

PARAEDUCATOR OBSERVATION SYSTEM

Rating Scale and Definition for Scoring Categories:

RATING SCALE			
2 = Most of the time	1 = sometimes	0 = Rarely/Never	NA = Not Applicable
The action is observed in at least 85% of opportunities, or at 85% of the time	The action is observed about 65 – 84% of opportunities, or the majority (but not all) of the time.	The action is observed less than 65% of opportunities, or less than 65% of the time.	Many dimensions listed below may not be observed. In these cases, ask the cooperating teacher for information. If not information is available or if not applicable, score “2” (full credit).

Categories/Definitions:

PREPARATION

All materials ready prior to lesson

- Definition: This applies to materials needed in a variety of activities, including instruction (books, pictures, pencils, recording sheets, etc.), play and recreation (games, equipment, music, etc.), independent seatwork (assignments, etc.). The paraeducator should not have to leave the group of students after starting a lesson to retrieve materials.

Organizes curriculum in sequential steps

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Corrects student work and maintains daily data

- Definition: For written assignments or other work produced by the student, the paraeducator must calculate student performance as required by the teacher or curriculum and record the information.

MANAGEMENT (Note: In exceptional circumstances where the paraeducator is managing students appropriately but students continue to misbehave, score “2.”)

States objectives/purpose

- Definition: As the paraeducator begins instruction, the paraeducator informs the student(s) of the purpose or expected outcome of the lesson. Stating the objectives or purpose of the lesson should only require one or two brief statements. The objectives may also be written on the board, printed in a book or other materials, and briefly reviewed.

Example: Paraeducator Observation System

Organizes curriculum in sequential steps

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Review/checks for prerequisite skills

- Definition: Prior to introducing new content, the paraeducator reviews material taught in previous lesson and checks to make sure students have mastered previous material before moving students on to the next part of the lesson.

Provides necessary instruction to students to start lesson, find the page, or get necessary supplies

- Definition: The activities should be conducted quickly, efficiently, and positively. Instruction should commence as soon as possible, but must have the attention of all students. Score “2” if the paraeducator provides instruction quickly, efficiently, positively, and with students’ attention. Score “1” for lower quality on these dimensions, or “0” if instructions are slow or inefficient or negative, etc.

Manages time efficiently (transitions)

- Definition: Understanding that long and poorly managed transitions lead to misbehavior, the paraeducator should supervise transitions, minimize off-task time, “direct traffic,” and move quickly to the next session.

Students on task (2 = 85%, 1 = 70–84%, 0 = 70%)

- Definition: Based on observations of on-task behavior recorded in a 5 minute period (minimum), score according to the table below:

No. of students	Total +	Total observes in 5 mins	Percent	Score
3	25-30	30	85-100	2
3	21-24	30	70-84	1
3	Less than 21	30	Less than 70	0
2	6-20	20	85-100	2
2	14-15	20	70-84	1
2	Less than 14	20	Less than 70	0

If possible, avoid observations of only one student. Each observation is 30 seconds long, i.e., the students must generally remain on task throughout the 30-second period. In exceptional circumstances in which individual students are not known to remain on task for high percentages of time, and in which the paraeducator delivers high rates of individual and group praise for on task behavior, scores of “2” may be given for lower percentages.

Reinforces students’ behavior when they follow rules

- Definition: The paraeducator (a) knows classroom and/or school rules and how to interpret them positively, and (b) praises individual students or groups of students for following rules. That is, attention is given for following rules not (exclusively) for violating rules. For example: the paraeducator praises students for “raising their hand,” or “working quietly.”

Example: Paraeducator Observation System

Follows behavior management plan for problem behaviors

- Definition: The paraeducator (a) describes the behavior management plan(s) for student(s), (b) produces a written plan (if applicable) which matches the paraeducator's description, and carries out the plan for behaviors to be weakened.

Scans entire group throughout instruction

- Definition: The paraeducator avoids spending excess time with one or a few students during instruction, and instead observes the behavior of the entire group by scanning frequently (i.e., often enough to observe potentially disruptive or off-task behavior.) While assisting one student, the paraeducator periodically scans the remaining students and reinforces on task behavior.

Enthusiastic when teaching (voice is expressive and neutral)

- Definition: Voice tone includes inflections and pitch changes, changes in pitch and pace to create emphasis, etc. Body language communicates interest in subject matter and students. When correcting mistakes or reprimanding behavior, voice tone is neutral.

