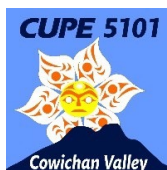


Cowichan Valley School District

Education Assistant Guide



Developed collaboratively with:



The Cowichan Valley School District acknowledges, honours and gives thanks as we work, live and play on the unceded traditional lands of the Hul'q'umi'num' speaking peoples, specifically the lands of the Penelakut, Halalt, Lyackson, Stz'uminus, Malahat, and Quw'utsun peoples; and the Ts'uubaa-asatx, Nuu-Chah-Nulth peoples. We dedicate this work to our First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and all children in the Cowichan Valley School District.



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Indigenous Ways of Knowing

The Cowichan Valley School District prioritizes Indigenous perspectives, knowledge and ways of being as part of our history and recognizes that Indigenous content is integral to our journey. Our path includes:

- Critically examining our own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to facilitate truth and reconciliation
- Addressing the inequities of outcomes for our Indigenous learners
- Creating safe, flexible and culturally-responsive learning environments
- Deepening our understanding of environmental stewardship, place-based historical knowledge, language, and culture

The Cowichan Valley School District has partnered with Cowichan Tribes, Halalt, Lyackson, Malahat, Cowichan Valley Metis Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Stz'uminus and Ts'uubaa-asatx Nation to create eight All-Nation Local Education Agreements & Memorandum of Understandings. LEAs and MoUs provide opportunities for local nations and the Cowichan Valley School District Board of Education to develop relationships to achieve the mutual goal of excellent educational outcomes for students.

(Click the link below or scan the QR code for more information)

[All-Nations LEAs/MOUs](#)



Inclusive Learning

The Cowichan Valley School District provides an educational system, in partnership with families and community, that ensures all learners are welcomed into inclusive, respectful, and responsive learning environments. In these environments, appropriate learning opportunities, resources, and/or supports are provided so that learners are empowered to develop skills, knowledge, a sense of belonging, and ways of being that will allow them to reach their full potential and create a future of their choosing. As an Education Assistant, you help provide equitable access for diverse learners.

BC Ministry of Education Policy Statement on Inclusion:

“British Columbia promotes an inclusive education system in which students with special needs are fully participating members of a community of learners. Inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs. The practice of inclusion is not necessarily synonymous with full integration in regular classrooms and goes beyond placement to include meaningful participation and the promotion of interaction with others.”

BC Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies and Guidelines, 2016, p. 2.

This resource conveys policies, procedures, and guidelines that support the delivery of inclusive education services in British Columbia’s public schools.

(Click the following link, or scan the QR code for more information)

[BC Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies and Guidelines \(2016\)](#)



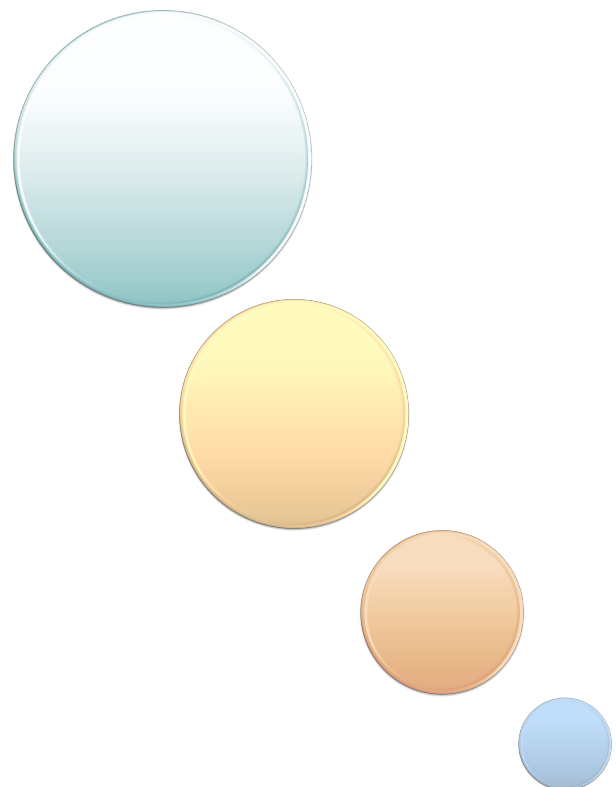
Supporting Students through a Needs-Based Model of Support

A Needs-Based Model of Support is grounded in inclusive principles and focuses on developing and implementing procedures and practices to support all learners. School Based Team (SBT) processes begin with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) based on the need(s) of the student. The SBT should follow a needs-based approach where universal supports and/or strategies are identified and implemented to support all learners.

