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## Team Players and Team Managers: Special Educators Working with Paraeducators to Support Inclusive Classrooms

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### ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes recommendations from a selection of international research literature urging teachers to take the initiative in their own classrooms to invite paraeducators to participate fully as team players in collaborative work. In US classrooms paraeducators (teacher aides/teacher assistants) have long been making valuable contributions in providing education services to students with a variety of needs. The literature documents change in their roles. Legislation has influenced their required qualifications—although legislation still refers to them as paraprofessionals. While some researchers have cast doubt on whether paraeducators are truly effective in their assigned roles, others have warned that the education system is over-reliant on them. In response to this changing perspective, teacher educators must revise programs to better prepare teacher candidates to effectively team with paraeducators. Personnel developers and school administrators must provide inservice training for a generation of teachers who have received little if any training in this area.

### KEYWORDS

Paraeducators; Paraprofessionals; Inclusion; Team Players; Managers

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