

**FOREST HILLS
SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE
8045 W ST RD 46
ELLETTSVILLE, IN 47429**

Instructional Assistant Training Checklist

Special education teachers must review the following information with all instructional assistants who will be working with children with disabilities. This information should be reviewed prior to the first day of work for new assistants, and at the beginning of each school year for all assistants.

Please check that each has been discussed:

_____ Information on confidentiality of personal information on students.

_____ Information on the specific special needs and characteristics of the students with whom the instructional assistant will be working.

_____ The instructional assistant's role related to the role of the teacher.

_____ The "Instructional Assistant Handbook: Working with Children with Special Needs."

Instructional Assistant _____

Special Education Teacher _____

School _____

Date _____

**Please return this completed form to the Forest Hills
office by September 25, 2009**

INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT HANDBOOK:

WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

I. GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES:

The Instructional Assistant is hired for the benefit of students by assisting the teachers in providing more quality individual or smaller group instruction. They are asked to aid the teacher in meeting their professional specifications, but are not to be solely responsible for clerical duties or the teaching of any subject. The top priority for an aide in education is to keep all that is happening in the school setting **confidential**. Nothing is more devastating for a program than gossip about children, teachers, or school situations.

II. DUTIES:

The duties of assistants vary considerably with the training and background of the aide, and needs of the classroom teacher at any particular time.

There are two primary responsibilities in your job; working with children and working with teachers.

Working with Children:

You are already aware that children are different in many ways. They differ in size, shape, behavior, interest, and background. Your job is to accept each, just as he is and respect his right to be different. Education demands that we create conditions which will promote an atmosphere conducive to learning. Just as you have a need for success, belonging, acceptance, and the like so do children. Affection, tolerance, sympathy, a sense of humor-these are some of the qualities you need to bring to school each morning to help children to know how you feel about them.

Here are some things about children that may help you:

1. One of the most important things to remember is that children need confidence self-respect, respect of others, guidance, and encouragement. These can be promoted by:
 - a.) **Learning and using their names as soon as possible.**
 - b.) **Taking time for friendly chats with each child and show you are interested.**
 - c.) **Developing the ability to listen**
 - d.) **Being consistent about what you approve and disapprove**

2. Elementary children are trying to become independent (from their parents, mainly, but also from adult authority in general). School people take the place of the parent for a large part of the day, and you may, therefore, be the most importance person in a child's life. They are sensitive. The slightest word from you may make a child happy,

sad, secure, fearful. It becomes obvious that you must weigh your actions and words carefully in all situations.

3. Don't play favorites. It is easier to like the child who is on time, always does what he is told, always conforms to our request. Children are different. They learn at different rates, have different energy levels, different temperaments. Don't neglect the unattractive child for the one with more personality. Try to divide your time evenly among all pupils. Most children are aware if it is obvious that someone else is getting more attention, and are hurt by this. Remember that "special" children come to us because they have problems-don't add to them.
4. The children with whom you will be working have learning problems. While it is not your job to play classroom experiences which bring the children face to face with their problems, you need to discuss with the teacher ways in which you can help the child reach his/her goal.
5. Children learn much from observing the significant adults in their lives. Your good classroom attitude promotes favorable pupil attitudes. They tend to mimic your actions and speech. If you are fair and considerate, they will be too. Please be positive at all times.
6. Don't scold an erring child in front of the entire class. No one enjoys being reprimanded in front of an audience. Besides, this may backfire by:
 - a. **Making the child a martyr.**
 - b. **Increasing the misbehavior by its attention-getting value.**

In other words, show the same respect for the children that you also require.

7. The child with learning disabilities already has enough problems. Don't give him more by being impatient, intolerant, or grouchy.

Working With Teachers

Your training as an assistant begins the first day on the job. As you count books and supplies, sharpen pencils, adjust shades, make name tags, arrange desks, etc. ask questions about your job. You should know something about the subjects taught and the grade levels of the textbooks used. You should know how children are scheduled, how attendance is kept, what reports you are required to keep. You need to know what equipment is available such as film projectors, tape recorders, typewriters, duplicating machines, and how they are used.

