

## **APPENDIX J**

# **INFORMATION FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

## **INFORMATION FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

The following information is included at the request of North Dakota Vision Services – School for the Blind. Contact information:

North Dakota Vision Services – School for the Blind  
500 Stanford Road  
Grand Forks, ND 58203-2799  
Phone: (701) 795-2708  
Toll Free: 1-800-421-1181

### **Required Competencies:**

- General working knowledge of blindness and low vision
- Knowledge of orientation and mobility (i.e., protective techniques, sighted guide, and use of the long white cane)
- Knowledge of daily living skills techniques (i.e., home/personal adaptations)
- Knowledge of new innovative adaptive technology (i.e., software, switches, synthetic speech, internet, email, refreshable Braille, electronic note takers, CCTV)
- Knowledge of prevocational, vocational, and career needs
- Knowledge of diseases and functions of the eye
- Knowledge of adaptive materials for the classroom and/or home and work environment (i.e., low vision aids, bold line paper, contrast, color)
- Knowledge of resources available and the ability to access these resources (i.e., recreation/leisure, adapted physical education)
- Knowledge of effective communication skills (i.e., Grade 1 Braille, Grade 2 Braille, computer Braille, Braille music, Nemeth Code, large-print, cassette tapes, listening skills)

### **Experiences/Requirements:**

Listed below are methods which may be used for completion of the competencies:

- Experience with low vision simulator goggles and/or blindfold
- Work or field experience and/or a sample video tape demonstrating skills related to each competency
- Job shadowing a vision professional in any of the competency areas
- Inservice trainings offered by ND Vision Services – School for the Blind on an ongoing basis on topics related to vision
- Courses taken from a university in the area of vision may also serve as a validation
- Correspondence courses from Hadley School for the Blind, National Federation of the Blind, or National Library Services (NLS)
- A log/portfolio worksheet would be maintained by each participant in verification of the completion of the competencies
- Completion of North Dakota School for the Blind training module

## **Role of Vision Paraprofessionals:**

Various factors influencing the specific responsibilities assigned to vision paraprofessionals could include: characteristics and personalities of teachers, vision paraprofessionals and students; interpersonal skills of both teachers and vision paraprofessionals; the experience of the vision paraprofessionals; the physical environment of the classroom; and classroom operating procedures. Individual education teachers may vary the responsibilities of the vision paraprofessional to enhance the program of instruction. The following list illustrates instructional duties which could be assigned to the vision paraprofessional in a classroom by the supervising teacher.

- Work cooperatively with a certified vision teacher
- Assist individuals in performing activities which are initiated by the teacher
- Participate as a member of the IEP team
- Assist in monitoring supplementary work and independent study
- Assist in educational demonstrations
- Reinforce learning in small groups or with individuals while the supervising teacher works with other students
- Provide assistance with individualized programmed materials (i.e., tactual map, large print worksheets, notes from blackboard or overhead)
- Assist in preparation/production of instructional materials (i.e., enlarge, Braille)
- Carry out instructional programs designed by the classroom teacher
- Work with classroom teacher to develop classroom adaptations
- Carry out tutoring activities designed by the supervising teacher
- Read aloud or listen to students read (Braille or large print)
- Read or adapt tests and worksheets
- Verbally describe events on field trips, videos, etc.

## **Duties the Vision Paraprofessional Should Not Perform:**

- Should not assume full responsibility for supervising and planning activities
- Should not program and prescribe educational activities and materials
- Should not grade subjective or essay tests
- Should not be responsible for medical needs of students
- Should not contact parents without knowledge of supervising teacher
- Should not be responsible for preparing lesson plans and initiating original content instruction
- Should not be used as a substitute for licensed teachers unless he/she possesses the appropriate substitute teacher's license and is employed as a teacher on a temporary basis, and paid accordingly
- Should not be assigned full responsibility for supervising the classroom field trips, etc.