While we recognize that **universal supports** and whole class practices are for all learners, some learners require **additional**, short-term supports to successfully meet their learning needs. A small number of learners may require additional **targeted supports** and/or services. Education assistants play a key role in working alongside the school team to implement goals and strategies identified in a student individual education plan.

If additional supports and services are required beyond those available within the school, then the SBT may access extended supports which may include district service providers, outside agencies, provincial outreach partners, and community services.

Throughout all levels of a Needs-Based Model of Support, learner specific information is collected, action plans are determined, and next-steps are documented. Learning is monitored and supports are modified to address learner's needs.



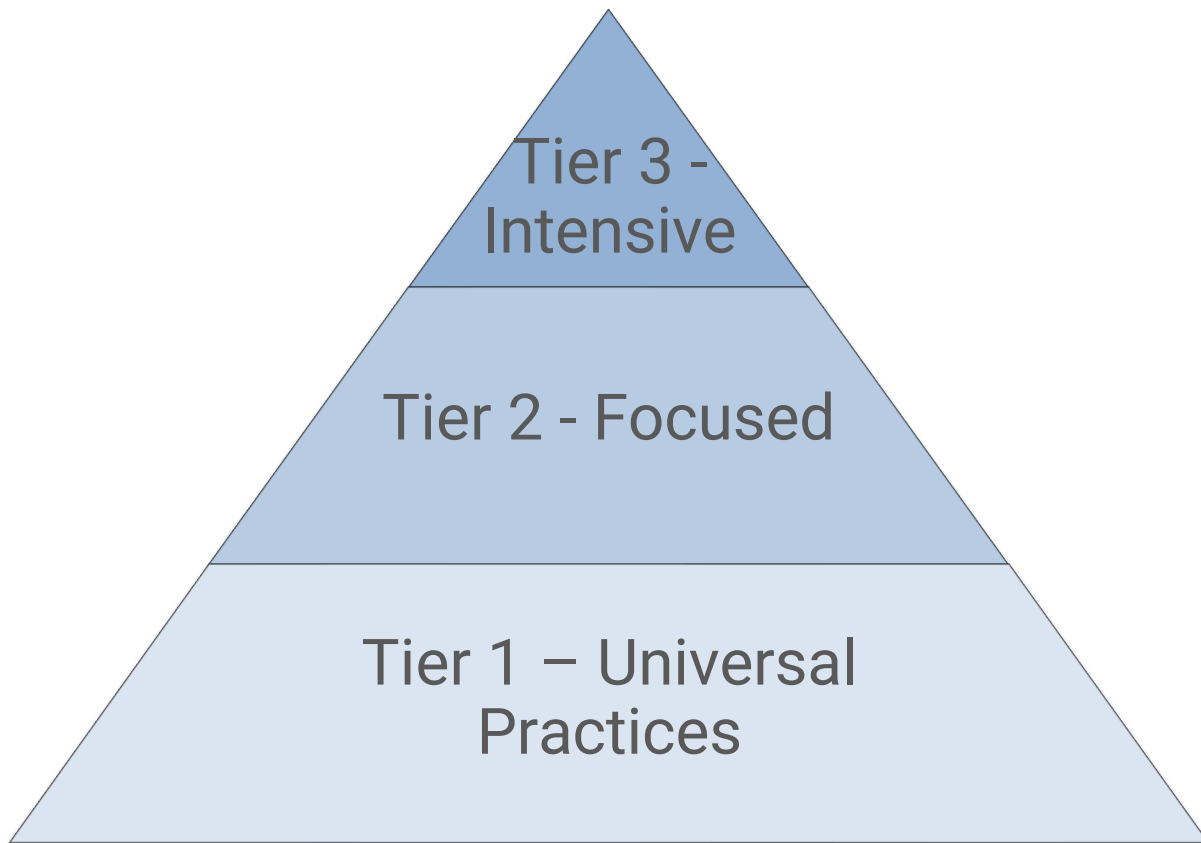
Roles and Responsibilities

Education Assistants work under the general supervision of the Principal of the school or a designate, providing a range of services for students with diverse needs which include personal care, behaviour support and assistance with educational programs. The assignment of regular duties is based on students' needs and the operational needs of the school. Seniority is not a factor in decision making.

Education Assistant	Classroom Teacher	Program Manager*
Assist the educational process (teaching and learning) of students in both instructional and non-instructional activities	Plan, coordinate, schedule and evaluate learning standards for all students	Collaborate with the classroom teacher to support the needs of students May deliver direct instruction/ intervention to support of students' learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs duties under the supervision of teachers, to support individuals or groups of students, in various learning environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has overall responsibility for the students in the class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports the team with understanding students' areas of strength and challenge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizes strategies and resources provided by teachers to support students with academic and social emotional learning and/or student program managers, to support assessment and reporting process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborates with program manager and itinerant specialists to provide universally designed and differentiated opportunities for learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists classroom teachers with resources and strategies to support learners within classroom environments Ensures development of Individualized Education Program for students with designations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborates with the program manager to provide resources for EAs to use with students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works collaboratively with the classroom teacher to provide resources for EAs to use with students
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses and reports on progress with respect to targeted interventions

***Program Manager**, sometimes called case manager, refers to the main contact developing and supporting the student's individual education plan (IEP). A program manager may be a resource teacher, learning assistance teacher or a counsellor.

Three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI)