Listen to the discussions that take place in the school, such as faculty meetings, luncheon gatherings, before and after school chats. Take notes to help you remember, clarify, and evaluate as you proceed from day to day.

Some General Suggestions for Instructional Assistants:

1. Get to know the names of the children as soon as possible. Notice what makes each child distinctive, his likes, and dislikes, personal background. It is amazing what it does to the relationship if you can say, “ Has Hilda had her kittens yet?”
2. Greet the children as they enter the room with a “Hello Jim”, a wink, a smile, a sign of recognition and acceptance.
3. Be sure you have enough materials for each child. If you make work sheets, have clear readable copies.
4. Circulate around the room, answer questions cordially and as briefly as possible.
5. Speak in a soft voice.
6. Expect the child to do well.
7. Correct papers as soon as possible so the teacher can discuss results with pupils. Unless the teacher instructs you otherwise, it is often advisable to indicate errors, but “grade” the paper on the number right rather than the number wrong.
8. Keep everything confidential.
9. Avoid outside interruptions while you are supervising children. Parents often want to ask questions or gossip, teachers want supplies or records. Let them know you will take care of their problems as soon as you can. They will respect your judgment.
10. Keep careful and accurate records. Children are easily confused and forgetful and do not always remember whether they did or did not turn in their homework.
11. Dress neatly. If you are working with highly distractible children, avoid gaudy and distracting clothing and jewelry.
12. Use children to help keep the classroom neat, but be sure you are fair and give everyone an opportunity.
13. Know where each child is at all times. Give the child the benefit of the doubt, but too many visits to the lavatory errands to various places,etc., may be symptoms for referral to the teacher.
14. Be sure you understand the child’s assignments. When you are asked to give directions for the worksheet know the answers.
15. Children should be helped off the school bus in the morning and supervised and/or helped on the bus in the afternoon.

III. ASSIGNMENTS:

Your assignments are always subject to review by the designated school administrator and are generally for the duration of one school year. Keep in mind that you will go where the student need is so it is possible that your location may be changed for the next school year. Since it is impossible to list all the activities an aide may perform, the following are given as suggestions:

A. Instruction Related

1. Correcting test papers, homework, workbooks, etc.
2. Observing child behavior and writing reports.
3. Preparing instructional materials: flash cards, charts, cut-outs, etc.
4. Taping reading assignments.
5. Listening to a child's oral reading.
6. Reading and storytelling.
7. Reading, spelling, and vocabulary words.
8. Putting written work on blackboards.
9. Assisting with drill work.
10. Assisting and checking pupils in seatwork.
11. Assisting students who are mainstreamed in their regular class (e.g. art, music, reading).
12. Administer informal tests to students either referred for or placed in special education.
13. Etc.

B. Non-Instructional

1. Distributing books and supplies.
2. Collecting homework.
3. Keeping supervision an playground, cafeteria, halls, inside recess, etc.
4. Checking out library books for pupils and/or teacher.
5. Securing parental forms for field trips.
6. Helping children with clothing.
7. Telephoning parents to pick up sick child, advise of absence, verifying request to leave early.
8. Helping with supervision of field trips.
9. Running errands.
10. Setting up special classroom exhibits.

C. Clerical

1. Keeping attendance records.
2. Setting up and maintaining seating chart.
3. Keeping inventory of classroom stock: equipment, books, supplies,ect.
4. Keeping record of class schedules.
5. Keeping record of books students have read.

6. Typing and duplicating materials.
7. Preparing bulletin boards.
8. Setting up appointments for parents-teacher conferences and home visits.
9. Keeping and maintaining folder of pupils work.

D. Housekeeping

1. Preparing and supervising pupil work areas.
2. Arranging instructional materials for easy accessibility.
3. Cleaning blackboards.
4. Maintaining orderly arrangement of classroom.
5. Supervising pupil clean-up time.
6. Watering plants.
7. Adjusting shades and drapes.