Instruction's verbal behavior does not interfere with classroom activity

- Definition: The paraeducator speaks at a voice volume for the activity and the size of the student group. Voice is neither too loud so as to dominate other classroom activities to too soft to command attention of the group. The language of paraeducator is appropriate for educational setting.

Able to adapt to changes in routine

- Definition: The paraeducator quickly and efficiently changes plans, or seeks assistance from the cooperating teacher or others regarding changes in plans, when the schedule is altered.

Delivers instruction according to curriculum guidelines

- Definition: The paraeducator follows all rules for delivering instruction as specified by the curriculum or the cooperating teacher (or as modified from the curriculum by the cooperating teacher).

Delivers instruction at an appropriate pace

- Definition: The paraeducator varies the pace of instruction to maximize the attention and level responsiveness of the group of the individual.

Frequent practice opportunities for students

- Definition: The paraeducator provides frequent opportunities for all students to respond/practice. Students are achieving 80% of better before the paraeducator moves from guided practice.

FEEDBACK

Corrects student errors

- Definition: When students give an incorrect response the paraeducator checks to make sure they understood the question. Some questions may be rephrased. The paraeducator should always provide the student with the correct answer, check for understanding, and then re-test.

Provides corrective feedback to students in a timely manner

- Definition: Feedback should be given to students as soon as possible, after their response.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Displays confidentiality

- Definition: The paraeducator (a) maintains possession of student's records at all times (if applicable), (b) communicates individual student performance or behavior only to the observer or to the classroom teacher, and (c) avoids divulging any information regarding student performance or behavior outside the classroom. Scores of "1" or "0" must either be directly observed or accompanied by a written report from the cooperating teacher or other school personnel.

Responds favorably to constructive feedback from observer

- Definition: The paraeducator acknowledges feedback from the observer, courteously asks for specific clarification, and/or describes the categories of observation that need to be improved or emphasized. Score "2" (responds favorably) or "0" (responds unfavorably)

Implements suggested changes after feedback is provided by observer

- Definition: The paraeducator modifies procedures in a desired direction as recommended by the supervising educator. (Score "2" only if a clear, measurable improvement is observed.)

Maintains proper grooming

- Definition: The paraeducator maintains hygiene and self-care that are consistent with the standards set by the school district, the building principal, and displayed by other teachers and paraeducators in the school. Scores of "1" or "0" must either be directly observed or accompanied by a written report from the cooperating teacher or other school personnel.

Maintains professional behavior

- Definition: The paraeducator behaves in ways that are consistent with the standards set by the school district, the building principal, and displayed by other teachers and paraeducators in the school. Behavior includes language, interactions with and discipline of students, and personal habits. Scores of "1" or "0" must either be directly observed or accompanied by a written report from the cooperating teacher or other school personnel.

OBSERVATION OF STUDENTS' ATTENTION TO TASKS

Observe behavior in a 5-minute period (minimum), Observe the paraeducator working with two, preferably three, students. If possible, avoid observations on only one student. In each 30 second "box" on the form, score "+" if each individual student remains generally on-task for the entire time.

On task behavior means facing the instructor or the appropriate materials on the desk or table and responding in such a way as to complete the task (examples: verbal responses to questions, completion of items on a math worksheet, reading a story, etc.). Turning away from the instructor or materials for a count of two seconds or less within a 30-second period should still be counted as "+."

On task behavior (-) means turning away for greater than two seconds within a 30-second period. These intervals may be adjusted by the observer according to the age, characteristics, or baseline data on a student. However, any adjustments should be discussed with the paraeducator prior to the observation.

Methods of observing on/off task behavior: Depending on the activity, the observer may (a) watch as many as three students for 5 minutes, (b) observe one student continuously for 5 minutes, then switch to the next, or (c) observe one student for 30 seconds (1 box), then switch to the second student for 30 seconds, then the third, then back to the first student for observation #2, etc. In either case, complete all boxes on the form for as many students as observed. Make observation notes as needed.

Group/individual reinforcement: The paraeducator's praise is the response to be tallied. First, identify whether the response focused on an individual group of students. Place the tally in the appropriate box ("group" or "individual"). This allows the observer and paraeducator to differentiate between group praise and individual praise. Second, circle the tally mark if the positive praise statement focused on classroom behavior such as raising hand to talk, sitting in a chair, etc., rather than a correct academic response. Do not circle the tally mark if the praise statement focused on an academic response. This allows the observer and paraeducator to differentiate between praise for classroom behavior and for correct academic responses.