The three-tiered response to intervention (RTI and Multi-Tiered System of Support) model provides a systematic way for schools to address the varying needs of students, both academically and behaviourally, ensuring that support is matched to the level of need. This approach promotes early identification and intervention, increasing the likelihood of success for all students.

Tier 1	Universal Practices (Includes differentiated instruction and UDL practices)	For all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective instruction for all (high-quality, evidence based with regular program monitoring) • School-wide/class-wide behavioural learning, expectations and routines for all students
Tier 2	Focused/ Targeted	For students requiring additional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted interventions with additional supports and monitoring – may be in small groups in or out of the classroom • Small-group or individualized instruction and intervention such as social skills groups or counselling support
Tier 3	Intensive	For students requiring more intensive and individualized support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intensive, one-to-one or small group or specialized programming with frequent monitoring • Individual behaviour intervention plans, counselling, collaboration with possible support services outside the school




Supporting Student Learning: Roles and Responsibilities – Tier 1- Universal

Tier 1 is inclusive of all students in the general classroom environment.

Education Assistant	Classroom Teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May assist the educational process (teaching/learning) of students in both instructional and non-instructional activities as directed by teacher or administrator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, coordinate, schedule and evaluate curriculum and instructional outcomes for all students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform duties under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher(s) and program manager. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain responsibility for all students registered in a particular class/block.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with teachers and specialists to share observations and suggestions regarding day-to-day experiences with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the program manager to develop appropriate goals, strategies, and activities for students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize learning resources to implement activities as provided by teachers and itinerant specialists including the use of technology as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support diversity in the classroom by providing universal, differentiated instructional opportunities for all learners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of and take responsibility for supporting medical needs or safety precautions for individual students in the class. Participate in training as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of and responsible for any medical needs or safety precautions for individual students in the class.

Supporting Student Learning: Roles and Responsibilities – Tier 2 – Focused/ Targeted

Tier 2 is more focused targeting support for some learners.