E. Audio-Visual Assistance

1. Ordering and returning films, filmstrips, and A-V materials.
2. Setting up and operating A-V equipment.
3. Preparing A-V materials.
4. Ordering and returning A-V equipment.

Remember: Confidentiality is a must!

Forest Hills Special Education Cooperative
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Confidentiality Information

Both Federal and State law requires our school to protect the confidentiality of students with disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Family and Educational Right to Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), and Indiana's Special Education Rules (Article 7) place specific requirements on schools in order to protect the privacy of student records.

Information in educational records is confidential and must not be disclosed, either orally or in writing, without prior written parental consent.

Generally, any written material concerning a student maintained by a school is considered an educational record. Personally identifiable information, such as the student's name, name of the student's parents, or personal characteristics that make the student's identity easily traceable should not be disclosed without parental consent.

School documents or publications that are available to the public must not differentiate students with disabilities from other students. School yearbooks, school newspapers, or general newspaper articles should identify students with disabilities only as members of the class (e.g., Helen Keller, 5th grade). Do not identify students with labels as Special Education Class, Class for Students with Learning Disabilities or Special Education Preschool Class. This would be considered a breach of confidentiality.

When may information be disclosed without parental consent?

Schools may disclose information from educational records without parental consent to "authorized public agency employees whom the agency has determined to have legitimate education interests" (FERPA). Teachers may discuss educational information with other teachers or staff involved with the student. Teachers may disclose information about a student to an instructional aide if the information is related to the specific special needs and characteristics of the student with whom the aide will be working. However, teachers should also ensure that instructional aides are aware of the policies and requirements concerning confidentiality of personal information.

School officials may disclose information to appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency if the disclosure is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

In general, all school personnel should be cautious when discussing information about children with disabilities with other staff. School personnel should not discuss information in situations or places that are not both educational and confidential. Personally identifiable information should never be shared with anyone who does not have an educational need to know the information.

Thank you for your help in insuring that we observe these federal and state regulations and preserve the privacy and dignity of our students and families.

**ADDITIONAL DUTIES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS
WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

POSITION TITLE: Teachers Assistant

QUALIFICATIONS: 1. High School diploma
2. Previous experience with individuals with disabilities preferred.

JOB GOAL: Paraprofessionals to assist teachers in carrying out individualized education plans for students assigned to the special education program.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Instructional Responsibilities

- a.) Assists teacher with the implementation of individual educational plans recording data as required.
- b.) After receiving instructions, administers informal diagnostic testing.
- c.) Operates audio-visual equipment.
- d.) Provides procedural and instructional assistance to substitute teachers. (The special education paraprofessional will not be used as a substitute teacher, except in emergency situations.)
- e.) Assists students in the area of self-care, as needed, i.e. feeding, personal hygiene, toileting, and transferring students who are in wheelchairs.
- f.) Assists with community based learning activities planned by the teacher.
- g.) Develops an understanding of the individualized education plan for each students, so as to carry out the program effectively and give input to its ongoing development.

2. Behavioral Management and Supervision

- a.) Cooperates with the teacher in implementing procedures for behavior management.
- b.) Assist with bus duties, as required.
- c.) Supervises field trips, hikes, and extra-curricular events when assigned class is involved.
- d.) Assists with restroom, hall, and recess duties, as required.

3. Clerical Responsibilities

- a.) Assists in correcting papers and recording grades.
- b.) Files classroom material and instructional work.
- c.) Assists in preparation of classroom materials.
- d.) Assists teacher in recordkeeping responsibilities.

4. Personal and Ethical Responsibilities

- a) Demonstrates personal care and hygiene skills.

- b) Discuss child's limitations only with the supervising teacher and those directly involved with the child's education program.
- c) Refrains from discussing administrative, interdepartmental, and interschool problems in the presence of students.
- d) Refrains from airing school problems and confidential matters, including personalities outside of school circles.
- e) Refrains from gossiping about problems with those who cannot assist in the solution.
- f) Refrains from expressing differences of opinion or dissatisfaction with the supervising teacher in the presence of the students.

5. **Additional duties may be assigned by the principal.**