



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

December 2022

Paraprofessional Resources



[Resource Links](#)

[SESA Library Materials](#)

Letter from the Editor

doeenda'
(hello in Athabaskan-Lower Tanana)

Paraprofessionals are extremely important members of a special education team. They can wear many hats in their role; however, they often have the least amount of educational background. For this reason, it is important that continued support and training be embedded throughout the year to increase knowledge and instructional strategies and add tools to their toolbox.

We know in the world of special education, time is a valuable gift. Although this newsletter is all about paraprofessional resources, the information included will benefit the entire educational team. We hope that these resources are not only informative but also prompt and guide recurring conversations on how to better plan, support, and provide access to some of these amazing resources.

SESA also provides training for special educational teams. Reach out to a specialist or give us a call to find out more information regarding onsite and distance training opportunities.

Happy Holidays,
[Amy Topmiller](#)
Newsletter Editor and Multiple Disabilities Specialist

Paraprofessionals and Print Disabilities

by Luke Martin, AKCAM Coordinator

For paraprofessionals, making sure that your students can access classroom material can be challenging. Those who work with students that cannot access typically printed materials due to a variety of causes like Visual Impairment, Cerebral Palsy, CVI, or Blindness, face their own set of challenges. When a student cannot access printed material due to a physical or cognitive impairment, they can be classified as having a Print Disability.

Sometimes we find ourselves asking questions such as "How can a student with a visual impairment or blindness succeed in a digital classroom? Can my student ever learn how to read without their vision? What could I do to make the content more accessible to them?" Asking these questions is a good first step to helping your students meet their goals for literacy.

Read More for a list of training and resources that will shed light on best practices in the classroom for your students with print disabilities, as well as allow you to have access to ready-to-go resources that can aid you in helping your student access literacy.

[Read More](#)



Paraprofessional Spotlight

Meet Celines, our nominated paraprofessional for December.

Here is what makes her a wonderful paraprofessional:

- She uses her creativity to create materials and activities for students with severe disabilities
- Meets students where they are and then encourages them to keep growing
- Finds out what motivates her students and uses it to encourage learning
- Doesn't just work on academic goals but helps increase social skills and build friendships for all of the students
- Comes in with a positive outlook, ready to try new things

**Thank You
for All You Do!**

Paraprofessionals and the Visually Impaired Student

by Angel Black M.S.Ed., TSVI, COMS, SESA Vision/O&M Specialist

Joke of the day: A Paraprofessional is talking to her student's TVI, "My blind student just can't seem to learn his Braille." "Why?" the TVI asks. "He's just not feeling it"!

This could be a typical conversation in the life of a paraprofessional working with a student who is blind and/or visually impaired. Most paraprofessionals in this position have had little to no training in working with this particular student population.

According to Merry-Noel Chamberlain, "In some ways, the duties of paraprofessionals working with blind or visually-impaired students are similar to those of all paraprofessionals who work with students one-on-one. Overall, the goal is to avoid promoting learned helplessness in the student. The aim of most paraprofessionals is to:

- Assist the student without doing for the student.
- Encourage the student to be as independent as possible—equal to his or her peers.
- Be as invisible as possible to avoid becoming a wall between the student and his peers or teachers.
- Provide just the right amount of support for the student—not too much and not too little.
- Work as a team member with the classroom teacher or special education teacher to help the student reach her or his highest potential possible in the least invasive way possible" (2018, Chamberlain).

[Read More](#)



Paraprofessional Training Resources (DHH)

by Abby Steer, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Education Specialist

The information surrounding Deaf and Hard of Hearing students is constantly changing. With new information coming out and the uniqueness of each student's needs, continuing your education is just as important as theirs. Training is a great way to learn new things or stay up to date on information you already know. Attached are a few valuable resources to get you started.

<https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/trainings/>

A great source for many different trainings. If you click on this link, it will show you a few trainings that they offer. You can search their website for training and articles that may aid in your search for knowledge.

<https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/trainings/#/detail/appld/1/id/400825>

This training is perfect for those who are looking at where to start with American Sign Language (ASL). In this training, you'll learn about the importance of gestures, as well as reading facial expressions and body language. You'll also be shown a few basic signs and phrases that can be used to communicate with your student.

[Read More](#)

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

by Brian Babcock, Autism Impairment Specialist

Paraprofessionals often spend more time with students than any other school team members. The question they ask most often is, "How can I learn more to support my student?"

[The University of North Carolina AFIRM Modules](#) offers free trainings that outline evidence-based intervention and instruction for students with autism.

Access is free, but users are required to create a profile. The following suite of trainings was recently added to provide content specifically for paraprofessionals:

- Reinforcement: Introduction & Practice
- Prompting: Introduction & Practice
- Supporting Peer Interactions: Introduction & Practice
- Time Delay: Introduction & Practice
- Visual Cues: Introduction & Practice

[Read More](#)

Paraprofessional Resources (MD)

by Jennifer Schroeder, Multiple Disabilities Specialist

Paraprofessionals and teachers need to work together as a team to support student's academic, communication, social skills, behavior, and adaptive skills goals. Paraprofessionals can make a real difference in the lives of their students, but there is often limited time in the day for specific training. Paraprofessionals often get training "in the moment," especially if there is a problem.