Education Assistant	Classroom Teacher	Program Manager	Itinerant Specialists	Principal/Vice Principal
May assist the educational process of students in both instructional and non-instructional activities.	Plan, coordinate, schedule and evaluate curriculum and instructional outcomes for all students.	Collaborate with classroom teacher to support the needs of students, provide targeted intervention where appropriate.	Collaborate with the SBT to support the needs of all students, provide targeted intervention where appropriate.	Actively lead the school in a focused effort to develop and implement an inclusive education program.
Utilize learning resources and implement activities as provided by teachers and itinerant specialists. Program delivery may include the use of technology.	Direct EAs in their work with students with respect to classroom activities, including the use of technology as appropriate.	Assist the classroom teacher with directing educational assistants in providing support for students requiring Tier 2 supports. Collaborate with the team to provide capacity building opportunities for EAs, where appropriate.		Ensure the development of schedules for educational assistants in consultation with SBT. Collaborate with team to provide capacity building opportunities for EAs, where appropriate.
Participate in School Based Team meetings as requested.	Refer students and participate in School Based Team meetings to problem-solve around needs of specific students.	Promote a problem-solving approach to School Based Team meetings. Co-chair School Based Team (LART)		Ensure the School Based Team is operational, facilitate collaborative efforts of team members in meeting the unique needs of students.
Collect observational data of student experience as directed.	Facilitate flexible scheduling of the classroom program to allow for targeted intervention to take place.	Provide targeted, supplementary, frequent instruction to small groups; in or out of a classroom.		Know strengths of staff, support training needs, create opportunities for staff to receive needed training and in-service.

Supporting Student Learning: Roles and Responsibilities – Tier 3 - Intensive

Tier 3 is focused on intensive support for a few learners and is a primary area of support for Education Assistants.

Education Assistant	Classroom Teacher	Program Manager	Itinerant Specialist	Principal/VP
Assist the educational process of students in both instructional and non-instructional activities including behaviour support plans (Ukeru).	Plan, coordinate, schedule and evaluate curriculum and instructional outcomes for students who need this level of support.	Collaborate with classroom teacher to support the needs of students. Provide targeted intervention where appropriate.	Collaborate with the SBT to support the needs of students, provide targeted intervention where appropriate.	Actively lead the school in a focused effort to develop and implement an inclusive education program including intensive interventions .
Utilize learning resources and implement activities provided by the teachers and itinerant specialists (including technology as appropriate).	Facilitate aspects of T3 supports that are appropriate within the classroom environment.	Provide individual supplemental instruction as appropriate.	Provide small group and/or individual supplemental instruction.	Support the Program Manager and Itinerant Specialists in creating time for capacity building and the delivery of the intervention(s).
In collaboration with the classroom teacher, provide input on progress related to the goals and strategies in the student plan(s).	Report on student progress with respect to learning standards, inclusive of individualized goals. All areas not addressed in the IEP/student learning plans are reflected in classroom reporting.	Complete and maintain all assigned students' records (IEPs, IEP progress reports, safety plans, behaviour plans).	Collaborate with classroom teachers and support teachers with respect to learning activities and IEP/learning plan goals.	Ensure accurate reporting regarding adaptations/modifications occurs, monitor progress toward IEP/student learning plan goals.
Provide observational data of student experience as directed.	Program manage IEPs/ student learning plans for students enrolled in class/block.	Generate progress reports for IEPs as appropriate.	Generate goals, complete assessments and provide progress reports with respect to area of specialization.	
		Collaborate with the classroom teacher to support the development of Student Learning Plans.		

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

When working in a school, confidentiality is essential. Visitors, volunteers, or other members of the community are often present in the hallways or in the staff lounge. Educational Assistants have access to a great deal of confidential information about students, teachers, colleagues, and parents. All matters related to the school, personnel, the students, and their families must not be discussed outside of educational team meetings. Information regarding student progress and learning needs should be communicated to parents by teachers, program managers, and/or administrators. Educational Assistants have a responsibility to ensure confidentiality in alignment with all district procedures.

Other considerations include:



Engage in instructional activities and strategies that are consistent with the philosophy and standard established by the student's support team.



