

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



**Handbook for  
Substitute Special Education  
Teaching Assistants  
(Paraprofessionals)**

*Children First*

**Division of Human Resources and Talent  
HR School Support  
SubCentral  
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<https://subcentral.eschoolsolutions.com>

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## Chief Executive Officer's Message



Welcome to the exciting challenge of becoming a Substitute Special Education Teaching Assistant (also known as a Substitute Paraprofessional) in the New York City Department of Education. You have chosen a path that will be, at times, challenging but also highly rewarding. In addition, you are taking on a role that is being increasingly shaped to meet the rigor and expectations of the New York City school system's "Children First" agenda.

The role of a substitute has evolved from being merely a coverage person to one that provides quality classroom assistance on an ongoing basis. You are an integral part of student learning. As a result, being a "coverage" no longer describes the full expectations of the position. The same high standards and accountability expected from permanently assigned Teaching Assistants are also expected from you.

Some important understandings should guide you as you take on assignments:

- Continuation of student learning along a continuum established by the classroom instructor and the permanent teaching assistant is your primary focus.
- Students look to you to establish your authority and to exude self-confidence in your role.
- Each classroom and school has norms that must be quickly grasped to achieve effective instruction.

The Division of Human Resources and Talent has created this handbook primarily:

- To clarify processes associated with being a Substitute Teaching Assistant.
- To describe expectations for Substitute Teaching Assistants.
- To introduce best practices which will enable you to succeed in our schools.

Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with support so that you can help our schools achieve the goal of improving learning for our students.

On behalf of the New York City Department of Education, the parents and our children, we commend you and thank you for your interest and commitment to using your expertise and skills as a Substitute Teaching Assistant.

Lawrence Becker

*Chief Executive Officer, Division of Human Resources and Talent*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>Getting Started: Organization of the New York City Public Schools</b>	<b>1</b>
• Hiring Process	2
<b>SubCentral/SmartFindExpress System</b>	<b>3</b>
• System Overview	3
• Registration for SubCentral	4
<b>General Responsibilities of a Substitute Teaching Assistant</b>	<b>5</b>
• Accepting a Job	5
• Punctuality	5
• Parking	5
• Work Hours	5
• Canceling a Job	6
• Photo ID	6
• Conduct	6
<b>Special Education</b>	<b>7</b>
• Special Education Services	7
• Key Terms Used in Special Education	7
• Characteristics of Disabilities and Appropriate Strategies	8
• Diapering and Toileting	11
<b>Beginning of School Day</b>	<b>14</b>
• Preparing For Your Assignment as a Substitute Teaching Assistant	14
• Important Questions to Ask Upon Arrival at School	14
<b>During The School Day</b>	<b>15</b>
• Instructional Expectations of the Substitute Teaching Assistant	15
• Other Classroom Issues	15
• What to Say and How to Say It	16
• 100 Ways to Say “Good Job!”	17
• Promoting Higher Level Thinking (Bloom’s Taxonomy)	18
<b>End of School Day</b>	<b>19</b>
• Reflections	19
<b>Code of Ethics</b>	<b>20</b>
• Accepting Responsibilities	20
• Professional Relationships	20
• Do Not Use (DNU) Policy	21
• Social Media	22
• Procedures in Case of Arrest (C-105)	22

<b>Additional Information</b>	<b>23</b>
• Becoming a Full Time Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional)	23
• Career Training Program	24
• Payroll	24
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>25</b>
• The School Year Calendar	25
• Important Contacts and Links	26
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Sample Tracking Form</b>	<b>28</b>

SubCentral Help Desk – (718) 935-4401  
SubCentral/SmartFindExpress Dial-In (718) 935-6740  
Web Page: <https://subcentral.eschoolsolutions.com>  
SubCentral Help Desk E-Mail: [subcentral@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:subcentral@schools.nyc.gov)

The New York City Department of Education- Division of Human Resources and Talent-[schools.nyc.gov](https://schools.nyc.gov)



## GETTING STARTED

### Organization of the New York City Department of Education

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The New York City Public School system is the nation's largest. There are over 1.1 million children and more than 1,700 schools with new schools opening every year. There are over 19,000 Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) employed in New York City Public Schools. Substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) cover the absences of permanently assigned Teaching Assistants serving in a special education, bilingual or pre-kindergarten assignment.

Community and High School Superintendents supervise schools, evaluate principals, and work to ensure that schools meet accountability targets and perform other duties required by statutes and the Chancellor.

There are internal and external organizations that offer packages of differentiated instructional and administrative support which are available to schools. They help schools achieve their accountability targets provide professional development support, design programs for high need populations and attract and support high quality instructors.

The Child First Networks (CFN), seek to consolidate services to our schools. The CFN is designed to integrate operational and instructional support for schools. The goal is to expand the philosophy of devolving as much decision-making power as possible to the people who know schools best: principals, teachers and school staff. Each CFN employs a small cross-functional team directly accountable to principals that delivers personalized service to schools. The ultimate goal is to streamline operations and build capacity within schools so school-based staff can focus their time on instruction and accelerate student achievement.



## **SUBSTITUTE SPECIAL EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL HIRING PROCESS**

In order to become a full-time Paraprofessional, one must first become a Substitute Special Education Paraprofessional. The role of the Substitute Special Education Paraprofessional is to assist teachers in the classroom, and/or assist with the daily care of students with emotional, cognitive, physical handicaps, autism and other special needs. Substitute Special Education Paraprofessionals are contacted on an as needed basis to cover absences reported by school-based full-time Paraprofessionals.

New eligibility requirements and application procedures have been implemented for the position of Substitute Special Education Paraprofessional. Applications are being accepted only from individuals who have been nominated by a principal using our online process. After a principal has completed the online nomination, an email is sent to the nominee with instructions on how to complete the online application. Once the nominee submits the application, an email is sent listing the next steps necessary to work as a substitute paraprofessional New York City public schools. The NYCDOE will accept applications only when vacancies exist or are anticipated. If applications are not being accepted, it is recommended that candidates continue to view our website, <http://schools.nyc.gov/careers/subpara> for updates.

