

THE PARA PROVIDER

A NEWSLETTER FOR PARAEDUCATORS: January 2004, Volume 1 Issue 1

"Things accomplish nothing--People accomplish everything."

OUR COLLEAGUE'S CORNER

Recently, the ROD Cooperative has established a committee to address the needs of paraeducators in the schools throughout our cooperative. The members of the committee include: Yvonda Kramer-Educational Consultant, Rick Whitmore-Educational Consultant, Lisa Peck-Assistant Director, and myself, Lisa Cotner-Paraeducator. Our committee is participating in the Facilitator/Mentor Training Program sponsored by the Indiana Paraeducator Support Project (IPSP). We attended our first training on November 13-14, 2003 at IUPUI in Indianapolis. This first training focused on identifying our priorities for paraeducator support. We felt our three top priorities were as follows:

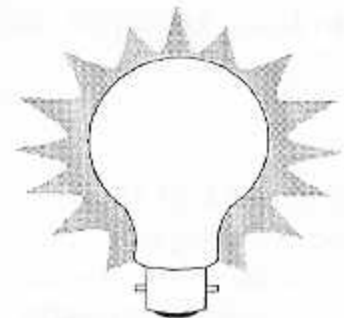
Orienting & Training Paraeducators, Acknowledging Paraeducators, & Supervision & Evaluation of Paras. We then brainstormed ideas to pursue these topics. We decided to focus on two ideas. The first is this newsletter and the second is to hold topical discussions at several locations throughout the cooperative. These discussions would be led by Lisa Peck, Assistant Director in conjunction with other ROD personnel. Attendance to discussions would be voluntary. Surveys regarding discussions have been given to paraeducators to get your input on the idea. The information obtained will be shared in this newsletter. Our committee will be going back to IUPUI in April and again in June. By attending these trainings we hope to gain insight in offering the best support to paraeducators.



AN ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for the hard work and effort that you put forth for children with special needs in the counties of Ripley, Ohio, and Dearborn. We hope that you will find this newsletter to be a source of information. The goal of The Para Provider is to address some of the questions that you may have in your job roles. Since your job descriptions vary greatly, we will attempt to include a variety of information to address your diverse needs.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Corning &
Lisa Peck



SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

Some of the best classroom ideas can come straight from those who work with students on a daily basis. If you have ideas or strategies that may be helpful to other paraeducators, then we want to hear from you. Send your ideas to:

Ripley-Ohio-Dearborn Special
Education Cooperative
c/o Lisa Peck, Assistant Director
P.O. Box 238
Sunman, IN 47041
or FAX to 812-623-2315



THINK ABOUT THIS.....

"Every Problem Contains The Seeds Of Its Own Solution."



The Para Provider Page 2

HELPFUL HINTS TO MANAGE CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Information from Donna Wittmer, associate professor at the University of Colorado-Deaver

Symptom: Is angry and hostile most of the time. The child could be bored or in a chaotic environment. The parent may be overwhelmed.

Strategy:

- * Teach the child a healthy way to handle anger. Say, "You can stomp when you are angry." Find out how anger is expressed in the student's family and/or culture.
- * Figure out what the child is trying to communicate and what he/she needs. Help the child to learn an appropriate way to get those needs met.
- * Value the student's feelings. Help him/her identify his/her feelings by saying, "It seems as if you are angry." or "I understand that you feel angry."
- * Be firm that expressing anger through aggression is not acceptable. Say, "I understand you may feel angry, you need to make a good choice." or "I understand that you are upset, but you are still expected to follow directions."
- * Ensure that the student feels safe.

Symptom: Exhibits aggressive behaviors. Bites, scratches, hits, kicks, spits, throws objects, curses, and/or pulls hair. The child could feel angry, need to feel powerful, frightened about lack of boundaries, or confused about different boundaries imposed, and/or observes aggression at home.

Strategy:

- * Make 10 positive remarks to each negative. Keep track of positive comments by keeping paperclips in your left pocket. Each time you make a positive comment move a paperclip from your left pocket to your right. This will give you an idea, if you do/don't say enough positive comments to students.
- * Compliment, Highlight, Address positive behaviors or the student and other students.
- * Teach and Model Appropriate Social Skills.
- * Talk to the child about his/her character in a positive way.
- * Stay close and attempt to redirect the student.



YOUR SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN!

According to the results of surveys obtained from paraeducators regarding the development of discussion groups, 50% of you stated that you would be interested in attending sessions. 24% of paras indicated that morning sessions worked best, while 48% indicated that afternoon was a better time. 27% of paras had no time preference. 39% of paras indicated that they were not interested, while 11% indicated that they could not attend sessions due to bus routes or other work duties. Our committee will be meeting to decide our next steps in this endeavor. Thank you for participating in the survey process.