

TIPS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

- Communicate with your teacher daily. This is essential in building a program which is responsive to students with disabilities.
- Offer suggestions or ideas and be understanding if your suggestions or ideas aren't taken.
- Ask your teacher's opinion on your performance.
- Discuss problems immediately so they don't become larger issues by ignoring them.
- Try to follow exactly the instructions given.
- Remember all final decisions are up to your teacher.
- Maintain student confidentiality.
- Give the teacher feedback; it helps in communication.
- Let teachers know your interests, hobbies, background and experiences. You may be able to contribute much to special class projects and special interest centers.
- Ask questions - the teacher may assume that you understand his/her instructions.
- Share responsibilities - offer to do something to help equalize the work in the room; don't wait to be told to do something. Work with the teacher as a team.
- Be patient - with yourself -- teaching is a learned profession; it takes time.
 - with the teacher -- some days are more demanding than others.
 - with the children -- the courtesy and respect we show children will be imitated.
- Become familiar with the children served in the classroom.
- Become familiar with the academic approach of the children.
- Become familiar with the various types of academic equipment and materials used in the classroom.
- Have a positive self-concept so that you are not dependent upon constant positive feedback from the children.
- Enthusiasm and sensitivity to the feelings of children is very important. However, this sensitivity must not get in the way of giving the child security by the use of firmness and structure.
- Mutual respect and support between the teacher and the paraprofessional must be shown at all times.
- There must be consistency in handling rules and rewards in the classroom.
- Be prepared to give any practical assistance that the teacher feels necessary for the success of the program (helping make teacher-made materials, copying, etc.). Work with the teacher. Have a positive attitude and emphasize the progress made.
- Be a self-starter. When reasonably certain of what the teacher wants done, do it without waiting to be told.
- When the teacher is absent and a substitute is hired, follow your normal routine as closely as you can - unless instructed otherwise.
- Show enthusiasm for your job. Be on time and be dependable.
- Be a professional!