The minimum eligibility requirements to submit an application for the Substitute Special Education Paraprofessional position are as follows:

- A High School diploma (or the recognized equivalent, e.g. GED)
- Proficiency in reading, writing and speaking the English language
- Authorization to work in the USA

The applications of those candidates meeting the minimum eligibility requirements will be further reviewed to identify candidates whose qualifications, experience, interests and availability best match the requirements of the position. Those selected to advance further will be required to pay a processing fee and fulfill the following requirements to be eligible to serve as a Substitute Special Education Paraprofessional:

- Demonstrate proficiency in the English language during an interview and a written essay assessment administered by the NYC Department of Education
- Complete a NYS approved workshop in Child Abuse Identification  
<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/ca.html>
- Complete a NYS approved workshop in School Violence Prevention  
<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/save.html>
- Successfully pass the New York State Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills test (NYSATAS) [www.nystce.nesinc.com](http://www.nystce.nesinc.com)
- Successfully complete the DOE supported and authorized online training program for Paraprofessionals
- Complete the SubCentral and Blood Borne Pathogens workshops conducted by the NYC Department of Education
- Successfully pass a criminal/employment background investigation after being fingerprinted by the New York City Department of Education (fees apply)
- Additional requirements may be added as state or city requirements change

# SubCentral SubCentral

## SubCentral/SmartFindExpress System

SubCentral is the central operations division, or “**home base**” for Substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals). The purpose of the system is to:

- Ensure the continuity of classroom instruction and student services by assigning qualified Substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) to fill absences.
- Remove the responsibility currently placed on principals and school staff to locate suitable substitutes when full-time Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) are absent.
- Track and maintain information on absences and substitute usage.
- Ensure special education students receive the support needed when Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) must be absent.

### System Overview

SubCentral/SmartFindExpress Internet System is an electronic means for reporting absences and arranging for substitutes to fill vacancies created by the absences. The substitute module of the SubCentral/SmartFindExpress System allows quick and easy access to the information you need to review your profile, search for jobs, review or cancel assignments. This guide provides instructions for performing these tasks using an Internet browser or telephone.

SubCentral/SmartFindExpress automates the absence entry process, your search for day to day assignments and the job assignment process. Telephone Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and computer Internet browser software (such as Internet Explorer), both communicate with SubCentral/SmartFindExpress to update information in the SubCentral/SmartFindExpress database. You are strongly encouraged to use Internet access whenever possible as it is much easier to access job assignments manually rather than IVR.

SubCentral/SmartFindExpress automates, prioritizes, assigns and dispatches available substitutes for the job. You have the ability to decline jobs, upon which the system repeats the process for the next selected substitute in sequence. SubCentral/SmartFindExpress records the assignment and tracks the status through completion, for record keeping and management reports.

SubCentral/SmartFindExpress selects you to fill absences and places calls to you during the specified call-out times. You can also call into the system or use your computer to search for available jobs. SubCentral/SmartFindExpress can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. SubCentral is the central operations division or your “**home base.**” When in doubt, contact the SubCentral Help Desk at (718) 935-4401 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or via email at [subcentral@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:subcentral@schools.nyc.gov).

## REGISTRATION FOR SUBCENTRAL

### **First Time Registrants**

- When you have been approved and processed to serve as a Substitute Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional) you will receive an Employee Identification System (EIS) Number.
- Please memorize this number. You will use it regularly throughout your career with the Department of Education.
- You will need this number in order to register to use the SubCentral System and create a PIN.
- For those who are registering for the first time, your EIS number is both your Access ID and PIN number. Then you must change your PIN as part of completing the registration process by calling 718-935-6740.



### **All Registrants**

- You must register with the SubCentral System to be called for substitute assignments.
- Your Access ID and PIN are used for all interactions with the system and should **never** be used by anyone else.
- You can register and change your PIN number by calling (718) 935-6740.
- If you are not registered, you WILL NOT be able to be called and offered any job assignments.

You can access SubCentral/SmartFindExpress System directly through the link: <https://subcentral.eschoolsolutions.com> or through the Division of Human Resources link that also includes detailed information on:

- Logging In
- Registration
- Using the SubCentral System
- Certification Workshops
- Salary
- Online Application
- Career Opportunities

**You must register with the SubCentral System to be called for substitute assignments.**

## **General Responsibilities of a Substitute Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional)**

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### **Accepting a Job**

- Whenever possible, you should use the SubCentral/SmartFindExpress System to accept jobs you are offered.
- Once you have done so, please make a personal note of the **date, time, location, location phone number, job number** and other information pertinent to the assignment.
- If you accept a job directly from school personnel, it is important to take notes and details of any pertinent information regarding those assignments.

### **Punctuality**

- You must report for duty before the official start of the school day.
- Many experienced substitutes recommend arriving at school at least **one hour before** the start of school in order to meet with the teacher they will be assisting in order to ascertain the duties for the day.
- Schools have different starting times, so be sure to listen to the time given in your assignment information to know when to report.
- If you accept an assignment from SubCentral/SmartFindExpress at a time close to the beginning of the school day and you believe you may not get to the school on time, call the school, explain your situation and ask if your services are still needed.

### **Parking**

- Throughout our city finding an appropriate parking space, especially around a school, is often very difficult. You are strongly encouraged to use public transportation whenever possible to avoid difficulties in finding parking spaces.
- If you do drive, give yourself plenty of extra time to find an appropriate parking space.

### **Work Hours**

- The beginning and ending times for Substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) will vary from school to school.
- Be certain to listen carefully to the start times as indicated by the SubCentral/SmartFindExpress System.
- When in doubt, call the school in advance to verify the start time and get the directions to the school if needed, or check your assignment in the SubCentral System for the school's starting time and location.
- A map of each school is available on the Department of Education's main website at [www.schools.nyc.gov](http://www.schools.nyc.gov) Go to the website and type in the name or number of the school on the main page of the website.
- You may also call the MTA at (718) 330-1234 or secure directions through <http://mta.info>, [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com), and [www.hopstop.com](http://www.hopstop.com) or other online resources.

### **Renewal Requirements**

- Substitutes are required to be aware of and to fulfill all renewal requirements in order to work the following school year. Please visit the Substitute Paraprofessional web page to view the current renewal requirements at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Careers/SubPara>

# Knowledge is Power

## Canceling a Job

- Once you accepted a job, it is critical that you either fulfill the commitment or cancel the job in a timely manner.
- If after accepting a job, you find the need to cancel the job, you must do so at least 1½ hours before the start of the job.
- Failure to do so may result in a principal excluding you from working at his/her school in the future. Repeated failure to do so will result in disciplinary action including suspension and/ or termination.
- Cancellations can be done using the SubCentral/SmartFindExpress (SFE) System and following the prompts to cancel a job.
- If you attempt to cancel the job after the 1½ hour deadline (approximately 6:00 a.m. the morning of the assignment), you will not be allowed to do so in the SubCentral/SmartFindExpress System and you must call the school administrator to cancel the job.

