

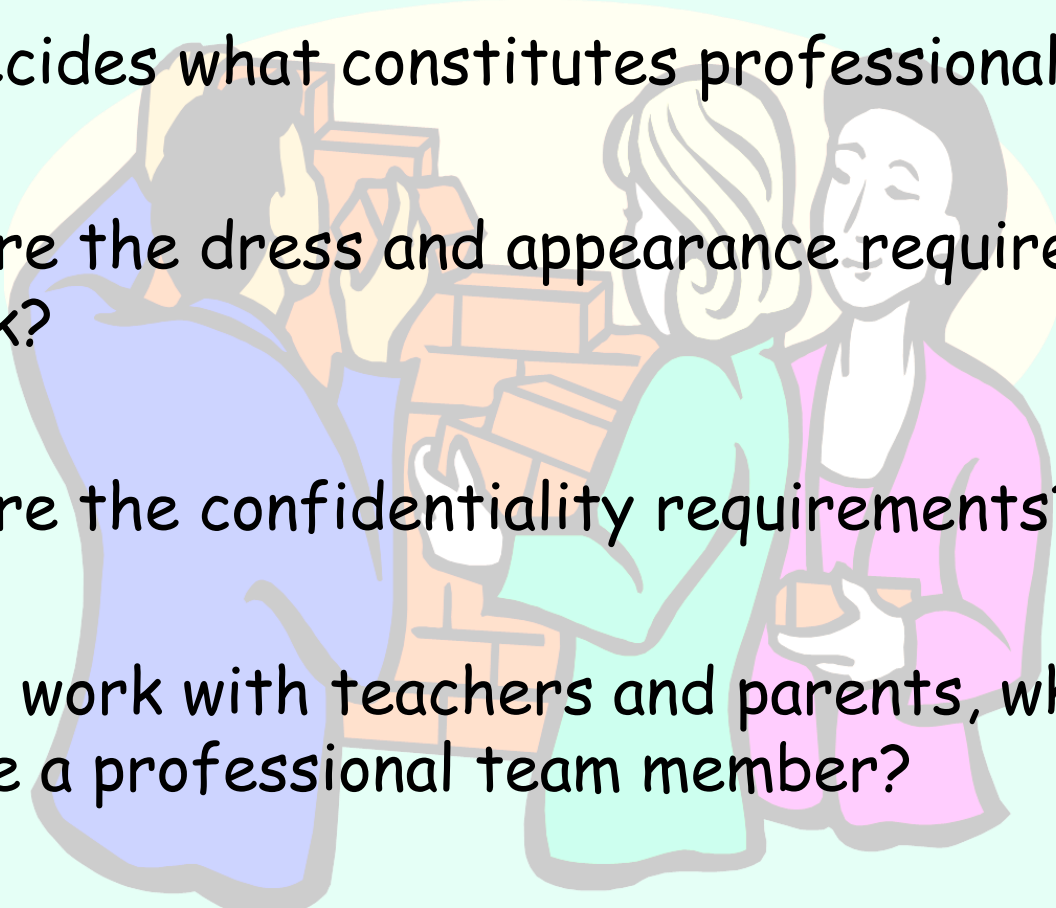


CHAPTER 12

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

- Who decides what constitutes professional behavior?
- What are the dress and appearance requirements for my work?
- What are the confidentiality requirements?
- When I work with teachers and parents, what must I do to be a professional team member?



PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR (continued)



- Do I know my role and responsibilities?
- What can I do to communicate effectively with my teacher(s) and others?
- What are the steps I can take to resolve conflict?
- What are my responsibilities relating to health and safety?

CEC PERFORMANCE-BASED STANDARDS FOR PARAEDUCATORS

Standard

Area Covered

Knowledge Component

1 Foundations

- Purposes of programs for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Basic educational terminology

2 Development and characteristics of learners

- Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life.

