

# HOW PARAPROFESSIONALS CAN ASSIST WITH DISTANCE LEARNING

**Purpose:** Provide districts examples of ways in which paraprofessionals may be used during the delivery of online educational services.

**General Rationale:** Our paras have built relationships with students throughout the course of the year. These connections have been interrupted due to school closures. Having our paras continuing working with their students is beneficial to the social, emotional well-being of their students. Research shows the positive impact of one caring adult on a child. We want to ensure that our children continue to have access to caring adults during this time of crisis.

## **Scenario 1 - Teacher Assistant**

What it looks like: Para would communicate with the teacher prior to the online lesson, so they have an understanding of the material being taught. During the teacher's lesson, the para would monitor the chat box for student questions, monitor the students' video feeds to make sure they are attending, and send messages to individual students to check for understanding and redirect the students back to task.

**Rationale:** As teachers and students adjust to the online learning environment having an extra set of eyes and virtual hands will be beneficial. The para may also be able to provide tech support to the teacher and students, as needed. Additionally, teachers who are used to having this additional support in their classrooms will feel a greater sense of support with another adult to assist with the challenges of quickly converting their lessons to an online format.

## **Scenario 2 - Small Group Skill Practice**

What it looks like: Para would communicate with the teacher prior to the online lesson or watch the online lesson being taught, so they have an understanding of the material. After the lesson, the para would virtually pull (by setting up another classroom/meeting) a group of pre-selected students (most likely special education students, but could also be students in RtI (Response to Intervention)). The para would then reinforce the material with the students and provide them assistance as they worked through the independent skills portion of the lesson.

**Rationale:** Certain students need additional repetition of material and more guided assistance during independent practice due to academic and behavioral skill deficits. Paras traditionally pull small groups of students to work with them within the classroom and this would be a continuation of that idea via remote learning.

### Scenario 3 - Small Group Skill Practice #2

**What it looks like:** Para would communicate with the teacher prior to the online lesson or watch the online lesson being taught, so they have an understanding of the material. The para would then have office hours where students who needed additional assistance could receive it. For example, daily from 10:00am until 11:00am, the para would be in a virtual classroom and assist students who come in for additional support.

**Rationale:** Certain students need additional repetition of material and more guided assistance during independent practice due to academic and behavioral skill deficits. Paras traditionally pull small groups of students to work with them within the classroom and this would be a continuation of that idea via remote learning. The office hours would give any student who needed additional practice/help a chance to receive it. There may be situations where a student thinks they have an understanding of the material, but when they go to do the independent practice they realize they need assistance. Not all parents/guardians can provide that assistance and teachers may not be available for additional assistance. This gives those students an opportunity to receive assistance. Additionally, students may wish to attend the office hours to keep the consistency of that adult relationship.

### Scenario 4 - One to One (1:1) Assistance

**What it looks like:** Para would communicate with the teacher prior to the online lesson or watch the online lesson being taught, so they have an understanding of the materials. Para may also communicate with the student and family (if permitted by district) to remind the student/family of the day/time of the lesson. During the lesson, the para would monitor their 1:1 student and track data on their behaviors, such as time attending to task. The para would also send messages to the student to check for understanding and redirect inappropriate behaviors. After the lesson, the para would virtually pull (by setting up another classroom/meeting) the student. During that time, the para would work with the student 1:1 on academics and/or provide positive reinforcement for the student based on the behavior intervention plan. If the student does not attend the lesson the para may (if permitted by the district) set up a time with the student/family for the para to review the material with the student and assist with the student making up the work.

**Rationale:** It is unclear at this time how students with 1:1s in their IEPs should go about receiving the same level of services in an online learning environment. However, if a student has a one to one to help with academics, behavior management, self-regulation, etc then the student will continue to need and require these services during online instruction. The student has a pre-existing relationship with their 1:1 and in a time of uncertainty, such as this, the consistency of that relationship is beneficial for the student.