

# Paraprofessional Decision Making

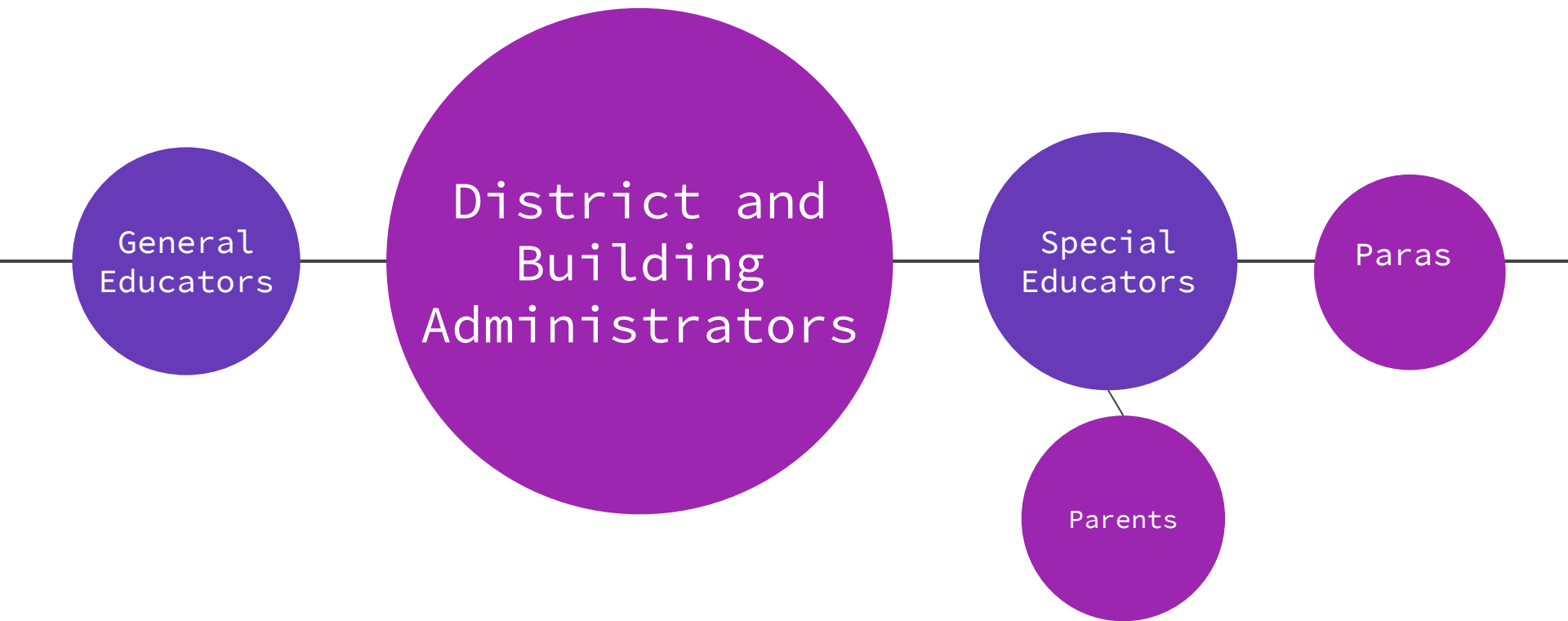
**December 2020**

# Why it's important

---

- **Misuse of paraprofessionals can result in over-dependent students, segregation and isolation from the peer group.**
- **Justification models are problematic because they inhibit both logical and creative problem solving and restrict potential solutions to a narrow and predetermined set of possibilities that focus on paraprofessionals as the answer.**
- **Justification models can send the unintended message that this is the only type of support available.**