Respect the confidential nature of information concerning students. Discuss a student's progress and/or educational program **only** with another member of the student's school-based support team (teacher, program manager, administrator).



Respect that parents have the right to expect their child's progress and/or behaviour at school to be kept in confidence.



Express differences of opinion privately with the classroom teacher and/or the other members of the student's school-based support team (teacher, program manager, administrator).



Respect the dignity and self-worth of all students and be mindful of their rights and sensibilities.



Encourage the independence of the students.



Respect the student's needs, race, gender, cultural background, and religion.



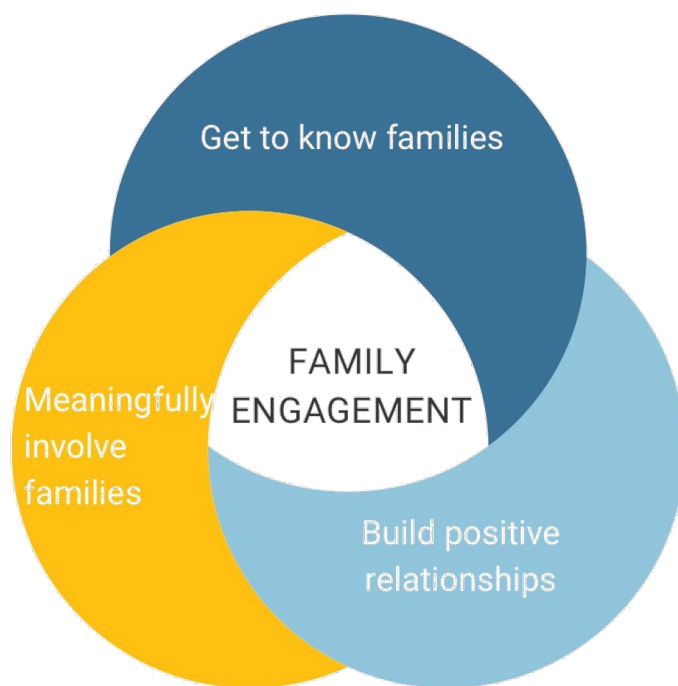
Serve as a positive role model.

Adapted from School District 23 and School District 68

Communicating with Families & Caregivers

On-going communication with families is essential to student success. As educational staff, it is crucial that we involve and value families and caregivers, as they know their child best. We must also value and recognize the gifts families can offer not only to their children, but to the school and community as a whole.

It is important that educational staff build connections and foster relationships with families, caregivers, and/or community members early on so that family engagement is nurtured. Family engagement, (sharing the responsibility to help their children learn and meet educational goals), leads to positive outcomes. Information about a student should be communicated in an accessible way and available to families/care givers in plain language by the classroom teacher.



As an Education Assistant it is important to remember that any anecdotal observations or other data that is collected should be retained at the school and provided to the classroom teacher and/or support teacher, to be used for more formal assessment and reporting documentation.

In order to be consistent, in the Cowichan Valley School District, Education Assistants refer all parent inquiries/requests of any nature to the teacher or program manager.

Education Assistants may be present when parents drop off or pick up their child. It is important to remember not to place yourself in the role of the teacher. Dialogue at these times should be restricted to friendly greetings and informal interactions. EAs should not provide updates on a student's behaviour or academic progress.

It is generally not appropriate to text with parents, unless part of a specific care plan. Parents should be reminded to contact the school directly.

Trauma Informed Intervention

The Cowichan Valley School District is committed to the development of a culture of care for all students and staff. A key aspect of creating a culture of care is continuing to create and promote safe and inclusive learning environments for our diverse community.

Education Assistants in the Cowichan Valley School District may have an opportunity to become trained in **Ukeru Systems: Trauma-Informed Care**.

Ukeru training is designed to teach critical skills for preventing and defusing disruptive or at-risk behaviour. The training allows staff to maintain the care, welfare, safety, and security of all. Participants learn how the behaviour of adults influences the behaviour of students, as well as how to identify precipitating factors for an escalation, allowing for a proactive, preventative response. Ukeru training also emphasizes the importance of a collaborative team approach.

