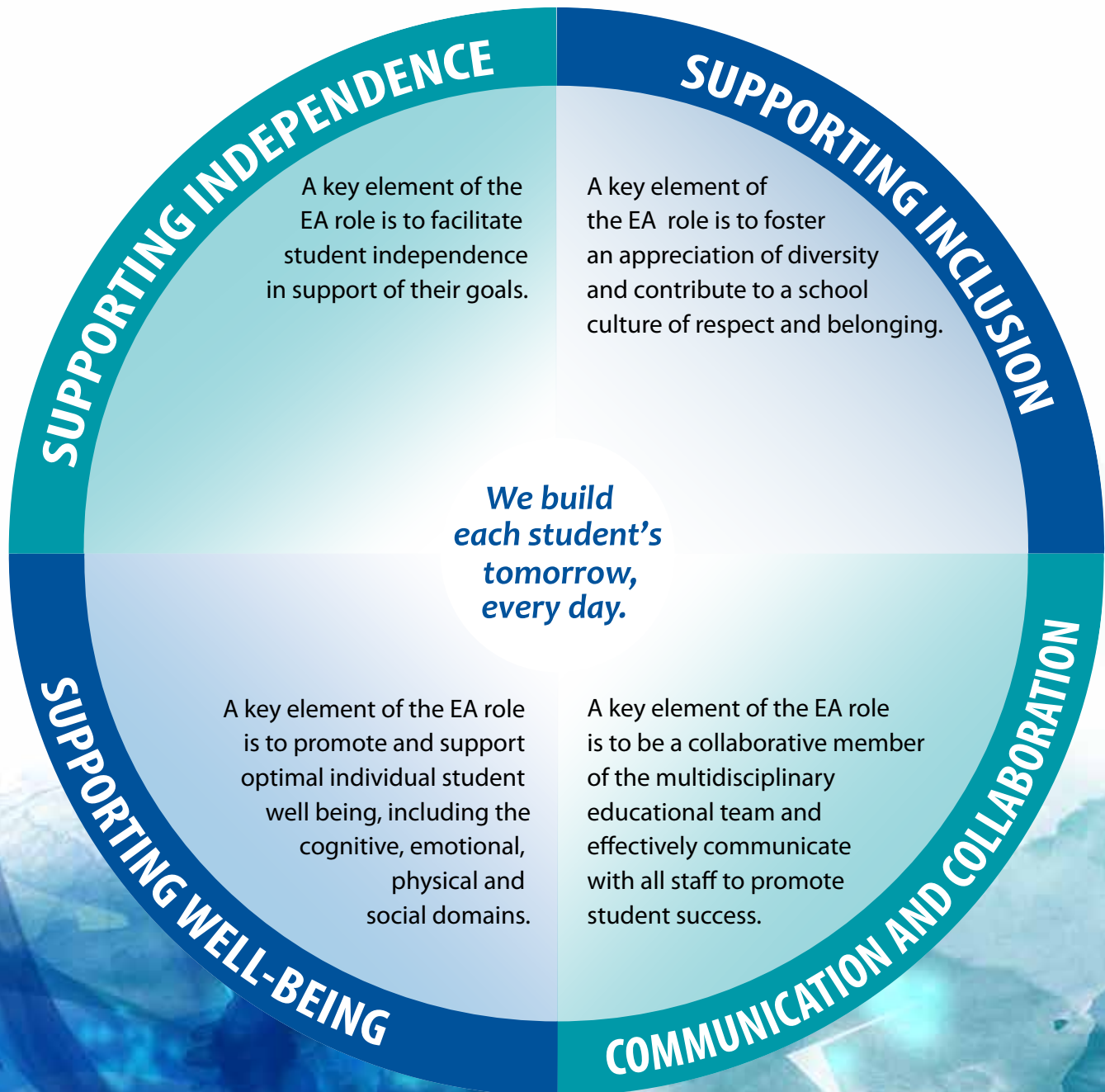




We build each student's tomorrow, every day.

EA

The Role of the Educational Assistant



Educational Assistants (EA) are valuable members of the school team and play a vital role in supporting equitable and inclusive classrooms and school environments that are responsive to student strengths, needs and overall well-being.

Domain

Tasks and Activities

Supporting Independence

A key element of the EA role is to facilitate student independence in support of their goals.