3 Individual learning differences

- Rights/responsibilities of families and children.
- Indicators of abuse and neglect

4 Instructional strategies

- Basic instructional and remedial strategies and materials.
- Basic technologies appropriate to exceptional learning needs

5 Learning environments/social interactions

- Demands of various learning environments.
- Rules and procedural safeguards regarding management of behavior

CEC PERFORMANCE-BASED STANDARDS (cont'd)

Standard

Area Covered

Knowledge Component

6 Language

- Characteristics of appropriate communication with stakeholders

7 Instructional planning

8 Assessment

- Rationale for assessment

9 Professional and ethical practice

- Ethical practices for confidential communication about individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's ability to work with others

10 Collaboration

- Common concerns of families of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Roles of stakeholders in planning an individualized program

ETHICS

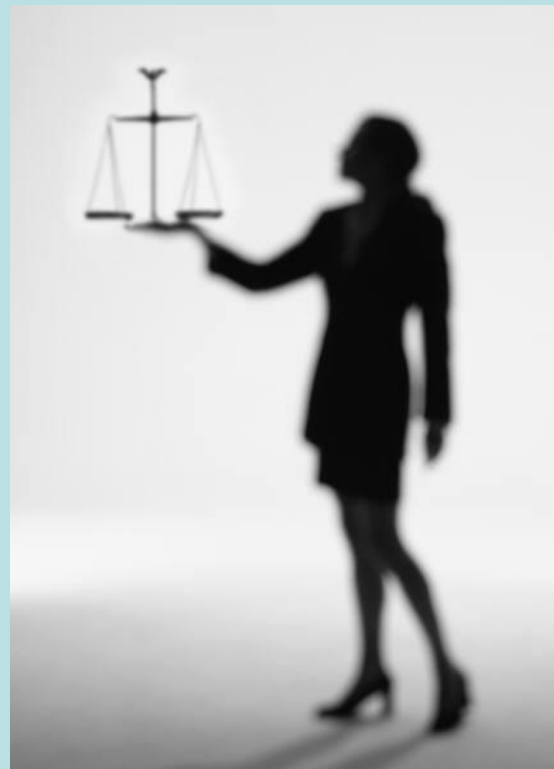
An important part of professionalism is that we act in an appropriate manner **because we know that it is right** - not just because someone is policing our behavior.



ETHICS (continued)

We behave in a particular way because we have certain beliefs, and integrity requires us to act according to those beliefs.

This is what is meant by ethical behavior or ethics—behavior that is governed by principles.



SITUATIONS REQUIRING PROFESSIONALISM

- Dress and appearance,
- Confidentiality and the use of information,
- Working relationships with other adults,
- Communication and conflict resolution, and
- Health and safety issues



DRESS AND APPEARANCE

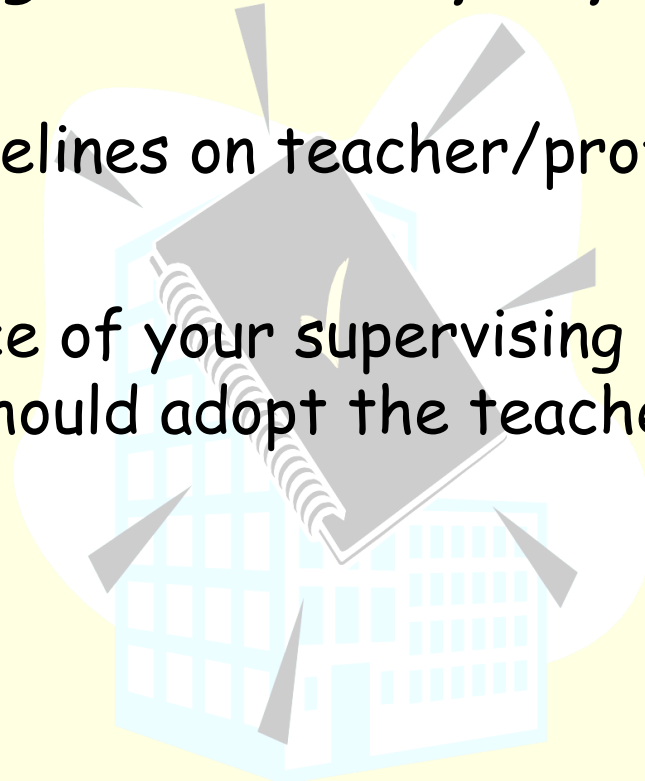
Be proactive:

- Find a copy of your school district dress code or guidelines
- Consider your own appearance and dress and make any changes that may be necessary, so that you meet the required standard.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

If there are no guidelines for paraprofessionals:

- Check for guidelines on teacher/professional dress.
- Seek the advice of your supervising teacher as to whether you should adopt the teacher's dress code.



DRESS AND APPEARANCE

BOTTOM LINE:

You represent your school and you are part of their Public Relations campaign.

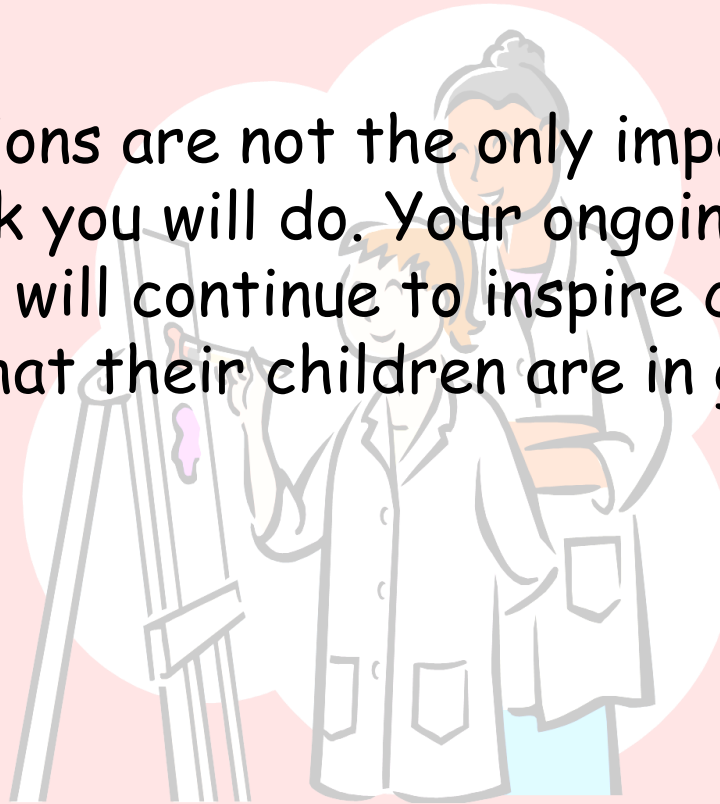
Consider: If you are the first person a parent meets when visiting the school, what impression would they have from your dress and appearance?



DRESS AND APPEARANCE

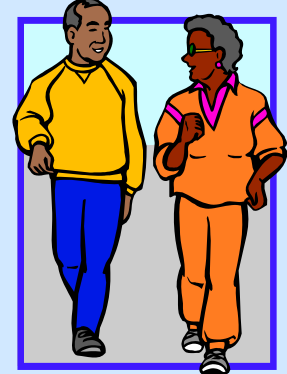
BOTTOM LINE (continued):

First impressions are not the only important public relations work you will do. Your ongoing behavior and appearance will continue to inspire confidence in parents that their children are in good hands.



CONFIDENTIALITY AND USE OF INFORMATION

Confidentiality:



The appropriate use of information. Just as there are situations in which it would be wrong to disclose information, there are situations in which it would be wrong to withhold information. You need to know what sort of information you can and cannot share, as well as with whom you should and should not share information and whether that changes according to circumstances.