The Ukeru training is provided by the district at regular intervals. Where an Education Assistant works with a student requiring specialized interventions, child specific Ukeru training may be provided.

Refer to Cowichan Valley Administrative Procedure [354](#) for additional information.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.

Everyone in British Columbia shares responsibility for keeping children safe. As an Education Assistant, with the support of the school-based principal, you may be required to report to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

- MCFD has the lead responsibility for responding to suspected child abuse and neglect. It also delegates authority for child protection and family support to Aboriginal Child and Family Services Agencies, which provide services to their communities.
- Police respond when a child is in immediate danger. Police also investigate cases where a criminal offence is suspected.
- As a service provider, our role is to be aware of, and alert to, signs and symptoms of possible child abuse or neglect and to respond appropriately if we have concerns about a child's safety or well-being. This is important to ensuring a collaborative response to suspected child abuse and neglect.
- Anyone who has reason to believe a child or youth under 19 years of age may be at risk has a legal duty to report the concern to the local MCFD office, in a timely manner, at 250-715-2725 or phone 1-800-663-9122 at any time, day or night. Please report concerns to the principal so that you have support when reporting concerns.
- The duty to report overrides any duty to protect the privacy of student, families, or staff.
- Refer to Cowichan Valley Administrative Procedure [AP 325](#) and [AP 403](#) for additional information.

Student Plans

Employees who are assigned to work with students with diverse needs will have access to the necessary documents regarding that specific student's educational program. These documents are generally kept in the student's designation file (red file) or in another confidential location. While school administrators are responsible for the development of safety plans to mitigate risks to staff, Education Assistants may be requested to provide input based upon direct observation of students, and are expected to review the plans regularly.

Employees assigned to work with a student may access the following documents:

- ✓ Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- ✓ Individual Safe Work Instruction (outline strategies to reduce/mitigate risk to staff)
- ✓ De-Escalation Plan (plan for staff to recognize shifts in behaviour and attempt to respond accordingly)
- ✓ Student Learning Plan
- ✓ Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP)
- ✓ Medical Care Plans

Work with the principal/vice principal and/or the student's program manager to obtain access as needed. As confidential documents, these should not be duplicated, nor housed in an on-call file. However, on-call notes should indicate the need to review Safety Plans where applicable. Access will be provided on an as-needed basis with permission from the administrator and should not be removed from their storage space.

Occupational Health and Safety

Administration Procedure 160 outlines the Health and Safety Guidelines for the district. Each site has a Health and Safety Committee which meets monthly to discuss issues related to health and safety at the site. It consists of a member from CUPE, USW, a teacher, and administrator. There will be a Health and Safety Bulletin board in the school which will identify the members of the committee and where any relevant information will be posted.

There are procedures in place for injuries, accidents or violent incidents. Please familiarize yourself with these procedures.

Worker's responsibilities include:

- ✓ Understand and follow acceptable and safe work procedures, safety rules, and regulations that apply to their job
- ✓ Only perform work or use equipment for which you are trained and authorized
- ✓ The right to refuse work that could create a risk to yourself or others



Getting to Know Your Student(s)

Developing positive and productive relationships with students is essential. It's important to take time to get to know your student or students so that you develop an understanding of their learning profile as well as other aspects of their identity.

Here are some questions you could ask to get to know your student or students better.

To the student	To the teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you want me to know about you? • What do you like about school? • What don't you like about school? • What do you enjoy doing outside of school? • Would you like to tell me about your friends? • How do you prefer to be supported? • What do you need from me? • What don't you want me to do? • How would you prefer to be addressed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is motivating for this student? • What does this student enjoy? • Would you tell me about this student's friends? • How can I best support this student's social needs? Academic needs? Behavioural needs? • Does this student have sensory needs that I need to be aware of? • Does this student have communication needs that I might need to know? • What adaptations/modifications does this student use? • Does this student use assistive technology? • Is there anything else that I need to know?