- Promote and celebrate student independence;
- Identify and facilitate opportunities for increased student independence to support individual short term and long term goals;
- Provide time and space to allow for independence;
- Employ prompting and fading, in accordance with the prompting hierarchy;
- Support the implementation of specialized programming as directed by professional staff (e.g., OT, PT, SLP);
- Support the implementation of assistive technology and specialized equipment to support independence for individual students, groups of students, and/or the class;
- Support the development of materials to promote independence (e.g., visual supports, alternative formats, independent tasks);
- Encourage students to make choices and communicate their needs;
- Maintain professional relationships with students;
- Support students to generalize new skills across environments (e.g., between classes, work experience);
- Employ prevention, intervention and restraint in the event of imminent risk to self and others in accordance with Behaviour Management Systems training.

Supporting Inclusion

A key element of the EA role is to foster an appreciation of diversity and contribute to a school culture of respect and belonging.

- Promote a sense of belonging for all and support students to be included and engaged in all aspects of the school day;
- Support students to work toward individual goals while participating in the classroom with age appropriate peers;
- Provide universal supports for learning in collaboration with the teacher;
- Support the student to access their program as provided by the teacher;
- Provide individual student/school-wide supports during non-instructional times (e.g., supervision duties, alternative recess programs, clubs, breakfast program, etc.);
- Collaborate with classroom teachers to develop and support learning strategies based on assessment results, Program Development Team recommendations, and system/community support recommendations ;
- Identify opportunities for peer interactions to support and encourage peer relationships;
- Support the implementation of technological supports required by students in the classroom;
- Support students to be fully included in their learning environment.

Domain

Tasks and Activities

Supporting Well-Being

A key element of the EA role is to promote and support optimal individual student well-being, including the cognitive, emotional, physical and social domains.

- Honour students' strengths, interests and prior knowledge;
- Employ positive reinforcement to shape behaviour and support student learning;
- Support students' physical well-being by supporting their personal care needs (e.g., feeding, diapering, toileting);
- With appropriate training, assist students with medication and medical procedures as required;
- Perform lifts, transfers, suctioning, catheterization, and other procedures in accordance with training by a qualified practitioner;
- Employ strategies and supports that respect the dignity of students;
- Employ the gradual release of adult responsibility and a continual focus on skill building to support individual student goals;
- Proactively support the safety needs of students in accordance with board expectations (Management of Aggressive Behaviour Policy, Individual Behaviour Plan, Safety Plan);
- Complete accident/injury/incident forms as necessary;
- Support social well-being by facilitating the development of positive peer relationships (e.g., authentic engagement, peer pals, best buddies);
- Respond to urgent student needs as directed by administration.

Collaboration and Communication

A key element of the EA role is to be a collaborative member of the multidisciplinary educational team and effectively communicate with all staff to promote student success.

- Develop and maintain professional relationships with students, parents and staff;
- Respect the dignity and self worth of all students;
- Provide input to teachers on student progress and possible opportunities for students to move towards independence;
- Support the teachers' responsibility to communicate with parents, by sharing relevant information about students' progress with the teacher (e.g., behaviour concerns);
- Collect data in conjunction with the school team (e.g., classroom teacher, LST, etc.) to support individual goals;
- Maintain professional standards of communication regarding what and how information is shared (e.g., factual, objective, confidential);
- Participate in professional development training opportunities.
- Under the direction of the teacher, support the delivery of program according to the student's Individual Behaviour Plan, Individual Education Plan or Safety Plan.

Responsibilities assigned to the Educational Assistant within a school are fluid and flexible based on the needs of the school as a whole. Support to individual students may vary over the course of the year as needs change.

Guiding Principles for Special Education

1. All students can succeed.
2. Each student has their own unique patterns of learning. Patterns of learning may vary greatly within a classroom. Teachers need to plan for diversity, give students tasks that respect their abilities, use dynamic and flexible groups for instruction, and provide ongoing assessment.
3. The TVDSB Mission of, "We build each student's tomorrow, every day" should be supported by maximizing student learning.
4. The practice of providing a range of services and placements shall be maintained.
5. Regular classrooms should be the first placement of choice for all students throughout their education career as per Regulation 181/98.
6. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s), students and staff must be engaged as equal partners in achieving student success. Group collaboration is imperative to ensure appropriate programming, placement decisions and the implementation of an effective IEP.
7. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s), students, staff and public involvement are essential in creating a caring culture of learning designed to optimize the development, establishment and implementation of programs and support services.
8. Educators, students and families require the support of the broader community to create a learning environment that supports students with Special Education needs.
9. Ongoing communication with students, parent(s)/legal guardian(s), staff, SEAC and other stakeholders is an important strategy in maintaining links with the broader community sector.
10. Fairness is not sameness - fairness can be achieved through the recognition of individual needs and addressed through modified programs, accommodations, universal designs and classroom practice.
11. Universal design, differentiated instruction and assessment "for" learning are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students.
12. Special Education programs and services are founded on evidence-informed and evidence-based research, tempered by experience.