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S1 E9: Role of Professionals Beyond Teachers in Online World

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Transcript

Lisa Dieker

Welcome to Practical Access. I'm Lisa Dieker.

Becky Hines

And I'm Becky Hines. And today we're going to continue on with the topic Lisa that I know that you introduced in our last segment. So, one of the questions I keep getting and I think you do is what is what is everybody doing? What is everybody else doing during this time of online instruction? We know teachers are delivering the content in whatever way they can but what's everybody else doing and what can they be doing?

Lisa Dieker

And I know in one of our early episodes, we already figured out or at least started some discussion about what's the special Ed teacher, but you know I've been being asked, what's an administrator? What's the speech language teacher doing? How do they deliver that? I think what we fall back to is the default. We always say what were you doing in the general Ed setting? How can you parallel that in the online environment that's comfortable to the kid and that's comfortable to the families? So, for example, though I'm hearing a lot of bonus moments, like I've had several teachers say they are collaborating across in between grade levels like they never have before because they're free. They don't have kids that they have to worry about. Oh, we only have 20 minutes during special. So, for example, one speech teacher said, you know, I have the instructional aide in one of my speech times so that she can follow up for the next hour with the family and the kids with additional activities. So again, kids, still getting 30 minutes, but now the IA is doing different walls and I'm kind of hearing a plethora, I find administrators are popping in online from room to room and listening to kids and reading books, but also asking questions of kids and really kind of doing some assessment in ways of the teachers that I don't think they can do when they have to walk through the building and kind of disrupt instruction. So, there are a few things I've heard. What else are you hearing?

Becky Hines

Well, some of the things that I've been recommending to the groups I'm working with are again, you mentioned last time, this idea of structure and routines, but getting into routines of things like conferencing. So, we have people who are in one-on-one pairs in different school systems. One-on-one aides; some school systems have them, some school systems don't, but are we sure that we're giving those people a tool and a specific way to connect with the student that they've been supporting? That's my first thought as a family member of someone with more significant needs so building in a structure for that so that it's easier not only for the family, but also for that instructional support person to have a direct connection. Sometimes just contacting families can be hard. So, when you mentioned these people, the administrators, we've got social workers, we have all of these people and if I think if everyone can start thinking about their own distribution channels, if you will. How do we make that part easier? I'm seeing a lot of people struggle with getting and receiving so many emails and so many links to meetings that I think that we all have to start owning our own little area and setting up a very good clear distribution channel. In one of the pages that I've been working on for local school, we put people's

pictures so kids could click on the picture of the person that they normally work with and it takes them right to a Google hangout link and right to the meeting with that person and I think we need to be that specific in a lot of cases and hook the right people up with the right kids and or teachers.

Lisa Dieker

Yeah, I've heard a lot too of counselors, you know, talking about, those are the kids that worry them the most, the kids who are already kind of ostracized or bullied or, you know, had some depression or had some mental health issues. And so, I'm hearing a lot of, you know, mindfulness lunches, phone calls, Google Voice calls, checking in, checking out. But I really do think that what I love is a lot of them are saying we're just kind of letting kids get on and organically talk to each other and interjecting and then I have one social worker that said I'm doing a life goal moment every day of the week. And it's one that I'm working on that I just let the kids work on with me and say, hey, today my life goal is getting back into a routine or eating healthy or not watching as much TV or using one of my talents. He happens to be an artist, so he said he got a whiteboard out and, in the background, he was drawing. Does anyone want to join the drawing today? What do you like to draw? Don't draw, ok? Let's talk about do you like to play with characters that that are drawn already, like gaming? So, I think that the whole conversation piece is really, really, important right now for our kids, who might be more isolated if there's technology. I think if there's not technology, I know folks are dropping off packets. I heard a teacher say, you know, I feel like it's Halloween and I'm ringing and ditching and running because I'm not allowed to be there. But dropping something off so that the kids get, but making sure there's mental health pieces in there or speech goals in there so it isn't just a packet of material, but it really aligns with all those services. You know, kids with disabilities not only need, but their families also expect them to be getting. So do think mindfully about all those services.

Becky Hines

I think the one layer with even the packets and the home delivery, which I love the idea of that we do know that most households have a phone. So, anyone who's working with kids who are working in a pretty isolated setting, I really recommend teachers, specialist paras, administrators, everyone, sign up for a Google phone number. Because what that does is redirect your own personal phone to this Google phone number, so kids don't have your home number, but they can reach you at scheduled meeting times. The one thing you have to be good at is if you know that you're directing to your Google phone, don't answer it. If it's not the time you have planned with the particular kid necessarily because it might throw you off schedule that you have planned.

Lisa Dieker

Yeah, I think that's funny too, because you know, again, kids are like whoa, I got access to the teacher, and some don't want it, and some want it all the time. So, it's no different than in the classroom. You know, setting those parameters for the kid who raises their hand for every question versus the kid who never raises their hand. Think about that. And remember, really simple, lots of teachers saying class Dojo allows them to send a message to everybody. Or you can do that through zoom, Google Hangout and then Remind is a great one. Lots of people are falling back on that app called Remind that I can send in, hey, don't forget your speech time is in 10 minutes. Great way again to turn that into the student taking responsibility and then assuming the parent has to. So, if the kid can even get a Google Voice that makes a difference too.

Becky Hines

And you started this segment, and we started talking about this idea of the roles of those ancillary other non-student contact persons and also those instructional assistants. Organizing all of these pieces is so difficult. If I was working with an instructional assistant who even could be in charge of my Reminds and sending them out to everyone and fielding some of those Google calls, that would make my job as the deliverer of content so much less stressful. So, I think being really purposeful and clear in what we're doing matters most right now.

Lisa Dieker

And I think the other two other just really basic things is, you know we've got Google Docs, those are great. Again, let's make sure families can access them. And then if your district does have access, there's a fee for this but Goal book is one where all these service providers could come together. So, do remember that if you're the speech teacher or you're the counselor and the kids got speech? Counseling, PT, OT, General Ed, Special Ed, and those families are at home trying to work online, too. You've got to think about a way of putting those six services in a way that's so easy and seamless for those families, like the pictures you mentioned, Becky, a structure or time of day. Otherwise, we're just going to add to the frustration of everybody and again, I think we're at a time where we can all call each other. From 7:00 to 7:15 and check in and check out with each other before we disperse our services across our caseload. Something we couldn't do before because kids were sitting in front of us at every moment of the day. So, make sure you schedule in that time to use those folks, and I would just end with my last tip being a checklist, especially for instructional aid. Of what you do want them to do if they're going to have one-on-one time with kids I'd like for you work on these skills, or I'd like for you to send up these Reminds, I think, often times we know what we want instructional aides to do, but sometimes we tell them at the moment, creating a structure and a checklist for them also can make their job more meaningful and make it easier on you.

Becky Hines

Structures and patterns which is the key tip from last time, and I agree Lisa, it's a great way to end today.

Lisa Dieker

Thank you for joining us again for Practical Access and please Twitter us @Access practical, if you've got a question for us. Thanks.