## Photo ID

- All substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) are required to have proper NYC DOE photo ID with them at all times and to present it upon request.
- Photo ID cards can be obtained at 65 Court Street, Room 102, Brooklyn, NY.
- Please be advised that you will not be issued your employee ID card until all requirements have been met and you have been approved for employment.

## Conduct

- Substitute Teaching Assistants are expected to maintain high standards of professional appearance to reflect professional dignity and to serve as a role model for students.
- New York City policy prohibits the use of tobacco products anywhere on school property as well as at school sponsored events.
- Cellular telephones and pagers for staff are allowed in the schools as long as they are turned off and out of sight during the school day. No calls should be made or received during the instructional day or during after school meetings with the exception of the duty-free lunch period.
- New York City prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance, illicit drug, and alcohol, as those terms are defined in state and federal law, in the workplace, on school premises, or as part of any related activities.

# Special Education

## Special Education Services

Special Education is an integrated set of individualized services, not necessarily a location. Here are some possibilities for Special Education services:

1. A general education classroom with some students with special needs who spend all or part of their day in the classroom with support from Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals).
2. A resource room where students are pulled from their classrooms for small periods of the day for individual or small group instruction.
3. A Special Education teacher spending time in multiple general education classrooms, co-teaching with the general education teacher with mixed groups of students (inclusion model).
4. A self-contained classroom with students grouped with similar disabilities.

This diversity may seem challenging, but can be very rewarding if you are ready to encounter a variety of experiences throughout your day and from assignment to assignment.

## Key Terms Used in Special Education

As a Substitute Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional), you need to have a basic understanding of terms and acronyms used in Special Education situations. Some terms you may encounter are:

- **Assistive Technology:** The use of devices that increase the ability of students to get along in society or that improve their quality of life (wheelchairs, computers, hearing aids, etc.).
- **Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** An individualized, written program that is developed and carried out by the members of the IEP team. It details goals, objectives and practices specific to the particular student's needs and abilities.
- **IEP Team:** A group of educational and related services personnel who develop, carry out, and evaluate the individual education plan, or IEP.
- **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP):** A plan written by the IEP team for an individual student that specifically outlines what procedures and practices will be used to reinforce positive behaviors and decrease undesirable behaviors.
- **Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA):** The practice of obtaining direct and frequent measures of student performance based on a series of objectives from a classroom curriculum.
- **Inclusion:** Involving students with disabilities as active participants in general education classroom activities. Five effective, or attitudinal, benefits of inclusion are:

1. the nondisabled students learn to be more responsive to others;
  2. new and valued relationships develop;
  3. nondisabled students learn something about their own lives and situations;
  4. students learn about values and principles; and
  5. students gain an appreciation of diversity in general.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** A location in which students have a maximum opportunity to interact with students who do not have disabilities.
  - **Public Law 94-142:** This law, now known as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) entitles all students with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 to a free, appropriate public education. The law defines individuals with disabilities to include those who are mentally challenged, hard of hearing, deaf, speech-impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, or orthopedically impaired; have multiple handicaps; or have other health impairments or learning disabilities and therefore, need special education services.
  - **Section 504:** This section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against people based on their disability. Students may not be left out of a public school activity only because of a disability. The major difference between Section 504 and IDEA is that the definition of a disability is broader under Section 504. In addition to the disabilities listed in the IDEA section, it covers students with AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis, allergies, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and other conditions.

## **Characteristics of Disabilities and Appropriate Strategies**

### **Autism**

Autism is a variable developmental disorder that is characterized by impairment of the ability to form normal social relationships, by impairment of the ability to communicate with others, and by stereotyped behavior patterns. Autism can affect language, measured intelligence, rate of development, and responses to people, events, and objects. Autism affects each child differently and its characteristics can fall anywhere on a spectrum that ranges from mild to severe. Students with autism may not communicate or socialize in typical ways. They may also preoccupy themselves with objects or items that seem unimportant. You might see other behaviors such as body rocking, head banging, unusual and repetitive hand movements, uncommon posturing, or repeated speech.

Students with autism need explicit assistance in identifying cues for social occasions and responding in ways considered appropriate by others. When interacting with students with autism, use the communication system they use. Many students with autism require a very structured classroom, clear expectations, fast-paced instruction, and positive consequences for acceptable behavior. Keep classroom activities as regular and predictable as possible.

### **Blindness or Low Vision**

Students are legally blind if they can see (with glasses) at 20 feet what other people see at 200 feet. Because of their severely impaired or nonexistent vision, they need assistance in understanding their place in space and may read using the Braille language. Students with low vision may use computers or books with large print.

When working with students who are blind, be sure to keep the classroom environment and layout consistent. Find out what assistive devices the student uses and allow those devices to be readily available. Ask students if you may assist them in moving from one place to the next.

### **Deaf or Hearing Impaired**

Deafness is severe hearing loss to a degree that a student can't hear spoken language even with hearing aids. A hearing impairment is not as severe but still affects classroom performance. Some deaf students or students with hearing impairments may have delays in their speech or language development and may use alternate forms of communication (sign language, communication boards, or computers).

Speak clearly with your face and lips in full view of the student. Do not talk loudly unless the student asks you to. Use the form of communication that the student uses.

### **Emotional Disorders**

Students with an emotional disorder may display a range of behaviors different from those expected in classrooms. The behaviors may include aggression, violence, verbal threats, destruction of property, seeking attention inappropriately, tantrums, hyperactivity, compulsiveness, impulsiveness, irritability or withdrawal. Students with an emotional disorder seem to be unable to control their behavior. They may appear to have poor memory, a short attention span, and a poor image of themselves.

Give students with emotional disorders genuine praise for their success. Point out the student's successes so that s/he can build his/her self-esteem. Make expectations small and achievable. Maintain trust by making eye contact, talking in a straightforward way, and listening carefully.

### **Learning Disabilities**

Generally, students with learning disabilities have deficits affecting information processing (input and output of language), perception (distinguishing letters, numbers, and symbols), memory (auditory or visual), or attention (distractibility). These students may have problems in reading, writing, spelling, math, listening or speaking. They do not learn at expected rates and may become frustrated, angry or withdrawn.

Try to understand the student's frustration, but don't accept "I don't know" as an answer. Allow more time to complete the assignment/task and be patient. Teach lessons in small parts and combine auditory and visual information (say it and write it).