Adapted from The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms – Julie Causton

Fostering Positive Relationships

Six Ways to Facilitate/Foster Positive Relationships – adapted from Julie Causton, 2009

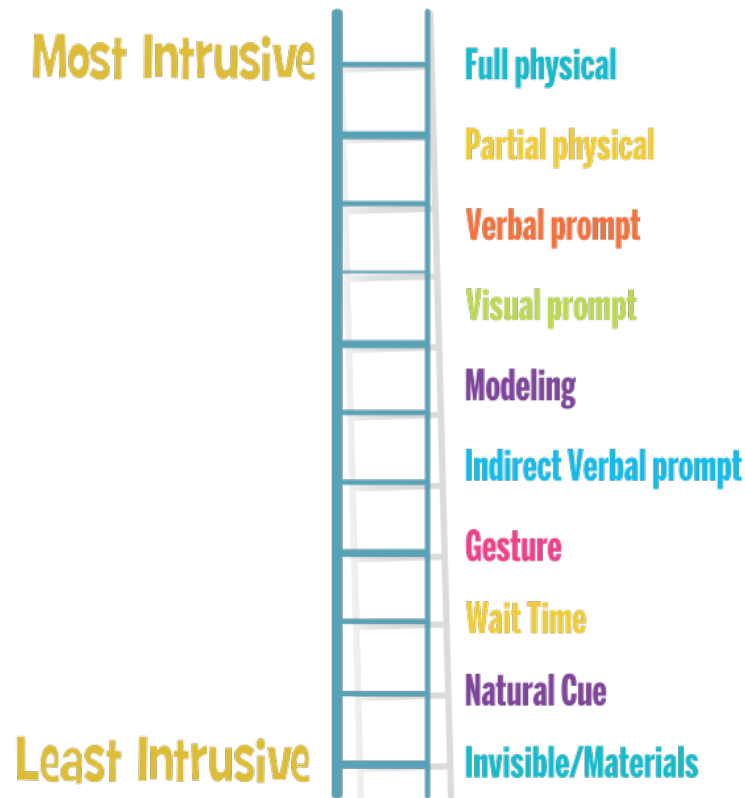
1. Highlight similarities among students – look for ways to make connections across student similarities in experience, learning etc. Example: “The two of you both are interested in learning more about robotics. You could sit together and share ideas.”
2. Help students invite each other to socialize – Consider potential social situations that occur throughout the day. Prompt a student with, “Who do you want to play with at recess today? How could you ask them?” A picture of classmates can allow a student to point to a friend they may like to partner or play with during the day. A student could use a device or other supportive tools to ask, “Will you play with me?” or “Will you be my partner?”
3. Provide behavioural supports that are social in nature – if small rewards are part of the student’s routine consider a social interaction/learning opportunity. Example: shooting baskets with a friend, going to the library with a friend, creating something with a friend, computer time with a friend etc.
4. Provide students with responsibilities that are interactive and collaborative – students often have class responsibilities/jobs. Having a partner for a classroom job is a great way to build connection and sense of belonging. Examples: delivering something to the office, handing out papers etc.
5. Help other students understand – supporting peers in understanding information is important. This sharing needs to be done in collaboration with the teacher and the student. Sharing confidential information is not okay but it may be appropriate to share the kind of support a student is receiving to support them in the classroom.
6. Step back – when a conversation among students has started, give the students space to have a natural conversation. It’s important for students to have independence wherever possible and sometimes adults inadvertently create a barrier between other students and the one they are supporting.

“Every child, with or without disabilities, has the right to belong. All human beings desire friendships, relationships, and academic challenge.”

Supporting Independence



THE PROMPTING LADDER



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Education Assistants are uniquely positioned to nurture independence skills throughout the school day. Independence skills are important, and it may take many years for students to acquire and use these skills.

Key skills involved in developing independence are self-determination, self-awareness and self-knowledge and self-advocacy.