# Who?

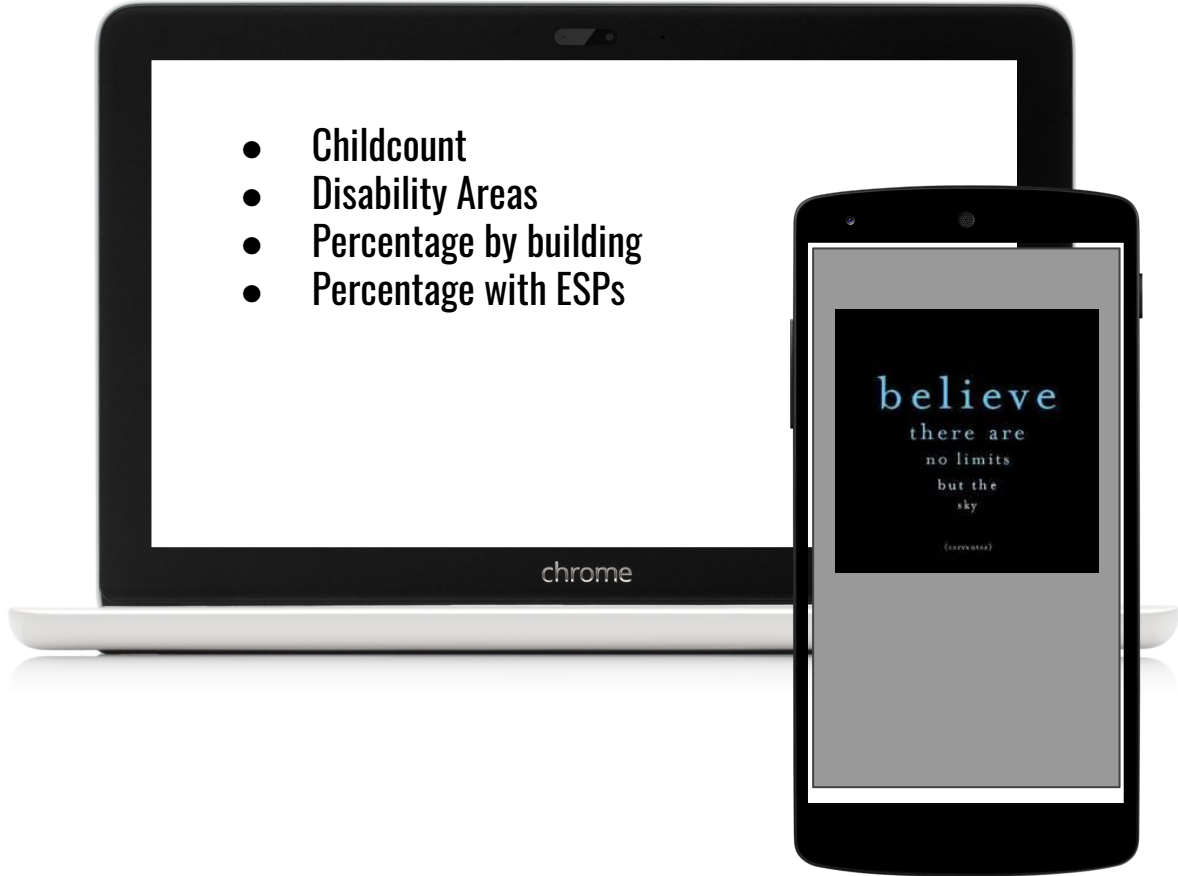


Data

# Sharing The Data

---

- Superintendent
- Director of Finance and Operations
- Principals
- Special Education Teacher



QUARTERLY REPORT FORM - CASE MANAGER

20190-2020

(ONLY CASE MANAGED STUDENTS)

TEACHER:										DATES FOR REPORTING						
STUDENT INFORMATION						SERVICE SETTINGS				ESP TYPE: S = SPECIFIC AND N = NON SPECIFIC IF SPECIFIC PLEASE ATTACH ESP SCHEDULE						
						SEPT 30	Dec 1	March 1	June 1	ESP TYPE - SEPT 30	ESP TYPE - DEC 1	ESP TYPE MARCH 1	ESP TYPE - JUNE 1	SERVICE SETTING CHANGE DATE	STATUS END DATE	STATUS END CODE
Student Name (Last, First)	DOB	PRIMARY DISABILITY CLASSIFICATION	PUBLIC OR NON-PUBLIC	GRADE	STATUS START DATE											
Doe, John	12/12/95	8	P	9	10/10/10	01				N				10/10/10	10/10/10	5

