

SCHOOL-BASED

JOB COACH

TRAINING MANUAL



Nebraska Department of Education
Job Coach Technical Assistance Guide

The Role of the Para-Educator/ Job Coach

You are a very important component in the overall success of a student's learning tasks and appropriate social skills in the workplace. You are a valuable member of the team and it is our hope that this training will supply you with additional tools for the job.

You are also important in the ongoing relationship between the community and your school district. The manner in which you deliver job coaching services will be viewed by individuals in the workplace and can be very influential in affecting changes in the myths about persons who experience disabilities.

What Is A Para-Educator?

A para-educator is a school employee whose position is either instructional in nature, or who delivers other services to students. A para-educator works under the supervision of a certified teacher. The teacher is responsible for the overall management of the classroom, including the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs and student progress. "Para" means "alongside" of an educator.

What Is the Code of Ethics for a Para-Educator?

A code of ethics defines and describes acceptable practices. The following code of ethics for para-educators outlines the specific responsibilities of the para-educator, 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 of students. You must follow the directions prescribed by him/her.
- Engage only in activities for which you are qualified or trained.
- You must not communicate progress or concerns about students to parents unless directed to do so by the teacher.
- You must refer concerns expressed by parents, students, or others to the teacher.

Relationships with Students and Parents:

- You should discuss a student's progress, limitations, and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in the appropriate setting.

- You should discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel.
- You must refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a student's disability, race, sex, cultural background or religion.
- It is important to 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.

Relationship with the School:

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

What Is A Job Coach?

A job coach is usually a para-educator employed by the school district or educational service unit to work in employment settings with persons who have disabilities. Job coaching may be one of many responsibilities assigned to a paraprofessional/job coach.

What Is The Role of the Job Coach?

A job coach provides educational services in the work environment for students with disabilities. Instruction is provided in the community work setting which allows the student increased opportunities to learn employable skills and behaviors. Your role is to follow the Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives for each assigned student.

Because of your importance in the overall success of a student's work experience, it is imperative that you **demonstrate professionalism** in your daily activities. You will be setting an example for the student on the proper way to dress, behave and interact in the workplace. There are numerous areas, therefore, that you should be conscious of when you perform your job as a paraprofessional/job coach.

Part of your role as a para-educator/job coach will be to demonstrate the following:

- Proper dressing and grooming skills

- Punctuality
- Appropriate ways to interact with others in the workplace
- Ability to pro-actively problem solve
- Effective communication
- Patience
- Ability to use respectful and “people first” language in all phases of support activities

Job Coach Responsibilities

Typically, Job Coach responsibilities may include the following:

- Become familiar with each student’s IEP and vocational objectives designed for the work site.** It is your responsibility to carry out these IEP goals and objectives as assigned.
- Communicate with your supervisor about job training sites on a systematic and consistent basis, including problems and concerns.** You will be expected to “troubleshoot” problems that occur in work sites, such as production problems, the method of performing tasks, relationships with co-workers, boredom, frustration, etc. These problems need to be addressed and communicated with your supervisor.
- Maintain confidentiality about all personal information and educational records concerning students and their families.** As a para-educator/job coach, you will have access to confidential information concerning the students you work with. It is very important that this information be treated with utmost discretion. You will be in settings with numerous individuals outside of the school building. People may approach you with questions about the student’s disability or other types of information about the student. Your response to these individuals should be made in such a way as to focus on the abilities of the student rather than specifics about their disabilities. You should not talk about any student, staff, school personnel, etc. that you are working with when you are in a public setting, especially not referring to that individual by name. Never leave written materials that you have about the student in any public area unattended. Keep all information at school in a designated area.
- Follow district policies for protecting the health, safety, and well being of students.** These policies may vary among school districts; therefore, you will need to refer to your district’s policies. It is imperative that you follow your school district’s policies and procedures for confidentiality very carefully.
- Collect and record data about student performance.** It is important, too, for you to understand that your job is a part of a much larger picture in the overall life of the students you are working with. Each job site enables those students to gain valuable skills. It will be extremely helpful for you to maintain detailed reports on how the student is doing at the work site. The information should include any changes noted in the student’s behavior, their attitude about doing the work, the speed with which

they are able to pick up assigned tasks, and how well the student is able to do the assigned tasks when you are not directly prompting them. Later, this information will be valuable to adult service providers in helping to determine the types of work skills that best match the student's unique skills, interests and abilities.

- Follow through with suggestions and procedures given by your supervisor.** These instructions may come to you in the form of a task analysis, where specified job tasks are broken down into smaller, teachable increments. Remember that the community work experiences are to be learning experiences for the student. Your role will be to assist them in learning the appropriate social skills and the necessary work skills as outlined in the student's IEP.
- Facilitate communication with employers, as appropriate.** This would include, among other things, schedule adjustments, changes, and feedback of student and staff performance.
- Serve as a link between the school and community work site setting.** Remember, you are a public relations ambassador.
- A job coach may be asked to transport students.
- A job coach may also be a part of the student's IEP planning team.

WHAT IS A TASK ANALYSIS?

A task analysis breaks down a task into small learning units or teachable steps. By breaking the task into teachable steps, you can help an individual concentrate on one step at a time. For example, brushing teeth consists of many different steps that generally should proceed in a certain order. Each step or unit should be the stimulus for the next step.

EXAMPLE OF TASK ANALYSIS

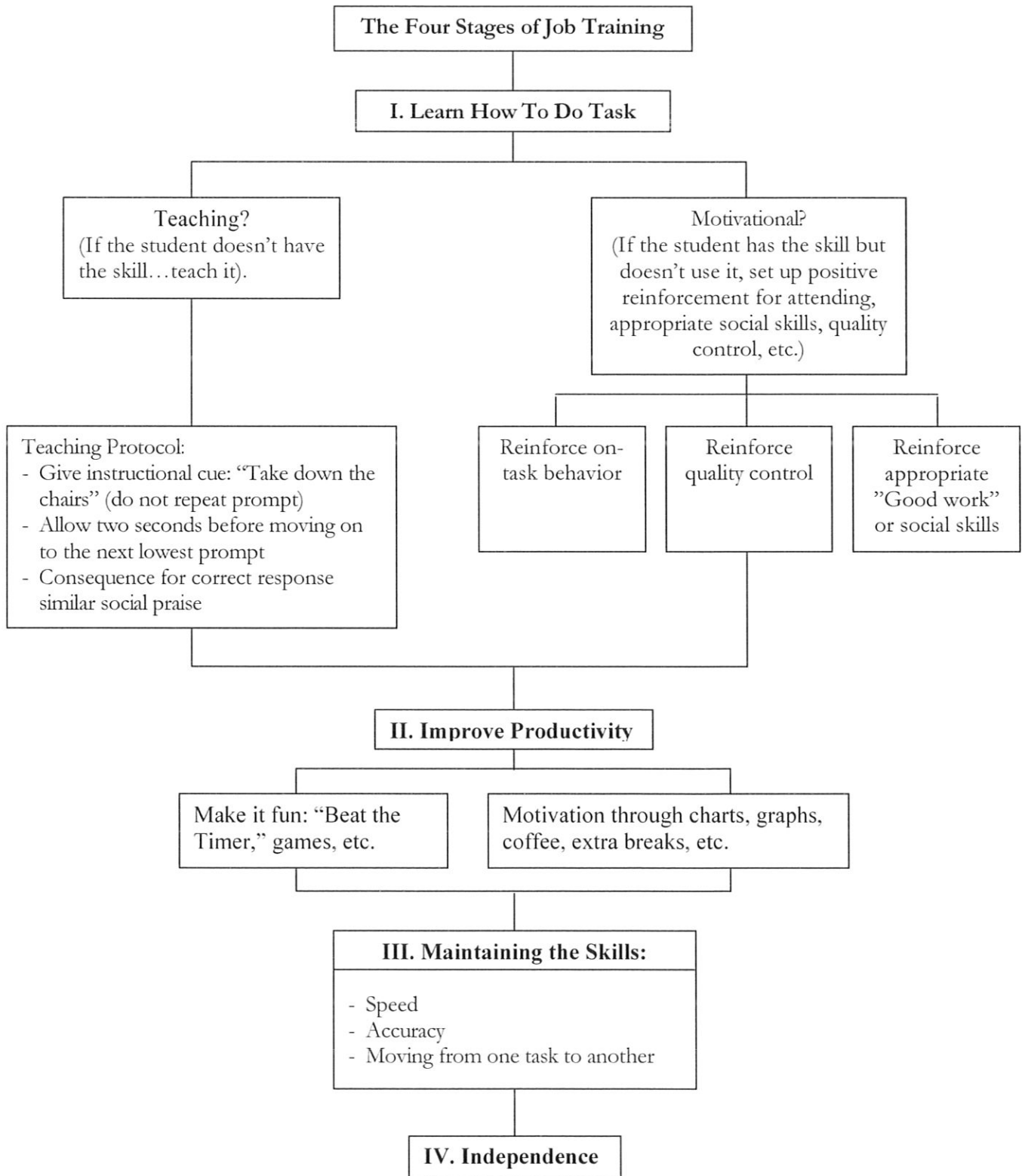
BRUSHING TEETH

<u>Natural Cue</u>	<u>Response</u>
1. After breakfast	Go into bathroom
2. In bathroom	Get toothbrush
3. Toothbrush in hand	Get toothpaste
4. Have brush & paste	Put paste on brush
5. Paste on brush	Brush teeth
6. Teeth brushed	Spit out
7. All spit out	Rinse mouth
8. Mouth rinsed	Rinse brush
9. Brush rinsed	Put brush away
10. Brush away	Put toothpaste away
11. Toothpaste put up	Leave bathroom

Not only is the task analysis essential to teaching the task, but the charting of progress on the steps of the task is also essential. If progress is not being made, the task analysis needs to be reviewed to see which step(s) is causing the student the most difficulty. These steps can be broken into smaller teaching units. The charting on the task analysis should be done at the time of instruction and the student should be actively involved in the charting process. This charting can also be used to help motivate the student to become more independent in each step of the task.

WHAT IS JOB TRAINING?

Teaching a task is just one part of job training.



After the student has learned how to do the task and is consistently doing quality work, improving productivity is the next concern of the job coach. Record keeping is also important in this stage to help student motivation and also to document the student's ability to be competitive in performing quality work within a reasonable amount of time. Taking productivity measured by time samples in a variety of settings helps future agencies identify variables that affect a student's productivity, and also helps identify what motivational variables are most effective. Once the task is learned and productivity increases, the challenge becomes maintaining the skills in speed, accuracy and combinations of tasks. The final stage is independence. Some students may not attain total independence at a particular job, but the data collected from the various stages will be invaluable for future planning.

We must make the most of every work experience site and help the student achieve the greatest level of competency and independence. We must also be sure that we do not lose what we learn; written documentation of these experiences is critical to a coordinated system (schools and adult agencies) that builds upon each successive experience.