In order to help paraprofessionals support the students in our special education programs, it is important that they have access to resources as well as time to look at those resources on a regular basis. The following resources are available to paraprofessionals and cover a wide range of topics.

[Paraprofessional Handbook](#)

[BLOG.pdf](#) This is a great handbook detailing the roles and responsibilities of a paraprofessional. Use it with your teacher and principal to create a



handbook specific to your school and classroom.

[Effective and High-Leverage Practices for Paraeducators](#) Free online class for paraprofessionals

[Read More](#)

Never stop learning

Paraprofessionals: Training & Resources (ED)

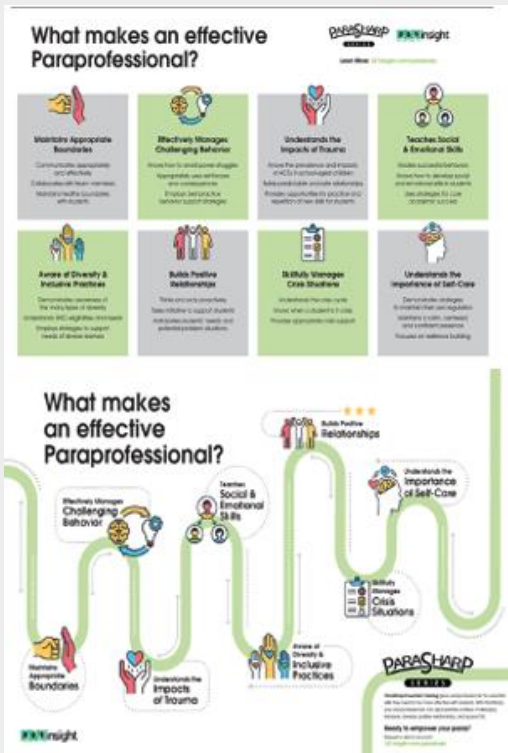
by Jessica Williams, SESA Emotional Disabilities Specialist

Paraprofessionals are often times considered the “backbones” of today’s classrooms, yet they continuously find themselves in challenging situations with little to no professional training to help the students that they serve. Because of this, paraprofessionals are left to learn many of their practical skills on the job. Paraprofessionals play an important role in making classrooms more inclusive and giving students the opportunity for more one-on-one support. When teachers, family members, and other community members recognize them as key members of the team, everyone benefits.

According to information put out by 321Insight, these are the four most effective methods to deliver training and resources to paraprofessionals:

- Staff Meetings: Address topics in all-staff meetings to ensure everyone is using a common language.
- Early Release/Late Start/PD Days: Survey staff to determine the greatest area of need.

- Team Meetings: Address specific challenges together so that all staff is working together to support interventions.
- Independent Use: Allow paraeducators to access new information and gain new skills while on the job or after trainings.



321Insight is a website that offers free webinars and other valuable resources to educators.

Access a free copy of these two posters by clicking the following link: <https://www.321insight.com/resources/>

By scrolling through the page, you will find these resources along with others that are available to you once you register at the bottom of the page.

[Read More](#)

JOIN US!



The Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference (ASSEC) is committed to providing high quality professional development relevant to the cultural, rural, and remote characteristics of our great state. ASSEC has provided ongoing professional development to Alaskan special educators, administrators, paraprofessionals, and families for more than 20 years. By inviting nationally recognized speakers, as well as knowledgeable local experts in the areas of disabilities and education, ASSEC has become a highly anticipated event within the field of special education in Alaska. By supporting Alaskan special education professionals and paraprofessionals, ASSEC also provides an indirect but great benefit to Alaskan students with special needs and their families.

Pre-Conference February 4 - 5, 2023
Main Conference February 6 - 8, 2023

Attendee Registration is now open!

[Register Here](#)

ASSEC AWARDS

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) is happy to partner again with the Alaska State Special Education Conference (ASSEC) to sponsor the:

**Inclusive Practice and Paraeducator
of the Year Awards**



This year's awards breakfast will be on Tuesday, February 7, 2022, during the conference. Nominations may be for an individual or group. If you would like to nominate someone, please complete the nomination form and return it to the GCDSE no later than December 27, 2022

[Nomination Form](#)

Email: Richard.saville@alaska.gov

Fax: (907) 269-8995

Mail: 550 W. 7th Ave, Suite 1220 Anchorage, AK 99501

AK-CASE SCHOLARSHIP

Alaska Council of Administrators of Special Education (AK-CASE) is pleased to offer a \$1000 scholarship to provide support for students currently enrolled in UAA, UAS, UAF, or an online program and pursuing a career in SPECIAL EDUCATION or RELATED SERVICES field. **Deadline: Friday, January 5, 2023**

[More Information](#)

Our Office has Moved!

Our New Address:
2600 Denali Street, Suite 200. Anchorage AK 99503



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