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# Core Instructional Competencies for Minnesota Paraprofessionals

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## Competencies are Based on these Guiding Principles Set by the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium

- ☑ Paraprofessionals are respected and supported as integral team members responsible for assisting in the delivery of instruction and other student related activities.
- ☑ The entire instructional team participates within clearly defined roles in a dynamic changing environment to provide an appropriate educational program for students.
- ☑ To ensure quality education and safety for students and staff, paraprofessionals are provided with a district orientation and training prior to assuming those responsibilities.
- ☑ Teachers and others responsible for the work of paraprofessionals have the skills necessary to work effectively with paraprofessionals.
- ☑ By recognizing paraprofessionals' training, responsibilities, experience, and skill levels, they are placed in positions for which they are qualified, which effectively and efficiently use their skills to enhance the continuity and quality of services for students.
- ☑ Administrators exercise leadership by recognizing paraprofessionals as educational partners.



# General Information

To be competent in a job, an individual must have knowledge, skills, and abilities to do all that is expected and required. The competencies are statements that indicate the knowledge and skills needed for instructional paraprofessionals to work successfully in educational settings.

This is a revised version of the competencies, designed for all Minnesota instructional paraprofessionals, including Special Education, Title I, Limited English Proficient, Bilingual, English Language Learner, Career and Technical Education, American Indian Education, as well as locally funded paraprofessionals. Although this version has a new numbering system, the competencies from the previous version can be identified within this version by using the codes provided in parenthesis.

## ❶ Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Education

- 1.1 Sensitivity to the beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures and how these impact the relationships between children, families, and schooling. (1K1)
- 1.2 Awareness of the human and legal rights and responsibilities of parents and children/youth as they relate to students. (1K2)
- 1.3 Understanding of the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel. (1K3)
- 1.4 Understanding of the purposes and goals of education and instruction for all students. (1K4)
- 1.5 Knowledge of relevant laws, rules, regulations, and local district policies and procedures to ensure paraprofessionals work within the parameters. (1K5, 1S1)

## ❷ Characteristics of Students

- 2.1 Knowledge of the similarities and differences between cognitive, communicative, physical, social, and emotional needs of students and the factors that influence these different needs. (2K1)
- 2.2 Awareness of the effects that exceptional conditions have on a student's life, family, school, and community. (2K2)
- 2.3 Knowledge of and respect for the diverse backgrounds (cultural, linguistic, environmental) of students and how these characteristics affect the student's life and learning. (2K3)
- 2.4 Understanding of the effects and side-effects of medications commonly prescribed for students. (2K4)
- 2.5 Awareness of the potential implications of various student characteristics on learning and achievement. (2K5)

### **3 Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation**

- 3.1 Awareness of the tools used by the district for student assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation. (3K1)
- 3.2 Ability to collect and record performance data on students under the direction of a licensed teacher, while respecting student confidentiality and the laws regarding ethical practices of assessment. (3S1, 3S2)

### **4 Instructional Content and Practice**

- 4.1 Ability to utilize learning styles theory in supporting instructional practices. (4K1)
- 4.2 Awareness of the challenges and expectations of various learning environments. (4K2)
- 4.3 Ability to establish and maintain rapport with students. (4S1)
- 4.4 Ability to draw on knowledge and resources regarding a variety of developmental and age-appropriate instructional methods, techniques, and materials when supporting the instruction of the licensed teacher. (4K3, 4S2)
- 4.5 Ability to assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials according to the needs of the student, under the direction of a licensed teacher. (4S3)
- 4.6 Ability to follow oral and written direction of licensed teachers, seeking clarification as needed. (4S4)

### **5 Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment**

- 5.1 Ability to assist and reinforce elements that support a safe, healthy, and effective teaching and learning environment. (5K1, 5S1)
- 5.2 Awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning. (5K2)
- 5.3 Understanding of strategies for assisting with the inclusion of students in various settings. (5K3)
- 5.4 Ability to use strategies that promote the student's independence. (5S3)
- 5.5 Awareness of how paraprofessionals can impact the overall learning environment for students and staff. (5K4)
- 5.6 Ability to prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning, as directed by a licensed teacher. (5S2)

## **6 Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills**

- 6.1 Understanding of applicable laws, rules and regulations, and procedural safeguards regarding the management of student behaviors. (6K1)
- 6.2 Understanding of ethical considerations inherent in the management of student behaviors. (6K2)
- 6.3 Understanding of the district-building behavior management plans for students. (6K7)
- 6.4 Awareness of the primary factors that influence student behavior. (6K3)
- 6.5 Ability to effectively employ a variety of strategies that reinforce positive behavior. (6K6, 6S1, 6S2)
- 6.6 Ability to collect objective and accurate information on student behavior to be provided to licensed professionals, as appropriate and directed by a licensed teacher. (6S3)
- 6.7 Awareness of the social skills needed for current and future environments. (6K4)
- 6.8 Ability to reinforce the development of student social skills by using appropriate strategies to modify the environment. (6K5, 6S4)