### **Developmental Disabilities**

Sometimes Developmental Disability is called cognitive impairment or intellectual disability. Intellectual characteristics and adaptive behavior among students with mental disability are significantly below average. Students are classified with Developmental Disabilities before age 18 based on their low IQ score and limited adaptive behaviors (personal and social standards).

Students with Developmental Disabilities learn more gradually than their peers and consequently, their skills are often delayed in comparison to their peers without disabilities. If students have mild limitations, they need special instruction but they

communicate, respond to instructions, and care for themselves. Students with severe cognitive impairment require intensive instruction, have limited communication skills, and require training to care for themselves.

Your interaction with students with such challenges will depend on the specific student. Use clear and simple language and check for understanding. Get the student's attention (say his/her name and make eye contact) before offering instructions. Break tasks into small parts. Recognize students when they are successful and be specific in your praise. Students will often imitate what they hear and see, so always model appropriate social behaviors.

### **Multiple Disabilities**

The multiple disabilities category is for students with two or more disabilities, like cognitive impairment and cerebral palsy, or blindness and deafness. Students with multiple disabilities present a considerable challenge and need highly specialized instruction dependent on specific needs.

See the sections related to the student's specific disabilities as you interact with students with multiple disabilities.

### **Orthopedic Impairments**

Physical and neurological disabilities fall into this category. These include cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and muscular dystrophy. Students may use assistive technology devices for mobility, communication, or independence. Characteristics of students vary based on the type and severity of the impairment.

- Students with **Cerebral Palsy** experience physical and neurological problems because of damage to the nervous system that occurred before, during, or immediately after birth. The student's muscles may be rigid and contracted. Coordination, mobility, balance, and communication may be affected.
- Students with **Spina Bifida** experience a birth defect of damage to the spinal cord. Students may experience motor impairment, muscle weakness, or paralysis.
- **Muscular Dystrophy** is the progressive deterioration of muscles connected to the skeleton so students have limited muscle movement and mobility.

Appropriate interaction depends on the specific characteristics of the student. Some students may require physical lifting or transferring. Be sure that you have been trained in the correct body positioning so that you do not injure the student or yourself.

### **Other Health Impairments**

These impairments are those that are not covered in the other categories. Students with disabilities are classified here if they experience attention deficit problems, epilepsy, heart conditions, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, lead poisoning, arthritis, or diabetes.

If a student with epilepsy experiences a seizure, remain calm and follow the procedures dictated by the teacher.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

ADHD is a condition that affects the areas of the brain that helps students control impulses, concentrate and organize. Studies have shown that it can be treated with medicine, therapy, and other support. When working with students with attention deficit issues, keep in mind that they have difficulty attending to tasks in the classroom and may appear impulsive or out-of-control. They are easily distracted.

It is helpful if you have the student sit where they will not be disturbed by people passing by their desk. Keep instructional materials and manipulatives out of the student's reach until it is time to use them. Describe expectations positively instead of what should not be done. Let the students learn by doing hands-on activities. Keep instruction fast-paced if the student appears bored; slow instruction if s/he appears hyperactive.

### **Speech or Language Impairments**

Speech impairments include articulation (abnormal production of sounds), stuttering (speech fluency), and voice problems (too loud, soft or hoarse). Language impairments can include receptive (understanding spoken or written communication) or expressive (speaking clearly) problems. Often, these impairments affect academic skills.

Be supportive and reassuring – students are sometimes self-conscious of their disorder and may give up easily. Listen carefully and patiently and use clear and simple instructions.

### **Traumatic Brain Injury**

These students have experienced severe head injuries. Depending on the part of the brain that was injured and the severity of the damage, the student's speech, language, memory, motor function, intelligence and behavior may be affected.

Use understanding, patience, and encouragement as the student works toward recovering abilities and skills.

### **Diapering and Toileting**

Due to the wide range of disabilities, both physical and cognitive, and the various ages and physical sizes of students in the NYC school system who require these services, procedures should be tailored to each individual student's specific needs.

Students may require diapering due to health, physical or cognitive problems which necessitate the use of diapers. These students may require changing either on a daily, scheduled or on an "as needed" basis. In any event, these tasks should be performed with dignity and respect for the student in a private, safe and secure setting.

The student with whom you are working may have special needs requiring special procedures. This information should be included in the IEP or 504 forms which are tailored specifically for the student with whom you are working. If the IEP is incomplete, you should consult the teacher.

### **Guidelines**

- Inspect the designated changing area and make sure that all of the necessary equipment and supplies are available (gloves, wipes, water, soap, etc.)
- Bring the student to the changing area
- Prepare the surface where the student will be changed by wiping with a sanitized cloth and/or placing protective paper on the surface
- Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – gloves (sleeves and apron if necessary)
- Talk to student about what you are doing
- Transfer student to changing table
- Remove soiled diaper and place in a covered waste receptacle
- Clean student using wipes, soap and water
- Dispose of soiled gloves and put on a clean pair of gloves
- Place clean diaper on student
- Transfer student from changing area
- Remove paper and clean surface with a sanitized cloth

The changing of gloves and cleaning the surface is necessary to avoid cross-contamination of infected or contagious material and is a safe handling procedure which should be practiced.

### **Facilities**

While we would want the ideal for all staff and students in the form of modern, spacious changing areas, that is not the reality. Many of our schools are old and were not built to accommodate the various needs of our students. However, this should not mean that our students should be treated with any less dignity and respect.

### **Toileting**

As with diapering students, toileting is another task that requires a certain amount of equipment and supplies in order to ensure the safety of both students and staff. There are different reasons why a student may require assistance with toileting, including physical and cognitive impairment as well as toilet training in the early grades.

### **Learning to use the Bathroom**

- Be patient, consistent, positive and use praise to help children become successful
- Toileting routines at home and school should be as similar as possible
- All children should be taught how to correctly wash their hands after using the bathroom

## **Guidelines**

- Prepare toilet by wiping with a sanitized/disinfectant cloth and/or placing protective paper
- Put on PPE – gloves (sleeves and aprons if necessary)
- Talk to student about what you are doing
- Assist with clothes
- Stabilize student on toilet seat if required
- Clean student when finished
- Dispose of soiled gloves and put on a clean pair of gloves
- Transfer student from toilet

## **Cleaning up after Toileting Accidents**

- Children should never be reprimanded for having an accident
- Accidents should be treated as teachable moments for children and indications to staff that they need to increase the frequency of reminders and trips to the bathroom
- All staff members assisting with toilet accident cleanup must use appropriate supplies
- All staff members must wear disposable gloves when changing children's clothes or diapers

The section above was adapted from *Enhancing Skills of Paraeducators: A Video-Assisted Training Program, Second Edition*, Robert L. Morgan, et al. 2001. ISBN 1-931975-19-1. Technology Research and Innovation in Special Education (TRI-SPED), Utah State University.



