

# 3 REASONS WHY WE WON'T BE HIRING MORE PARAPROFESSIONALS

Hiring just one more paraprofessional seems like the logical solution when educators are overwhelmed by individual student needs or behavior. We get it...you want to provide support and it even seems like a good idea...after all...it costs less than hiring another teacher!

But...the request for another paraprofessional often means that other issues are at play and the solution may create more negative consequences.

In fact, 20 years of research suggests that saying "No" to more paraprofessionals is a better long-term strategy to support educators and create more inclusive schools.

## 3 Reasons MORE Paras are NOT the answer.

### I. UNINTENDED NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDENTS

Research repeatedly demonstrates that paraprofessionals come with many unintended, and often negative consequences, including:

- Significant reduction in teacher engagement with students assigned to a paraprofessional
- Negative social and academic consequences solely based upon the proximity of the adult (e.g., one-on-one aide)
- Stigmatization, limited sense of agency, and negative impact on a student's sense of belonging
- Creation of new behavior problems (e.g., withdraw, escape, refusal, learned helplessness, over dependence on adult support)
- Necessary peer relationships are replaced with paraprofessional relationships

### 2. HUMAN SUPPORT IS THE SUPPORT OF LAST RESORT.

Students with the most needs also require instruction and support delivered by adults with the most skill. Paraprofessionals, who often support students with the most significant needs, are often those with the least amount of training. Think about it for a minute, when was the last time your paras received training that was directly related to their roles and responsibilities? In particular, how much training have they received around effective co-teaching, differentiation, and effective ways to support behaviors that are challenging? The research is clear...with training and supervision, paras can take on critical roles in the delivery of inclusive education...even for students with the most support needs.

### 3. BAND-AID APPROACH TO SYSTEMIC ISSUES.

Often a para is hired for a student who only needs temporary support or in a classroom where better instruction is desperately needed for all students. When we hire more paras, it's a band-aid, or short-term fix; and yet we continue to pay for them year after year. Basically, any para you hire becomes a permanent employee. Not a financially smart decision. We have to problem solve together about how to fix the actual issue. A better investment is more training for the paraprofessionals and educators you currently have.

## How you might deliver the message.

Start where you agree and then move on to what YOU are willing to do.

For example, say, "I agree our students need support...and we have the following things at the ready" (insert your own menu of options - the following area a few examples).

- On-demand training
- Books or book clubs on specific topics
- Link to key articles or blogs with practical strategies
- Access to a consultant or problem solving team
- Willing administrators or coaches to come into the classroom and provide temporary support

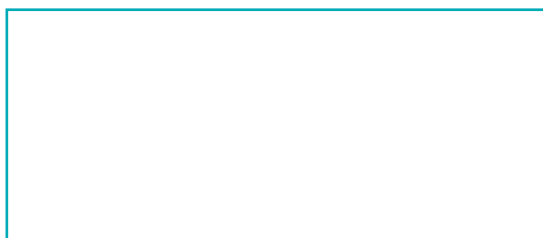
Here are a few more examples of what you can say using the "I agree" strategy:

- I agree our students need thoughtful inclusive support. Let's look together at this [checklist of supplemental supports, aids, and services](#).
- I agree our students and staff need to be and feel safe. I will come in and observe and then we can brainstorm together new ideas to keep everyone safe and thriving in your class.

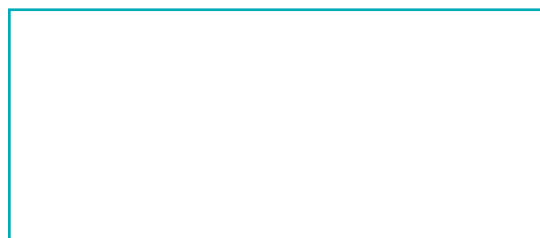
## Try it on your own...

*write your own response using the "I agree" formula.*

**I agree our students do need...**



**And I can support you with that by...**



**GET PRACTICAL AND FOCUSED ANSWERS TO ALL OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ABOUT INCLUSIVE SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS.**

*Whether you're a seasoned paraprofessional or an educator supporting them, click below and learn all about Para-Bytes.*

**START NOW**

