FOR PARAS · FREE

INKED EDUCATOR LIFE

PARA FIRST-WEEK CHECKLIST

Most paras get a schedule and a kid's first name on day one, and then somebody says good luck. Here's what to ask for and who to find in your first week, so you're not guessing. Check off what you get and go ask for what you don't.

If nobody's offered, you're allowed to ask.

ASK TO SEE THE PLAN

- ☐ The **goals** for each student you work with. A one-page summary is plenty.
- ☐ Each student's **accommodations**, and when they're supposed to get them.
- ☐ The **behavior plan**, if there is one. Read it before the hard day comes.
- ☐ What **calms each kid down** and what tends to set them off.
- ☐ How each kid **communicates**, whether that's words, a device, pictures or signs.
- ☐ Any **health and safety** needs, like allergies or seizures, and who handles them.

KNOW YOUR DAY

- ☐ Your **schedule**, with real times and room numbers on it.
- ☐ Where you're supposed to be at **arrival, lunch, recess and dismissal**.
- ☐ Any **duties** you have, like bus, lunchroom or hallway.
- ☐ What you do when the teacher is out and there's a **sub**.
- ☐ Your job in a **fire drill, a lockdown or an evacuation**.

FIND THESE PEOPLE

The teacher I report to _____

The nurse _____

Who I call in a crisis, and how _____

Who covers my break _____

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR TEACHER

- ☐ "What do you want me to do when a kid **refuses to work**?"
- ☐ "When should I **step in**, and when do you want me to wait?"
- ☐ "How much help is **too much** for this kid?"
- ☐ "Do you want me to **write anything down**, and where?"
- ☐ "When is a good time for me to **ask you questions**?"

WHEN A KID ESCALATES

- ☐ **One calm voice** does the talking.
- ☐ If the teacher is already talking to that kid, don't add a second voice. **Clear some space** instead.
- ☐ Give **one short instruction** and then wait.
- ☐ Move the **other kids** and leave that kid where they are, because an audience makes everything bigger.
- ☐ Calm doesn't mean we skip the work. It means the kid is **ready for it**.

KEEP IT PRIVATE

- ☐ What you learn about a student **stays at school**. That means not the hallway, not the store and not online.
- ☐ If a parent asks about their child's plan or progress, **send them to the teacher**.
- ☐ **No photos** of students on your phone.

WHAT I STILL NEED TO ASK

I EXPECT A LOT FROM PARAS. YOU DESERVE TO BE SHOWN THE PLAN.

by Rob Murphy, special education teacher · @inkededucatorlife · General information, not training or legal advice. Your school's rules, each student's plan and your teacher's directions come first.