INFORMATION TO WHICH YOU MAY HAVE ACCESS AS A PARAPROFESSIONAL

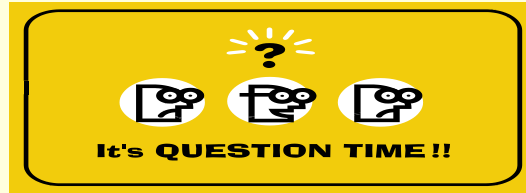
- Personal information about students;
- Information on a student's academic skills and progress;
- Information about student goals, such as an IEP goals;
- Information about a student's social skills;
- Personal and professional information about other adults.



A GOOD RULE OF THUMB

Do not share student information with anyone except your supervisor.





In the local market, you bump into the mother of one of the children with whom you work closely . She says:
So how is my boy doing? What do you say to her?



Scenario 1

One of the other paraprofessionals in your Junior High approaches you while you are both on lunch supervision duty and asks about a student with whom you both work. He works as a job coach and you provide individual support to the student in math. He is a bit concerned about the student's understanding of money and change, and wants to know whether there is anything on the student's IEP stressing math skills, and what you have been asked to cover with the student. What do you say to him?



Scenario 2

At a Saturday school soccer game, you get into conversation with your sister-in-law about the soccer skills of the various girls on the team. She says:

Look at Danielle--she's a fabulous player! But I don't think she should be allowed on the team when you hear how she behaves in the classroom. What on earth happened last Friday in math? My girl came home with some story about chairs being thrown about and I was ready to go up there and complain, but she just shrugged it off and said "Oh, it's just Danielle." But it sounds to me like she's putting the rest of the kids in danger. So I thought I'd check with you and get the real version of the story before I go and confront the principal.

What to you say to her?

Scenario 3

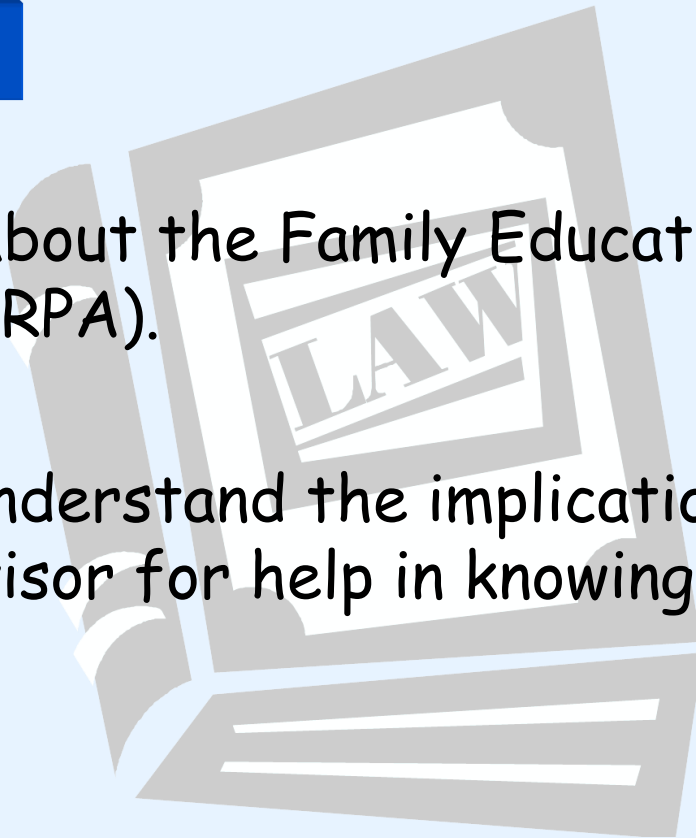
Your supervisor wants to talk to the father of a student who used to attend the school, to ask if he'll talk to her careers class about his work as a lawyer. Knowing you live locally, she asks: 'I want to talk to Ken Grover, to see if he'll come and talk to my 9th grade class, but his number isn't in the directory. Isn't he your neighbor? I don't suppose you have their number?' You and your family are close friends of the Grovers, so of course you have their telephone number, but what do you say to your supervising teacher?



