

**FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**

*Second  
Edition*

The  
**Paraprofessional's**  
**Handbook** for  
**Effective Support** in  
**Inclusive**  
**Classrooms**



**Julie Causton**  
**Kate MacLeod**  
Foreword by Shelley Moore

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by

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# About the Authors

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## **Julie Causton, Ph.D.**

Julie Causton is founder and chief executive officer of Inclusive Schooling. She is a former professor in the Inclusive and Special Education Program in the Department of Teaching and Leadership at Syracuse University. She has spent the past 20 years studying and creating best practices for inclusive education, with a specific focus on supporting students whose behavior challenges the educational system. As a former special education teacher herself, she knows firsthand how belonging leads to better outcomes for students. She works with administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and families across the country to help them create inclusive experiences. Julie is the author of seven books about inclusive education, and she has published articles in over 30 educational research and practitioner journals. She lives in Manlius, New York, with her wife, two adorable teenagers, dog, and three cats.



## **Kate MacLeod, Ph.D.**

Kate MacLeod is an assistant professor of special education at the University of Maine at Farmington and founder and consultant at Inclusive Schooling. Her teaching, research, writing, and consulting are guided by a passion for inclusive education and social justice. Kate is a former high school special education teacher in New York City and now works with administrators, educators, and families around the country to create more inclusive practices for all students. Kate's research and writing are focused on understanding the culture of inclusive schools, inclusive school reform, and best teaching practices for supporting students with diverse and complex support needs. She is the author of two books about inclusive education, and she has published articles in educational research and practitioner journals. Kate lives in Maine with her husband and her newborn son, two dogs, a cat, and a flock of chickens.



# About Inclusive Schooling

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Julie Causton, Ph.D., and Kate MacLeod, Ph.D., co-founded Inclusive Schooling in order to support administrators, educators, and parents who wish to create more caring and creative inclusive schools for all learners. Inclusive Schooling offers live and online courses, workshops, presentations, and innovative support focused on creating and supporting inclusive schools.

[www.inclusiveschooling.com](http://www.inclusiveschooling.com)



# Introduction

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We wrote the second edition of *The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms* as a resource for paraprofessionals in their important work to thoughtfully provide inclusive support to students with disabilities. The book is a powerful learning tool on its own, featuring up-to-date information on best practices for teaching in inclusive classrooms, along with reflections, quizzes, activities, and to-do lists in every chapter to make the learning meaningful and actionable.

This facilitator's guide was developed as a companion to the book and a tool to support education leaders who choose to use *The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms, Second Edition*, for live or virtual professional development (PD) training for paraprofessionals.

## How to Use This Guide

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Facilitating PD trainings can be a time-consuming process, but this guide has everything you need to effectively plan and conduct six 1-hour training sessions, including communicating information on scheduling and preparation, leading meaningful discussions, and ultimately, enhancing the knowledge and skills of the paraprofessionals you supervise and/or with whom you work.

## Getting Started

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For each session, we have included our recommendations for leading the session, including 1) tips for leader preparation, 2) key terms and definitions needed to understand the topic, 3) frequently asked questions for which you can prepare answers, and 4) a suggested agenda for leading discussion and group/partner activities. Let's walk through the steps you'll need to take in order to plan a productive and meaningful PD with the paraprofessionals in your school.

### Scheduling Sessions

To get started with the administrative details of your PD, we recommend deciding how often you want to meet. This guide was designed so that the chapters in *The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms, Second Edition*, are broken down into six 1-hour training sessions.

## Determining the Frequency of Sessions

You can use the recommended schedule of six sessions to lead your group of paraprofessionals in weekly, biweekly, or monthly 1-hour sessions. This type of scheduling provides important time for paraprofessionals to implement the ideas and practices they are learning from the book with their actual students and colleagues. This means more authentic learning and reflection for paraprofessionals and additional opportunities for you to provide feedback on their practice and ideas instead of answering hypothetical questions.

However, if your school uses a different method of PD—such as half days or whole-day workshops—you can modify the sessions as needed! We have provided sample schedules for full- and half-day PD in [Appendices A and B](#).

## Preparing the Materials

Prior to your first session, you will need to ensure that each paraprofessional has their own copy of *The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms, Second Edition*.

Also, if hosting in-person sessions, determine a means for paraprofessionals to write down questions that come up over the course of discussion. This could be on a whiteboard, on a large pad of paper, or in individual journals provided to session attendees. If you are hosting virtual PD, use a chat feature to share and keep track of questions.

## Download the Online Materials

You will also need to download the online materials, including the following:

- Session PowerPoints with introduction videos—These PowerPoint slides will guide you through each session and include introduction videos from the authors. They will feature discussion prompts and other key moments from the session agenda.
- E-mail templates—To save you time and energy, we have created a series of e-mails that you can copy and paste, filling in a few details specific to your PD, and then send to the attendees ahead of each meeting.
- Certificate of Completion template—This fillable PDF is available for each attendee who completes the PD program.

## Adapt This Guide to Suit Your Needs

Remember, there are many ways to work through the book with paraprofessionals! Please adapt this read-along guide to fit your unique needs and the needs of your paraprofessionals. The sessions in this guide were designed to follow the sequential order of the chapters in *The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms, Second Edition*. Foundational information is presented in the first few chapters and then built upon in later chapters of the book. However, if you feel that a different order would better suit the needs of the paraprofessionals in your school, these sessions can be adapted to be used in any order.

### ***Adapting This Guide for Virtual Training***

This guide is easily adaptable for PD held virtually. We recommend using a video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, Google Meets) so you can share your screen as you share the introductory videos, move through the activities and discussions on the PowerPoint slides, and create breakout rooms for certain activities. The shared screen provides paraprofessionals with visual support, and the breakout rooms provide them with opportunities to share ideas and work through activities in small groups or with partners rather than in the whole group. We also recommend using the chat functions on these video conferencing platforms during whole-group discussion to encourage staff to participate using multiple modalities. The chat option, in addition to verbal sharing, will greatly increase engagement while also modeling inclusive practices.

If you're interested in additional training for your paraprofessionals, please visit our Inclusive Schooling website, [www.inclusiveschooling.com](http://www.inclusiveschooling.com), to learn more about our online courses for paraprofessionals or hire us to facilitate your PD.