# Beginning of the School Day

## Preparing For Your Assignment as a Substitute Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional)

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The following are some best practices used by effective Substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) in order to assist in the instruction of special needs children.

- Meet with the teacher to review your assignment for the day. Ask the teacher if there are any special health, mobility, toileting, etc. issues of which you should be aware.
- Familiarize yourself with the names of the children and the classroom setting.
- Ask the teacher if you can familiarize yourself with the physical layout of the school, including the classrooms you may be utilizing, lavatories, entrances and exits, cafeteria and auditorium.
- Introduce yourself to any other Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) working in the classroom; and, if there is time before class, to the teachers and Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) on either side of your classroom, or across the hall.

## Important Questions for Substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) to Ask Upon Arrival

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- What are the special needs of the students with medical and/or special education-Individualized Education Programs (IEP) to whom I have been assigned?
- What are the procedures for school dismissal and fire drills?
- Are there unique classroom or school wide practices to be followed such as "Assembly Day, homeroom, or special announcements?"
- Are there any special events scheduled for the day/ week?
- What types of services (i.e. speech, physical therapy, social work, counseling, etc.) does the child receive and who are the providers?



# During the School Day

## **Instructional Expectations of the Substitute Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional)**

Your primary responsibility is to assist the teacher in providing instructional support and other direct services to students with special needs in order to continue student learning along a continuum established by the teacher. The students you will be assisting will include students with autism, emotional, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities. Some of your duties may include the following:

- One-on-one or small group instruction as outlined by the teacher.
- Reinforcement of behavior through the use of positive supports.
- Teaching daily living skills such as independent feeding and dressing.
- Diapering and toileting after proper instructions are provided.
- Aiding occupational therapists, physical therapists and/ or speech therapists as well as aiding other education providers during instruction.
- Guiding and assisting students in small group instruction settings with class routines and in transitioning from one activity to the next.
- Teaching students, under the direction of the teacher in the following areas: recreation, motor, vocational, socialization and communication.
- Assisting students with ambulation to and from buses, classroom, lunchroom, school-wide arrival and dismissal.
- Collecting data documenting student behavior for instructional purposes.
- Writing separate anecdotal information concerning a student's behavior while they are receiving 1:1 related services.

All substitutes are required to perform related work during the course of the school day in connection with the assignment, including positioning and interacting with students.

## **Other Classroom Issues**

### **Completing Administrative Tasks**

You may be required, at times, to assist with attendance or other classroom records such as: daily attendance forms, subject attendance scan sheets, Delaney cards, etc. Carefully follow the teacher's directions to ensure accuracy.

### **Granting Permission**

Follow the classroom teacher's guidelines for these areas:

- Always ask for documentation if students are being admitted to or pulled out of class.
- If you are granting permission for students to leave class, be mindful that your records, in general, should have at least a first and last name, ID number, time, and a location.
- If you have an official pass, ensure that its use aligns with school policy.

## Facilitating Special Duties

- Ensure that you arrive on time.
- Ask supervisors about your assignment expectations.

### **What to Say and How to Say It**

Throughout the day, you will need to convey instructions, warnings, directions, reprimands and encouragement to students. The most effective way to convey these messages to students is to be **brief, firm and positive**.

#### **Say:**

Speak in a quiet voice  
Use both hands when you climb.  
Climb down the ladder.  
Keep the puzzle on the table.  
Turn the pages carefully.  
Sit on your chair.

#### **Don't Say:**

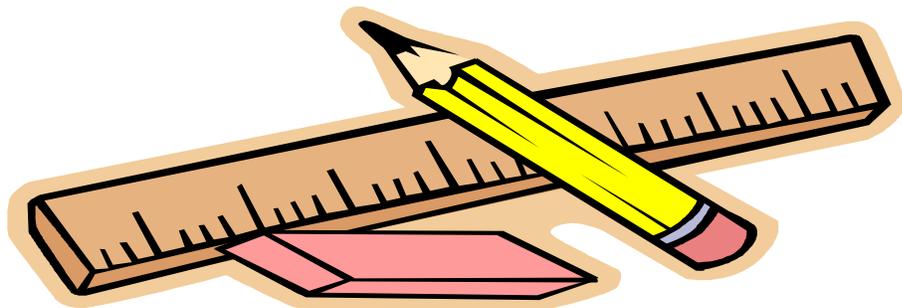
Don't shout.  
You'll fall if you don't watch out.  
Don't jump.  
Don't dump the puzzle pieces on the floor  
Don't tear the book.  
Don't rock your chair.

#### **DO**

- Speak in a calm, kind voice.
- Speak directly to the student; do not call across the room.
- Speak in short, meaningful sentences that the student can understand.
- Try to express your request in a positive way.
- Keep your voice and facial expressions pleasant.
- Speak in short, meaningful sentences that the student can understand.
- Try to express your request in a positive way.
- Keep your voice and facial expressions pleasant.

#### **DON'T**

- Make fun of the student.
- Give students a choice if they cannot have one.
- Compare one student with another, *"Look at how many questions Mary has completed."*



## **100 Ways to Say “Good Job!”**

Everyone knows that a little praise goes a long way. Whether it is spoken or written at the top of a student’s paper, praise reinforces good behavior and encourages quality work. Here are 100 ways to give praise, show interest, and offer encouragement.

