and ethical conduct set down by your district and school.
- Be familiar with and follow the “chain of command.”
- Be diligent in following confidentiality rules.
- Find out and follow district and school policies regarding your role and responsibilities in: IEP meetings, reporting child abuse and neglect, participation in parent conferences and communicating with families.
- Respect the rights and dignity of children with disabilities and their families.

Instructional Support Role

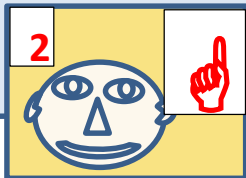


1. Get to Know developmental milestones and expectations for young children.

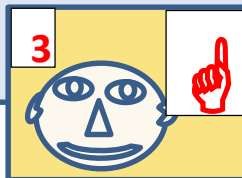


5. Foster learner Independence.

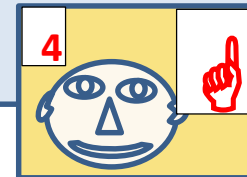
2. Engineer a Favorable Learning Environment.



3. Build up on Instructional skill-sets to assist teacher and support child.



4. Implement Student-support Adaptations with Fidelity and Consistency.



DEC Recommended Practices

- Get familiar with **DEC Recommended Practices** (www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices). It provides guidance to practitioners on promoting the development of young children, birth through age 5, who have or are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities. There are 8 topic areas:
 - Leadership
 - Assessment
 - Environment
 - Family
 - Instruction
 - Interaction
 - Teaming and Collaboration
 - Transition (www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices)

Personalized Supports: Systematic Instruction

- Teachers coach and guide paraeducators to:
 - Use systematic instruction techniques with errorless prompting to teach academic concepts.
 - Break down complex tasks into smaller parts to increase student's success in learning the concepts.
 - Limit the amount of information (concepts) presented at any given time.

Personalized Supports: Level of Prompts

- When information is presented, make effective use of prompts.

Prompting Strategies:

- Modeling
- Verbal or gestural cues
- Verbal Prompts
- Physical assistance
- Total guidance
- Fade assistance gradually.

Target: Independent Performance

Move from least to most intrusive.

Modeling



Verbal/Gestural Cues



Verbal Prompt



Physical Prompt



Total Assistance

Personalized Supports: Prompting Strategies

- Teachers coach and guide paraeducators to:
 - Use ‘Errorless Prompting’ techniques. Make effective use of prompts when presenting information. Gradually fade prompts.
 - Praise only the correct response.
 - Provide sufficient wait time for student to respond.
 - Repeat, and reinforce concepts taught using a variety of concrete objects.
- Be alert to the prompts provided through: body language, facial expressions, the way the questions are phrased and the tone of voice.
 - **Watch the Prompts!**


An 'Aha' Moment

- Sara, a preschool classroom paraeducator, was working with 4-year-old Jonathan, practicing counting skills. At the same time, she was marking on a data collection form the correct/incorrect responses to assess his mastery of counting skills.
- Sara would say to Jonathan, *“Give me four bears,”* while holding out the palm of her hand. As soon as he placed four plastic bears in her hand, she would close her palm immediately, saying, *“Good Job!”*
- Alice, the classroom teacher who had watched Sara’s teaching from a distance, later alerted her: *“Be careful about the accidental prompts that you may be giving.”*

An 'Aha' Moment

- Reflecting on the teaching scenario, an “aha” moment came to Sara:

“If I had not closed my palm, would Jonathan have continued to give me more bears or stopped at four? Does he really have the concept of ‘four’?”

The **“Aha”** moment for Sara! 

- Sara thought over the many unintentional prompts and cues we provide and the inaccurate assumptions we make of skill mastery.
- Next day, as she worked with Jonathan, she realized that he responded to the closed palm as a signal to stop and had not really acquired the concept of “four.”
- Therefore, she needed to continue teaching the concept until he had fully grasped it.

Personalization: An Example

Mrs. Kline, an early childhood paraeducator, worked well with the teacher and the young children. One of the students had a habit of annoying other children by touching and scratching them. Based on her observations over a few weeks, Mrs. Kline gently asked the teacher if she could find out from the parent some ideas on what the child liked to do at home. They found out that the young girl felt comforted and less anxious if she held small stuffed animals, and the parent sent some to school.