CONFIDENTIALITY

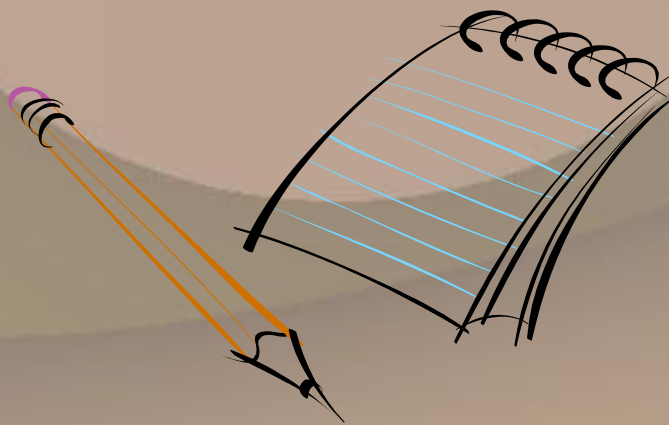
BE PRO-ACTIVE:

- Find out more about the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).
- If you do not understand the implications of the law, ask your supervisor for help in knowing how it applies to you.



CONFIDENTIALITY (continued)

- Keep written documentation where it cannot be accidentally seen.
- Check with your supervisor whether your district allows students to grade each other's papers or tests.



CONFIDENTIALITY

THE BOTTOM LINE:

You are under a legal obligation, to keep information confidential.

Although it can be difficult to withhold information when you are approached by a member of the local community, adopt the practice of referring requests for information to your supervisor.



CONFIDENTIALITY

THE BOTTOM LINE (continued):

Although you can be a very useful source of community information for the school, no unnecessary information about students and their family backgrounds should be shared with school personnel.



COMMON COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

With students: gain and focus their attention; engage in the teaching/learning process; respond to their interests and concerns; coordinate homework or assignments; facilitate work placements.

With your supervisor: follow instructions, discuss ways of working effectively, provide feedback, observe your supervisor.



COMMON COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES (continued)

With parents: phone to arrange meetings with the teacher, translate, participate in teacher-parent conferences and IEP meetings.

With other adults: work with the Special Education teacher and other teachers whose classrooms you attend, coordinate with therapists or speech pathologist, take directions from the building administrator.



COLLABORATION: BE PRO-ACTIVE

Ask advice. When you ask another person for advice it sends a very definite message to them. It says "I am willing to learn from you."



COLLABORATION: BE PRO-ACTIVE (continued)

Share information. Although we have cautioned you about keeping confidentiality, it is important that - when appropriate - you willingly share information with those who need it.

Respect other people's preferences. Not everyone that you work with works in the same way - we are all very different. A word that relates to collaboration is compromise: there has to be

"give and take."