Discovery Elementary - December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Overall Building Enrollment	Total Unduplicated Students in Special Education	Total Unduplicated Students In SPED Excluding Speech Only	Overall Percentage of Unduplicated Students in Special Education	Number of Students in Special Education with ESP support	Percentage of students in Special Education with ESP Support (excluding speech only students)

Hanover Elementary - December 1st, 2020

Overall Building Enrollment	Total Unduplicated Students in Special Education	Total Unduplicated Students In SPED Excluding Speech Only	Overall Percentage of Unduplicated Students in Special Education	Number of Students in Special Education with ESP support	Percentage of students in Special Education with ESP Support (excluding speech only students)

Montrose Elementary - December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Overall Building Enrollment	Total Unduplicated Students in Special Education	Total Unduplicated Students In SPED Excluding Speech Only	Overall Percentage of Unduplicated Students in Special Education	Number of Students in Special Education with ESP support	Percentage of students in Special Education with ESP Support (excluding speech only students)

# Quarterly Reports

Gathering input from teachers

# Summaries

Sharing the data with administrators

# Meetings with Principals

## Review of Data

- Generate questions and observations

## Sharing information

- Summary of research
- Examples of fading
- Alternatives for support

## Impressions from the principals

- How do you see supports being utilized in gen ed?
- What is the gen ed teacher's role when a para is present?
- What is the comfort level of gen ed teachers in providing accommodations?
- How are decisions made at the IEP team meeting?
- Do teams discuss fading supports?
- ~~Are goals added to the IEP to encourage independence?~~

# Meetings with Special Education Teachers

## **Sharing information**

- Summary of research
- Examples of fading
- Alternatives for support

## **Generating Feedback**

- How do you see supports being utilized in gen ed?
- What is the gen ed teacher's role when a para is present?
- What is the comfort level of gen ed teachers in providing accommodations?
- How are decisions made at the IEP team meeting?
- Do teams discuss fading supports?
- Are goals added to the IEP to encourage independence?
- How can we support?



# Sharing of information

# Issues to be aware of

---

- **Special Educators and paras spend much of the day apart**
- **Inadequate training**
- **Separation from classmates**
- **Unnecessary dependence**
- **Interference with peer interactions**
- **Feeling stigmatized**
- **Loss of personal control**
- **Provoking behavior problems**

# Issues to be aware of

---

- **Inappropriate utilization of paras**
- **Over-reliance on para supports**
- **Limited access to competent instructors**
- **Interference with teacher engagement**
- **Role of paras has steadily expanded to include teacher-type activities**
- **Spending the majority of day with a para instead of certified teacher**

# Must Do

— — —

- Engage paras in appropriate roles
- Provide sufficient and continual training for roles they are expected to undertake
- Explicitly avoid asking to undertake inappropriate roles
- Provide adequate supervision on an ongoing basis

“Utilizing paras without adequate training and supervision is not only educationally problematic, it may constitute a violation of FAPE provisions of IDEA” (Giangreco, Doyle & Suter, 2012)

# Training

## Initial Para Training:

In accordance with MN Statute, section 125A.08.

Before ore beginning at the time of employment, each paraprofessional will be trained in sufficient knowledge and skills in emergency procedure, building orientation, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, vulnerability, reportability.

## Ongoing Para Supports and Training:

In accordance with MN Statute, section 125A.08.

Annual training opportunities to enable the paraprofessional to continue to further develop knowledge and skills specific to students with whom the paraprofessional works, including understanding disabilities, the unique and individual needs of each student according to the student's disability and how the disability affects the student's education and behavior, following lesson plans, and implementing follow-up instruction procedures and activities.

## Suggested

Daily opportunities for engagement with the teacher and training specific to the student's needs.

Topics for ongoing training and supports regarding respect, role clarification, orientation and supervision.