Ms. Kline gave her a small stuffed animal, a turtle, to hold during group activities. When the young girl sat quietly without bothering other students, Ms. Kline praised her, “You are sitting nicely keeping your hands on the turtle.” Soon, the annoying behaviors stopped.

Concerns: Paraeducator Proximity

- Researchers have documented that greater contact between the student and the paraeducator has an adverse effect on student learning and performance, especially if the paraeducator is not trained:
 - Negatively impacted students' social interaction with peers
 - Also affected teachers' academic expectations of the student.

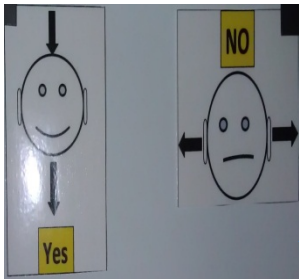
(cited in Causton-Theoharis, et al., 2007)

Minimize Proximity, Maximize Discreet Support

- Minimize proximity while maximizing your discreet and targeted instructional support. It can be stigmatizing and embarrassing for the student if you are always next to the student helping him/her.
 - Do not sit or place a chair next to the student. Circulate among all students.
 - Read books or play games with small groups that include students with and without disabilities.
 - Encourage peers to support - a natural support available in the classroom.
 - Avoid sitting next to or right behind the student during 'Circle Time' in an area away from peers

Get familiar with Technology and Assistive Technology

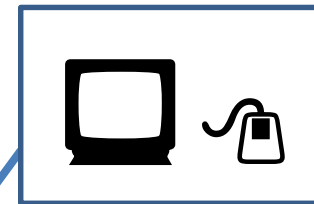
Pictures/Dry Erase Board



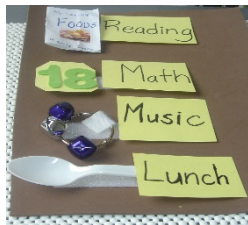
Computer



Power Point



Picture Schedule

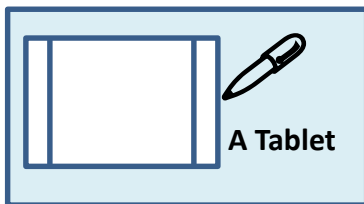


Technology

Hearing Aid



Technology Apps.