1. You’ve got it made.
2. Super!
3. That’s right!
4. That’s good!
5. You are very good at that.
6. Good work!
7. Exactly right!
8. You have just about got it.
9. You are doing a good job!
10. That’s it!
11. Now you have it figured out.
12. Great!
13. I knew you could do it.
14. Congratulations!
15. Not bad.
16. Keep working on it; you are improving.
17. Now you have it.
18. You are learning fast.
19. Good for you!
20. Couldn’t have done it better myself.
21. Beautiful!
22. One more time and you’ll have it.
23. That’s the right way to do it.
24. You did it that time!
25. You are getting better and better.
26. You are on the right track now.
27. Nice going.
28. You haven’t missed a thing.
29. Wow!
30. That’s the way.
31. Keep up the good work.
32. Terrific!
33. Nothing can stop you now.
34. That’s the way to do it.
35. Sensational!
36. You have got your brain in gear today.
37. That’s better.
38. Excellent.
39. That was first class work.
40. That’s the best ever.
41. You have just about mastered that.
42. Perfect.
43. That’s much better than ever before.
44. Much better!
45. Wonderful!
46. You must have been practicing.
47. You did that very well.
48. Fine!
49. Outstanding!
50. Fantastic!
51. Tremendous!
52. Now that’s what I call a fine job.
53. That’s great.
54. You’re really improving.
55. Superb!
56. Good remembering.
57. You’ve got that down pat.
58. You certainly did well today.
59. Keep it up!
60. Congratulations, you got it right.
61. You did a lot of work today.
62. You Rock!
63. Marvelous!
64. I like that.
65. Cool!
66. Way to go!
67. You’ve got the hang of it!
68. You’re doing fine.
69. Good thinking.
70. You’re learning a lot.
71. Good going.
72. I’ve never seen anyone do it better.
73. That’s a real work of art.
74. Keep on trying!
75. Good job.
76. You remembered!
77. That’s really nice.
78. Thanks!
79. That’s “A” work.
80. That’s clever.
81. Very interesting.
82. You make it look easy.
83. Excellent effort.
84. Awesome!
85. That’s a good point.
86. Superior work.
87. I knew you could do it.
88. That looks like it’s going to be a great paper.
89. That’s coming along nicely.
90. That’s an interesting way of looking at it.
91. Out of sight!
92. It looks like you’ve put a lot of work into this.
93. Right on!
94. Congratulations, you only missed...
95. Super-Duper
96. It’s a classic.
97. I’m impressed.
98. Bravo!
99. Phenomenal job!
100. What neat work.

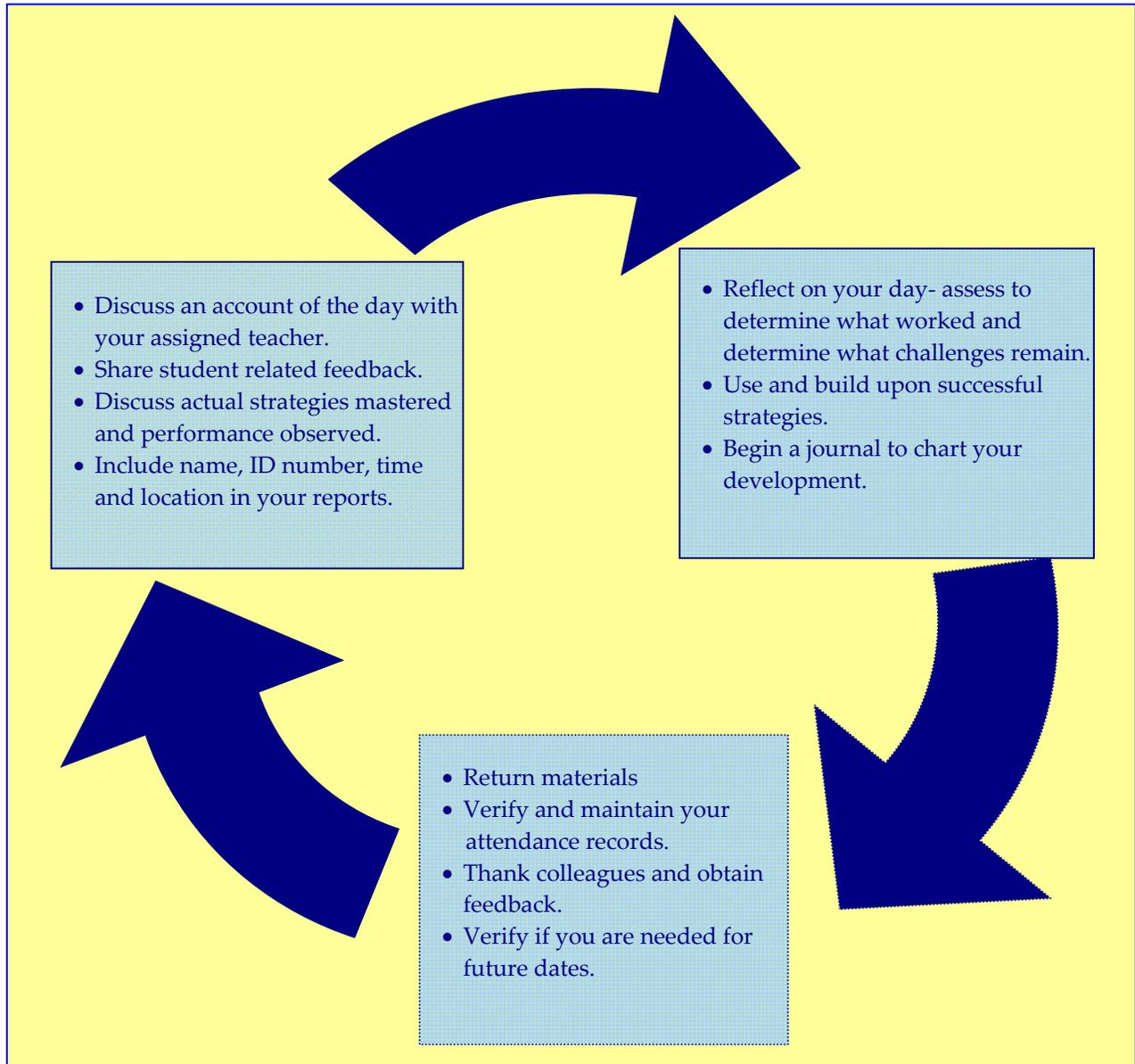
## Resources and General Educational Concepts for Teaching Assistants

<b>PROMOTING HIGHER LEVEL THINKING</b>		
<b>Level of Thinking</b>	<b>Typical Verbs Used</b>	<b>Examples of Questions</b>
<p><b>Knowledge</b> Knowledge questions ask students to recognize, recall, and state facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers</p>	<p>define      draw repeat      record label      identify name      list</p>	<p>NAME the author of the book.</p>
<p><b>Comprehension</b> Comprehension is the ability to understand concepts at a basic level. The student knows the meaning of the information, but does not relate or apply it to other situations.</p>	<p>classify      compare contrast      translate explain      summarize give examples</p>	<p>COMPARE the weather today with the weather yesterday</p>
<p><b>Application</b> Application is the ability to use learned knowledge in particular and concrete situations. The student can apply rules, principles, and concepts in new and appropriate contexts.</p>	<p>apply      calculate complete      demonstrate illustrate      practice solve      use predict      show</p>	<p>COMPLETE the sentence using a vocabulary word from the lesson.</p>
<p><b>Analysis</b> Analysis is the ability to break down a concept into its component parts.</p>	<p>analyze      classify discuss      divide explain      infer inspect</p>	<p>EXPLAIN why it is important to have classroom rules.</p>
<p><b>Synthesis</b> Synthesis is the ability to put together elements or parts to form a whole. The student arranges and combines pieces to form a pattern, structure, or idea that was not clearly evident before.</p>	<p>arrange      combine construct      create design      develop generalize      organize plan      predict categorize      rearrange</p>	<p>PREDICT what would happen if a law was passed that made commercials on television illegal.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b> Evaluation is the ability to judge the value of materials, methods, or ideas. This level of thinking requires students not only to understand the material but to make a judgment based on this understanding.</p>	<p>assess      critique estimate      evaluate judge      rank rate      recommend test      value justify</p>	<p>What requirements for employing a new teacher would you RECOMMEND to the principal?</p>

<http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/teaching-guides/pedagogical/blooms-taxonomy/>

# End of School Day

## Reflections



# Code of Ethics

A code of ethics defines and describes acceptable practices. A code for Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) examines specific responsibilities of the Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional), as well as the relationships that must be maintained with students, parents, teachers, school and community.

## ***ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITIES***

- Recognize that the teacher has the ultimate responsibility for the instruction and management and follow the directions prescribed by him/her.
- Do not communicate progress or concerns about students to parents unless directed to do so by the supervising teacher.
- Refer concerns expressed by parents, students, or others to the supervising teacher.

## ***RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS***

- Discuss a child's progress, limitations, and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in the appropriate setting.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel.
- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a student's disability, race, gender, cultural background or religion.
- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents and staff members.
- Present yourself as a positive adult role model.

## ***RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TEACHER***

- Recognize the teacher as a supervisor and team leader.
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher.
- Discuss concerns about the teacher or teaching methods directly with the teacher.
- When problems cannot be resolved, utilize the appropriate grievance procedures.

## ***RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL***

- Accept responsibility for improving your skills.
- Know school policies and procedures.
- Represent the school district in a positive manner.

Code of Ethics adapted from Supervising Paraeducators in School Settings: A Team Approach, edited by Anna Lou Pickett and Kent Gerlach, 2009, Pro-Ed, Inc.

### **Do Not Use (DNU) Policy**

At the end of each day, schools have the right to determine whether an individual substitute should not be assigned back at that school. There could be many reasons for this, including poor attitude, inability to work in the specific educational environment and types of behaviors (erratic, aggressive, argumentative, etc.). Failing to appear for an assignment or unexcused lateness to an assignment will automatically disqualify you from future assignments at that school.

In order to ensure our schools are getting the best substitutes, each time a complaint is registered, the information is placed in your record. It allows the SubCentral Unit to track your performance at assignments and allows the SubCentral team to maintain details contained within your profile.

- The SubCentral team monitors the substitute's performance regularly and sends letters to the substitute via certified and standard mail each time a school reports an issue with a substitute's work ethic, quality or performance.
- The SubCentral Office then conducts informal conferences with the substitute and their union representative to reach mutual agreements regarding the substitute's continued employment.
- Additional training may be recommended to improve the substitute's overall performance and enhance their quality of employment.
- If there is no improvement, or if the substitute continues to receive negative performance reports, he/she may be blocked from obtaining future employment, be suspended or terminated.



## **Social Media**

All substitutes are required to read the DOE's Social Media Guidelines (<http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/SocialMedia/default.htm>) and adhere to our professional standards of conduct. In an increasingly digital world, we seek to provide our students with the opportunities that multi-media learning can provide. As we challenge our students with new methods of learning, we will ensure that these tools are used responsibly and serve to enrich the learning environment in our schools. It is important for school and Department staff to use these tools in a way that protects the privacy and safety of our students and employees.

Please remember that DOE employees should not use their personal email address for professional social media activities and DOE employees should not communicate with students who are currently enrolled in DOE schools on personal social media sites.

## **Procedures in Cases of the Arrest of Employees (C-105)**

Department of Education employees who have been arrested and charged with a felony, misdemeanor or violation must immediately notify the Office of Personnel Investigation (OPI) in writing and provide a copy of the criminal court complaint. Additionally, if a substitute is on a long term assignment he/she must notify their supervisor. Notification to a supervisor alone does not satisfy this reporting requirement. OPI must be notified separately in writing.

Inquiries concerning this regulation should be directed to:

Administrator, Office of Personnel Investigation  
New York City Department of Education  
65 Court Street – Room 200  
Brooklyn, New York 11201  
Telephone: 718 935-2665 Fax: 718 935-4366/5778



# Additional Information

## BECOMING A FULL TIME TEACHING ASSISTANT (PARAPROFESSIONAL)

### New York City and New York State Qualification Requirements

In order to qualify for full-time employment, you are required to begin as a Substitute Special Education Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional) and you must serve at least 25 days of service in that capacity. You must possess a Level 1 Teaching Assistant certificate from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) along with satisfying any additional requirements. A school may offer you a full time position to fill a vacancy, if no hiring restrictions exist.

By the end of the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) year of full-time service, Level 1 Teaching Assistants must have completed the following:

- 9 semester hours of collegiate study (9 college credits) at an institute of higher learning, approved by the NYSED or regionally accredited institution, which are acceptable toward meeting the requirements for an associate and/or baccalaureate degree.
- Obtained a Teaching Assistant Level II certificate as issued by the NYSED.

By the end of the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) year of service, Level II Teaching Assistants must have completed the following:

- 18 semester hours of collegiate study (18 college credits) at an institute of higher learning, approved by the NYSED or regionally accredited institution, which are acceptable toward meeting the requirements for an associate and/or baccalaureate degree.
- Obtained a Teaching Assistant Level III certificate as issued by the NYSED.

After completing 18 college credits and obtaining a Teaching Assistant Level III Certificate, the following is required:

- Satisfactory completion of 75 clock hours of acceptable professional development during each subsequent five-year professional development period. (A total of 75 hours over the course of five years; **not** 75 hours each year.)

