Guidance for Paraprofessionals

The following guidance is developed to support DOE paraprofessionals working in DOE-managed schools with implementation of Remote Learning. As per the Guidance and Expectations for Remote Learning in Response to COVID-19, paraprofessionals providing support to students with disabilities (SWDs) are expected to continue to support teachers and related service providers (as appropriate) in the delivery and development of remote instruction. They should provide the teacher/related service provider with insight and observations about what strategies and modifications work well with the students they know best. All paraprofessional staff shall support teachers and/or related service providers with remote learning.

Key expectations for all DOE paraprofessionals are as follows:

- Participate in scheduled school-based professional development regarding online learning.
- Support classroom teachers with preparing assignments, content and activities.
- Assist with collecting materials that will be sent out to students.
- Maintain regular communication with teachers and related service provider(s).
- Communicate and check-in with students and families as determined by classroom teacher, related service provider and/or school leadership.
- Under the direction of the teacher or related service provider, support families and students in accessing and participating in remote learning and therapy experiences, including supporting families in implementing behavior supports and structures, as needed.

Considerations for 1:1 Paraprofessionals

For those services that can be provided remotely, IEP-assigned paraprofessionals, under the direction of the child’s teacher and/or related service provider, should make every effort to continue to support students remotely within the student’s mandated domain and with consideration to the child’s family or caregiver. School leadership may also assign paraprofessionals to other duties during remote learning as described above when delivery of IEP mandated services for their assigned students has been fulfilled. Key expectations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Implement academic, social emotional and behavior supports as identified in the management needs section of the student’s IEP as it relates to remote learning.
- Implement adaptations and modifications to meet the needs of the student, inclusive of behavior, for remote learning.
- Conduct individualized check-ins with student and family for better understanding of assigned work and share any needs and concerns as appropriate.
- Provide language supports remotely to students recommended for instruction in a language other than English.
- Principals may place IEP-assigned paraprofessionals with SE teachers to support remote small group instruction.

If supporting a student who is or will be using assistive technology, participate in training offered by the Center for Assistive Technology (CAT)/Assistive Technology (AT) Team/Tech Solutions regarding AT devices and, with appropriate training and/or experience, assist in using these devices.

Resources for Paraprofessionals

Special Education Office Professional Learning Calendar: access to all centrally offered professionals development as it relates to the paraprofessional role in remote learning.
NYCDOE Teach-at-Home Website: access all training materials for educators and remote instruction materials for students

Encounter Attendance Guidance During School Building Closure for SETSS Providers and Paraprofessionals: explains the Service Location options available for Paraprofessionals during school building closure as a result of the COVID-19 response.