

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: A WORKING RELATIONSHIP: TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS BUILDING COLLABORATION IN A SHARED SPACE

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There is a lack of documented evidence related to the relationships existing between paraeducators and teachers working in early childhood special education (ECSE) classrooms. The study aims to fill a conceptual gap in the knowledge about relational equity, relational power dynamics, and collaboration styles among early childhood special education teachers and paraprofessionals. Study participants included six educators from two different early childhood school sites. Collaborative and critical case study approaches, a variety of methods, including teacher-paraprofessional classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and job description analysis, will be used to involve the participants in exploring their supportive and collaborative practices while reflecting on potential relational dynamics articulated through daily partnering in the classroom setting.

Keywords: paraprofessionals, early childhood, equity, power, collaboration