Please refer to New York State's Implementation of the Requirements for Teacher and Paraprofessionals in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) memoranda at [www.highered.nysed.gov/nclbhome.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/nclbhome.htm) for the latest information on Paraprofessionals and the No Child Left Behind Act.

Individuals seeking to become Teaching Assistants must apply directly to the New York State Education Department for certification. The online package may be accessed by logging on to the Office of Teaching Initiative's website at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/index.html>.

### **Career Training Program for Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals)**

The Career Training Program provides full-time Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) with an opportunity to acquire six college credits at participating colleges during each of the Fall, Spring and Summer semesters, through a combination of tuition assistance, released work time and summer stipends. There is no cost to participants.

Substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) are subject to the following restrictions for participation in this program:

- Must be on payroll for at least 30 days
- Must have NO previous college credits
- Can apply for a MAXIMUM of six credits only
- Not eligible for released time
- Not eligible for summer stipend

The NYC Department of Education is entitled to recover from a Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional) who fails to complete the course(s) in which s/he is enrolled the amount of tuition and fees incurred by the Department.

Further information on this program may be obtained from:

Office of School Based Support Services

Career Training Program

65 Court Street, Room 508

Brooklyn, NY 11201

Telephone: 718-935-2449

Fax: 718-935-4262

Email: [ctp@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:ctp@schools.nyc.gov)

### **Payroll**

Substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) are paid twice a month usually during the 2nd and 4th week of the month. There is a one pay period lag to receive payment.

Direct deposit or electronic fund transfer (EFT) is a benefit available to all Department of Education employees. Direct deposit provides for the electronic transfer of the employee's pay directly to the employee's bank account. This service may be accessed through the DOE intranet using the online Payroll Portal <https://payrollportal.nycboe.net> or by contacting the payroll secretary at the school(s) in which you work. A direct deposit form may also be obtained in person at the payroll office on the 10th floor.

If you do not have direct deposit, your check will be routed to the school in which you have worked the most days in that pay period. In the case that you have worked an equal number of days in each of several schools, your paycheck will be routed to the last school in which you worked. Having direct deposit is to your advantage because your check will go directly to your bank account and you won't have to spend time tracking it down or picking it up. Please contact Sub Para Payroll Office at 718 935-4000 with any questions.

# Appendix



## **The School Year Calendar**

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The School Calendar meets the New York State Education Department requirements of a minimum of 180 days in all schools. Our School Year Calendar begins in late August for staff and in early September for students and ends in late June for both.

For current calendar <http://schools.nyc.gov/Calendar/default.htm>

Our Calendar is adhered to without exception, unless notifications of subsequent changes are received pursuant to collective bargaining agreements or for other reasons, provided these other reasons are not inconsistent with collective bargaining or legal obligations.

### **Work Year**

- The work year for Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) begins on the Tuesday after Labor Day and concludes during the last week of June.

### **Work Hours**

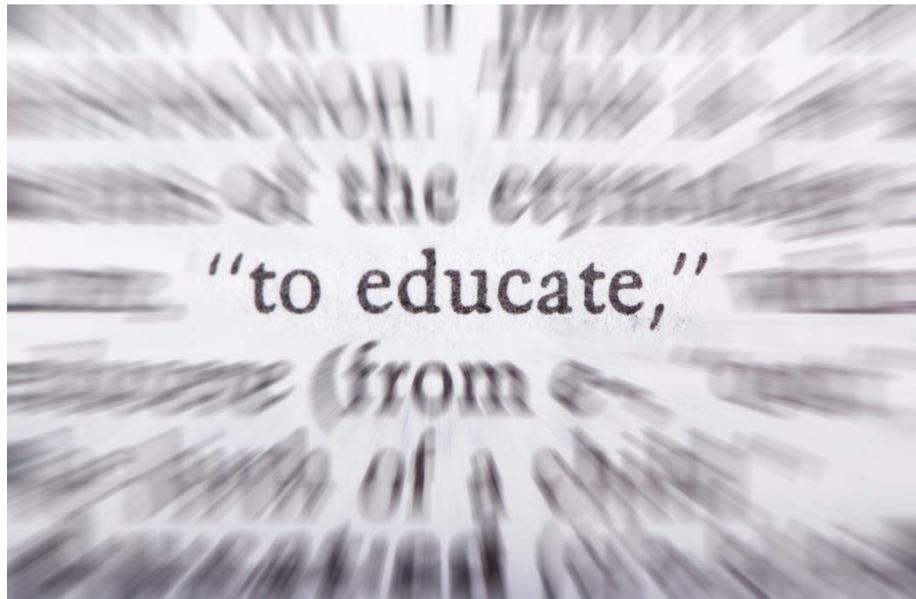
- The work day of full-time Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) is 6 hours and 20 minutes including a duty-free lunch period equal to that of teachers in the school. The day is extended by an additional 37 ½ minutes, Monday through Thursday following student dismissal. Friday's work schedule is 6 hours and 20 minutes.
- The 37 ½ minutes shall be used for tutorials, test preparation and/or small group instruction.
- In single session schools, the day will start no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and end no later than 3:45 p.m.
- Multi-session schools that cannot utilize the additional time in this manner due to space or scheduling limitations will have a 6 hour 50 minute day.

### **Vacation, Holidays and Sick Leave**

- Substitute Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals) are not entitled to accrue vacation or sick leave days.

## **Important Contacts and Links**

- SubCentral Help Desk - (718) 935-4401
- SubCentral E-Mail address - [subcentral@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:subcentral@schools.nyc.gov)
- SubCentral/SmartFindExpress Dial-In (718) 935-6740
- SubCentral Web Page- <https://subcentral.eschoolsolutions.com>
- SubCentral – <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/DHR/SubTeachers.htm>
- United Federation of Teachers (UFT) - <http://www.uft.org>
- New York City Department of Education - <http://schools.nyc.gov>
- New York State Education Department - <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/>
- Teaching Assistant (Paraprofessional) Exams - <http://www.nysatas.nesinc.com>
- Child Abuse Identification Workshop - <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/ca.html>
- School Violence Prevention and Intervention Workshop - <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/save.html>
- Chancellor's Regulations - <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/ChancellorsRegulations/default.htm>
- Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures (The Discipline Code) <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/DisciplineCode/default.htm>
- Teachers Exams - <http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/>
- NY State learning standards - <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/cores.html>
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) - [www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org)



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DATE WORKED	TIME/DATE JOB ACCEPTED	JOB NUMBER	SCHOOL NAME/CODE	FULL TIME PARAPROFESSIONAL NAME	DATE PAID



# Children First

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