

# MONTHLY VISUAL SUPPORT



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## Procedures for Effectively Training Paraeducators

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Paraeducators play a primary role in delivery of learning activities to students in classrooms across the country. A paraeducator's role can be a viable and powerful means of enriching services to students if programs are systematically planned, personnel are properly trained and adequate support and supervision are provided. How can you be sure that paraeducators are well-prepared for their job? There are many well-established and accepted studies in the research literature describing the procedures for appropriately training staff (Sarakoff & Sturmey, 2004). These steps include modeling, instruction, rehearsal with feedback and Coaching. Let's take a closer look at

- ▶ Prepare - Before the paraeducator begins hands-on training, provide them with a thorough knowledge base of skills including instruction, behavioral, literacy, social and language learning techniques for the population being served. Provide continued resources and training throughout the year. A great training resource is [www.autisminternetmodules.org](http://www.autisminternetmodules.org).
- ▶ Modeling / Demonstration - The paraeducator needs to see, hear and touch examples to see how they work in real situations. They should be able to watch the teacher demonstrate the procedures in which they are being trained, during real-time situations, whether it be academic or behavioral procedures. Provide the paraeducator with verbal, written and/or video instructions so they have a visual reminder to look back at, should they need review at a time when the teacher is not readily available.
- ▶ Role-Playing, Practice & Feedback - Provide the paraeducator with an opportunity to role-play both positions of student and assistant. They should be able to try out the skill, strategy or concept in a controlled, safe place (not with students). Provide them with feedback. Keep it real, serious and fun! This step will substantially boost the learning of the paraeducator and increase the likelihood that they will be able to demonstrate the skill when working with the student.
- ▶ Coaching - Coaching is an essential part of training. Coaching involves watching the paraeducator perform the skills with students and providing on the spot, discreet feedback so they can refine their skills. To avoid turning feedback into a punisher, accentuate the positive!