COLLABORATION: THE BOTTOM LINE

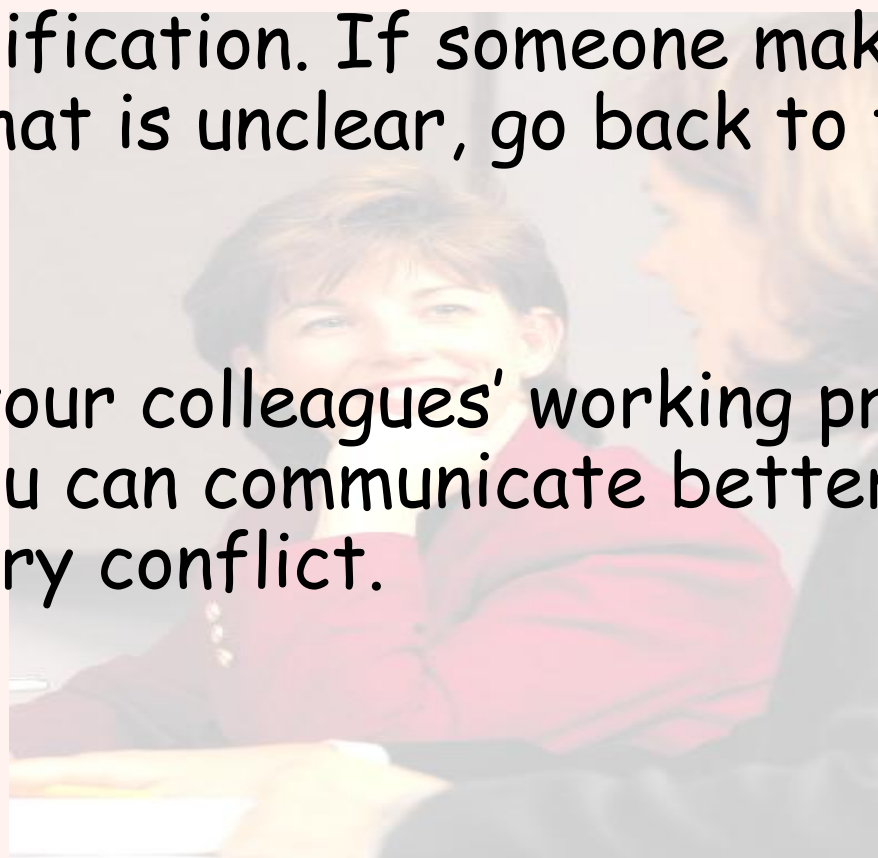
Whatever your precise role, you are likely to have to engage in a variety of **collaborative activities**, both instructional and organizational during your working week. You can enhance the **effectiveness** of those collaborations through your **willingness** to ask advice, share information whenever appropriate, and **work** to the strengths of your fellow team members.



COMMUNICATION: BE PROACTIVE

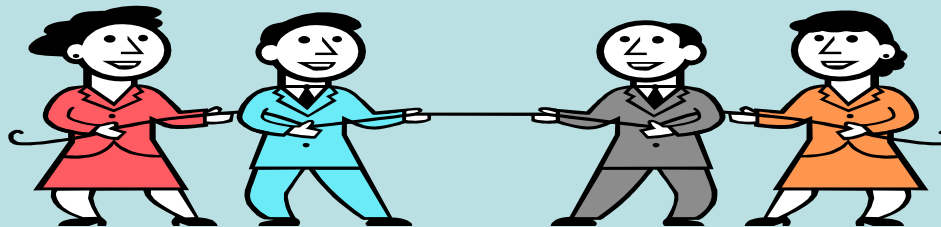
Ask for clarification. If someone makes a request that is unclear, go back to them and discuss it.

Reflect on your colleagues' working preferences so that you can communicate better and avoid unnecessary conflict.



COMMUNICATION: BE PROACTIVE (continued)

Cultivate an attitude of learning. If you keep an open mind, rather than automatically assuming that "different" means "wrong," you are much more likely to learn from a situation and reduce conflict.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Seek training if you are working in curriculum areas with a predominantly practical approach or with students with health issues.

Take a CPR class.

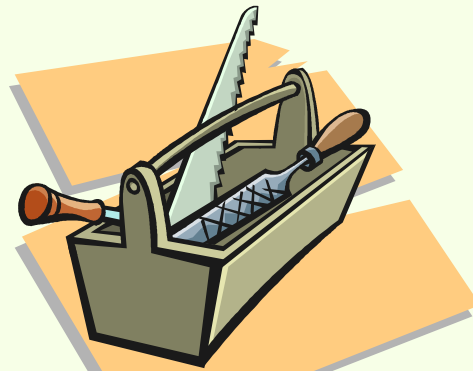
Keep the workplace safe with no dangerous substances or objects.



HEALTH AND SAFETY (continued)

Train students to know what tools they should/should not use or touch.

Know the fire, tornado or earthquake drills.



There are legal requirements to report information on child abuse and neglect. If you do not know what to do, ask your supervisor.