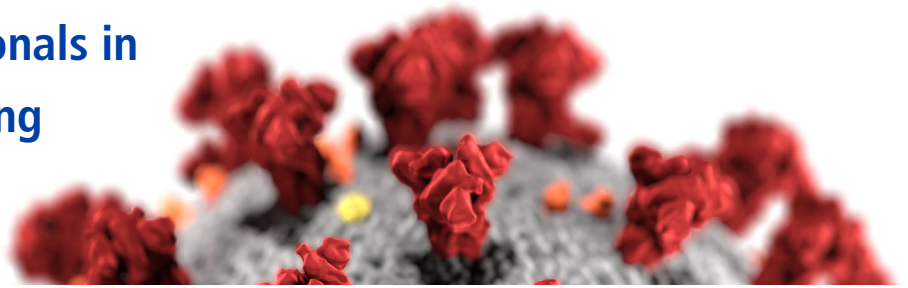


SPECIAL EDUCATION TOOLKIT

Guidance for paraprofessionals in the time of distance learning



Paraprofessionals are essential in meeting the needs of our students, and that remains true within the context of distance learning. Students are going through a tremendous shift in their lives, and having interaction with those with whom they are most familiar can create a sense of comfort and connection. Paraprofessionals should be consulted regarding their ideas for student learning. They often know more about student communication styles and student home life than other staff and can help inform them of circumstances they may not be aware of.

Here's how paraprofessional might support students

- Organize student work to send home.
- Plan basic movement activities that can be done at home for a break. Create videos to demonstrate.
- Work with teachers to compile a list of online resources that can be sent home to parents in categories to supplement activities (music, reading, movement) for parents needing additional supports.
- Write specific directions for the art projects (aligned with standards) developed by the teacher. Create a finished product and take a picture.
- Assist with uploading documents to an online platform, if trained to do so.
- Read and record books that will be utilized for courses.
- Read aloud and record any other content that will be used by teachers (tests, worksheets).
- Find a daily inspiration, quote or video to include in correspondence.
- Work with the mental health team to provide extra supports and outreach to high-need students.
- Create fun activity packets that support the learning standards (word searches, crossword puzzles, math sheets).
- Create story time videos.
- Write notes to be sent home to students so they remember we care and are thinking of them.
- Schedule online meet and greets for check-ins in coordination with the teacher, and support learning if there are questions.
- Spend time learning the technology your school staff is using, help others learn as needed.
- Find supports for students to use technology or help with any technology issues if familiar.
- Continue to collaborate on modifying materials/assignments.
- Check in on families to see how distance learning is going and to see if there are any additional resources needed.

Guidance on checking in with families

In many of our districts, paraprofessionals are asked to “check in” with families. The following are some guidelines share by one of our CFT locals, that may provide some clarity on this task. A check-in is:

- An opportunity to connect with students regularly (once or twice a week if needed).
- A short phone call (you can use *67 to block your number).
- An opportunity to monitor students’ stress with schoolwork and how overwhelmed they may feel during distance learning.
- A chance to verify how they are keeping up with their schoolwork.
- A chance to ensure they know how to access and are able to turn in assignments.
- An opportunity for them to ask questions about an assignment or how to log onto a learning platform (ie. Khan Academy or Google Classroom).
- An opportunity to deliver curriculum accommodations we would typically deliver in the classroom.

If a check-in/call becomes a longer conversation with a parent because...

- They have questions/concerns regarding their students IEP, or
- They share concerns around their student’s mental health or social/emotional concern, or
- They have concerns regarding the specific assignments being given by teacher, then...
- Remind them you are just calling to check in their student’s progress with assignments.
- Direct them to the student’s case manager via email (do not provide personal cell numbers).
- Let their case manager know as soon as you can.