

# Paraprofessional Conference

Ridgewater College  
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# Questions

This presentation is set up in a series of questions..... Some of the questions have answers - some of the answers are discovered – other questions will require the creation of answers.

# Who are the students we work with in special education ?

Students in special education have disabilities. Disabilities that effect their ability to access and progress in school (the general education curriculum, extracurricular activities and program activities) with students without disabilities.

## What is special education?

*Special education* means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with disability, including—

Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings;

## What is special education?

*At no cost* means that all specially designed instruction is provided without charge, but does not preclude incidental fees that are normally charged to nondisabled students or their parents as a part of the regular education program.

## What is special education?

*Specially designed instruction* means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction—

- (i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and
- (ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.

34 CFR§300.39

# How do students get into special education ?

Procedures for students to qualify for special education are outlined in state and federal statutes and rules. The formal process that includes:

- Prereferral interventions
- Evaluation
- Criteria
- Multidisciplinary team which may include outside agencies
- Assessments
- Notice
- Determination based on the evaluation and criteria that the student has a disability and is in need of specially designed instruction.

## How does the special education process effect day-to-day activities?

- Sets standards for time-out, confidentiality, class size, ect.
- Prescribes documentation mechanisms
  - Individual Education Program (IEP)
  - Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
  - Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

## How does the special education process effect day-to-day activities?

- Determines the roles and responsibilities of participants in the process.
- Regulatory procedures for specially designed instruction, accommodations and modifications, related services and supplementary aides and services.

## How does the special education process effect day-to-day activities?

- Special Ed. Teacher  
34 CFR§300.321(a)(3)
- Case Manager  
Minn. Rule 3525.0550
- General Education  
Teacher  
34 CFR§300.321(a)(2)
- Parent  
34 CFR§300.321(a)(2)
- Administrator  
34 CFR§300.321(a)(4)

*Para Professional means a district employee who is primarily engaged in direct instruction with one or more students for instructional physical or behavioral management or other purpose under the direction of a regular or special education teacher or related service provider.*

Minn. Rule 3525.0200

# What are the personal considerations when you work with students in special education?

- Personal need for love and admiration
- Personal need to be “needed”
- Use the “helper role” to detract from conflict
- Work and personal life out of balance
- Desire for control and power
- Personal need for on-going gratification

## What are some important concepts to remember when working with students in special education?

- Personal
  - Not paid
  - May last a lifetime
  - Equal responsibility
  - No special training
  - Time commitment undetermined
- Professional
  - Paid
  - Time sensitive
  - Takes place in a public place
  - Staff is responsible
  - Special training
  - Time is set and determined

## What are the skills I need to do this job?

- Communication skills
- Observation skills
- Interactions with students and staff
- Interventions and responses
- Environmental descriptions
- Reporting information
- Specialized training if providing a specialized task
- Reporting curriculum progress
- Identifying needs and safety issues in an environment .

## What information do I need to know?

You are not alone in this: You are part of a team of people making important decision on behalf of students.

## What is the basic information do I need to know?

- Confidentiality
- Time-out
- Observation
- Rules

# Confidentiality

Special Education information on students is protected by federal and state law and administrated through school policy and procedures.

There are penalties for both the individual and organization when confidential information is shared and especially if that “sharing of information results in harm to the individual.

# Confidentiality

The district has procedures for sharing information about students.

Helpful Hint:

**You can always say something – You can not unsay something.**

## Time-out

Education is a property right under the Constitution - Goss v. Lopez

This applies to all students – whenever a student is removed from the general education program there must be:

Due process, and  
Notice.

## Time-out

- Time-out is a regulatory activity. It is classified as a restricted activity according to Minn. Rule and the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.
- All time-out rooms must be registered with MDE and they are monitored for compliance with state regulations
- Time-out rooms need to have documentation mechanisms regarding the use with any students.

## Time-out

- When time-out is used as an intervention there must be a behavior intervention plan and the need must be identified in the student's IEP.

## When should Time-out be used

- As determined and documented in an IEP or behavior intervention plan.
- When a student is hurting themselves or someone else.
- In extreme emergency situations.

## When should Time-out not be used?

- For “nuisance” behavior
- When a student is frustrated
- When a student is showing strong emotion but is in control of themselves
- For accidental circumstance or situations
- As a standard consequence for nonviolent or “in control” in fractions.

## Observation – What am I seeing?

- Observation is defined as reporting circumstances and situations without subjective data.
- Objective vs. Subjective Observation
- Structured observation vs. Standard observation
- Using observations in educational environments
- Reporting observational data

## Rules- Are they meant to be broken?

- Rules are everywhere – classrooms, hallways, school bus
- Rules sometimes substitute for behavior plans – this is a losing proposition.

## Rules- Are they meant to be broken?

- There should be as few rules as possible.
- Rules should be specific:
  - Walk in the halls
  - Inside voices are used inside, outside voices are used outside.
  - Listen to the person talking until they are finished – then respond to what they are saying
- “No” is not a verb- At best it solicits a “stop” response.
- If a student does not know what to do instead of what you want them to “stop” and it is not rewarding – a power struggle will occur.
- As often as possible – Consequences should be natural .

## What are my tools?

- **Choice** – student choice
- **Redirection** – Changing the focus of a student or bring the student's focus back to task.
- **Praise** - a subjective attachment of acceptance.
- **Feedback** – an objective response of acceptance
- **Coaching** – Supporting approximation

## What are some helpful hints for choices?

- Choices should be as close to “alike” as possible.
- Choices should be about situations, circumstances which the student is legitimately able to select.
- Choices should not have a “good” vs. “bad” connotation to their selection.

## What are some helpful hints for redirection?

- A student is “off-task” and you want them to “return to task”.
- A student is preparing to complete one task and move to another.
- A student has begun an undesirable behavior and needs to be moved to another behavior.

## What are some helpful hints for praise?

- Praise must be specific
- Praise must be used sparingly
- Praise should be made about activities or action of the student – it should not be used as a personal judgment.
- Praise can be used as reassurance and encouragement
- Praise demonstrates value.

## What are some helpful hints for feedback?

- Feedback is specific
- Feedback is objective
- Students can make another choice or take another action after feedback.
- Feedback can be measured
- Feedback demonstrates acceptance vs. value.

## What are some helpful hints for coaching?

- Accepts imperfection and “trail and error”
- Coaching may combine redirection and choices as a strategy.
- Students respond with information that can influence the outcome of a situation or project.

## What do student with disabilities need to know so they can be successful?

- To feel and believe they are capable and able to succeed.
- To know they are cared about by others.
- To realize that they are able to influence people and events
- To remember and practice helping others.
- Fun, stimulation and success and accomplishment.