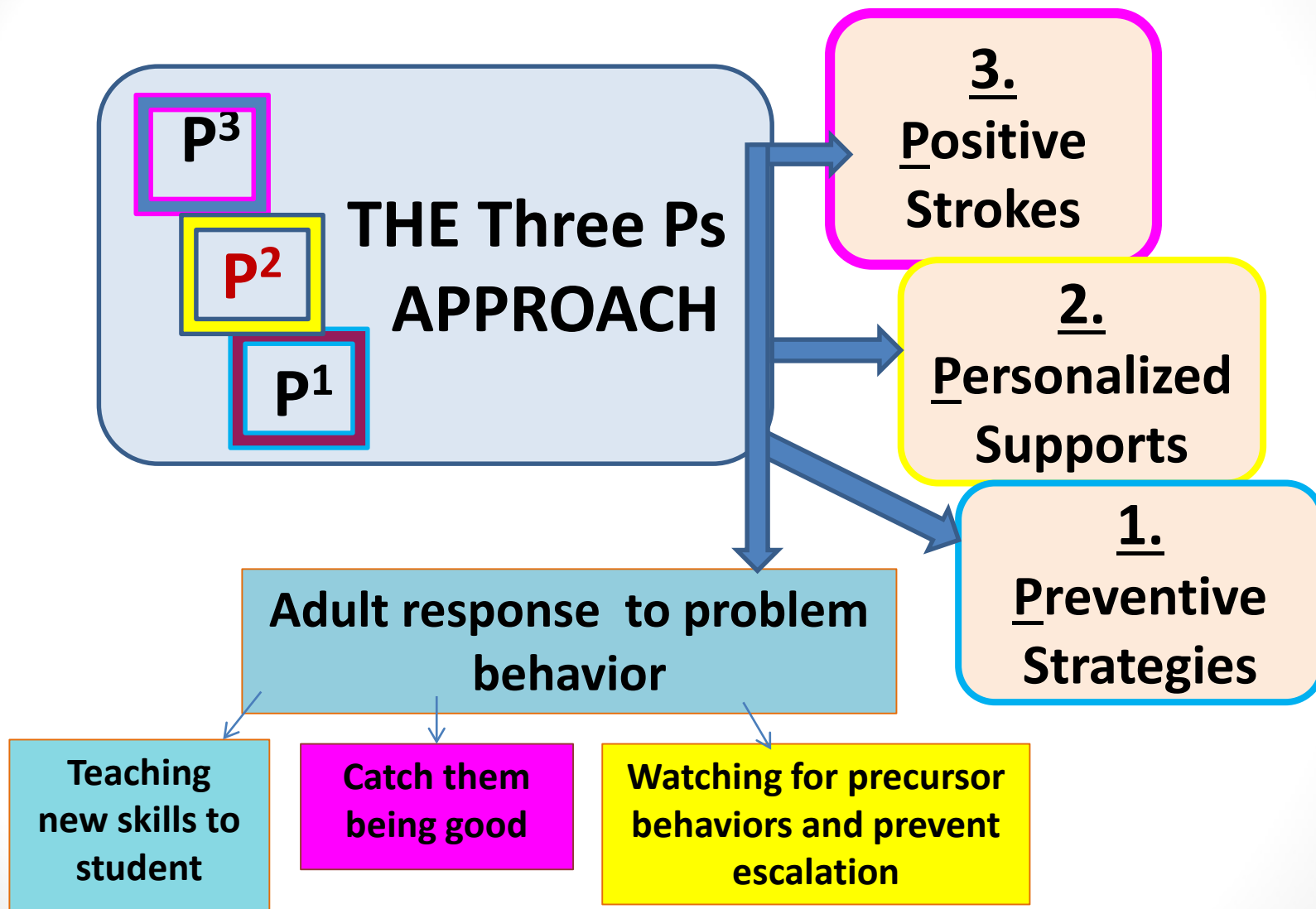
Assistive Technology

Environmental Control Unit



Voice Output Device





Adapted from Sarathy, 2012

**Manipulatives
Table**

**Discovery
Table**

**Rules posted
with visuals**

**Books
Corner**

What are some essentials for a supportive physical environment for children experiencing behavioral difficulties?

- *Clearly defined and labeled work areas*

**Circle-time
area**



Visual Boundaries



Designated 'Safe Space'

**Mark's
Work
Area**

P1

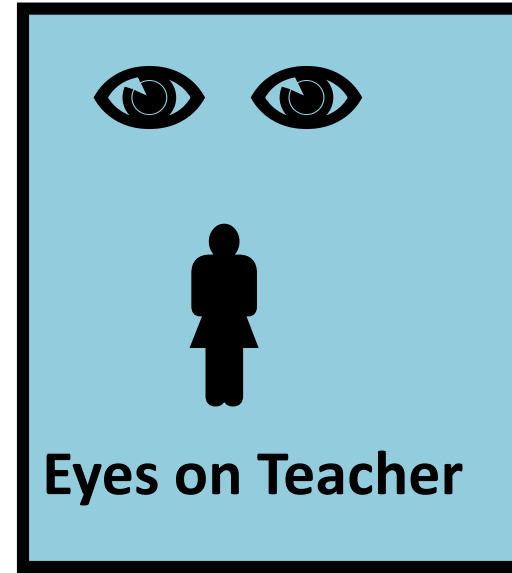
P¹: Use Preventive Strategies

P1

Cue Them to Rules

- Cue students to rules as you accompany them:
 - When leaving the classroom environment, when going outside for recess, to the cafeteria for lunch, to the school assembly, etc.
- Assist them in using the “Pictured Rule Cue Cards” – visual cues to remind students of rules.
 - The cue cards, when fastened to a key ring, will be easily portable. The next slide shows a picture.
 - The student can be gradually trained to use it, enabling self-management.

Rules Cue Card



P1

P¹: Use Preventive Strategies

P1

Coping with Transitions

- Prepare your student in advance for transitions between activities and environments.
 - Use a visual cue during transition - an effective strategy to decrease challenging behavior and increase compliance with transition demands.
 - Provide verbal cue in addition to the visual.
 - Set a timer (or an hour glass timer) a few minutes before the next activity to alert the student.
 - Ring a chime or play a musical instrument as a transition signal.

A Case Scenario: Transition Tantrum

Sara throws a tantrum, refusing to come in from recess

- Sara is an 4-year-old girl with ASD. She does not like to leave the playground after recess. Refusing to go inside, she clings to the swing or slide. When the paraeducator tries to physically move her from the equipment, Sara kicks, hits and throws herself to the ground.
- In the struggles to get Sara back to the classroom, the paraeducator gets scratched and bruised almost daily.

How should the teacher and the paraeducator work together to address Sara's transition tantrums? What are some strategies that will help with Sara?

Personalized Support

Responding to Transition Challenge (Cont'd)

- Give Sara an advance warning a few minutes before the end of recess: (e.g., “5 minutes to line up”).
- Play a musical instrument (e.g., may be a Stir-xylophone) to signal all the students to line up at the end of recess.
 - Try to get Sara’s attention to the sound of the musical instrument by positioning yourself close to her. She could hold the instrument and bring it back to the classroom.
- Redirect and ignore Sara’s tantrum behavior when possible. Do not get into a physical struggle.
- Get additional help if Sara has a severe meltdown and becomes aggressive in the playground. (*Adapted from Sarathy, 2014*)

Personalized Support

Addressing Transition Problems During... Arrival

John screams, cries and refuses to walk from bus to classroom... Paraeducator meets him at the bus

- Greet John at the bus with a song.
 - Start each day with the same routine and greet him with the same song (personalized) for him.
 - Use a 'Transition Marker': bus to classroom
 - Give John a job to do – ask him to carry something to the classroom.
 - Assign a peer partner to help John walk to class.

P3

P³: Deliver Positive Strokes

“Catch ‘Em Being Good”

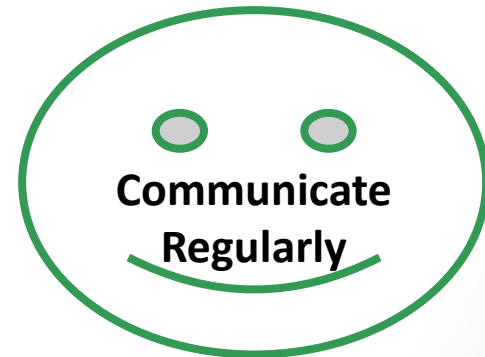
P3

- Praise is under-used despite its powerful impact. Effective praise is specific and contingent.
- Provide descriptive and immediate positive feedback (e.g., “I like the way you are listening to the story” instead of simply, “Good job!”).
- Maintain a ratio of 4-5 positive statements to 1 corrective statement (Conroy, et al., 2008).

Collaborate for Student Success

- **Collaboration for student success is a requisite.**
 - Commit to cooperation.
 - Resolve conflicts with equanimity
- **Different Perspectives:** Be open and accepting.
- **Consistent Communication:** Share information on student issues and progress on a consistent basis.
- **Spread Optimism!** Focus on strengths, not weaknesses.
- **Maintain Professionalism:** Separate Personal from Professional.
- **Use the healing power of laughter.**

Collaboration and Teaming for Student Success



Resources

- Causton-Theoharis, J. 2009. *The Paraprofessional's Handbook for effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms*. Paul Brookes Publishing Co.
- Giangreco, et.al (2005). "Be Careful What You Wish for...": Five Reasons to Be Concerned About the Assignment of Individual Paraprofessionals. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 37(5), 28-34.
- Katsyannis, A. Hodge, J. & Lanford, A. (2000). *Paraeducators: Legal and practical consideration. Remedial and Special Education*, 21, 297-304.
- Sarathy, P. 2012. Paraeducator Power Training for Supporting Students with Disabilities –A Trainer's DVD and a Trainee Manual. Legal Digest, Texas: Austin (website link: <http://www.ed311.com/>)
- Sarathy, P. 2014. *Serving Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities: A Guide to Strategies for Successful Learning.*, (Second Edition, 2014). LRP Publications, PA (www.lrp.com)
- Sarathy, P. 2013. Positive Behavior Strategies for Students with ASD: A Practical Guide to Avoiding the Legal Risks of Aversives. LRP Publications. (www.shoplrp.com)



THANKS.

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