A resource for additional information can be found at the following site:
<https://blog.brookespublishing.com/12-ways-paraprofessionals-can-teach-independence-skills/>

Orientation

Questions to consider when you are assigned to a new school:



Roles and Responsibilities

- What are my special and regular duties?
- What is my schedule? Will I be required to meet a bus at the beginning/end of day? Are there lunchtime or other out-of-classroom activities where I am required to support students?
- If I am responsible for working with more than one teacher, how is my time divided?
- What records am I responsible for keeping? How and where should things be recorded?
- How best do I support students who are dysregulated or communicating through behaviour?
- Is there any specialized equipment that I am required to use with students I am supporting?



Safety Considerations

- Are there known hazards associated with the school and what are the safety procedures?
- Who is the designated First Aid Attendant?
- What emergency procedures do I need to know?
- Will I be working with a student where there is a risk of violence? If yes, how will I be provided access to the following documents prior to working with the student: IEP, Behaviour Intervention Plan, Safety Plan,?
- How do I report an incident/injury/violent incident or an unsafe situation?
- Is there any special equipment/clothing required for this position?



Communication

- What is the appropriate line of communication that I am expected to follow?
- With whom should I discuss a problem concerning relationships?
- What should my response be when parents raise questions about their child?
- How do I record an absence?
- Who should I phone if I am going to be late or have some other emergencies occur?
- Which regular meetings am I expected to attend? What other meetings might I be invited to on an as-needed basis?
- What is the best way for me to communicate with the teachers whom I work with on a regular basis?



Other

- Where is the staffroom? Is there a specific place to keep my personal belongings?
- Do I need a school or classroom key? Who do I see about this?
- Where can I get a copy of the bell schedule?
- Where are supplies kept and how are they obtained?
- If there is a time where I don't have work or am not needed in a classroom, who should I see for re-deployment?
- How do I complete my timesheet?

Casual Education Assistant Book

Regular Education Assistants should develop a Casual EA Book for their position to be used by casual EAs who replace them when they are away from school. Frequently, teachers are unable to immediately relay detailed information about the position or the student(s) requiring support. A smooth transition from one EA can be enhanced with a clearly written plan that is readily available. The Casual EA Book should be available upon arrival and check-in at the office.

The Casual EA Book should contain the following information:

- ✓ School map
- ✓ School bell schedule
- ✓ School staff directory
- ✓ School specific fire/earthquake evacuation procedures
- ✓ School fire drill procedures
- ✓ Contact information – who to see regarding safety plans
- ✓ Regular schedule, including break times
- ✓ Specific assignment duties, helpful routines/prompts
- ✓ Statement to read Safety Plan when required
- ✓ Where to find the “basics” (walkie talkies and/or vest for supervision for example)
- ✓ Playground and classroom expectations
- ✓ Notes – include student strengths/strategies to support students you support
- ✓ Who to report to in the case you need to be re-deployed in the school.

Please **do not** include:

- Confidential information about students

Other Resources and Links

Professional Learning Resources:



CUPE Resources:



Human Resources

HR Processes: after being offered a position verbally by Human Resources, you will receive a commencement email that will include instructions on how to access your email/copiers, etc., how to find and complete our New Hire Orientation, setting up your ID badge and a district information package and the new hire paperwork (T4's, Direct Deposit, Criminal Record Check).

Easy Connect (Dispatch): You will receive an email to your district email address inviting you to the Easy Connect Dispatch system (for dispatching). Most inquires can be directed to **Easy Connect Help Desk: 1-866-806-6851** or email info@simplication.com (4:30am – 4:00pm Monday through Friday)

SSDAS (for accessing the internal postings)

Payroll Forms:

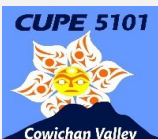
- CUPE Casual Timesheet
- CUPE Regular Timesheet
- CUPE Wellness Guide

CUPE Job Descriptions:

- EA Behavioural
- EA Complex Needs
- EA Personal Care
- EA Specific Care

Support staff are expected to avail themselves of professional development opportunities in order to remain current with their assignments. Please reference AP442 for more information.

Qualification upgrade requests will occur twice per year in October and April.



We appreciate the co-development of this handbook with CUPE. This Education Assistant Guide does not supersede the collective agreement or district APs.

