Use data
Provide input to members of the educational team regarding student progress or problems in academics or behavior. Use written documentation from daily record-keeping formats rather than relying on memory. Be specific and constructive when relaying information.

Maintain confidentiality
Respect the privacy of students and other staff members in your work setting. Do not share information about students, staff, or school issues with people outside of your school. If others ask you for information about a student, it is best to refer them to your partner teacher or supervisor.

Encourage students to make decisions
Empower students to control their own lives as much as possible in the educational setting by offering choices. Discussing options and making decisions increases self-esteem and self-reliance.

Allow students to demonstrate what they know
Students learn best and retain more when they do their own work. Provide supports as directed by your partner teacher that assist students to understand and complete assignments, projects, and tests. Refrain from doing the work for students.

Become a contributing member of your school community
You are not only a valuable member of your classroom team, but you also have much to contribute to your school community. Look for opportunities to serve on schoolwide committees. Ask your supervisor about opportunities to participate in schoolwide and districtwide staff development activities. Always remember that you represent your school and your district in any community activities in which you may be involved.
Special education paraprofessionals work with teachers and other educational professionals in supporting student achievement and building independence. Special education paraprofessionals work side-by-side with teachers to provide appropriate and meaningful educational programs to students with special needs. They have a variety of key responsibilities in the educational setting. This brochure provides tips for paraprofessionals supporting teachers and students in maintaining an effective classroom environment.

Be a member of the team
Know the roles, responsibilities, and policies of your job in your work setting. Find out what you can and cannot do in your role as a paraprofessional. Bring an enthusiastic, positive attitude to your job. Bring questions or problems to your partner teacher or supervisor in a professional, productive manner.

Support inclusion of students
Help students to participate in the regular education program as directed by your partner teacher or supervisor. Work with regular and special education staff to provide necessary adaptations or supports for students that allow them to participate and engage in learning tasks.

Attend to students’ needs
Be respectful when assisting with daily care routines. Address special feeding, exercise, grooming, or toileting needs in a manner that maintains students’ self-esteem.

Foster socialization
Throughout the day allow students the opportunity to interact with peers on their own. Encourage adults and peers to speak directly with the student. Provide assistance only if needed or requested to ensure clear communication.

Promote independence
Students learn independence by doing, not by watching others do for them. Limit hand-over-hand assistance and use as few prompts as possible when providing assistance and instruction. Give verbal directions only when needed.

Request assistance
Ask for guidance and direction from your partner teacher and supervisor. Ask for assistance with disciplinary issues. Request training in specific skills and routines as needed to provide appropriate academic, social, behavioral, or vocational instruction.