## **7 Communication and Collaborative Partnerships**

- 7.1 Ability to participate as a member of the educational team when requested to attend conferences with families or primary caregivers, with an understanding of some of the concerns of parents. (7K1, 7S5)
- 7.2 Ability to use ethical practices for confidential communication about students. (7S1)
- 7.3 Ability to be sensitive and respectful in communications regarding all children and families – regardless of differences in cultural heritage, lifestyle, values, and home environment. (7S4, 7S7)
- 7.4 Awareness of the roles of students, parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school and community personnel in planning an individualized program, when relevant. (7K2)
- 7.5 Ability to employ constructive communication strategies and approaches in working with and responding to students, their families, and school and community personnel. (7S2, 7S8)
- 7.6 Ability to follow teacher instructions while conferring and collaborating with them around student schedules, instructional goals, and performance. (7S3)
- 7.7 Ability to understand and use appropriate educational terminology regarding students, roles, and instructional activities. (7S6)

## **8 Professionalism and Ethical Practices**

- 8.1 Ability to demonstrate a commitment to assisting students in reaching their highest potential, including the modeling of positive behavior. (8K1, 8S1)
- 8.2 Ability to carry out responsibilities in a manner that demonstrates knowledge of, and a positive respect for, the distinctions between the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, professionals, and other support personnel. (8S2)
- 8.3 Perform duties within the context of written standards and policies of the school, state, or agency where they are employed. (8S7)
- 8.4 Perform duties in a manner that demonstrates the ability to separate personal issues from one's employment responsibilities. (8S3)
- 8.5 Ability to show respect for the diversity of students. (8S4)
- 8.6 Ability to demonstrate proficiency in academic skills (including oral and written communication) while knowing how to self-evaluate one's own knowledge of the content being taught. (8S6)
- 8.7 Ability to show a willingness to participate in on-going staff development, self-evaluation, and apply constructive feedback. (8S5)

## **9 Academic Instructional Skills In Math, Reading, and Writing**

### **■ Math**

- 9.1M Ability to support and reinforce the instruction of students in math following written and oral lesson plans developed by licensed teachers.
- 9.2M Ability to utilize effective developmental, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive instructional strategies in math that support the instruction of licensed teachers.
- 9.3M Ability to access and effectively use available resources (including technology) for supporting teacher instruction in the subject of math. (Examples: internet resources, instructional manuals, tangibles, colleagues, etc.)
- 9.4M Ability to support a licensed teacher in the gathering and recording of data regarding student performance in the area of math. (Examples: rubric instruments, curriculum-based measurement, etc.)
- 9.5M Knowledge of terminology related to the instruction of math.
- 9.6M Understand how the Minnesota Standards and Testing (including state and local testing) direct the teaching of math in Minnesota.

## ■ Reading

- 9.1R Ability to support and reinforce the instruction of students in reading following written and oral lesson plans developed by licensed teachers.
- 9.2R Ability to utilize effective developmental, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive instructional strategies in reading that support the instruction of licensed teachers.
- 9.3R Ability to access and effectively use available resources (including technology) for supporting teacher instruction in the subject of reading. (Examples: internet resources, instructional manuals, tangibles, colleagues, etc.)
- 9.4R Ability to support a licensed teacher in the gathering and recording of data regarding student performance in the area of reading. (Examples: rubric instruments, curriculum-based measurement, etc.)
- 9.5R Knowledge of terminology related to the instruction of reading.
- 9.6R Understand how the Minnesota Standards and Testing (including state and local testing) direct the teaching of reading in Minnesota.

## ■ Writing

- 9.1W Ability to support and reinforce the instruction of students in writing following written and oral lesson plans developed by licensed teachers.
- 9.2W Ability to utilize effective developmental, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive instructional strategies in writing that support the instruction of licensed teachers.
- 9.3W Ability to access and effectively use available resources (including technology) for supporting teacher instruction in the subject of writing. (Examples: internet resources, instructional manuals, tangibles, colleagues, etc.)
- 9.4W Ability to support a licensed teacher in the gathering and recording of data regarding student performance in the area of writing. (Examples: rubric instruments, curriculum-based measurement, etc.)
- 9.5W Knowledge of terminology related to the instruction of writing.
- 9.6W Understand how the Minnesota Standards and Testing (including state and local testing) direct the teaching of writing in Minnesota.