# Questions to Consider

— — —

## *Inclusive Environments*

1. Is the student with a disability located where the teacher can readily monitor, prompt, cue and provide feedback?
2. Is the student with a disability appropriately and purposely grouped with classmates who do not have disabilities?
3. If a paraprofessional is in the classroom, does his or her proximity to the student facilitate or interfere with teacher and peer interactions?
4. Are the settings and materials arranged in a manner that facilitates learning?
5. Is the student appropriately seated or positioned for learning?
6. Does the classroom teacher have expectations of ownership for the instruction and learning of students with disabilities?
7. Does the teacher interact with the students with disabilities in similar and proportionate ways as students without disabilities?
8. Does the special education teacher have enough time to collaborate with the general education teacher?

# Questions to Consider

— — —

## *Individualized curriculum*

1. Are team members sufficiently knowledgeable about their students with disabilities as individual learners?
2. Do team members have sufficient knowledge of the students with disabilities within curriculum content areas?
3. In revisiting a student's IEP goals and objectives annually, do they reflect the highest priority learning outcomes that can be reasonably attained?
4. Do special education students have sufficient content knowledge in areas they are supporting?



# Questions to Consider

— — —

## *Purposeful Instruction*

1. What instructional formats are being used and to what extent do they lend themselves to addressing needs of students?
2. Does the classroom rely heavily on large group instruction?
3. During large group instruction are methods used to maximize student participation?
4. How much instructional time is participatory and activity based?
5. Are students encouraged to help each other?
6. To what extent are general education teachers instructionally engaged with students with disabilities?

# Questions to Consider

— — —

Questions to ask at the IEP meeting:

- a. What specific tasks does the student need help with?
- b. How frequently do they occur
- c. Is there someone already in the building who can provide support?
- d. In what areas will we focus on independence?
- e. How will the child be taught more independence?
- f. Can another student provide the help as a peer?

# Reducing Support - Increasing Independence

---

[Methods for Fading Support](#)

# Decision Making

— — —

1. Identify specific areas in which the student requires assistance (significant behavior, activities of daily living, safety)
2. Discuss alternative options to para support and rationale for para support versus other options
3. Write a goal that addresses independent functioning in areas identified
4. Progress monitor frequently

# Decision Making

— — —

5. Define method for promoting independence and train paraprofessional
6. Maintain progress monitoring data to be reviewed at least annually at the IEP meeting
7. Completion of goal precipitates a meeting
8. Present the change as a celebration!

# Alternatives Supports

- **Inclusion**

- Preferential seating with teacher readily monitoring, prompting, cueing or providing feedback

- Peer assistance

- Arrangement of materials

- Collaborative plan for accommodations between gen ed and special ed teacher

- **Curriculum**

- Individualized planning for student

- Consideration of how the disability affects access to the curriculum (accommodate)

- Designation of goals and instruction to prioritize independence and skills

- **Instruction**

- Regrouping for instruction

- Accommodated delivery of information

# STAFFING CHANGES

---

Moved away from staffing based on IEP minutes

REVISED STAFFING MODEL

# Literature Reviewed

---

Giangreco, M., Halvorson, A., Doyle, M., & Broer, S. (2004). Alternatives to Overreliance on Paraprofessionals. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 17(2), 82-90.

Giangreco, M., & Broer, S. (2003, February 21). Alternatives o Overreliance or Inappropriate Utilization of Paraprofessionals in Special Education. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from [www.uvm.edu/~cdci](http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci)

Giangreco, M., Yaun, S., McKenzie, B., Cameron, P., & Fialka, J. (2005). "Be Careful What You Wish for...": Five Reasons to Be Concerned About the Assignment of Individual Paraprofessionals. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 28-34.

Giangreco, M., Doyle, M., & Sutter, J. (2012). Constructively Responding to Requests for Paraprofessionals: We Keep Asking the Wrong Questions. *Remedial and Special Education*, 33(6), 362-373.

Giangreco, M., & Broer, S. (2003, March 1). Guidelines for Selecting Alternatives to Overreliance on Paraprofessionals. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from [www.uvm.edu/~cdci](http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci)