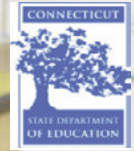


2012



# **GUIDELINES** *for* **Training & Support** **of Paraprofessionals** *Working with Students Birth to 21*



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# Contents

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Acknowledgments . . . . .	iv
Rationale . . . . .	v
Acknowledgment of Previous Contributions of Guidance for Paraprofessionals in Connecticut . . . . .	vi
Executive Summary . . . . .	vii

## Section 1: Terminology and Job Titles

Terminology and Job Titles . . . . .	2
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## Section 2: Federal and State Legislation for Paraprofessionals

IDEA 2004, Federal Legislation for Paraprofessionals Working with Students with Disabilities . . . . .	5
Federal Legislation for Title I Paraprofessionals — No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) . . . . .	7
Title I, Part A Paraprofessional Requirements: . . . . .	7
ParaPro Assessment: . . . . .	8
Connecticut Legislation for Paraprofessionals Working with Students with Disabilities . . . . .	10
Current Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation . . . . .	10

## Section 3: Paraprofessional Data

National and Connecticut Data . . . . .	12
Credentialing and Paraprofessionals . . . . .	14

## Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals

Roles and Responsibilities . . . . .	16
Appropriate Roles for Paraprofessionals . . . . .	24
Connecticut Birth to Three Paraprofessionals . . . . .	25
Birth to Three Personnel Standards . . . . .	26
Job Coach Competencies for Paraprofessionals . . . . .	27
Participation in Individualized Family Service Plan Meetings or PPT Meetings. . . . .	29

## Section 5: Hiring and Orientation of Paraprofessionals

Job Descriptions for Paraprofessionals . . . . .	32
Sample Job Description . . . . .	33
Development of a Handbook . . . . .	35

## **Section 6: Supporting Paraprofessionals**

<b>Supervision and Evaluation</b>	<b>37</b>
Supervision	37
Evaluation	38
<b>Effective Use of Paraprofessionals</b>	<b>40</b>
Examining Impact	42
Analysis	42
<b>Staff Development</b>	<b>43</b>
Instructional Support	44
Behavior Management	45
Roles and Responsibilities	45
Disability Specific Training	46
<b>Section Resources</b>	<b>47</b>
Standards for Teacher/Provider Supervisory Competencies	48
The Principal’s Role in Supporting Instructional Teams	54
10 Tips for Connecticut Administrators	55
Danbury Public Schools Para-Educator Performance Evaluation – SAMPLE	56
East Hampton Public Schools Paraprofessional Performance Appraisal – SAMPLE	58
Middletown Public Schools Paraprofessional Annual Review Form – SAMPLE	60
Walkthrough Protocol.	62
Teacher-Paraeducator Planning Tool – SAMPLE	65
Teacher-Paraeducator Planning Tool – Blank	66
What is my Role as a Paraprofessional? – SAMPLE	67
Classroom Activity Analysis Worksheet – SAMPLE	68
Schedule for Paraprofessional Staff – SAMPLE	69
<b>Appendix A</b>	
LRE News	70
<b>Appendix B</b>	
Paraprofessionals and SRBI	79
<b>Appendix C</b>	
Paraprofessional Brief: ELL	85
<b>Appendix D</b>	
Paraprofessional Brief: ADHD/ADD	90
<b>Appendix E</b>	
CSDE Survey of Districts on Paraprofessional Professional Development	95
<b>Appendix F</b>	
No Child Left Behind – Title I Paraprofessionals and Non-Regulatory Guidance	99
<b>Appendix G</b>	
Legislative Program Review and Investigations Study Executive Summary	113
<b>Appendix H</b>	
American Federation of Teachers: Status of State Paraprofessional Certification	118

**Appendix I**

Community Colleges, Regional Educational Service Centers, and Other Organizations Offering Programs for Paraprofessionals . . . . . 121

**Appendix J**

Paraprofessionals Brief: Challenging Behaviors . . . . . 124

**Appendix K**

Frequently Asked Questions . . . . . 130

**Resources . . . . . 132**

**References . . . . . 135**

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# Rationale

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Paraprofessionals are essential work force members of early intervention and school programs. Identified through a myriad of titles and job descriptions, paraprofessionals' roles and responsibilities have evolved along with the need for increased instructional supports for diverse learners. The number of students with disabilities in general education classrooms has increased significantly and paraprofessionals often play key roles to ensure the successful provision of supports and services in general education. Moreover, as the needs of the children and students are becoming more complex, the skills required of paraprofessionals are expanding. Traditionally, paraprofessionals have been undervalued in their roles as service providers. As paraprofessional roles and responsibilities continue to grow, systems must work diligently to ensure high quality personnel and services.

According to data compiled by the State Department of Education, during 2010-11, about 40,000 noncertified full-time equivalent staff who work in grades K-12 were employed by local school districts. Of these, about 25,137 were noncertified, noninstructional staff, while 14,740 were noncertified, instructional paraprofessionals. (Connecticut State Department of Education, ED 162 Non-Certified Staff Report 2010, 2011).

“In the final analysis, schools cannot adequately function without paraeducators, and paraeducators cannot adequately function in schools that lack an infrastructure that supports and respects them as viable and contributing members of instructional teams.” (Daniels and McBride 2001)

# Acknowledgment of Previous Contributions of Guidance for Paraprofessionals in Connecticut

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A committee formed in 1989 to study the role of paraprofessionals and to provide advice to the Commissioner of Education regarding the preparation, qualifications, role, function and ongoing development of the state's paraprofessional work force. This committee led to the development of a definition of a paraprofessional, a listing of recommended minimum qualifications for school paraprofessionals, a statement on career ladders for paraprofessionals, and recommendations regarding the role of paraprofessionals from both state and local perspectives.

In 1995, Connecticut's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Council established a subcommittee. The mission of this subcommittee was "to develop and disseminate a framework for training paraprofessionals in education, early intervention, related services and personal care that can be used at the state, regional and local levels" (CSPD Task Force on Paraprofessionals Report 1996).

The work of the two previously mentioned studies on roles and training combined with the work of the task force of 2001 lead to the original draft version of the Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students, Birth to 21 (2004). This document was developed by a task force led by Deborah Richards of the Connecticut State Department of Education and State Education Resource Center (SERC) consultants Maureen R. Anderson and David R. Grice. A group of 17 stakeholders assisted in the development of the guidelines of 2004. The stakeholder group included representatives from: Connecticut Birth to Three System, public schools, CSPD, institutes of higher education, community based programs, the State Advisory Council on Special Education, regional educational service centers, American Federation of Teachers Connecticut, and the Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired. This revision retains much of what was in this prior document and is intended to provide updated information and direct readers to the value of paraprofessionals and the critical role they play on a daily basis in classrooms and early intervention settings across Connecticut. This document also illuminates the importance of the training and supervision necessary for personnel who supervise and evaluate paraprofessionals.



# Executive Summary

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The Connecticut State Department of Education defines a paraprofessional as:

An employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the teacher or other certified or licensed professional. The ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of student progress, is a collaborative effort of certified and licensed staff.

This document, *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students, Birth-21 (2007)*, is a revision to a document developed by the Connecticut State Advisory Council on Special Education and the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD 2004). Paraprofessionals continue to be essential work force members of early intervention and school programs. Identified through a myriad of titles and job descriptions, paraprofessionals' roles and responsibilities have evolved along with the need for increased instructional supports for diverse learners. The number of students with disabilities in general education classrooms has increased significantly and paraprofessionals often play key roles to ensure the successful provision of supports and services in general education.

This revision highlights the increasing numbers of paraprofessionals in our state, the current requirements under The No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the importance of training for paraprofessionals, as well as their supervisors and evaluators. The appropriate use of paraprofessionals and sample tools that may help schools become better skilled in determining their role and impact on student learning is emphasized.

## **Federal Legislation for Paraprofessionals Working with Students with Disabilities**

Paraprofessionals were formally identified in federal legislation with the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 105-17). The term paraprofessionals continues in the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA.

Federal regulation 34 C.F.R. Section 156(b)(2)(iii)300.156 (iii), allows paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with state law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.

Further regulation say each state is to require that: Public schools improve the knowledge of special education and regular education teachers and principals and, in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, concerning effective instructional practices and provide necessary training.

Birth to Three regulations in 34 CFR Section 303.360 (b) require "The personnel development of this part must: (3) provide for the training of a variety of personnel needed to meet the requirements of this part, including public and private providers, primary referral source, paraprofessionals, and persons who will serve as case coordinators."

Additional requirements for Title I paraprofessionals who provide instructional assistance

They must have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, a General Educational Development (GED) diploma, and:

- two years of college credit; OR

- an associate (or higher) degree; OR
- pass a State Board of Education adopted paraprofessional assessment that assesses content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics. (The Connecticut State Board of Education adopted Educational Testing Services' ParaPro Assessment in December 2002 and established a passing score of 457.)

Because paraprofessionals provide instructional support, they should not be providing planned direct instruction, or introducing students to new skills, concepts or academic content.

Federal nonregulatory guidance regarding Title I paraprofessionals may be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/paraguidance.doc> and is included in Appendix A.

## **Connecticut Legislation for Paraprofessionals Working with Students with Disabilities**

Connecticut regulations concerning children requiring special education [RSCA Section 10-76d-2 (g)] require the following for school-based paraprofessionals: Provision shall be made for the direct supervision of each aide in special education by a person certified or licensed in the area of specialization to which such aide is assigned. The Connecticut Birth to Three System identifies Personnel Standards for qualified personnel working in the early intervention system [17a-248 (10)]. (See Section IV for Paraprofessionals in the Birth to Three System)

## **Paraprofessional Data**

The position of paraprofessional is one of the fastest growing occupations in public schools. According to the United States Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-2011 Edition, paraprofessionals held about 1.3 million jobs in 2008. Many worked for public and private educational institutions. Child care centers and religious organizations employed most of the rest (<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos153.htm>). Connecticut data indicate that there were 14,740 noncertified instructional paraprofessionals working in the role of paraprofessional in the 2010-11 school year.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The National Resource Center for Paraeducators developed a model for roles and responsibilities in 1999. This framework, articulating key competencies for paraprofessionals, has been modified and adopted for Connecticut paraprofessionals. The primary areas of focus are assisting and supporting professionals with maintaining effective instructional teams and learner-centered supportive environments, planning and organizing learning experience, engaging students in learning and assisting in instruction, assessing learner needs, progress and achievement, and meeting standards of professional or ethical conduct. Some examples of appropriate use of a paraprofessional are one-on-one tutoring, classroom management, assistance in a computer lab, library or media center, assistance in accommodating learners, and collection of data. Strong emphasis should be placed on the paraprofessional understanding of their role (i.e., job description) and the appropriate level of guidance and training to support the paraprofessional in carrying out these roles.

## **Hiring and Orientation**

To develop a stable and skilled paraprofessional work force, it is important to ensure there are procedures and practices that address some of the concerns that exist in the paraprofessional work force. One considerable concern is the hiring and retention of paraprofessionals. Some factors such as poor salaries, inadequate training, undefined roles should be considered when planning for paraprofessionals. The time spent on planning for and implementing procedures for the hiring of paraprofessionals is priceless, as it will provide a strong foundation for the paraprofessional as well as for the students with whom he or she will work.

Consideration of the match between the needs of the student or students and the ability and skill of the potential paraprofessional to perform the work necessary to meet those needs is important during the hiring process.

A handbook that includes such basics as, building maps, district phone numbers and safety procedures is an effective way to share important information. Additional information on the development of a handbook for paraprofessionals is available on page 35.

## **Supporting Paraprofessionals**

There is a difference between the person responsible for hiring and evaluation of performance (an administrator), and the person directing day-to-day work with students (an educator or other licensed person” (Wallace and McNerny 2001). Teachers must not be expected to have administrative management duties such as the hiring or firing of paraeducators. Those duties belong to the administration” (Wallace and McNerny 2001). Clarifying the roles of both supervisor and evaluator will lead to better understanding of individual responsibility of the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional should also have knowledge of these roles.

Staff development is a critical and a federally mandated aspect of paraprofessional support. Training programs and job-embedded processes provide the knowledge and skills needed by the paraprofessionals and by those persons who oversee the use of paraprofessional services. It is often helpful to initiate a comprehensive paraprofessional training program by conducting a needs assessment. Sound professional development decisions are determined through ongoing assessment of current practices, needs and intended outcomes.

Paraprofessionals should be part of a team that recognizes that all students can learn. The certified teacher should have training in the principles of teaching and learning that emphasize scaffolding teaching and supports, fostering independence, data collection, and strategies for student engagement. Proper teacher training and modeling will help ensure that the paraprofessional will also be effective when working with students.

## **Resources Included in This Document**

National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model for Paraprofessional Responsibilities Birth to Three Credentialing System Job Coach Competencies Standards for Teacher/Provider Supervisory Competencies Roles of Program and Building Administrators in the Management of Paraeducators 10 Tips for Administrators from Connecticut Sample district evaluation forms Classroom walkthrough protocol Sample Teacher-Paraeducator Planning tool (NCES) Stetson & Associates: What is my role as a paraprofessional? Classroom Activity Analysis Worksheet, Schedule for Paraprofessional Staff

Appendix A: LRE News

Appendix B: Paraprofessionals and SRBI

Appendix C: Paraprofessionals Brief: English Language Learners (ELLs)

Appendix D: Paraprofessional Brief: Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Appendix E: CSDE Survey of Districts on Paraprofessional Professional Development

Appendix F: No Child Left Behind – Title I Paraprofessionals and Non-Regulatory Guidance

Appendix G: Legislative Program Review and Investigations Study

Appendix H: American Federation of Teachers: Status of State Paraprofessional Certification

Appendix I: Community Colleges, Regional Educational Service Centers, and Other Organizations Offering Programs for Paraprofessionals

# Section 1: Terminology and Job Titles

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- Terminology and Job Titles

# Terminology and Job Titles

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The task force formed in 2001 chose to retain the title of “paraprofessional” despite much discussion that the term “paraeducator” might better represent the staff roles and responsibilities addressed in these guidelines. The term “paraprofessional” continues to be used in both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, legislation. Previous studies of the role of paraprofessionals have identified more than 25 job titles for paraprofessionals. A recent study by the Connecticut General Assembly Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee has made a recommendation to change the term paraprofessional to “paraeducator,” as the team conducting the study felt the title paraeducator better captures the dimensions of the role. Further consideration of this recommendation is necessary. However, the retention of the term paraprofessional in federal legislation is likely to determine the term used in the state. Today, many schools and providers continue to use multiple terms as a means to define job roles, responsibilities, compensation and benefit packages, and career ladders. These delineations are often helpful and may be reflected in contract language and policy and procedures for the program or school. Nonetheless, a job title is not as important as the definition of the roles, responsibilities, qualifications and level of supervision required by the staff person. Confusion about job titles often stems from confusion over roles and responsibilities, not titles.

For the purpose of this document, the following terminology is used throughout:

**Competencies:** Specific skills and knowledge required to perform their job by paraprofessionals who are assigned to different programs or positions.

**Credentialing:** Systems designed to certify that paraprofessionals have mastered the knowledge and skills required for entry to or higher levels of paraprofessional positions.

**Paraprofessional:** An instructional assistant, instructional associate, early intervention associate, early intervention assistant, aide, teacher’s aide, special education aide, one-to-one aide, teacher assistant, paraeducator\*, instructor, tutor, job coach or educational support personnel. \*This title is used in IDEA and NCLB legislation and in classrooms across Connecticut. The titles paraeducator and aide are also found in the literature.

**Schools:** School districts; public, private, magnet, charter schools; RESC programs; preschools; and community-based early childhood programs.

**Programs:** An agency or organization approved by the Connecticut Birth to Three System to provide early intervention services to children with disabilities and their families.

**Professional:** A certified special or regular education teacher or licensed support staff such as a speech pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, school psychologist, school social worker or school nurse.

**Skill standards:** Statements that describe job functions or tasks related to competency areas established for an occupation or profession.

**Student:** Infant, toddler, youth or adolescent involved in an educational or intervention program.

**Supervisor:** Teachers or other professional practitioners who are responsible for integrating paraprofessionals into the instructional team. This role has supervisory responsibilities that include planning, scheduling and assigning tasks for paraprofessionals based on their experience and training. It also requires directing and monitoring the day-to-day work of paraprofessionals, providing feedback, on-the-job coaching and sharing information with principals about paraprofessional strengths and training needs.

**Evaluator:** Those personnel who have the authority to make hiring and firing decisions based on evaluation.

For the purpose of this document, the following is the definition of a paraprofessional in Connecticut schools or programs as described in the 1990 committee report with minor revisions and an endorsement by the Connecticut State Personnel Development and Connecticut State Advisory Council for Special Education Task Force that developed the previous guidelines. This definition is upheld by the Connecticut State Department of Education in this revision of the *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students, Birth to 21*:

"A paraprofessional is an employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the teacher or other certified or licensed professional. The ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of student progress, is a collaborative effort of certified and licensed staff."

# Section 2: Federal and State Legislation for Paraprofessionals

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- IDEA 2004, Federal Regulations for Paraprofessionals Working with Students with Disabilities
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Federal Legislation
- Connecticut Legislation for Paraprofessionals Working with Students with Disabilities
- Current Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation

# IDEA 2004, Federal Legislation for Paraprofessionals Working with Students with Disabilities

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Paraprofessionals were formally identified in federal legislation with the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 105-17). The term paraprofessionals continues in the reauthorization to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. The new regulations are listed below.

## **Part B - State and Local Eligibility: Personnel Qualifications 34 C.F.R. Section 156(b)(2)(iii)300.156 (iii)**

Allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with state law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.

### **Professional Development Activities IDEA sec. 654(a)(3)(B)(i-vi)**

Each state is to require that: Public schools improve the knowledge of special education and regular education teachers and principals and, in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, concerning effective instructional practices, and provide training in:

- learning styles;
- behavior interventions;
- scientifically based reading instruction;
- early interventions;
- effective instruction;
- transition; and collaboration.

## **Part C (Birth to Three) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development 34 CFR Section 303.360 (b)**

“The personnel development of this part must: (3) provide for the training of a variety of personnel needed to meet the requirements of this part, including public and private providers, primary referral source, paraprofessionals, and persons who will serve as case coordinators.”

### **Legal Issues Surrounding the Appropriate Use of Paraprofessionals**

Katsiyannis, Hodge and Lanford (2000) reviewed summaries of national due-process hearings, Office for Civil Rights rulings, Office of Special Education Programs memos, and court rulings from 1990-1999 regarding the legal parameters associated with the use of paraeducators in special education and found the following:

1. Public schools must supply services provided by paraeducators if these services are necessary for a student to receive free appropriate public education (FAPE).
2. Paraeducators must be qualified to perform assigned services as indicated in the individualized education plan (IEP).



3. Paraeducators who lack appropriate training may not directly provide special education services.

Appropriately trained paraeducators may assist in the provision of special education services only if certified special education personnel supervise them. (Wallace and McNerney 2002)

Currently there are no rulings regarding the use of paraprofessionals in Connecticut. In 2004, courts in Iowa examined a case where a paraprofessional, not certified in special education, was improperly responsible for the student's instruction, the selection of instructional materials, data collection and behavior management. The court determined the student had not received a FAPE because the IEP and behavior intervention plan (BIP) must be developed, implemented and evaluated by a trained professional. The court ordered three years of compensatory education [(Linn-Mar community School District, 41 IDELR 24 (SEA IA 2004)].

# Federal Legislation for Title I Paraprofessionals — No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110)

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## Title I, Part A Paraprofessional Requirements:

Title I, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that paraprofessionals meet higher standards of qualification to ensure that students who need the most help receive instructional support only from qualified paraprofessionals. **For the purposes of Title I, Part A, a paraprofessional is an employee of a local education agency (LEA) who provides instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds. Therefore, the following requirements apply only to paraprofessionals who provide instructional support in Title I-funded programs. Instructional paraprofessionals who are paid with Title I funds in Title I targeted assistance schools and all instructional paraprofessionals in Title I schoolwide program schools (regardless of funding source) must meet the Title I requirements. Included also are Title I paraprofessionals who provide instructional support to eligible private school students and preschool children.**

Title I paraprofessionals described above who provide instructional assistance must have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, a General Educational Development (GED) diploma, **and:**

- two years of college credit; OR
- an associate (or higher) degree; OR
- pass a State Board of Education adopted paraprofessional assessment, which assesses content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics. (The Connecticut State Board of Education adopted Educational Testing Services' *ParaPro Assessment* in December 2002 and established a passing score of 457.)

Paraprofessionals working primarily as translators or solely on parental involvement activities must have a high school diploma or GED, but do not have to meet the other requirements. Individuals who work solely in noninstructional roles, such as those who provide personal care services, perform clerical duties, work in food services, cafeteria or playground supervision, and provide noninstructional computer assistance are not considered paraprofessionals under Title I, Part A and the requirements do not apply.

A Title I, Part A paraprofessional may be assigned to:

- provide one-on-one tutoring for eligible students, if the tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher;
- assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional materials;
- provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory;
- conduct parental involvement activities;
- provide instructional support in a library or media center;
- act as a translator; or provide instructional support services to students. **(A Title I paraprofessional may not provide any instructional support to a student unless he/she is working under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher.)\***

\*According to federal guidance: "A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates

the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher [§200.59(c)(2) of the Title I regulations]. As a result, a program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not permitted.

“A program where a paraprofessional provides instructional support and a teacher visits a site once or twice a week but otherwise is not in the classroom, or a program where a paraprofessional works with a group of students in another location while the teacher provides instruction to the rest of the class would also be inconsistent with the requirement that paraprofessionals work in close and frequent proximity to a teacher.”

This means “a paraprofessional who provides services to eligible private school students and is employed by an LEA must be under the direct supervision of a highly qualified public school teacher throughout the duration of the services/program being offered.”

**Because paraprofessionals provide instructional support, they should not be providing planned direct instruction, or introducing students to new skills, concepts or academic content.**

Paraprofessionals may assume limited duties that are assigned to similar personnel who are not working in a program supported with Title I funds, including duties beyond classroom instruction or that do not benefit participating children, so long as the amount of time spent on such duties is the same proportion of total work time as prevails with respect to similar personnel at the same school.

LEAs receiving Title I funds shall require that the principal of each school operating a Title I program attest annually in writing as to whether the school is in compliance with the requirements for teachers and paraprofessionals. Copies of attestations shall be maintained at each school operating a Title I program and at the main office of the LEA and shall be available to any member of the general public on request.

Federal nonregulatory guidance regarding Title I paraprofessionals may be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/paraguidance.doc> or in Section IV, Paraprofessionals in the Connecticut Birth to Three System.

## **ParaPro Assessment:**

The CSDE worked collaboratively with 16 other states and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the development of the ParaPro Assessment that meets the federal requirements for a state assessment for paraprofessionals.

The ParaPro Assessment measures skills and knowledge in reading, math and writing, and measures the ability to use these skills and knowledge to support instruction. It is a 2½-hour multiple choice test with 90 questions. This test is available in two formats. The paper and pencil version is offered three times a year at select locations throughout the state; test results are available in four weeks. The assessment may also be completed through the Internet, with unofficial results immediately available upon completion. At the time of this publication, the cost of the assessment is \$45. A school district receiving Title II funds may use these funds to pay for the test and to support paraprofessionals in meeting the requirement through ongoing training and professional development. The ParaPro Assessment can be retaken if an individual does not pass. There are no limits on the number of times a paraprofessional can take the test. A paraprofessional must obtain a passing score of 457 to meet the Connecticut standard. The paper and pencil version of the test can be retaken after 60 days. The Internet version can be retaken after 30 days. Individuals planning to retake the test should participate in the same type of remedial intervention such as attending a workshop or use of the study guides before retaking the test.

ETS offers the Test at a Glance, which includes a sample test explanation, format, content and practice questions. This sample test and additional tutorial support is available on the ETS website at [www.ets.org/parapro/index.html](http://www.ets.org/parapro/index.html). There is also a study guide available for purchase from ETS. The study guide contains detailed descriptions of test content, tutorial assistance and a complete practice test (with answers and explanation of answers). Preparation

workshops are also available by request through the regional education service centers (RESCs). The CSDE highly recommends that paraprofessionals go through either of these preparation options or through options provided by local agencies/districts before taking the assessment.

# Connecticut Legislation for Paraprofessionals Working with Students with Disabilities

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Connecticut regulations concerning children requiring special education [RSCA Section 1076d-2 (g)] require the following for school-based paraprofessionals: Provision shall be made for the direct supervision of each aide in special education by a person certified or licensed in the area of specialization to which such aide is assigned.

The Connecticut Birth to Three System identifies personnel standards for qualified personnel working in the early intervention system [17a-248 (10)]. (See Appendix A.) The personnel standards identify two categories of paraprofessionals, an early intervention assistant and an early intervention associate. “These personnel can be valued team members and work successfully to support and extend the role of early intervention professionals; however, it is expected that the number of staff in these job categories will not exceed 25% of the total direct full-time equivalent early intervention staff” (Connecticut Birth to Three System Procedures Manual 2008). The standards identify the job responsibilities as well as level of supervision required for both assistants and associates. Additional guidance on use of paraprofessionals in the Birth to Three System is included in Appendix B.

## Current Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation

Sec. 10-155j of the 2008 Supplement to the General Statutes. Development of paraprofessionals. The Department of Education, through the State Education Resource Center and within available appropriations for such purposes, shall promote and encourage professional development activities for school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. Such activities may include, but shall not be limited to, providing local and regional boards of education with training modules and curricula for professional development for paraprofessionals and assisting boards of education in the effective use of paraprofessionals and the development of strategies to improve communications between teachers and paraprofessionals in the provision of effective student instruction.

Sec. 10-155k of the 2008 Supplement to the General Statutes. School Paraprofessional Advisory Council. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a School Paraprofessional Advisory Council consisting of one representative from each state-wide bargaining representative organization that represents school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. The council shall advise, at least quarterly, the Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, of the needs for the training of such paraprofessionals and the effectiveness of the content and the delivery of existing training for such paraprofessionals. The council shall report, at least quarterly, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the recommendations given to the commissioner, or the commissioner's designee, pursuant to the provisions of this section, to the joint standing committee of the General assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education.

Sec. 28 of PA 07-3 of the June Special Session. Not later than December 1, 2008, the department shall report and make recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education concerning professional development for paraprofessionals and the status and future of school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. Public Act 08-169 (signed by Governor on June 12, 2008) Autism: Requires the Commissioners of Education, Higher Education and Developmental Services and the President of Southern Connecticut State University to define autism and developmental disabilities and to develop recommendations by February 1, 2009, for a comprehensive state-wide plan to incorporate methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities into teacher preparation programs, teacher certification requirements, in-service training for educators and training provided to school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities.

# Section 3: Paraprofessional Data

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- National and Connecticut Data
- Credentialing and Paraprofessionals

# National and Connecticut Data

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The position of paraprofessional is one of the fastest growing occupations in public schools. Doyle (1997) reports that in the early 1960s there were about 10,000 paraprofessionals working in schools, primarily in noninstructional roles. In the late 1990s, about 500,000 paraprofessionals worked in public schools (see Wallace and McNerney 2002; Pickett, Likins and Wallace 2002). According to the United States Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010–11 Edition, paraprofessionals held about 1.3 million jobs in 2008. Many worked for public and private educational institutions. Child care centers and religious organizations employed most of the rest (<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos153.htm>).

The 1989 Committee of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development conducted a survey of paraprofessionals in public schools based on district size. In this study, “the number of paraprofessionals in Connecticut varies from fewer than 10 to over 400, depending primarily on the size of the district. Small rural districts reported employing an average of 10 paraprofessionals; medium cities reported an average of 60; fringe cities reported about 70 positions and the large cities reported 200 to over 400 positions” (Committee to Study the Role of Paraprofessionals Report 1990).

As indicated in the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Staff finding in School Year 2005–06 there were about 37,000 noncertified full-time equivalent staff in school districts K–12. Of these, 25,000 were noncertified noninstructional staff, while 12,046 were noncertified instructional paraprofessionals.

The Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Data Collection, Research and Evaluation, annually conducts a fall hiring survey to determine areas of teacher and administrator shortage. The Hiring Survey for the 2011–12 School Year for Special Education Paraprofessional positions identified 171 full-time positions and 34 unfilled part-time positions, available statewide. Of these positions, 20 full-time (15 because no qualified applicant could be found) and four (two because no qualified applicant could be found) part-time positions remained open as of October 1. The average rating of the applicant pool quality indicated that there were many acceptable applicants (ED-156 Fall Hiring Survey, October 2011).

Worth noting is the ongoing identification of personnel shortages in special education. Special education teachers and speech language pathologists fall within the top 10 professional shortage areas (ED-156 Fall Hiring Survey, February 2007). Job experience and training make paraprofessionals ideal candidates to pursue a professional career in education. Paraprofessionals have valuable experience in their schools and communities and have acquired interpersonal skills to work effectively with children. Paraprofessionals are highly motivated and interested in teaching in their home communities. The report of the Connecticut CSPD Recruitment Task Force (2002) identified a career ladder for paraprofessionals as a recommendation for addressing recruitment issues. Development of career ladders for paraprofessionals and opportunities to receive college-level course credit for training may assist programs and districts with recruiting and retaining paraprofessionals and with addressing some of the identified professional shortages in Connecticut. In 2004, using the recommendations of the CSPD Recruitment Task Force of 2002, the Department of Education, with grant funds from the State Personnel Development Grant, developed a plan for recruitment in four specific urban areas for paraprofessionals who live and work in urban areas. With this grant opportunity, Southern Connecticut State University is working with cohorts of paraprofessionals to provide them with the training needed to meet the requirements of a highly qualified, certified special education teacher.

A survey by the Task Force on the Use of Paraprofessionals in Connecticut’s Birth to Three System, public schools and private special education programs (2002) and the executive summary of the results of this survey are included in Appendix E. This survey shows wide variations in the numbers of paraprofessionals employed by schools and programs and their needs. Many of the differences are attributed to the different work environments. More than

half of all respondents report having written job descriptions, health benefits, opportunities to attend workshops and formal performance evaluations. The summary includes information on the highest and most pressing professional development needs. All three environments identified need for future training in positive behavior supports and implementation of behavior management plans, facilitating social interactions between children and their peers, and teaming skills such as conflict management and problem solving.

The National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP) has released a review of the literature on paraprofessionals and their relationship to academic improvement. This review contains newer studies that have previously not linked the two together and refuted their findings based on factors that were not controlled for. Other literature indicates a link between the use of paraprofessionals along with teachers but does so with the clear statement that the paraprofessional must be adequately trained for the results to hold true in the general population. A complete literature review on this topic can be found at <http://www.aft.org/psrp/topics/download/ParasandStudAchieve.pdf>.



# Credentialing and Paraprofessionals

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Many states have implemented a paraprofessional credentialing program or are studying the merits of such a program. A report compiled by the American Federation of Teachers on the status of state paraprofessional standards and certification regulations is included in Appendix E. This document demonstrates the wide variation in ways that states approach setting standards, issuing letters of approval or permits, setting entry requirements based on education or training, or requiring certification or licensure as defined in legislation. Of the 48 states included in the report, 22 had no specified standards or regulations (including Connecticut) and eight had certification or licensing requirements.

The 1989 Paraprofessional Task Force was charged by the education commissioner to study the issue of a certification requirement for paraprofessionals in Connecticut. “After careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of a state certification permit system for paraprofessionals, the committee decided by consensus not to recommend the establishment of a credentialing system at this time” (Report of the Committee to Study the Role of Paraprofessionals 1990).

The committee recognized the positive aspects of a credentialing system to provide a career ladder and standardized quality for skills and training, but this was not outweighed by the concern for channeling state resources and energy into the establishment of the system. At that time, there were no national models for certification in other states. The 1995 CSPD and SAC Task Force reached this same conclusion and suggested, “rather than attempting to introduce credentialing or state statute at this point, guidelines for paraprofessionals would provide districts with suggestions for implementing more effective paraprofessional employment practices” (CSPD 1996). The Connecticut Birth to Three System currently offers the early intervention associate credential on a voluntary basis for both professionals and paraprofessionals.

A study was conducted by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations committee in 2006. The primary focus of the study was on whether the state should establish minimum standards for public school paraprofessionals who perform instructional tasks. An executive summary of the study and recommendations are included in Appendix E.

The Education Committee voted to present Bill 7357, which provided for a voluntary credentialing system for paraprofessionals in Connecticut. The Education and Appropriations committees later introduced a joint favorable substitute bill, which passed the General Assembly. This substitute eliminated the credentialing component.

# Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals

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- National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model
- Paraprofessionals in the Connecticut Birth To Three System
- Job Coach Competencies for Paraprofessionals
- Paraprofessionals and Individualized Family Service Plans and Planning and Placement Team Meetings

# Roles and Responsibilities

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The CSPD and SAC Task Force reviewed many state and national models for defining roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals. The National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model (1999) was eventually selected and modified as a framework in articulating key competencies for Connecticut paraprofessionals.

The model described in the following pages is designed to assist districts and programs in identifying responsibilities of paraprofessionals and then delineates the knowledge and skills necessary for performing those duties. The model should serve as a guide and should be modified to meet the unique needs of a school district or program.

The model defines six primary areas of responsibilities for paraprofessionals:

1. Assisting teachers/providers with building and maintaining effective instructional teams.
2. Assisting teachers/providers with maintaining learner-centered supportive environments.
3. Supporting teachers/providers with planning and organizing learning experiences.
4. Assisting teachers/providers with engaging students in learning and assisting in instruction.
5. Assisting teachers/providers with assessing learner needs, progress and achievement.
6. Meeting standards of professional or ethical conduct.

For each of these responsibilities, the model describes the scope of responsibilities and the knowledge and skills needed by the paraprofessional to perform these responsibilities. The knowledge and skills lists are intended for use as a guide in training paraprofessionals.

The model is further organized to define three levels of responsibilities, which are based on paraprofessionals' training, experience and job requirements:

1. Level 1: This individual is an entry-level paraprofessional, with a high school diploma or equivalent, but has little or no experience. This individual requires a high level of direct supervision.
2. Level 2: This individual has multiple years of experience and training, typically on the job, and has the knowledge and skills to work more independently in the same setting as the supervisor.
3. Level 3: This individual has participated in some type of postsecondary training, usually with a focus on a specialized set of skills. This person may work more independently, such as in the community or a student's home.

**Responsibility 1 — PARAPROFESSIONALS ASSIST TEACHERS/PROVIDERS WITH BUILDING AND MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL TEAMS.**

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carrying out team decisions as assigned by the teacher, provider or related service personnel.</li> <li>2. Attending meetings and sharing relevant information with other team members to facilitate problem solving, decision making, program planning and other team activities.</li> <li>3. Using ethical practices for confidential communication about students.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding of the distinctions in teacher/provider and administrator roles in the employment, supervision, management, evaluation and preparation of paraprofessionals.</li> <li>2. Understanding of the value of a team approach to the delivery of education and related services for learners and their families.</li> <li>3. Awareness of federal, state and district/agency policies, regulations and practices connected with paraprofessional employment, roles, supervision and preparation.</li> <li>4. Awareness of communication styles that contribute to effective participation in program implementation teams.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to follow teacher/provider instructions and carry out team decisions.</li> <li>2. Ability to interact constructively with and demonstrate respect for learners, families and other school/agency personnel.</li> <li>3. Ability to contribute relevant objective information to teachers/providers to facilitate planning, problem solving and decision making.</li> </ol>
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Participating in regularly scheduled meetings with teachers/providers.</li> <li>5. Assisting teachers/providers in activities that engage children in learning experiences.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Understanding of the distinctions in the roles and responsibilities of teachers/providers, families, paraprofessionals and other team members in identifying learner needs, developing plans to meet learner needs and implementing programs to achieve learner goals.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Ability to participate in program planning team meetings, when required by program or district/agency policies and procedures.</li> <li>5. Meets specialized competencies for Connecticut Birth to Three System, Early Intervention Assistant.</li> <li>6. Meets specialized competencies for speech aide.</li> </ol>
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Participating in meetings with teachers/providers to assist with planning and organizing learning experiences and environments.</li> <li>7. Attending program planning team meetings based on program/district/agency policies to assist with developing individualized education, transition and family service plans for children who have disabilities and other special needs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Awareness of problem-solving and decision-making strategies that strengthen program planning teams and program implementation teams.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Meets specialized competencies for CT Birth to Three System, early intervention associate.</li> <li>8. Meets specialized competencies for job coach or community based support.</li> <li>9. Meets specialized competencies for speech assistant.</li> <li>10. Meets specialized competencies for applied behavior analysis instructor.</li> <li>11. Meets specialized competencies for sign language interpreter.</li> </ol>

**Responsibility 2 — PARAPROFESSIONALS ASSIST TEACHERS/PROVIDERS WITH MAINTAINING LEARNER-CENTERED, SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS.**

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assisting teachers/providers with the implementation of district/agency policies and procedures for protecting the safety, health and well-being of learners and staff.</li> <li>2. Implementing strategies developed by teachers/providers that maintain supportive and inclusive environments; respect individual differences among learners, their families and school/agency staff; and protect the human and legal rights of all individuals.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding of the value of serving all children and youth in the least restrictive and in supportive learning environments.</li> <li>2. Understanding of the distinctions and similarities in teacher/provider and paraprofessional roles and responsibilities for creating and maintaining supportive learning environments.</li> <li>3. Awareness of district/agency procedures for protecting the safety, health and well-being of learners and staff.</li> <li>4. Awareness of district/agency policies and procedures for managing and disciplining all children and youth.</li> <li>5. Awareness of district policies, procedures and methods for managing learner behaviors that are disruptive and/or aggressive.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to implement proactive behavior and learning strategies developed by teachers/providers that maintain supportive learning environments.</li> <li>2. Ability to follow and use prescribed district/agency policies and procedures to ensure the safety, health and well-being of learners and staff.</li> <li>3. Ability to provide translation services for families with limited English proficiency and follow teacher/provider plans to support and encourage family participation in their child's learning environment.</li> <li>4. Ability to use universal health precautions for preventing illnesses and infections and proper body mechanics for lifting learners and heavy objects.</li> </ol>
Level 2	<p>(The scope of responsibilities for level 2 paraprofessionals as team members includes all the responsibilities of level 1 paraprofessionals as team members.)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Understanding strategies that support families strengthens their ability to assist with learning activities and encourage participation in the learning environment.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Ability to implement procedures or plans for managing individual student behavior.</li> </ol>
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Assisting teachers/providers with involving families in their child's learning experiences.</li> <li>4. Assisting teachers/providers with communicating with child/families through interpretation of native language.</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Ability to carry out teacher/provider plans to enhance family interactions with infants/young children that facilitate physical, social, language and cognitive development, and share information about community support services and resources.</li> <li>7. Ability to carry out teacher/provider plans to support and share information with families about community services and resources available to students making the transition to the work force, postsecondary education and adult world.</li> </ol>

**Responsibility 3 — PARAPROFESSIONALS SUPPORT TEACHERS/PROVIDERS WITH PLANNING AND ORGANIZING LEARNING EXPERIENCES.**

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assisting teachers/providers with the development/preparation of learning materials/instructional resources and the environment.</li> <li>2. Provide support in data entry and record keeping.</li> <li>3. Inventory supplies and ordering materials selected by the teacher/provider.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding of the value of organized environments to facilitate transitions and promote learning.</li> <li>2. Awareness of resources, equipment and technology for preparing learning materials developed by teachers/providers.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to use copy machines, computers and other equipment to prepare learning materials and resources.</li> <li>2. Ability to follow instructions in creating modifications of learning materials.</li> </ol>
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Gathering and sharing relevant information that supports the planning process about the performance and behavior of individual learners.</li> <li>5. Ability to prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning as directed.</li> <li>6. Ability to use strategies that provide learner independence and positive self-esteem.</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Ability to prepare and use adaptive equipment and assistive technology prescribed by teachers/providers and other professional staff.</li> <li>4. Ability to assist PTs, OTs, SLPs and nurses to maintain adaptive equipment.</li> <li>5. Ability to objectively gather and report information about learner's performance and interactions to assist the teacher/provider in the planning process.</li> </ol>
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Assisting teachers/providers to modify learning strategies to accommodate different learning styles, ability levels and other learning needs of individual children and youth.</li> <li>8. Assisting teachers/providers with the development/preparation of resources and settings.</li> <li>9. Ability to adapt instructional materials to the needs of the learner, under the direction of a certified professional.</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Ability to assist teachers/providers with modifying learning materials and activities to meet the needs of individuals with different ability levels, learning styles or language backgrounds.</li> </ol>

**Responsibility 4 - PARAPROFessionALS ASSIST TEACHERS/PROVIDERS WITH ENGAGING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN LEARNING**

Level 1	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using lesson plans and learning strategies developed by teachers/providers.</li> <li>2. Reviewing and reinforcing learning activities initiated by the teacher/provider to help children and youth master concepts and skills.</li> <li>3. Performing monitoring duties as assigned in other learning environments (e.g., lunchrooms, playgrounds, libraries and buses).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding of the rationale, mission, philosophy and goals of the program to which the paraprofessional is assigned.</li> <li>2. Proficiency in basic reading, math, writing and speaking English.</li> <li>3. Awareness of the distinctions in teacher/provider and paraprofessional roles in engaging children and youth in learning experiences.</li> <li>4. Awareness of different methods that are used by teachers/providers to accommodate an individual's learning needs.</li> <li>5. Understanding of the distinctions in the roles and responsibilities of professionals and paraprofessionals in the development and implementation of behavior management plans.</li> <li>6. Awareness of developmentally and age-appropriate techniques that reinforce the learning of children and youth with different needs.</li> <li>7. Understanding of state and district rules and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individual learners.</li> <li>8. Understanding of basic principles of proactive behavior management strategies that increase learner independence, motivation and self-esteem.</li> <li>9. Understanding of effective procedures for dealing with verbal aggression and other forms of resistance.</li> <li>10. Understanding of how the use of technology can promote learning.</li> <li>11. Awareness of different strategies used by teachers/providers to support learners who come from different ethnic, cultural and language minority backgrounds.</li> <li>12. Awareness of how various assistive and adaptive devices and materials facilitate learning and inclusion of children and youth with developmental, physical and sensory disabilities and those who are medically fragile.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to develop and maintain effective interactions with all learners.</li> <li>2. Ability to use developmentally and age-appropriate reinforcement and other learning activities developed by teachers/providers.</li> <li>3. Ability to use teacher/provider-developed positive behavioral strategies and procedures that facilitate the learning of children and youth with challenging behaviors.</li> <li>4. Ability to monitor and assist children and youth in other learning environments (e.g., libraries, computer labs, lunchrooms, playgrounds and buses).</li> </ol>

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 2	<p>4. Implementing behavioral programs developed by teachers/providers.</p> <p>5. Assisting children and youth with individualized learning activities and/or independent study projects developed by teachers/providers.</p> <p>6. Assisting occupational and physical therapists, speech language pathologists and nurses in the delivery of related services.</p>	<p>13. Understanding of different strategies used by teachers/providers to support learners who come from different ethnic, cultural and language minority backgrounds.</p> <p>14. Understanding of how various assistive and adaptive devices and materials facilitate learning and inclusion of children and youth with developmental, physical and sensory disabilities and those who are medically fragile.</p> <p>15. Understanding academic/curriculum areas based on learner and program needs.</p> <p>16. Awareness of patterns of cognitive, physical, social, emotional and language development typically achieved at different ages and factors that impede typical development.</p> <p>17. Awareness of the impact of different learning styles/preferences on the performance of individual children and youth.</p>	<p>5. Ability to carry out teacher/provider developed behavioral strategies that increase learner independence, motivation and self-esteem.</p> <p>6. Ability to carryout teacher/provider developed behavioral strategies and procedures that facilitate the learning of children and youth with challenging behaviors.</p> <p>7. Ability to follow and carry out teacher/provider plans for strengthening academic skills for school-age learners.</p> <p>8. Ability to carry out teacher/provider plans for developmentally appropriate learning activities for infants and children.</p> <p>9. Ability to assist nurses (based on state and local policies) with procedures required by learners who have special health care needs. For level 2 paraprofessionals who are providing language interpretation:</p> <p>10. Ability to use teacher/provider developed learning strategies for English language learners.</p> <p>11. Ability to preview lessons in native languages to ensure that English language learners understand instructions and concepts.</p>
Level 3	<p>7. Carrying out learning activities for children, youth and their families in homes, educational settings, work sites and other community-based settings.</p>	<p>18. Understanding of the purpose and need for learning and performance standards.</p> <p>19. Understanding of the validated practices for working with individuals with severe and challenging behaviors.</p>	<p>12. Ability to assist teachers/providers in implementing advanced behavioral strategies to facilitate learning of children and youth with challenging behaviors and promote an orderly and safe learning environment for all.</p> <p>13. Ability to carry out teacher/provider plans in community-based vocational and transitional programs for students entering the work force.</p> <p>14. Ability to assist student with activities as designed and identified by physical and occupational therapists and speech language pathologists.</p>



**Responsibility 5 - PARAPROFESSIONALS ASSIST TEACHERS/PROVIDERS WITH ASSESSING LEARNER NEEDS AND PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS.**

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data collection on learner activity as designed by teacher/provider.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Awareness of the distinctions in the roles of teachers/providers, other licensed district/agency professionals and paraprofessionals in the assessment process.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assist in data collection as designed by certified professional.</li> </ol>
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Carrying out functional (informal) assessment activities to assist teachers/providers in documenting information about learner strengths and needs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Awareness of the reasons for conducting different types of evaluations to assess learner strengths and needs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Ability to use functional (informal) assessment instruments developed by teachers/providers to document and maintain data on learner behaviors and performance and to objectively report the results.</li> </ol>
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Providing information and assisting in administering standardized tests based on the paraprofessional's qualifications to carry out assigned tasks.</li> <li>4. Assisting teachers/providers and other team members with maintaining learner records required by the district/agency/state.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Understanding of the differences of standardized (formal) assessment instruments and teacher/provider developed functional (informal) assessment tools.</li> <li>4. Awareness of district policies and procedures for maintaining learner records required by the district/agency/state.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Ability to assist with student modifications for standardized tests based on a state/district / agency policies (e.g., Connecticut Mastery Test).</li> <li>4. Ability to assist teachers/providers in conducting functional behavioral analysis.</li> <li>5. Ability to assist teachers/providers in maintaining learner records as required by the district/agency/state.</li> </ol>

**Responsibility 6 - PARAPROFESSIONALS MEET STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT.**

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assisting school/agency administrators and teacher/providers with protection of the civil, legal and human rights of children, youth and their families.</li> <li>2. Practicing the standards of professional and ethical conduct approved by the school district/agency/state and federal guidelines for education and/or human services personnel.</li> <li>3. Following the chain of command established by the district/agency to address policy questions, systems issues and personnel practices.</li> <li>4. Following guidelines established by the district/agency to protect the health, safety and well-being of children and youth.</li> <li>5. Respecting individual differences among children, youth, their families and school/agency personnel.</li> <li>6. Providing administrators and other stakeholders input in creating professional development activities for paraprofessionals.</li> <li>7. Participating in continuing professional development.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding of the civil, legal and human rights of children, youth and their families.</li> <li>2. Understanding of district, agency and/or state and local laws, policies and procedures for identifying signs/characteristics of and reporting suspected physical, sexual and psychological child abuse.</li> <li>3. Understanding of district/agency standards for professional and ethical conduct for all personnel.</li> <li>4. Understanding of the district /agency's chain of command for decisions making and addressing policy questions, systems issues and personnel practices.</li> <li>5. Understanding of the district/agency's guidelines for protecting the health, safety and well-being of children and youth.</li> <li>6. Awareness of and sensitivity to diversity and individual differences among learners, their families and school/agency personnel.</li> <li>7. Understanding of opportunities for professional growth and career advancement for paraprofessionals.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to perform assigned tasks under the supervision of teachers/providers in a manner consistent with professional and ethical guidelines established by the state or district/agency.</li> <li>2. Willingness to participate in professional and career development opportunities.</li> <li>3. Ability to confer with principals/administrators and supervising teachers/providers to identify strengths and professional development needs.</li> </ol>
Level 2 and Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Participating with administrators and other stakeholders in creating and implementing comprehensive systems of professional development for paraprofessionals.</li> </ol>		

# Appropriate Roles for Paraprofessionals

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There has been much attention paid to what paraprofessionals cannot and should not be doing in regard to assisting teachers, and this has created an environment for paraprofessionals in which they tend to be underused and relegated to the role of clerk or babysitter.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 cites appropriate roles for paraprofessionals who:

1. Provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher.
2. Assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional materials.
3. Provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory.
4. Conduct parental involvement activities.
5. Provide instructional support in a library or media center.
6. Act as a translator.
7. Provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher [Title I, Section 1119(g)(2)].

According to these guidelines, paraprofessionals have the instructional responsibility to do the following (page 2):

1. Assist professionals with building and maintaining effective instructional teams.
2. Assist professionals with maintaining learner-centered supportive environments.
3. Support professionals with planning and organizing learning experiences.
4. Assist professionals with engaging students in learning.
5. Assist professionals in instruction.
6. Assist professionals with assessing learner needs, progress and achievement.

The following are 10 examples of appropriate and effective utilization of paraprofessionals, taken from the model of roles, responsibilities and training of paraprofessionals identified in this guideline document:

1. Participation in regularly scheduled meetings and sharing relevant information.
2. Implementation of proactive behavior and learning strategies.
3. Use of strategies that provide learner independence and positive self-esteem.
4. Assistance in accommodating and modifying learning strategies based on learning styles, ability levels and other individual differences.
4. Review and reinforcement of learning activities.
5. Assistance in engaging learners through an awareness of cognitive, physical, social, emotional and language development.
6. Use of developmentally and age-appropriate reinforcement and other learning activities.
7. Collection of data on learner activity.
8. Carry out functional (informal) assessment activities.
9. Participation in continuing professional development.

# Connecticut Birth to Three Paraprofessionals

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Included in the Connecticut's Birth to Three System Personnel Standards are two categories of paraprofessional generalists called early intervention assistants and early intervention associates. Education, experience and supervisory requirements for both are listed. These personnel can be valued team members and work successfully to support and extend the role of early intervention professionals, however, it is expected that the number of staff in these job categories will not exceed 25 percent of the total direct full-time equivalent early intervention staff. The following are more in-depth descriptions of the use of these personnel.

## **Early Intervention Assistants**

Early intervention assistants receive at least one hour per week of direct supervision by a licensed or certified early intervention professional who is qualified to conduct initial evaluations. They must also have the availability of contact with a superior during work hours. They provide direct services to children and families by performing routine tasks assigned by the professionally licensed or certified personnel. They take no independent action, but carry out written programs and service plans designed by licensed or certified personnel. Some examples of their duties may be:

- Observing and/or assisting with evaluation and assessment sessions.
- Participating in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development.
- Assisting families and early intervention personnel in the delivery of services.
- Assisting in maintaining data. Participating in periodic conferences, team meetings with early intervention professionals.
- Developing a rapport with the child and family.

## **Early Intervention Associates**

Early intervention associates must receive at least one hour per month of direct supervision by professionally licensed or certified early intervention personnel and must attend at least one team meeting per month. They may function independently, providing direct services to children and families in home, or community-based settings, however, all progress notes must be countersigned by their supervisor. They may perform all the functions of the early intervention assistant in IFSP development and implementation, and monitor outcomes as part of a trans-disciplinary team. They are not responsible for conducting initial evaluations or annual assessments however; they may provide information that contributes to those evaluations or assessments. They cannot be the only service provider listed on the IFSP.

## Birth to Three Personnel Standards

PERSONNEL CATEGORY	ENTRY DEGREE	LICENSURE/ CERTIFICATION	ADDITIONAL SUPERVISION REQUIRED	JOB RESPONSIBILITIES	CAN ACT AS SERVICE COORDINATOR?
Early intervention assistant	High school diploma or GED	Documentation of training specific to child, the child's disability or delays and the specific techniques being used with the child.	At least one hour per week of direct supervision and availability of direct contact with supervisor during work hours. All progress notes must be countersigned by supervisor who is licensed or certified	Provides direct services to children and families by performing routine tasks assigned by professionally licensed or certified personnel. Takes no independent action. Carries out written program and service plans designed by licensed or certified personnel. Does not perform initial evaluations or annual assessments but provides data and input.	No
Early intervention associate	1. Bachelor's degree in a human service field (or) 2. C.D.A. (or) 3. Associate degree in a human service field (or) 4. High school diploma or GED and three years of experience as early intervention assistant	For those without a bachelor's degree: 1. Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition as CDA (or) 2. Associate degree from institution of higher education in education or human services field (or) 3. With documentation of three years successful experience as early intervention assistant by employing agency and completion of Parents As Teachers or equivalent training as approved by the lead agency or Completion of the Connecticut Birth to Three credential.	At least one hour per month of supervision and at least one team meeting per month. All progress notes countersigned by a supervisor who is licensed or supervised.	Participates in IFSP development and implementation, monitors outcomes as part of a transdisciplinary team, provides direct and/or consultative services to children and families.  Under regular supervision by professionally licensed or certified personnel, may function independently.  Does not perform initial evaluations or annual assessments but provides data and input.  Services may be billed to health insurance if the individual possesses a bachelor's degree and an early intervention associate credential.	Yes, after successful completion of service coordination training.
Occupational therapy assistant (COTA)	Associate degree from accredited AOTA program	Department of Public Health license §20-74c C.G.S.	Supervised by a licensed occupational therapist.	Participates in implementation of transdisciplinary team.	
Physical therapy assistant	Associate degree from approved PTA program.	Graduation from an accredited PTA program. Registered with the Department of Public Health under §20-73(b) C.G.S.	Supervised by a licensed physical therapist.	Under direct or indirect supervision of the PT, assists in providing intervention.	Yes, after successful completion of service coordination training.

# Job Coach Competencies for Paraprofessionals

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Students with disabilities who receive training and support at a variety of job sites during high school are better prepared for a successful transition to the work world. The job coach plays a key role during this time of vocational exploration. Knowing the student, his/her strengths, interests and needs; establishing relationships based on trust, mutual respect and effective communication; ensuring a safe environment; and modeling appropriate skills and positive behaviors fosters student independence, responsibility and self-advocacy.

The job coach represents the school and serves as the liaison between the employment site, school, student and parents. A diverse and critical array of competencies are required of the job coach, including good judgment, common sense, the ability to think on one's feet, and the ability to maintain professional behavior at all times.

The job coach will demonstrate the knowledge and skills to accomplish the following:

1. Ability to work effectively and maintain relationships with families, students, school personnel, employers and co-workers:
  - a. Collects and maintains data about the performance and behavior of individual students and confers with special and general education teachers about student schedules, instructional goals, progress and performance.
  - b. Participates as a member of the team responsible for transition planning and vocational assessment for individual students.
  - c. Provides relevant employment information for inclusion in each student's vocational portfolio.
  - d. Consults with school team members to assist with the design of individualized transition services, including competitive and supported employment or vocational training programs.
  - e. Demonstrates an understanding of the roles and responsibilities appropriate for professional and paraprofessional personnel.
  - f. Communicates effectively with employers and co-workers to ensure students are integrated into the work environment.
  - g. Familiarizes employers and co-workers with the needs of students and models appropriate interactions.
  - h. Educates students about the cultural norms of the specific work environment (e.g., appropriate dress, reporting structure, attendance policies, unwritten policies and procedures).
2. Ability to apply professional, ethical and legal standards of conduct in relationships with students, parents, school personnel, adult service providers, employers and co-workers:
  - a. Understands the legal rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities and their families.
  - b. Is sensitive to diversity in cultural heritage, lifestyles and value systems among students, families, co-workers and employers.
  - c. Demonstrates ethical and professional standards of conduct established by the local school district.
  - d. Understands the value of serving students in integrated settings.
  - e. Maintains professional appearance and attitude.
3. Ability to assist in the assessment, planning, provision and evaluation of instruction in the cognitive and affective domains:
  - a. Communicates with colleagues, follows instructions and uses problem-solving techniques and strategies as an effective member of an instructional team.
  - b. Motivates and assists students to build self-esteem and develop interpersonal skills that will help

increase integration in the workplace.

- c. Demonstrates the ability to use computers and learn about assistive technology and adaptive equipment that will enable students to participate more fully at school and in the workplace.
  - d. Demonstrates the ability to assist in pre-employment, vocational or transition training in classrooms or the workplace.
  - e. Analyzes job requirements, sequences daily tasks, observes and records data, and provides training at job sites using appropriate instructional interventions.
  - f. Encourages student decision-making/self-advocacy regarding the identification of future career plans.
  - g. Observes, understands and monitors the student's preferred learning style(s), work skills and tolerances, and preferred modes of communication.
  - h. Identifies environmental or job modifications necessary for the student to succeed in the workplace.
  - i. Uses appropriate instructional techniques, such as reinforcement, cueing, prompting, modeling and fading.
  - j. Assists in on-site observations to evaluate job performance.
  - k. Records progress in a consistent manner and shares information with appropriate supervisory personnel.
  - l. Assists students to learn appropriate work habits and performs jobs as specified.
4. Ability to apply health and safety standards within diverse work environments:
- a. Follows health, safety and emergency procedures developed by the local school district and the workplace.
  - b. Ensures that students understand and abide by the health, safety and emergency procedures developed by the local school district and the workplace.
5. Ability to demonstrate effective communication, conflict resolution and negotiation techniques to facilitate a positive and effective work environment:
- a. Assists students to become independent by modeling, monitoring and supporting positive behavior in the workplace.
  - b. Describes behavior in measurable and observable terms.
  - c. Recognizes environmental factors/situations that may precipitate negative or inappropriate behaviors and intervenes with appropriate behavior management techniques.
  - d. Assists students to acquire positive social behaviors and work habits.
  - e. Identifies strategies that may eliminate interfering behaviors.
  - f. Motivates students to work in a productive and competitive manner.

Revised adaptation from Supported Employment Competencies for Direct Service Staff (APSE) 2007

# Participation in Individualized Family Service Plan Meetings or Planning and Placement Team Meetings

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Paraprofessionals in the Birth to Three System may attend and/or conduct Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings for their assigned families. However, this paraprofessional cannot be listed as the sole individual on the IFSP to deliver service. There must always be a certified or licensed professional who works collaboratively with the paraprofessional identified on the IFSP (see Appendix B or Birth to Three System Procedure Manual).

Paraprofessionals are not required members of the IEP team under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) nor is a paraprofessional a required member of the state defined planning and placement team. Although the IDEA says “the IEP team for each child with a disability included...at the discretion of the parent or school district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child...”, the paraprofessional is employed by the school district and the school district will determine whether it is appropriate or feasible for the paraprofessional to attend the child’s IEP team meeting just as the district determines the appropriate staff members generally for the child’s IEP team meeting.

Paraprofessional attendance at planning and placement team (PPT) meetings\* is an individual district and school-based decision. It is important that district or school personnel explain their policy on the attendance of paraprofessionals at PPTs to both parents and school staff. Attendance of paraprofessionals at PPT meetings may also be made on an individual basis. If a paraprofessional spends an extensive amount of time with a student, a decision might be made for that paraprofessional to attend the student’s PPT. If a paraprofessional is required in the individualized education program (IEP) and not attending a student’s PPT meeting, it is the responsibility of the student’s teacher and the paraprofessional’s supervisor to communicate in detail with the paraprofessional about the student, before the PPT.

If a paraprofessional is necessary for a student with a disability, use the following guidance from the 2006 Connecticut State Department of Education IEP Manual and Forms to record their use on the IEP:

When a Paraprofessional is used to provide support to a classroom of students (e.g., a “classroom paraprofessional”), the Planning and Placement Team should record this on the bottom of Page 8 under Frequency and Duration of Supports Required for School Personnel to Implement this IEP. (Connecticut State Department of Education, IEP Manual and Forms, Jan. 2006, p.21)

If an Instructional Paraprofessional is used to provide specially designed instruction or a related service to a child under the supervision of a certified or licensed service provider (i.e., a “one-to-one paraprofessional”), this service should be recorded under the Special Education Service or Related Services heading in the grid at the top of Page

11. (Connecticut State Department of Education, IEP Manual and Forms, Jan. 2006, p.21-22)

When paraprofessional support is listed, the individual paraprofessional should not be listed by name. The person identified as responsible for implementation should be the certified or licensed professional, with the paraprofessional listed as a support.

\*These meetings are referred to as IEP meetings in the federal regulations.



# Section 5: Hiring and Orientation of Paraprofessionals

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- Hiring and Orientation of Paraprofessionals
- Job Descriptions for Paraprofessionals • Sample Job Description • Development of a Handbook

# Hiring and Orientation of Paraprofessionals

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There are many factors associated with the hiring and retention of paraprofessionals. Mueller (2002) found attrition of paraprofessionals to be related to inadequate training, undefined roles, poor salaries, lack of career advancement, lack of recognition, isolation, stagnation, lack of support from authority, lack of communication, lack of evaluation and guidelines, and engagement in roles that paraprofessionals do not feel they should assume. These issues need to be addressed to develop a stable and skilled paraprofessional work force.

Although previous experience or training is an important aspect of hiring a paraprofessional, research shows that interpersonal skills and attitudes of applicants and an interest in self-improvement may be better indicators of how well a candidate will fit into a team (Pickett 1997). It is helpful to include the supervising professional as part of the interview team to help clarify the roles and responsibilities of the position and to assess interpersonal styles for compatibility. Considerable attention should be given to the match between the needs of the student or students and the ability and skill of the potential paraprofessional to perform the work necessary to meet those needs. The time spent during the hiring and orientation process is valuable, as it provides a level of common understanding for the teacher/supervisor and paraprofessional and readiness for future training of teacher-paraprofessional teams.

Once the paraprofessional is hired, the next step in the employment process is the orientation. This should take place before the individual having any contact with students or families and should be viewed as part of the initial training program. The orientation to the program or district should include the philosophy or mission of the school or program, roles and job duties, including the responsibility to maintain confidentiality, schedules and expectations for performance. Policies or procedures should be discussed, including contracts, evaluation, vacation and emergency or sick leave, calendars, dress codes, complaint procedures, fire drill procedures, smoking regulations, use of phones and parking. The orientation to the building or work setting should include safety and emergency procedures, a review of the district or employee handbook, building/grounds map, lunch and recess procedures, use of building equipment and essential phone numbers/contact information. Once this information is covered, the next phase of orientation should include specific family, child, student or classroom orientation.

Each district in Connecticut identifies a central office employee, on an annual basis, as a district contact person for paraprofessional issues. The role and function of this person is to act as a liaison between the Department and/or SERC and to disseminate information of importance to paraprofessionals, such as personnel development opportunities, policy updates, resource availability, information exchange, data gathering regarding best practices and networking across districts on effective practices for paraprofessionals. The district contact may also be used to collect information regarding the paraprofessionals within the district. This contact receives a monthly newsletter by e-mail. All issues of this newsletter are posted on the CSDE Paraprofessional Information and Resources page: <http://www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali>.

# Job Descriptions for Paraprofessionals

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A job description for a paraprofessional is a critical tool in clarifying roles and responsibilities and identifying qualifications and training needs. It should be used as the foundation for hiring, training, supervising and evaluating staff.

The CSPD and SAC Task Force Survey on Paraprofessionals (2002) reported the following percentage of programs reported the use of paraprofessional job descriptions:

- 68 percent of Birth to Three programs
- 66 percent of school districts
- 94 percent of private schools

Clearly, if paraprofessionals are to be effective in their work, provision of a job description that is as specific to their position as reasonably possible is warranted. The list below identifies those elements that should be included in a comprehensive job description.

- Specific position/title. Department/location. Assignment length – days per year/hours per day.
- Qualifications/requirements for Given Assignment.
- Roles and responsibilities – duties may include percent of time spent in each activity.
- Range of possible duties beyond current assignment (such as lifting, toileting, behavior management techniques).
- Person responsible as daily supervisor.
- Person responsible for evaluation. Any physical requirements (such as lifting).
- Entry-level requirements for education and skills (such as those mandated under the No Child Left Behind Act qualifications for paraprofessionals in Title I programs).

# Sample Job Description

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The job description is useful in clarifying the roles of the paraprofessional and can serve as a reference point in conducting an evaluation of paraprofessional's performance. The job description should specifically delineate the paraprofessional's duties in writing and may change from time to time, depending on the needs of students and staff. Often included are the duties that paraprofessionals are to perform and the duties that paraprofessionals are not to perform, as dictated by school district policy, ethical and legal constraints, and school protocol. Administrative concerns, such as working conditions, supervision and evaluation procedures, may also appear in a written job description. Job descriptions will vary depending on the needs of staff and students and the duties expected to be performed by a paraprofessional.

## Job Description for Paraprofessional, Lincoln Public Schools

Position / Title: Paraprofessional Department: Variable Assignment: General instruction Assignment Length: 180 days Essential Functions:

Note: This is a generalized job description. Specific duties and responsibilities vary, depending on the assigned department or school. Applicants should be made aware of the specific functions of the position before employment.

### Frequent:

- Performs office duties such as attendance reports, typing, filing and handling routine interruptions such as notes, messages and deliveries.
- Performs routine supervisory duties such as lunchroom, playground, halls and classroom.
- Types, draws, writes and duplicates instructional materials.
- Researches and assembles materials to be used in a particular unit (per instructions from the respective teacher).
- Prepares bulletin boards, graphs and charts.
- Reserves films. Checks papers, workbooks, homework and tests; (if object answers have been supplied by the teachers).
- Helps in the care of the classroom. Writes plans on chalkboard, overhead projector.
- Reads to students, listens to students read.
- Helps students with make-up work.
- Assists in individual or group activities, games, flash cards, etc.
- Assists students in interpreting and following directions of the teachers.
- Drills to reinforce any skill the teacher has taught.
- Alerts teacher to needs of students.
- Assists teacher in checking progress of individualized study projects.

### Occasional:

- Fills out attendance cards and cumulative records.
- Checks emergency sheets, class lists, etc.
- Collects moneys for books, lab fees, etc.
- Assists with inventory of supplies and equipment.
- Assists with field trips. Contacts community resource people. Makes educational games and aids. Assists when emergencies arise. Performs any other delegated noninstructional responsibility assigned by teacher or administrator.

## **Requirements:**

1. High school diploma or equivalent; good work attendance record.
2. Ability to follow teacher direction and written plans.
3. Ability to maintain student confidentiality.
4. Appropriate communication skills.
5. Ability to work in a team setting.
4. Ability to work with and meet individual needs of children as directed by teachers and other professional staff.
5. Ability to work or learn to work various office machines.
6. For paraprofessionals hired in Title I positions, see requirements on page 7.

**Reports to (Evaluator):**

Building administrator

**Receives Guidance from (Supervisor):**

Teacher, building administrator

**Full-Time/Part-Time:**

Full-time, part-time

**D.O.T. No.:**

249.367.074 Elementary

099.327.010 Secondary

## **Physical Requirements:**

Standing — frequent

Walking — frequent

Sitting — occasional

Bending/stooping — occasional

Reaching/pulling — occasional

Climbing — never

Driving — occasional

Lifting 40 pounds maximum\* — occasional

Carrying 25 feet — occasional

Manual dexterity tasks — frequent

*Specify: \*a/v equipment, TV/VCR, recorders, telephone, typewriter/word processor, and copier.*

## **Other Requirements:**

Effective oral and written communication skills and skills in human relations, leadership and conflict management.

## **Working Conditions:**

1. Inside and outside. 1. Climatic environment: Most district classrooms and other work areas are not air-conditioned and are subject to extremes of temperature and humidity.

2. Hazards: stairs, dust, drafts, communicable diseases and others, depending on assignment.

## **\*Range of Possible Duties:**

Job duties may vary depending on assignment. Individuals may be reassigned, as necessary.

Job duties may include:

1. Self-care activities.

2. Behavior management

3. Supervision of children outdoors and on transportation.

4. Lifting of individuals.

\* Modified by Task Force

# Development of a Handbook

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Some districts have developed a handbook for their paraprofessionals that includes many useful pieces of information, such as building maps, district phone numbers and safety procedures. It is suggested that the handbook include sections that address the six responsibilities contained in the guidelines (see section 4). Examples of topics that can be helpful when orienting new paraprofessional to his or her new role are listed below. It is also critical that training on the contents of the handbook accompany the handbook itself so that the contents are understood by the paraprofessionals.

1. **Effective instructional teams.** The first responsibility of the paraprofessional is to assist teachers with building and maintaining effective instructional teams. Notice that the paraprofessionals are to assist the teacher, not the student. When a paraprofessional assists and supports the teacher, then the students benefit and achieve with higher rates of success. Within this first responsibility, there are three categories: teams, roles and specific competencies.
2. **Learner-centered, supportive environments.** The second responsibility focuses on the paraprofessional assisting teachers with maintaining learner-centered, supportive environments. In the classroom, the paraprofessional helps the teacher help the students by maintaining an environment in which all students are included, not just physically, but academically, socially and emotionally, and makes sure that the lessons are centered on the students and not that the students are centered on the lesson.
3. **Planning and organizing learning experiences.** The third responsibility focuses on the planning and organizing the learning experiences for students. This includes two primary categories: clerical and materials. Under the category of clerical is the preparation of materials, such as copying. It should be noted that a paraprofessional's job is not intended to be secretarial, but rather instructional and thus, copying should be kept to a minimum.
4. **Engaging students in learning.** The fourth responsibility focuses on the function and responsibility of the paraprofessional in the classroom, which includes both instruction and behavior management. It is the paraprofessional assisting the teacher in engaging students in the lesson, activity or task. Understanding the mission and philosophy of the district, school and classroom is addressed as well as proficiency in basic reading, writing, math and the English language. The paraprofessional is also to understand the distinctions between the teacher and paraprofessional in the classroom, which includes an awareness of methods and strategies that accommodate for student learning needs. Paraprofessionals should also know what technology and assistive technology devices facilitate student learning. A vital aspect of a paraprofessional's responsibility is to know the different racial, ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds of students.
5. **Assessing learners.** The fifth responsibility focuses on the assessing the learner's needs. The ultimate assessment is the teachers' responsibility, but the paraprofessional is expected to support and assist, specifically in data collection, documenting student strengths and needs, maintaining learner records, and assisting in administering standardized tests.
6. **Professional and ethical conduct.** The sixth responsibility focuses on the professional and ethical conduct of the paraprofessional which includes civil, legal and school policies as well as professional development; career advancement; chain of command; and awareness of racial, cultural and learning differences in students, families and staff.

# Section 6: Supporting Paraprofessionals

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- Supervision and Evaluation
- Effective Use of Paraprofessionals
- Staff Development
- Section Resources

# Supervision and Evaluation

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“There is a difference between the person responsible for hiring and evaluation of performance (an administrator), and the person directing day-to-day work with students (an educator or other licensed person” (Wallace and McNerny 2001). Just as it is important to identify the roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional, it is equally important to identify the roles and responsibilities of those who supervise and evaluate their performance. Often the professional staff provides the day-to-day supervision of the paraprofessional, while an administrator, such as a principal, program manager or special education director, completes the evaluation. “Teachers should have supervisory functions as to program implementation, including planning, assigning duties and checking with paraeducators as to their comprehension of their assigned duties. Teachers must not be expected to have administrative management duties such as the hiring or firing of paraeducators. Those duties belong to the administration” (Wallace and McNerny 2001).

## Supervision

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 both have regulations regarding paraprofessionals and their supervision. In 34 CFR §1119(g)(3)(A) of IDEA 2004, it states that “paraprofessionals who provide instructional support must work under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher.” Section 200.59(c)(2) of NCLB 2001 states that “a paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if: (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working; and (2) the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher.”

Paraprofessionals need supervision on a daily or regularly scheduled basis. The type and level of supervision should be based on the skills and experience of the paraprofessional, the needs of the students, the instructional setting, and the task assigned National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD 1998). Newly hired paraprofessionals will require more supervision as will a paraprofessional who is involved with a new student or child.

Supervision that is both appropriate and complies with the federal regulations presumes that the supervisor has developed the skills necessary to direct and manage the paraprofessional’s activities. The supervisor must have skills in working as part of a team and the ability to make the paraprofessional part of the instructional team. Teamwork can be defined as “a process among partners who share mutual goals and work together to achieve the goals” (Pickett, Gerlach, Morgan, Likins and Wallace 2007). The following elements are essential to a team’s effectiveness: trust, shared goals, communication, role clarification, clear direction and opportunities for feedback. Determining how the paraprofessional will support the teacher through the identification of a schedule of activities is a collaborative effort between both parties, determining how to best meet the teacher’s needs. The Access Center, a resource that supports the improvement of outcomes for all students K-8, has a planning tool that may be useful in planning that schedule of support. The Teacher Paraeducator Planning Tool is included at the end of this section. Other materials developed by Stetson and Associates Inc. of Houston, the My Role as a Paraprofessional, the Classroom Activity Analysis and the Schedule for Paraprofessional Support worksheets are also useful planning and training tools and are included at the end of this section.

The following are suggested questions for administrators to include when interviewing teacher candidates about the role of paraprofessionals:

1. Did your student teaching or internship experience provide any opportunity to work with paraprofessionals?
2. How would you define the term “Paraprofessional?”
3. How do you see the paraprofessional role with teachers?



4. How comfortable are you directing and managing the work of paraprofessionals?
5. Both No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) state that paraprofessionals must be “appropriately supervised.” How would you define “appropriate supervisions?”
6. Have you supervised any adult work in a work setting?
7. How comfortable are you in a supervisory role?
8. What are some of the duties you would assign a paraprofessional?
9. How do you see the paraprofessional role in the classroom?
10. What do you see as the main responsibilities of a supervisor of paraprofessionals?

Certified teachers who supervise paraprofessionals may not have developed the knowledge and skills to work in this capacity in their pre-service training. Subsequently, their in-service training should include such development to enhance the performance of their paraprofessional. The supervisor is a mentor to the paraprofessional. The supervisor should understand the training needs of the paraprofessional provide for on the job training and advocate for the paraprofessional for additional training when necessary. Standards for teacher/provider supervisory competencies are provided at the end of this section.

It would be beneficial to both the certified teacher and the paraprofessional to have common time for the paraprofessional to share their perception of skills, interests, hobbies, strengths and comfort (with tasks and content) as well as areas of discomfort and areas in need of improvement. This would provide the supervising teacher with some insight regarding professional development needs. Below are suggestions for how time can be found in the school day to allow teachers and paraprofessionals to meet:

- Establish a firm 15 minute meeting time for each day.
- Set aside a longer (45 minute to 60 minute) meeting time for each week.
- Determine a monthly meeting to discuss progress of individual students.
- Meet when students do not need supports (such as during lunch, recess or special-area classes).
- Establish a communication notebook to be used by the teacher and paraprofessional.
- Maximize time when scheduling preparation times and lunch breaks.
- Floating substitutes to provide release time for teachers and paraprofessionals.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluations of paraprofessionals should be completed by an administrator who has the necessary credentials to evaluate personnel. This is critical as evaluations lead to continued employment or the decision not to rehire. Evaluations should be completed for paraprofessionals at a minimum of once per year. Input from the supervisor who works on a daily basis with the paraprofessional is helpful to the evaluator, as he or she may not see the paraprofessional in their capacity as frequently. The evaluation process and tools should be developed in conjunction with the job description and be based on the competencies required for the position. When evaluating paraprofessionals, supervisors should ask themselves the following questions:

- Do I give the paraprofessional honest and useful feedback that will help him/her to improve?
- Do I encourage the paraprofessional to share with me his/her observations of student’s needs?
- Do I respect the confidentiality of our exchange of information?
- Do I help and encourage the paraprofessional to participate in training opportunities to improve skills or

for personal growth?

- In addition to providing regular informal evaluation do I set aside time throughout the year for giving the paraprofessional formal feedback/or evaluation?
- Do I give the paraprofessional opportunity to evaluate our team relationship and our work with students?
- When evaluating the paraprofessional, do I begin by letting him/her know what I think he/she does well; do I give him/her suggestions for improvement?
- Do I tell the paraprofessional how I appreciate his/her help and compliment him/her on specific things he/she is contributing to the program?
- Do I inform the paraprofessional in advance of scheduled changes that alter activities in which he/she is involved?
- Do I meet with the paraprofessional at a designated time each week?

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“Principals are responsible for creating school environments that support and recognize the value of teacher and par educator teams and seeing that district policies and practices are carried out.” (Pickett, Gerlach, Morgan, Likins and Wallace 2007).

It is important that the evaluation process be seen as one way in which feedback can be elicited from the paraprofessional, as well as provided by the evaluator. This process should help to identify the training needs of individual paraprofessionals, as well as the patterns of training needs that emerge as a result of evaluating all paraprofessionals at a building level. Subsequently, it is the role of the evaluator to ensure that each paraprofessional’s training needs are met. Just as with certified teachers, it is appropriate to evaluate needs of a paraprofessional, provide the appropriate training and monitor the implementation of that training. When evaluations are performed in this manner, it is fair to both parties and also sets a positive tone and creates an environment conducive to adult learners. Further information on the roles of program and building administrators can be found in the section resources on page 54.

# Effective Use of Paraprofessionals

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“There is no question that paraprofessionals play an increasingly prominent role in educating students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Their role in the classroom has expanded, based on the belief that they are a key support mechanism to operationalize inclusive education efforts particularly for students with severe disabilities” (Giangreco, Broer and Edelman 2001).

Giangreco voices the concern that paraprofessionals in some instances have replaced the use of the most qualified teachers for students with the most intensive needs. In addition, his research has documented that students with disabilities who were placed in a general education setting with a one-on-one paraprofessional had less general education teacher engagement than when the paraprofessional was program- or classroom-based (Giangreco 2001). In a different study, Giangreco, Edelman, Lusielli and MacFarland (1997) observed that “teaching assistants providing one-to-one support who hovered alongside the student with severe disabilities in the regular education classroom interfered with the social and academic inclusion process. In the instances where a one-to-one paraprofessional is required, it is important that the team provide supervision and training to inhibit the student’s reliance on the paraprofessional.” In addition, planning and placement teams should consider a wide range of supplementary aids and services as supports for students with disabilities in general education classrooms to limit the need for students to have one-on-one staff support at all times.

If a school district is interested in evaluating their use of one-to-one paraprofessionals, it should use the “Guidelines For Selecting Alternatives To Over-Reliance On Paraprofessionals” noted in the resource list (Giangreco 2003).

The SERC LRE Newsletter focuses on the contributions of paraprofessionals to high-quality educational programming for students with disabilities. The main article, “The Roles of the Connecticut Paraprofessional: Challenging, Complex” examines the drawbacks of over-reliance on paraprofessionals (Appendix A).

Recently, data on appropriate programming for students with intellectual disability in Connecticut was gathered using a walkthrough protocol approach (Appendix L). This tool has two indicators that examine the proximity and role of the paraprofessional. These two indicators and their coinciding rubrics are listed below. After analysis, both of these indicators rose to the surface as being problematic when examining the effective use of paraprofessionals.

**Indicator 10:** Paraprofessional, if applicable, appropriately assists the student without interfering with appropriate peer assistance or developing an overdependence of the student on the assistance of the paraprofessional.

Little or No Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
Paraprofessional is positioned directly next to student and interferes with teacher’s ability to directly instruct, reclarify, question, assess or interact with student. Paraprofessional answers for, or provides answer to student. Paraprofessional does not allow other students to assist or child to self-advocate for him/herself.	Paraprofessional is positioned a comfortable distance from child allowing for free interaction with peers and teacher. Paraprofessional allows student to ask questions of teacher or peers. Student is given opportunity to learn by doing or to make a mistake and may require paraprofessional assistance to clarify or correct.

**Indicator 4:** The general education teacher is the main provider of the instruction or assessment or as a part of a coteaching support, in partnership with the special education teacher (a paraprofessional or other adult may be available to assist the student when necessary, but the student is viewed as attentive to the teacher and the teacher is attentive to the student).

Little or No Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
Paraprofessional or special education teacher who is not teaching lesson checks for understanding. Special education teacher not part of dynamic co-teaching arrangement.	General education teacher questions or calls on student. Teacher may check in with student or observe their execution of a task. Teacher may also check in by observing and/or listening to the student when engaged in group work.

While the first indicator specifically mentions the location of the paraprofessional relative to the student, the second is the result of a paraprofessional inappropriately assisting the student. Subsequently, the general education teacher leaves responsibility for the student with the paraprofessional to teach the student and to check their understanding. The compilation and preliminary analysis of walkthrough data across 136 districts and 667 students have provided further support for Giangreco’s findings in his 1997 and 2001 studies mentioned previously.

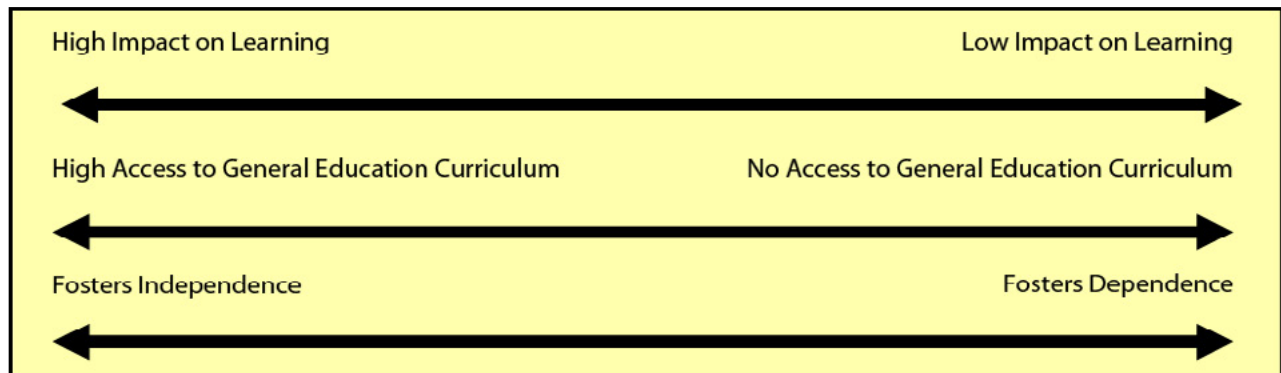
Although this data collection tool was used to identify programming practices for students with intellectual disability, it is likely an appropriate and efficient way to begin collecting data relative to the use of paraprofessionals with students with other disabilities or without disabilities. School personnel may want to consider adding to this to develop a more comprehensive tool for gathering baseline data on the appropriate use of paraprofessionals in their schools and across the district.

School districts may also find it useful to examine the impact that the use of a paraprofessional has on the success of the student. Consideration of impact on students’ learning, access to the general education curriculum and independence are important factors when making education decisions regarding the effective use of paraprofessionals. The following is an example of a way to assess the effectiveness of the use of a paraprofessional. For specific examples, see Appendix M. (For a more in-depth review of this procedure as well as training opportunities, please visit the State Education Resource Center online at <http://www.ctserc.org/>.)

## Examining Impact

To determine if the use of a paraprofessional will have an impact on the student's access, participation and progress in the general education curriculum, as well as foster a student's independence:

- Examine the potential support of a paraprofessional.
- Use the continuum below to assess the use of a paraprofessional and determine the specific:
  - Level of impact on learning.
  - Access to general education curriculum.
  - Ability to foster independence.



## Analysis

- If paraprofessional support falls on the right side of the continuum, use of a paraprofessional may not be an appropriate support for the student.
- If paraprofessional support falls in the middle, determine how the use of a paraprofessional can be adjusted to fall in the left side of the continuum.
- Based on your analysis of the impact, select paraprofessional support when it has a likelihood of high impact on learning, access and independence.

# Staff Development

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Staff development is a critical and federally mandated aspect of paraprofessional support. Training programs and job-embedded processes provide the knowledge and skills needed by the paraprofessionals and by those persons who oversee the use of paraprofessional services.

“Paraeducator training programs should be long-range, comprehensive and systematic. Often the impact of training is lessened because it is based on available speakers or the current “hot topic” rather than on progressive development of an identified set of knowledge and skills” (Pickett and Gerlach 1997). Every program or district should have an annual staff development plan for paraprofessionals and for those who support paraprofessionals, which is based on a set of competencies such as those described in these guidelines.

Sound professional development decisions are determined through ongoing assessment of current practices, needs and intended outcomes. It is often helpful to initiate a comprehensive paraprofessional training program by conducting a needs assessment.

There are varieties of staff development approaches that can be used to enhance paraprofessional services. Teaming paraprofessionals with certified or licensed staff in ongoing professional development may ensure the acquisition of some competencies; other needs of paraprofessionals and support staff will not be met in these broader formats. To assure the development of skills, training can also occur within the instructional setting where professionals might model or coach the paraprofessional while working directly with students. Some of the most effective training takes place in daily or weekly team meetings where the team can problem-solve and collaborate on strategies. It is helpful for administrators to develop opportunities for ongoing training and communication. Although there is often limited time for meeting, programs and districts have tried a variety of creative ways to develop regularly scheduled meeting times, such as:

- Adding time to the paraprofessional work day one day a week.
- Scheduling meeting time during professional planning time one time a week, including paraprofessional in regularly scheduled team meetings.
- Hiring a substitute paraprofessional one day a month to free up different paraprofessionals throughout the day for meeting and training.
- Offering stipends for veteran paraprofessionals to mentor new paraprofessionals.
- Offering early release time one day a week to allow paraprofessionals to stay after work on another day.
- Scheduling time in the early evening for all paraprofessionals to attend training a few times a year.
- Sponsoring a summer institute or supporting attendance at a statewide summer institute.
- Offering online training sessions that can be completed on personal time for either course credit or as part of a career ladder.
- Supporting release time to attend state conferences and training.

An instrument designed to help teachers, supervisors and administrators to support and enhance the skills of paraprofessionals through training and ongoing supervision, The Assessment Checklist for Paraprofessionals (ACP), developed by the State Education Resource Center (SERC) has its foundation in the content of this guideline document. The assessment is intended to be used as:

- A guide for paraprofessionals in self-assessment and self-improvement.

- A collaborative and informal assessment between paraprofessional and supervisor.
- A needs assessment survey for paraprofessionals in a school or district.
- A guide in the design of professional development for paraprofessionals.

The ACP is an informal assessment of the role, function and responsibilities of the paraprofessional within a school or program. This document was created for instructional paraprofessionals; those who are in classrooms and working with teachers and students. Before utilizing the ACP, the user should be very familiar with the guidelines. This assessment checklist is not an evaluation or a judgment of the paraprofessional or the performance of the paraprofessional; it is a means of identifying, enhancing and articulating the roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional for both the paraprofessional and his/her colleagues, particularly the supervisor.

The intent of this instrument is to build capacity within PK-12 schools and/or districts regarding the training and support of paraprofessionals. This tool is based on Connecticut's *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students, Birth to 21*, which has more than 120 indicators of skills, knowledge competencies and responsibilities. The ACP has taken those skills that were deemed the most pertinent to paraprofessionals working in schools, PK-12. Birth to Three System language and specific items to Birth to Three System have been omitted (i.e., agency, providers, etc.). The competencies and skills addressed in the ParaPro Assessment are also included in this checklist. This publication is available through SERC.

The following sections identify areas of training that can develop better-informed and more effective paraprofessionals.

## **Instructional Support**

The U.S. Department of Education states that paraprofessionals provide instructional support, but they should not provide planned direct instruction or introduce students to new skills, concepts or academic content (2004, Title I Paraprofessionals: Non-Regulatory Guidance). To clarify, paraprofessionals should not teach students anything that has not been taught in the school's curriculum by the certified teacher.

The above guidance should be used to support paraprofessionals as they work with teachers in the classroom to help all students. A paraprofessional may provide review to a small group while the certified teacher provides instruction to the whole class, or the teacher may lead a small group in a discussion to enhance their learning while the paraprofessional reinforces the content that has already been taught.

Assuming that the paraprofessional has been appropriately trained and is under the supervision of a certified teacher, it is an appropriate and effective use of paraprofessionals to provide instruction that is not new to the class, a group of students or a single child. Instruction should be delivered based on the plans of the certified teacher. Paraprofessionals in many instances can provide personal insight based on their years of experience and can also make connections to a topic that will enhance the teacher's plans.

Paraprofessionals should be part of a team that recognizes that all students can learn. The certified teacher should have training in the principles of teaching and learning that emphasize scaffolding teaching and supports, fostering independence, data collection and strategies for student engagement, ensuring the paraprofessional will also receive proper training leading to more effective use of their support.

Paraprofessionals play important roles in improving student achievement. Before making decisions regarding the appropriate role of paraprofessionals in the SRBI process, schools and district should examine how they are currently training, supervising and evaluating their paraprofessionals. The Connecticut's *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students, Birth to 21* document should be used as the foundation for identifying appropriate roles for paraprofessionals in the SRBI framework. It is important that once these roles are identi-

fied, the paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and receive ongoing specialized training. Appendix A: Paraprofessionals and SRBI provides guidance and support to schools and districts in the implementation of the SRBI framework.

## **Behavior Management**

As a member of the school team, the paraprofessional may have a role in classroom behavior management or for particular students. Once again, the certified and supervising teacher should have developed skills in this area to ensure appropriate transfer to the paraprofessional.

Some basic principles to be aware of are: Almost all behavior is learned and serves a functional purpose; consistency in the use of positive reinforcement, verbal and social praise and access to preferences can have positive effects on students' behavior; effective management of the learning environment can lead to better academic understanding and it is the responsibility of educators both ethically and professionally to treat learners with dignity and respect, and we must exercise self-restraint when involved in emotional situations and respect the learner's privacy. Key to understanding the function and management of behavior is that almost all behavior is learned and serves a functional purpose. (Pickett et. al. 2007)

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

One of the most basic understandings paraprofessionals must have is their role in the environment in which they work. They should have a clear definition of their role as a support to the teacher and their schedule of responsibilities. With this information, there is no misunderstanding between the paraprofessional and those with whom he or she works. In the case of paraprofessionals whose support includes students with disabilities, it is necessary for them to have an understanding of the IEP information that is pertinent to their role as an implementer.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), each public school district is required to have written policies and procedures that address the confidentiality of student records and access to those records. FERPA allows the disclosure of information from a student's record without first obtaining the consent of the parent (or eligible student if the student is over 18 or an emancipated minor) if the disclosure is to other school officials, including teachers within the school district and consultants on contract with the school district who have been determined by the school district to have a legitimate educational interest in accessing the student's file. The same holds true for the paraprofessional. The education records policy of the school district must define the term "legitimate educational interest" and should indicate in their policy which employees of the school district have a legitimate educational interest in accessing a student's education record without parental consent. School districts should be clear with their staff on who should have access to a child's record without written parental consent by providing staff with copies or other access to the district's education records policy.

Where a paraprofessional supports a child eligible for special education, it is important that the paraprofessional understand what is expected of them within the context of the implementation of a child's IEP. Access to the child's IEP is one means of achieving this familiarity with the services included in the child's IEP and understanding the role of the paraprofessional in the implementation of the child's IEP. Disclosure of information from the child's IEP by the supervising teacher and other staff working with the child would also be appropriate. Each child record has an access sheet included in the front of the individual record. If a staff member accesses the child's record, they must sign in on the access form indicating the reason they are accessing the child's record.

As roles and responsibilities for the paraprofessional may change over the course of the school year, it is important to have some system of ongoing communication to alleviate the opportunity for misunderstanding. Time is a valuable and ever decreasing commodity, so it is important to be as efficient as possible in determining an appropriate system of communication. The use of written communication can be helpful as a way to ensure consistency across all those who may work with students. For example, a notebook could be developed that has sections for indi-



vidual students, plans developed by the teacher and a section for questions/notes. This could be kept in a central (confidential) location.

## **Disability Specific Training**

Frequently, a basic understanding of specific disabilities may be helpful to a paraprofessional's interaction with a student. For example, knowing some of the fairly common characteristics of those students with whom you work may better prepare you for difficult situations or, on a more positive note, help you understand their strengths. This is not to say that all students with a particular disability act or learn in the same way because clearly they do not. This training is important though to get a general understanding that can be generalized to much of the population. It will also help staff members recognize when a particular student is more challenging and further training is warranted.

There are occasions when a paraprofessional may need very specific information to work effectively with a student with a particular disability. There may be specific instructional and behavioral strategies that are particularly effective for some students. This would require much more specific training for both the teacher and the paraprofessional. It is important to recognize these situations and respond with the appropriate training.

# Section Resources

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- Standards for Teacher/Provider Supervisory Competencies
- Roles of Program and Building Administrators in the Management of Paraeducators
- 10 Tips for Administrators from Connecticut
- Sample district evaluation forms Classroom walkthrough protocol SERC Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Newsletter
- Sample Teacher-Paraeducator Planning tool (NCES)
- Stetson & Associates tools: What is my role as a Paraprofessional?, Classroom Activity Analysis Worksheet, Schedule for Paraprofessional Staff
- Frequently Asked Questions About Paraprofessionals

# Standards for Teacher/Provider Supervisory Competencies

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## STANDARD 1:

**To Serve as Leaders of Program Implementation Teams and to Supervise Paraprofessional Teachers / Providers Demonstrate the Following Knowledge and Skill Competencies:**

### 1. Knowledge competencies include an:

1. Understanding of the value of a team approach in the delivery of services.
2. Understanding of the distinctions in teacher/provider and administrator roles in the employment, management, supervision, evaluation and preparation of paraprofessionals.
3. Understanding of distinctions in the roles and responsibilities of teachers/providers and paraprofessionals.
4. Awareness of the contributions that paraprofessionals make to increasing the availability of individualized learning experiences and services.
5. Awareness of federal and state laws and regulations and district/agency policies and practices that influence the employment, roles and responsibilities, supervision and preparation of paraprofessionals.
6. Understanding of the responsibilities of teachers/providers for supervising paraprofessionals in program implementation teams.
7. Awareness of district/agency policies that may require paraprofessionals to participate in program planning teams.
8. Awareness of interactive, problem-solving and decision-making techniques that build and maintain effective program planning and program implementation teams.

### 2. Skill competencies include an:

1. Ability to plan work assignments for paraprofessionals based on program requirements and learning objectives for individuals and groups.
2. Ability to appropriately delegate tasks to paraprofessionals based on their qualifications to carry out an assignment.
3. Ability to share information with paraprofessionals about their roles as members of program planning teams, if required by district/agency policies, as well as the roles of other team members, including families, in the development of learner goals.
4. Ability to monitor the day-to-day performance of paraprofessionals and to provide principals/agency administrators with relevant information about the strengths and professional development needs of paraprofessionals.
5. Ability to provide systematic on-the-job training and mentoring to paraprofessionals.

National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model (1999)

## STANDARD 2:

### **To Ensure that Paraprofessionals Contribute to Learner-Centered, Supportive Environments, *Teachers/Providers Demonstrate the Following Knowledge and Skills:***

#### **1. Knowledge competencies include an:**

1. Understanding of the contributions that paraprofessionals make to serving children and youth in supportive, learner-centered environments.
2. Awareness of district/agency and/or state/local government policies and procedures for reporting suspected physical, sexual and psychological child abuse.
3. Awareness of effective strategies for involving families in all aspects of their children's learning experiences.
4. Awareness of distinctions in teacher/provider and paraprofessional responsibilities for sharing information with families about learner performance, and/or engaging families in their child's learning experiences.

#### **2. Skill competencies include an:**

1. Ability to share and/or reinforce information with paraprofessionals about federal, state and local policies and procedures that ensure the safety, health, and well-being of children, youth, and staff.
2. Ability to plan paraprofessional activities that help to maintain supportive learner-centered environments and protect the safety, health and well-being of children, youth and staff.
3. Ability to appropriately involve paraprofessionals in activities that engage families in their child's learning experiences.
4. Ability to model skills that demonstrate respect for the views, rights and contributions of children and youth, families and school/agency personnel.

National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model (1999)

**STANDARD 3:**  
**To Appropriately Involve Paraprofessionals in Assisting  
with Planning and Organizing Learning Experiences,**  
*Teacher/Providers Demonstrate the Following Knowledge and Skills:*

**1. Knowledge competencies include an:**

1. Understanding of the distinctions in teacher/provider and paraprofessional roles in diagnosing learning needs; modifying learning activities for individuals; and identifying appropriate materials, equipment and technology systems.
2. Understanding of how the life experiences of paraprofessionals who come from diverse cultural, ethnic and language backgrounds may contribute to planning and organizing learning experiences and environments.
3. Understanding of how paraprofessional familiarity with the needs and circumstances of families whose children have disabilities or other special needs may contribute to planning and organizing learning experiences and environments.

**2. Skill competencies include an:**

1. Ability to appropriately involve paraprofessionals in the planning of individualized learning experiences and organizing environments to promote learning.

National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model (1999)

**STANDARD 4:**  
**To Appropriately Involve Paraprofessionals in Learning Experiences,**  
*Teachers/Providers Demonstrate the Following Knowledge and Skills:*

**1. Knowledge competencies include an:**

1. Understanding of differences and similarities in teacher/provider and paraprofessional roles and responsibilities in facilitating the learning process.
2. Understanding of how different cultural heritages, ability/developmental levels and other characteristics of children and youth affect their learning styles/preferences.
3. Awareness of various learning strategies, materials, adaptive equipment and assistive technologies that are required to meet the needs of individual children and youth.

**2. Skill competencies include an:**

1. Ability to share information with paraprofessionals about characteristics and learning objectives for individual children and youth.
2. Ability to provide on-the-job training to prepare paraprofessionals to follow learning plans developed by the teacher/provider and to use methods, materials, adaptive equipment and assistive technology selected or developed by the teacher/provider.

National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model (1999)

## **STANDARD 5:**

### **To Appropriately Involve Paraprofessionals in Assessing the Strengths and Learning Needs of Children and Youth, *Teachers/Providers Demonstrate the Following Knowledge and Skills:***

#### **1. Knowledge competencies include an:**

1. Awareness of the distinctions among teacher/provider, other licensed district/agency professionals, and paraprofessional roles and responsibilities in the assessment process.
2. Understanding of the skills required by paraprofessionals to objectively gather information and report on the performance and achievements of individual children and youth.
3. Awareness of district/agency policies and procedures for preparing and maintaining all learner records.

#### **2. Skill competencies include an:**

1. Ability to appropriately involve paraprofessionals in administering standardized achievement tests based on state/district/agency policies, the protocol for conducting the tests, and the paraprofessional's qualifications to carry out the task.
2. Ability to provide on-the-job training to prepare paraprofessionals to use functional (informal) assessment tools and to objectively share relevant information about learner strengths and needs.
3. Ability to prepare paraprofessionals to assist with record-keeping activities based on district/agency policies and procedures.

National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model (1999)

**STANDARD 6:**  
**To Ensure that Professional and Ethical Standards Connected  
with the Supervision of Paraprofessionals Are Met,**  
*Teachers/Providers Demonstrate the Following Knowledge and Skills:*

**1. Knowledge competencies include an:**

1. Awareness of the human, civil and legal rights of all children and youth and their families and the responsibility of all district/agency staff for respecting and protecting these rights.
2. Understanding of the ethical and professional standards of conduct established by the professional organization representing their discipline and/or the state/agency for the selection, supervision, assessment and preparation of paraprofessionals.
3. Awareness of resources and opportunities for professional development to improve team leadership and supervisory skills of paraprofessionals.

**2. Skill competencies include an:**

1. Ability to follow standards of professional and ethical conduct for the supervision, assessment and preparation of paraprofessionals established by the professional organization representing their discipline and/or the state/district/agency.
2. Ability to model standards of professional and ethical conduct for paraprofessionals (i.e., maintaining confidentiality; respecting rights of children, youth and families; and demonstrating sensitivity to diversity in culture, ethnicity, family structure, learning styles and abilities).
3. Ability to evaluate one's own skills to improve paraprofessional supervision.

National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model (1999)



# The Principal's Role in Supporting Instructional Teams

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The principal and other school administrators are critical to the success of instructional teams. The principal takes the leadership role in creating a school climate in which paraprofessionals have a professional identity and contribute to activities that help to enhance student achievement. Even though teachers are responsible for the day-to-day instructional supervision of paraprofessionals, principals are responsible for the administrative supervision that included the hiring, preparation, evaluation, and dismissal of paraprofessionals. The following checklists will serve as a guide for administrators who want to improve the effectiveness of paraprofessionals and the teachers who direct their work. The principal and/or other school administrator have the primary responsibility for:

- Recruiting, interviewing, and hiring paraprofessionals.
- Assigning paraprofessionals to specific programs, teachers, classrooms or educational teams.
- Developing appropriate job descriptions
- Developing appropriate policies for ht employment, training and supervision of paraprofessionals
- Evaluating paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers
- Promoting effective teamwork in the building and within teacher-paraprofessional teams
- Providing professional development opportunities for paraprofessionals and those who supervise them

@Pacific Training Associates 2009, Seattle Washington

# 10 Tips for Connecticut Administrators

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A comprehensive paraprofessional support program requires leadership by the building administrator. Cathryn Riggs (2002) has developed 10 tips for administrators to provide support for paraprofessionals.

1. Know the paraprofessionals by name and by position.
2. Ensure that paraprofessional job descriptions are relevant to current duties and responsibilities.
3. Provide an introduction to agency, district or school policies for all paraprofessionals assigned to the school or agency, including information about sick leave, personal time, vacation, salary agreements, works hours and so forth.
4. Assign responsibilities to paraprofessionals carefully, respecting job descriptions and individual strengths.
5. Ensure that all paraprofessionals are clear about the “chain of command” for their supervision and evaluation. Assist professionals in developing their supervisory skills.
6. Provide relevant training opportunities. 6. Assist paraprofessionals in developing career goals.
7. Provide time in the schedule for paraprofessionals and teachers/providers to plan together.
8. Provide opportunities for paraprofessionals to meet with you as a group.
9. Create a community where paraprofessionals are respected and where their contributions are valued and acknowledged.

In addition, administration can advocate for their paraprofessional work force by supporting the use of substitutes for paraprofessionals, career opportunities, and reimbursement for training at institutes of higher education, and improved wage and benefit packages.

**DANBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
PARA-EDUCATOR  
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

<b><u>1.0</u></b>	<b><u>Relationships with Students</u></b>	Above Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1.1	Interacts positively with students	_____	_____	_____	_____
1.2	Displays patience with students	_____	_____	_____	_____
1.3	Communicates effectively with students	_____	_____	_____	_____
1.4	Supports the student's behavior intervention plan	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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<b><u>2.0</u></b>	<b><u>Relationship with Teacher</u></b>	Above Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
2.1	Follows teacher's oral and written directions	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.2	Asks for clarification when needed	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.3	Reports pupil progress to teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.4	Has cooperative and congenial attitude	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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<b><u>3.0</u></b>	<b><u>Responsibilities</u></b>	Above Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
3.1	Prompt in getting to assigned areas	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.2	Demonstrates initiative	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.3	Seeks to improve skills required for the job	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.4	Works independently and completes work assigned	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.5	Maintains confidentiality	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Employee signature signifies that the employee has received and read the evaluation and does not necessarily indicate the employee's agreement.*

Supervisor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**EAST HAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**East Hampton, Connecticut**  
*Paraprofessional Performance Appraisal*

     Part Time  
     Instructional  
     Program Assistant

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Employee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions**

Evaluate the employee in each of the areas listed under performance responsibilities. Check the rating that most nearly coincides with your overall judgment of each quality. The care and accuracy with which this appraisal is made will determine its value to you, to the employee and to the school system.

Paraprofessional I - To be evaluated on the appropriate Para II or Para III criteria that would be applied if the position were to be full-time.

Paraprofessional II - Evaluate items 1 through 13.

Paraprofessional III - Evaluate items 1 through 22.

(Always)      (Most Often)    (More Often Than Not)    (Not Often)    (Rarely)

Performance Responsibilities:	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
1. Basic Skills						
2. Sensitive to Needs						
3. Interpersonal Skills						
4. Student Differences						
5. Discipline						
6. Public School System						
7. Communication						
8. Organizational Skills						
9. Team Membership						
10. Student Management						
11. Plan and Implement						
12. Student Support						
13. Model Productive Behavior						
14. Knowledge and Ability						
15. Responsive Environment						
16. Maintain Resources						
17. Staff Notification						
18. Supplementary Assistance						
19. Evaluation Skills						
20. Tutorial						
21. Maintenance of Sp. Ed. Areas						
22. Participates in Team Meetings						

**Additional Comments:**

Consider other elements of job performance, which may not be included but are job related, i.e., problem-solving, judgment, poise, cleanliness etc.

Element	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Unsatisfactory

**Overall Appraisal:**

- Excellent           \_\_\_ Excellent on all Performance Responsibilities.
- Very Good         \_\_\_ No fair ratings and majority of items rated very good or better.
- Good                \_\_\_ Most elements rated good or better but no more than one element rated fair.
- Fair                 \_\_\_ No unsatisfactory elements but at least two or more elements rated fair.
- Unsatisfactory   \_\_\_ One or more elements rated unsatisfactory.

**Appraisal Comments:**   Comments are encouraged on all elements but are required on those elements rated Fair or Unsatisfactory.

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	Date	Signature	Title
<b>Rated by:</b>			
<b>Reviewed by:</b>			
<b>Approved by:</b>			
<b>Employee:</b>			

**MIDDLETOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
PARAPROFESSIONAL  
ANNUAL REVIEW FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current Assignment (i.e., Preschool, Resource Room): \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Administrator shall complete this review form and meet with the employee to discuss the content. This form shall be used as a constructive guideline.

<b>1.0 Relationships with students</b>	Above Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1.1 Deals positively with students	—	—	—	—
1.2 Displays patience with students	—	—	—	—
1.3 Communicates effectively with students	—	—	—	—
1.4 Supports the student's behavior intervention plan	—	—	—	—
Comments: _____				
_____				
_____				
<b>2.0 Relationship with teacher</b>	Above Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
2.1 Follows teacher's oral and written directions	—	—	—	—
2.2 Follows through on teacher's directions	—	—	—	—
2.3 Asks for clarification when needed	—	—	—	—
2.4 Reports pupil progress to teacher	—	—	—	—
2.5 Has cooperative and congenial attitude	—	—	—	—
Comments: _____				
_____				
_____				
<b>3.0 Responsibilities</b>	Above Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
3.1 Prompt in getting to assigned areas	—	—	—	—
3.2 Demonstrates initiative	—	—	—	—
3.3 Seeks to improve skills required for the job	—	—	—	—
3.4 Works independently and completes work assigned	—	—	—	—
3.5 Maintains confidentiality	—	—	—	—
Comments: _____				
_____				
_____				

**4.0 Additional Comments**

4.1 Principal/Designee Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4.2 Para Educator Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4.3 Teacher(s) Comments: (Teachers will provide input to the principal or designee.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5.0 Action Plan to Address Areas of Improvement (This is required if areas need improvement. This is a non-disciplinary action plan.)**

5.1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature (employee disagrees with review)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Designee Signature Title Date

This annual review form will not be placed in the file unless the paraprofessional agrees.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want this form in my personnel file.



## Connecticut State Department of Education Walkthrough Protocol

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Reg \_\_\_\_\_ Segr \_\_\_\_\_ Resource \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
 Student's Schedule Matches Placement Yes or No Reason \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Connecticut State Department of Education Walkthrough Review of IEP implementation, Use of Supplementary Aids and Services and Best Practices in the Instruction of Students with Disabilities in INSTRUCTIONAL Classes

#### INDICATORS #1-6: GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSES

#	<b>Indicators</b>	<u>Little or No Evidence</u>	<u>Sufficient Evidence</u>	<b>Score</b>	<b>N/A</b> (not applicable)
1	The student is seated within the same seating structure as the other students in the classroom.	Score point = 0 Student is in a study carrel, separate seat apart from the reg. group, or back of the room.	Score point = 1 Student is seated alongside typical peers in the general seating arrangement (i.e., whole class, groups, peer pairs, etc.).	0 or 1	
2	The general education teacher is the main provider of the instruction or assessment or as part of a co-teaching support, in partnership with the special education teacher (a paraprofessional or other adult may be available to assist the student when necessary, but the student is viewed as attentive to the teacher and the teacher is attentive to the student).	Score point = 0 Student is being taught by a paraprofessional or special ed teacher and is not part of the regular classroom instruction/lesson.	Score point = 1 Student is receiving instruction from the regular ed teacher or there is general/special ed teacher co-teaching arrangement where shared teaching is evident.		
3	Student is engaged in the same curricular activity as the other members of the class (the material/instruction may be accommodated or the content/performance accommodated or modified for students needs but these do not change the intent or nature of the activity from the grade level standard)	Score point = 0 Student is engaged in a separate unrelated activity or different content area Student's activity is weakly connected to the grade level standard, more superficial in nature.	Score point = 1 Student is engaged in the same activity as his/her typical peers. Student's activity is tied into the grade level standard but may be modified or accommodated for in accordance with his/her IEP. Student may have a reduced workload, manipulatives, simplified reading, assistive technology (AT), etc.		

## Connecticut State Department of Education Walkthrough Protocol

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

#	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Little or No Evidence</b> Score pt. = 0	<b>Sufficient Evidence</b> Score pt. = 1	<b>Score</b> 0 or 1	<b>(NA)</b>
4	The general education teacher or the general education-special education co-teachers check for the student's understanding of the concept (rather than another adult in the room assuming total responsibility for checking the student's understanding).	Para or special ed teacher who is not teaching the lesson checks for understanding. The special ed teacher is not part of a dynamic co-teaching arrangement.	General ed teacher questions or calls on the student. They may check in with the student or observe their execution of a task. Teacher may also check in by observing and/or listening to the student when engaged in group work.		
5	Peer assistance is occurring as appropriate to the culture of the classroom (if students are permitted to assist each other, than this is also occurring for the student being observed).	Student is assisted by para or the teacher rather than a peer, or student receives no help at all from peer(s).	Peer offers to help the student or student requests assistance from a peer. Teacher may pair up children to work together.		
6	Peer interactions between the student and peers are comparable to other students in the class (student engages peers and peers engage the student).	Student does not attempt to interact with peer or makes an attempt to engage a peer who does not respond to him/her. Peer engages the student but student does not respond or responds inappropriately.	Student and peer are meaningfully engaged with each other in either a discussion, activity, question and answer exchange, or nonverbal exchange similar to the interactions of other peers/groups in the class.		

### **INDICATORS # 7 -10: GENERAL ED, SEGREGATED/RESOURCE SETTINGS**

7	Student is actively engaged in the activity and demonstrates some level of understanding of the concept or the application of the skill being instructed.	Student is off-task, not attending to the general ed teacher, preoccupied with something/someone, or self-stimulating behaviors are noted. Student has great difficulty answering questions or executing a given task. Part of a group, but not participating.	Student answers the teacher's question(s), executes a given task, demonstrates mastery orally, in writing, with manipulatives, or with the use of AT.  In a group setting, student actively participates w/ others demonstrating mastery orally, in writing, with manipulative, or with the use of AT.		
---	---	--	--	--	--

## Connecticut State Department of Education Walkthrough Protocol

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

#	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Little or No Evidence</b> Score pt. = 0	<b>Sufficient Evidence</b> Score pt. = 1	<b>Score</b> 0 or 1	<b>(NA)</b>
8	The student's IEP goals and objectives are integrated as part of the lesson design and instructional delivery.	Lesson content unrelated. Little or no evidence of scaffolding of instruction.	Lesson content is directly aligned with IEP objective(s). Or, pre-teaching of skills, vocab., concepts are noted.		
9	The student's IEP supplementary aids and services, accommodations, and modifications are applied as appropriate to the curricular activity.	Absence of para support, per IEP. Lack of utilization of the instructional strategies, materials, books, equip., AT, preferred seating, etc. as outlined in IEP. Content is not modified, if applicable. There is little or no attendance to a behavior plan, if required.	Para assistance per IEP. Student uses AT, materials, books, equipment, etc. as depicted in IEP for the specific subject area class. Identified instructional strategies are evident. Modifications to work, tests, time, etc. are noted, as applicable. There is adherence to a behavior plan if required for the student.		
10	Paraprofessional, if applicable, appropriately assists the student without interfering with appropriate peer assistance or developing an overdependence of the student on the assistance of the paraprofessional.	Para is positioned directly next to the student and interferes w/ the teacher's ability to directly instruct, reclarify, question, assess or interact w/ the student. Para answers for, or provides the answer to the student. Para does not allow other students to assist or, the child to self-advocate for him/herself.	Para is positioned a comfortable distance from the child allowing for free interaction with peers and the teacher. Para allows the student to ask questions of the teacher or peers. The student is given the opportunity to learn by doing or to make a mistake and may require para assistance to clarify or correct.		

Total points \_\_\_\_\_ out of total applicable indicators \_\_\_\_\_

Table 2: Sample Teacher-Paraeducator Planning Tool

Teacher: John Doe      Class: History      Paraeducator: Mary Smith      Week: February 8-11, 2005

Time	Assigned Student(s) and Task				
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Prior to 8 am class	All - 4, 3		All - 4		(group work) All - 4
8-8:15	(group work) J. Doe, B. Roy, J. Port & C. John - 1		(ind. work) D. Close - 6,		R. Clark, J. Doe, P. Brown - 5
8:15-8:30	(pair work) J. Porter & C. John - 1		(lecture) C. John - 2		(ind. work) C. John - 7
8:30-8:45	(ind. work) All - 5		(lecture) C. John - 2		(ind. work) All - 5
8:45-9	P. Rich & M. Barnes - 6		All - 5		A. Smith, D. Jones, & L. Lee - 6
7:55 - 8 am		All - 4, 3			
8-8:30		(group work) D. Clort - 1			
8:30-45		(lecture) C. James - 2			
8:45-9		(ind. work) All - 5			
Period 4/History 1					
Period 6					

**Task Key**

- 1 - Work with student(s) to re-teach longitude/latitude, use text p.54-55
- 2 - During lecture, provide note-taking support for student
- 3 - Enlarge print on longitude/latitude worksheet - make 5 copies
- 4 - Positive reinforcements (stamp notebooks) for students entering and beginning warmup
- 5 - Monitor students - provide help/answer questions as needed
- 6 - Supervise student work on Excel spreadsheet project
- 7 - Sit with student, assist on ind. work



# What Is My Role as a Paraprofessional?

Directions: Working with a partner, indicate with an "X" the responsibilities you have been assigned and their frequencies.

Responsibility	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never	When Requested by Teacher/Administrator
Provide input to daily/weekly lesson plans					
Develop students' schedules					
Provide input into choices of specific paraprofessional tasks					
Schedule volunteers					
Chart student data					
Monitor and correct students' behaviors					
Plan with general education teachers					
Plan with other paraprofessionals					
Coordinate related services for individual students					
Document student progress on report cards					
Adapt student assignments/tests					
Plan with grade level teams					
Provide support in the general education classroom					
Provide direct instruction to students					
Provide student support during testing					
Assist students with eating, dressing, personal care, and toileting					
Adapt instructional materials					
Assist with selection of technology for student use					
Provide training to other faculty members					
Provide training to peer tutors/assistants					
Observe students to give input					
Supervise peer supports					
Locate, arrange, or make instructional materials					
Supervise volunteers					
Participate in parent conferences					
Score tests and papers using keys					
Provide input into IEPs					
Attend IEP meetings					
Maintain student files or records					
Supervise playground, halls, lunchroom, buses, and loading zones					
Provide specific health needs as designated and trained by nurse or other professionals					
Assist students with adaptive devices or equipment					
Physically move students or assist students with movement from one place to another					

# Classroom Activity Analysis Worksheet

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Information		Accommodations or Modifications?				Personal Assistance? (√ most appropriate support)									
Time	Class/Sub Objective #	As Designed?	With Accommodations?	If yes, Describe Accommodations?	With Curricular Modification	If yes, describe modifications	Behavioral Interventions (if yes, describe.)	External Support (adapt materials)	Peer	Paraprofessional	Special Education Teacher	Spec Populations Teacher	Speech/Language Pathologist	Related Services Staff	Specialized Support (outside the gen ed class)
		YES	NO	NO	NO						SF	CT	SF	CT	
		NO	YES	YES	YES										
		NO	NO	NO	NO										

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**Accommodation:** A change made to HOW content is taught and/or learning is assessed in order to provide a student with access to information and to create an equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills.

**Modification:** A change in what the student is expected to learn and/or demonstrate.

**Co-Teacher (CT):** A formal, year-long or semester-long commitment between a general education teacher and a special populations teacher to jointly plan, deliver, and assess instruction for all students in the general education class. (WHO? Certified and/or licensed personnel partnered with the general education teachers)

**Support Facilitator (SF):** An individual who provides a variety of supports, either to students and/or to the general education teacher, which meets the needs identified through collaborative planning. (WHO? Certified special populations teachers; licensed personnel, such as OT, PT, speech, etc.; paraprofessionals)

**Behavior Interventions** that apply across the school day (if any).

**Schedule for Paraprofessional Staff**    **School:** \_\_\_\_\_    **Date Prepared:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Schedule for:** \_\_\_\_\_

Use information from the Activity Analysis Worksheet (Form 2) to prepare the daily schedule for each paraprofessional on the staff

Time	Class/ Subject	Student(s)	Supervising Teacher	Support Type		Details re: Support			Skills Required	Observation Schedule
				External	In-Class Support	Acc	Modif	Behav		
7:30										√
8:00										
8:30										
9:00										
9:30										
10:00										
10:30										
11:00										
11:30										
12:00										
12:30										
1:00										
1:30										
2:00										
2:30										
3:00										
3:30										
4:00										

Time/Days per Week	Duty	Responsible for:	Skills Required	Observation Schedule
				√

Remember: To make best use of instructional paraprofessionals, eliminate or significantly limit the amount of time spent on duties outside the classroom.

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# Appendix A

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LRE News

# LRE News

The State Education Resource Center's *Least Restrictive Environment* Initiative aims to increase the number of placements of students with disabilities in general education classrooms and to promote access to the general education curriculum for all students with disabilities regardless of setting. The *LRE News* devotes each issue to a topic pertinent to these goals. This issue focuses on the contributions of paraprofessionals to high-quality educational programming for students with disabilities.

Examining the Impact of Paraprofessional Support .... p. 3  
Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation ..... p. 4

FAQs About Paraprofessionals ..... p. 5  
Resources on Paraprofessionals .... p. 6

## The Roles of the Connecticut Paraprofessional: Challenging, Complex

Paraprofessionals have a word for it: fading.

Fading is when they help just enough to get a child going, but not too much to cause unnecessary dependence. The paraprofessionals' work, for the moment, is done. That's when they fade.

School districts are always striving to achieve that perfect balance with paraprofessionals, who are sought out more and more as inclusive practices grow. To meet the growing demand, in 2008 the Connecticut General Assembly authorized the expansion of paraprofessional training through the State Education Resource Center (SERC) and established a Paraprofessional Advisory Council to report on the need for additional professional development. [For more on the legislation, see p. 4.]

According to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), a paraprofessional is "an employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students."<sup>1</sup> The paraprofessional works under the supervision of a teacher "or other certified or licensed professional." This definition implies that paraprofessionals serve the teacher, not a student, although many parents continue to associate their child with a specific paraprofessional—even when paraprofessionals do not always work one-to-one with any one particular student.

Yet parents support the use of one-to-one paraprofessionals as a way to satisfy the inadequacies of special education, says Michael Giangreco, professor of education and researcher at the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion at the University of Vermont. General education teachers, with

an eye on their caseloads, might ask for paraprofessionals even more than parents do. Schools justify the need for 1-to-1 paraprofessionals so more of them will be funded, Giangreco says. This does not necessarily serve the students' best interests, however.

Giangreco has examined issues surrounding paraprofessionals in-depth (some of his whimsical cartoons on the subject are reprinted on the following pages), and chronicled the drawbacks of over-reliance on paraprofessionals in the classroom. One drawback is that parents might have a more difficult time monitoring their child's independent progress if the paraprofessional does not adequately fade.

Second, the achievement of students with paraprofessionals can be perceived differently from the achievement of other students because of misunderstandings about a paraprofessional's role.

*Continued on next page*

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# Role

*Continued from first page*

For example, a student's achievement is sometimes partly—and inaccurately—attributed to the paraprofessional, says Jennifer Nagel, a former certified special education teacher and supervisor of paraprofessionals at Sedgwick Middle School in West Hartford who is now with Rocky Hill Schools. (The student might hear, “You have an adult helping you and you got only a C?”) Ideally, paraprofessionals are facilitating students' ability to do the work but not helping them do it, she says.

A third drawback: When a paraprofessional's role is unclear, it can get in the way of the free appropriate public education (FAPE) required by law. Some students with one-to-one supports get the majority of their instruction from paraprofessionals rather than from highly qualified teachers, Giangreco says. No one expects middle and high school teachers to be highly qualified across multiple disciplines, yet that is often what is expected of paraprofessionals. In Giangreco's research, more than two-thirds of paraprofessionals reported making curricular or instructional decisions without supervisory direction from a certified educator.<sup>2</sup>

Overextending paraprofessionals also might have the effect of separating students from their classmates and causing unnecessary dependence. While Giangreco's research has shown that many younger children think of their paraprofessional as their parent—which suggests overdependence—older students report sometimes feeling embarrassed by needing a paraprofessional and feeling as if they have their own personal teacher watching over them all the time.

“Kids won't be kids if there's always a teacher around,” says Nagel.

Classroom teachers, too, need to know that students assisted by paraprofessionals still need the teachers' full attention. The presence of paraprofessionals does not preclude the use of differentiated instruction, says Glenn McGrath, director of pupil services for West Hartford Schools.

With this in mind, West Hartford, which has approximately 135 paraprofessionals in special education, follows certain

practices to build on the strengths of the paraprofessional-student relationship and avoid the pitfalls. No district has a one-size-fits-all model for using paraprofessionals, and many districts, including West Hartford, continue to enhance their approach.

First, West Hartford paraprofessionals are assigned to work with several students, and vice versa. This reduces the student's dependence on one particular paraprofessional, and allows paraprofessionals to learn to work with a variety of students.

“We just think that paraprofessionals are assigned to classrooms and programs, not to individuals,” McGrath says.

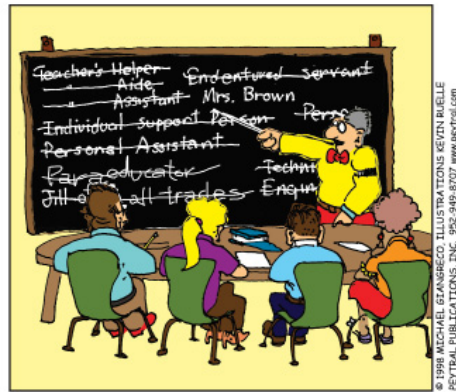
Second, the district encourages good communication between the paraprofessional and the classroom teachers. The paraprofessionals are given time to debrief. Because some of them work with the same students, they can share their experiences.

The paraprofessionals are expected to provide the teachers with relevant information and observations that the teacher might not know about. Parents must seek out the teacher, not the paraprofessional, to discuss their child. The teacher should still be the go-to person even if the parents ask paraprofessionals to attend their child's Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings.

Third, paraprofessionals must have adequate access to professional development. Schools and districts must find a way to fund time that paraprofessionals might spend outside of the classroom for training or attending meetings. Some professional development is held during school hours, such as SERC's annual “Paraprofessionals as Partners” conference in the fall, but SERC also holds training for paraprofessionals before the school year begins and schedules others after school hours.

Fourth, as suggested in Connecticut's Guidelines for the Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21 (2008), West Hartford created a handbook that outlines the expectations and roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals (referred to in West Hartford as “paraeducators”). It suggests that one way to facilitate student achievement is to support student independence. A paraeducator should allow a student to have

*Continued on page 4*



AFTER A GRUELING MEETING, THE STAFF DECIDES TO LET MRS. BROWN KEEP HER NAME.



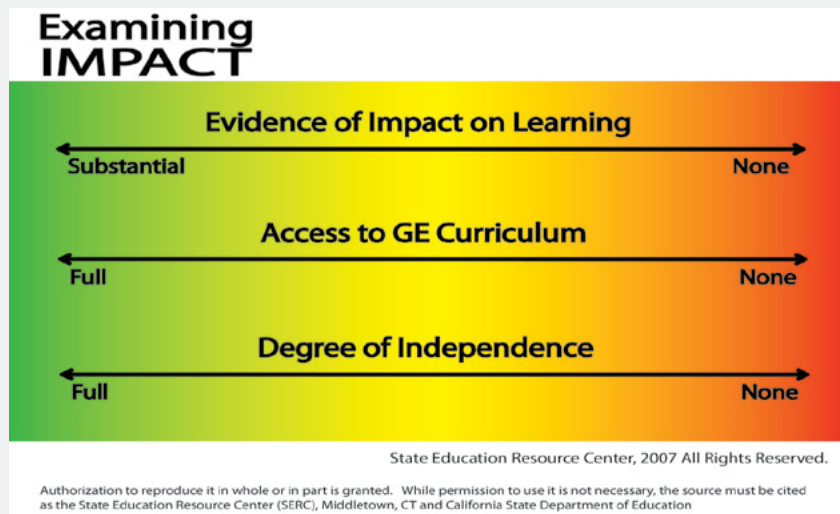
GOING IN THROUGH THE PARAPROFESSIONAL DOOR



## EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF PARAPROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

One-to-one paraprofessional support for a student with disabilities—especially students with significant disabilities—can have several unintended consequences, according to research. Two significant concerns are separation from classmates and unnecessary dependence, says Michael Giangreco of the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion at the University of Vermont.

Before making a decision to use one-to-one paraprofessional support, a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) should consider the impact on a student's overall learning opportunity, on access to the general education curriculum, and on the student's independence. The State Education Resource Center (SERC), in collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education, has developed an "Examining Impact Tool" to assist in that decision:



### Guiding Questions for the Conversation

#### 1. Level of impact on learning

What evidence do we have that the use of one-to-one paraprofessional support will increase the rate and progress of a student's learning?

#### 2. Access to general education curriculum

Will the use of one-to-one paraprofessional support increase access to the general education curriculum by:

- removing environmental and instructional barriers to learning?
- increasing student participation in general education activities and tasks?

#### 3. Fostering independence

Will the use of one-to-one paraprofessional support increase a student's capacity to independently:

- use naturally occurring resources and supports, such as peers and materials?
- use his/her accommodations, such as assistive technology?
- problem-solve and generalize learning to new situations?
- interact with non-disabled peers and adults other than the paraprofessional?

### Analysis of the Conversation

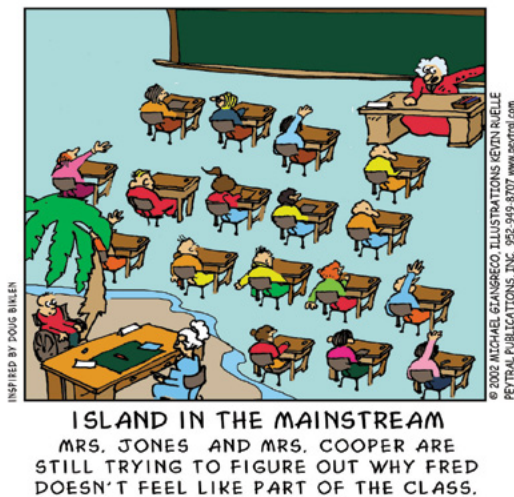
The PPT can use the Examining Impact Tool to measure the level of impact in each of these areas and conduct an overall analysis to determine if paraprofessional support is appropriate. Then it can make adjustments in how and when paraprofessional support is used. For example, a PPT may determine that a paraprofessional is needed only to assist a student with mobility during activities requiring movement, but is not needed during seatwork.

# Role

Continued from page 2

enough space to make his/her own decisions, successes, and mistakes, and to become responsible for his/her own learning. At the same time, the paraeducator should keep a careful balance of support and intervention. In an ideal situation, the paraeducator should be viewed by the outsider as an assistant to the teacher and classroom, not the individual student.

This concept is expressed succinctly on a page at the beginning of the handbook: “Your GOAL for the student(s) you work with is to help them build confidence and increase independence,” it says. “Learn to ‘fade’ when possible.”



Finally, the district is developing a formal paraprofessional evaluation, based on evaluation guidelines from the CSDE. Danbury and Middletown are among the districts with existing paraprofessional evaluations that CSDE identifies as models in the Connecticut guidelines.

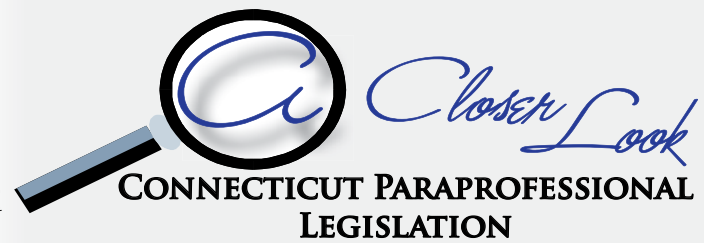
Administrators, not teachers, have the authority and credentials to evaluate paraprofessionals—although evaluators would certainly consult with the teachers since they are the ones who observe the paraprofessionals the most. The state guidelines suggest that evaluations are completed at least once a year.

Evaluations have become critical not only for paraprofessionals to evaluate their own performance, but also to strengthen the classroom environment in which paraprofessionals have become more important.

“The role has gotten bigger and better,” McGrath says. “It certainly is growing.” ♦

<sup>1</sup>Connecticut State Department of Education. (2008). Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21.

<sup>2</sup>Giangreco, M. (2009, May 27). Paraprofessional Supports in Inclusive Schools: Research, Practices and Alternatives. Webinar sponsored by the Inclusive Schools Network, Education Development Center, Newton, Mass.



## CONNECTICUT PARAPROFSSIONAL LEGISLATION

*Sec. 10-155j of the 2008 Supplement to the General Statutes. Development of paraprofessionals.* The Department of Education, through the State Education Resource Center and within available appropriations for such purposes, shall promote and encourage professional development activities for school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. Such activities may include, but shall not be limited to, providing local and regional boards of education with training modules and curricula for professional development for paraprofessionals and assisting boards of education in the effective use of paraprofessionals and the development of strategies to improve communications between teachers and paraprofessionals in the provision of effective student instruction.

*Sec. 10-155k of the 2008 Supplement to the General Statutes. School Paraprofessional Advisory Council.* The Commissioner of Education shall establish a School Paraprofessional Advisory Council consisting of one representative from each state-wide bargaining representative organization that represents school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. The council shall advise, at least quarterly, the Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, of the needs for the training of such paraprofessionals and the effectiveness of the content and the delivery of existing training for such paraprofessionals. The council shall report, at least quarterly, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the recommendations given to the commissioner, or the commissioner's designee, pursuant to the provisions of this section, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education.

*Sec. 28 of PA 07-3 of the June Special Session.* Not later than December 1, 2008, the department shall report and make recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education concerning professional development for paraprofessionals and the status and future of school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities.

*Public Act 08-169 (signed by Governor on June 12, 2008). Autism:* Requires the Commissioners of Education, Higher Education and Developmental Services and the President of Southern Connecticut State University to define autism and developmental disabilities and to develop recommendations by February 1, 2009, for a comprehensive state-wide plan to incorporate methods of teaching children with autism and other developmental disabilities into teacher preparation programs, teacher certification requirements, in-service training for educators and training provided to school paraprofessionals.

# FAQS ABOUT *Paraprofessionals*

## ***What is Connecticut's definition of a paraprofessional?***

A paraprofessional is an employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the teacher or other certified or licensed professional. The ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of student progress, is a collaborative effort of certified and licensed staff.

## ***Is the teacher the paraprofessional's supervisor?***

Yes, but there is a difference between the person responsible for hiring and evaluation of performance (an administrator) and the person directing day-to-day work with students (the teacher). Often the teacher provides the day-to-day supervision of the paraprofessional, while an administrator, such as a principal, program manager, or special education director, completes the evaluation. "Teachers should have supervisory functions as to program implementation, including planning, assigning duties, and checking with paraeducators as to their comprehension of their assigned duties. Teachers must not be expected to have administrative management duties such as the hiring or firing of paraeducators. Those duties belong to the administration."<sup>3</sup>

## ***What is the definition of "direct supervision?"***

According to federal guidelines in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): "A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher."

## ***Can a paraprofessional see a student's IEP? Attend a student's PPT meeting?***

There is no state or federal regulation prohibiting a paraprofessional from seeing a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). In fact, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) encourages paraprofessionals whose support includes students with disabilities to have an understanding of the IEP information that is pertinent to their role as an implementor. Paraprofessional attendance at Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings is an individual district and school-based decision. It is important that district or school personnel explain their policy on the attendance of paraprofessionals at PPTs to both parents and school staff. If a paraprofessional spends an extensive amount of time with a

student, a decision might be made for that paraprofessional to attend the student's PPT. If a paraprofessional is required in the IEP and does not attend a student's PPT meeting, it is the responsibility of the student's teacher and the paraprofessional's supervisor to communicate in detail with the paraprofessional about the student before and after the PPT.

## ***Can a paraprofessional act as a substitute for a teacher if the paraprofessional is not certified?***

Paraprofessionals who have a bachelor's degree can serve as a short-term substitute (in the same position for up to 39 days). Districts must get approval for any substitute who is serving in the same classroom/position for more than 39 days. Districts can also allow a person who does not hold a BA to serve as a short-term substitute with the approval of the CSDE Bureau of Certification.

## ***Can a paraprofessional be asked to perform personal care duties (i.e. toileting)?***

Toileting is an activity of daily living and generally falls under the responsibility of a paraprofessional. If the child has special needs, the Guidelines for Special Health Procedures for School Nurses (1997) does say that the school nurse should assess the situation to ensure that the proper position, equipment available, etc., are in place and that any training for the paraprofessional should be provided. This document is available in school nurses' offices or by calling (860) 807-2108.

## ***What is the paraprofessional's role in Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI)?***

SRBI is Connecticut's Framework for Response to Intervention (RTI), a process used to determine if and how students respond to instruction, including social/emotional learning. RTI provides a framework for school teams for designing, implementing, and evaluating educational interventions in a timely manner. Collaboration among all school staff ensures positive learning experiences and outcomes for struggling students whose needs are identified early. Paraprofessionals can be a valuable part of SRBI teams by assisting classroom teachers and special educators with screening, assisting teachers with benchmarking and progress monitoring assessments, recording observations of behavior and learning strategies, entering assessment data into a management system, serving as a member of the intervention team, and collaborating with teachers to provide support for students, implement interventions, and participate in school-wide professional development.

<sup>3</sup>Connecticut State Department of Education. (2008). Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21.

*Adopted from "Frequently Asked Questions About Paraprofessionals," published by the Connecticut State Department of Education and the State Education Resource Center, August 2009. The full text is available online at [www.ctserc.org/parafaq](http://www.ctserc.org/parafaq).*

# RESOURCES ON *Paraprofessionals*

## **American Federation of Teachers (AFT) - [www.aft.org/psrp](http://www.aft.org/psrp)**

The Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel (PSRP) division of the AFT provides information, resources, and professional development for paraprofessionals and support staff.

## **National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources (NCPR) - [www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html](http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html)**

This provides a comprehensive repository of information, as well as a forum to further the discussion, for achieving the goal of bringing talented paraeducators into the ranks of our nation's teaching force.

## **National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NRCP) - [www.nrcpara.org](http://www.nrcpara.org)**

NRCP serves paraeducators; teachers; policymakers and administrators; other education professionals; occupational, physical and speech-language therapists; early childhood specialists; personnel developers in two- and four-year colleges and universities; and other stakeholders in addressing policy questions and other needs of the field. It provides technical assistance and shares information about policy questions, management practices, regulatory procedures, and training models that will enable administrators and staff-developers to improve the recruitment, deployment, supervision, and career development of paraprofessionals.

## **Rhode Island Technical Assistance Project (RITAP) - [www.ritap.org/TA/about-us/about.php](http://www.ritap.org/TA/about-us/about.php)**

Developed by the Rhode Island Department of Education, RITAP provides information on teacher assistant-related legal requirements and effective practice, training opportunities, resources, training materials, PowerPoint presentations, and a quarterly teacher-assistant newsletter.

## **Michael Giangreco's home page - [www.uvm.edu/~mgiangre](http://www.uvm.edu/~mgiangre)**

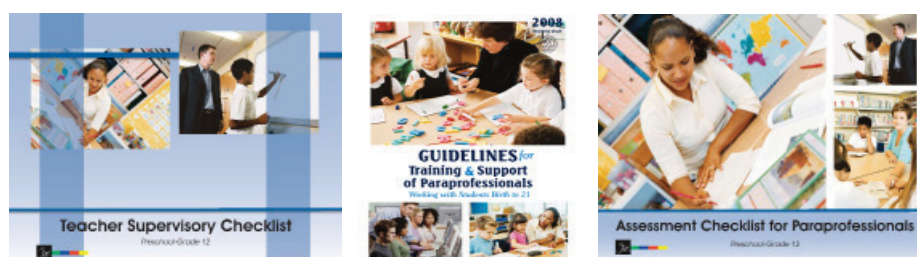
Michael Giangreco is a professor at the University of Vermont. His Web site includes resources with a focus on effective utilization of paraprofessionals as well as how to plan, adapt, coordinate, implement, and evaluate educational programs and services for students with disabilities who are included in general education classrooms.

## **Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) - Paraprofessional Information and Resources - [www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali](http://www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali)**

This Connecticut State Department of Education Web page provides information on paraprofessional regulations and legislation, professional development opportunities, and other resources for paraprofessionals.

## **Guidelines for Training & Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21 - [www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Guidelines\\_Paraprofessionals.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Guidelines_Paraprofessionals.pdf)**

This Connecticut State Department of Education publication highlights the increasing numbers of paraprofessionals in our state, the current requirements under NCLB, and the importance of training for paraprofessionals, as well as their supervisors and evaluators. It includes sample tools that define appropriate roles and responsibilities for paraprofessionals. These tools will further assist schools in becoming better skilled in determining the paraprofessional's role and impact on student learning.



# The Importance of Responsible Inclusive Practices

A Settlement to  
P.J. ET AL. v. STATE OF CONNECTICUT, BOARD OF EDUCATION, ET AL.

In 1991, a case was filed by five school-age children with mental retardation and their families. It was certified as a class action lawsuit on December 13, 1993. The class membership includes all school-age children with the label mental retardation/intellectual disability on or after February 20, 1991 who are not educated in regular classrooms.

The settlement to *P.J. et al. (Plaintiffs) v. State of Connecticut, Board of Education, et al. (Defendants)* was approved by the federal court on May 22, 2002. The agreement provides that the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) demonstrate progress each year in the following goals and outcomes:

1. an increase in the percent of students with mental retardation or intellectual disability who are placed in regular classes, as measured by the federal definition (i.e., eighty [80] percent or more of the school day with non-disabled students);
2. a reduction in the disparate identification of students with mental retardation or intellectual disability by Local Education Agency (LEA), by racial group, by ethnic group, or by gender group;
3. an increase in the mean and median percent of the school day that students with mental retardation or intellectual disability spend with non-disabled students;
4. an increase in the percent of students with mental retardation or intellectual disability who attend the school they would attend if not disabled (i.e., "home school");
5. an increase in the percent of students with mental retardation or intellectual disability who participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities with non-disabled students.

To ensure that Connecticut demonstrates progress toward these goals/outcomes, the jurisdiction of the Court for enforcement of this Agreement will continue for five (5) years. For a period of eight (8) years, the Court may entertain Plaintiffs' motions for substantial non-compliance with this Agreement.

Among the specific responsibilities of the CSDE is the development of policy statements. The Commissioner of Education has issued a policy letter that reiterates the State Board of Education's position, which affirms the right of each child with mental retardation or other disability to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

The Chief of the Bureau of Special Education of the CSDE issued a policy memorandum with further information regarding:

- (1) the individual student decision-making process that must be followed by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT);
- (2) the CSDE's responsibilities for oversight of LEA activities to ensure compliance; and
- (3) the joint state and local obligation to work toward greater inclusion of students with mental retardation in all aspects of the school program.

Each superintendent of schools, LEA school board member, special education due process hearing officer, and teacher preparation program in Connecticut received these policy memorandums along with a copy of the Agreement.

Program Compliance Review of LEAs by the CSDE, including targeted database monitoring, will facilitate improvement in each of the goals through consistent feedback to all LEAs on their performance in achieving these goals. Monitoring will include, but is not limited to, participation and progress of class members in the general curriculum, use of out-of-district placements, availability of supplementary aids and services, and the use of promising practices. Focused monitoring to identify and provide solutions will occur in districts not making satisfactory progress toward the goals or who are found deficient as a result of monitoring activities.

To enable LEAs to extend and improve education in regular classes for class members, a technical assistance system with a sufficient number of qualified specialists will be developed to assist LEAs in carrying out their responsibilities.

Training programs to enable parents of class members to effectively advocate for the education of their children in least restrictive environments will focus on topics such as: Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, management and teaching activities and routines, and the development of active parent groups.

To support attainment of these goals, a Complaint Resolution Process will be maintained by the CSDE in accordance with requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In addition, a four (4) member Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) to advise the parties and the Court regarding the implementation of the Agreement has been established.

For further information about the Agreement, or about activities for families of students with intellectual disabilities, which are being coordinated by the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC), Connecticut's Parent Training and Information Center, please contact Rhonda Kempton, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education, (860) 713-6924, rhonda.kempton@ct.gov.



# LRE *News* is online!

THIS ISSUE:  
*Paraprofessionals*

NEXT ISSUE:  
*Peer Supports*

Visit the  
*Least Restrictive Environment Initiative*  
at [www.ctserc.org](http://www.ctserc.org)



# Appendix B

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## Paraprofessionals and SRBI



# Paraprofessionals and SRBI

## Paraprofessionals and Instructional Support

### Connecticut's Definition of a Paraprofessional

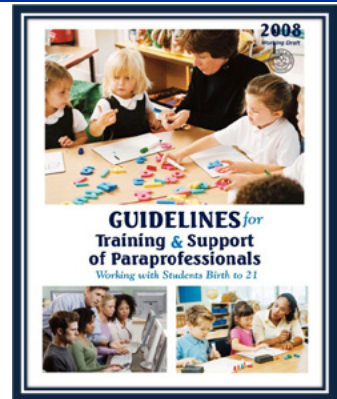
"An employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the teacher or other certified or licensed professional. The ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of students' progress, is a collaborative effort of certified and licensed staff."

*-Connecticut's Guidelines for  
Training and Support of  
Paraprofessionals, pg. 7*

Over the past year, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has received requests from districts for support documents to assist in the implementation of Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI). This document, Paraprofessionals and SRBI, is the first in a series of documents to provide guidance and support to districts in the implementation of the SRBI framework.

Paraprofessionals play important roles in improving student achievement. They also can serve as a valuable resource for providing instructional support. Before making decisions regarding the appropriate role of paraprofessionals in the SRBI process, schools and districts should examine how they are currently training, supervising and evaluating their paraprofessionals. The Connecticut *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals* was published and endorsed by the CSDE to inform and guide district personnel in the many important factors to consider in the use of paraprofessionals, specifically their training and effective use. It also clarifies the paraprofessional role as it is related to instruction. The CSDE highly recommends that this document be used as the foundation for identifying appropriate roles for paraprofessionals in the SRBI framework. It is important that once these roles are identified, the paraprofessional continues to work under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and receive ongoing specialized training.

We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this publication. Comments should be directed to Iris White, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement, [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov).



The CSDE has endorsed and published this guideline document to inform and guide district personnel in the many important factors to consider in the use of paraprofessionals, specifically their training and effective use. The guidelines can be downloaded from the CSDE Paraprofessional Information and Resources page: [www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali](http://www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali).

### Inside this issue:

A Paraprofessionals Guide to SRBI	2
Paraprofessional Questions Regarding SRBI	3
Sample Roles for Paraprofessionals	4
Paraprofessional Development Resources	5



For more information regarding SRBI, please log onto: [www.ct.gov/sde/SRBI](http://www.ct.gov/sde/SRBI)

*“A key component to SRBI is that all children, including English Language Learners receive high quality curriculum and instruction, attention to the quality of the school climate, as well as a comprehensive system of social-emotional learning and behavior supports in the general education classroom or program. (Tier I)”*

## A Paraprofessionals Guide to SRBI

SRBI is *Connecticut’s Framework for Response to Intervention (RTI)*, a process used to determine if and how students respond to instruction and social-emotional learning. SRBI provides a framework for school teams for designing, implementing and evaluating educational interventions in a timely manner. SRBI emphasizes successful instruction for all students through high-quality general education practices, as well as targeted interventions for students experiencing learning, social-emotional or behavioral difficulties. A child’s progress is assessed and results are used to make decisions about appropriate supports. SRBI uses a three-tiered model as a continuum of support.

**Tier I: (Core)** the on-going general education curriculum, instruction and social/behavioral supports for all students, with adequate differentiation of instruction.

**Tier II: (Supplemental/Targeted)** short-term (e.g., 8 – 20 weeks) targeted interventions provided in small group settings for students who are not making progress with the Core instruction; it is part of the general education system. Student progress should be assessed weekly or biweekly.

**Tier III: (Intensive)** more intensive and/or individualized short-term (e.g., 8 – 20 weeks) interventions for students who fail to respond adequately to the supplemental/targeted interventions; it is part of the general education system.

A key component to SRBI is that all children, including English Language Learners, receive high-quality curriculum and instruction, attention to the quality of the school climate, as well as a comprehensive system of social-emotional learning and behavior supports in the general education classroom or program. (Tier I)

Common Assessments are given to all students to enable teachers to monitor academic and social progress, and identify those who are experiencing difficulty early. Students may be identified as needing additional supports to supplement what they are currently receiving in Core instruction (Tier I). Additional teaching strategies or methods that have been proven to be effective in teaching children and result in improved student achievement are used (Tier II and Tier III).

Teachers need to determine whether an intervention is successful or needs to be changed. Progress monitoring is the process by which teachers can better understand a child's needs and demonstrate the growth children are making in a specific area. For students not making progress from supplemental interventions (Tier II), they are provided with a higher level of support (individualized instruction) they need to be successful learners (Tier III). With appropriate selection and monitoring of interventions, the expectation is that most students make enough progress to continue with Core Instruction (Tier I) without additional supports.

Collaboration among all school staff ensures positive learning experiences, early identification of student needs and positive outcomes for struggling students. As a paraprofessional, you can be a valuable part of SRBI teams by assisting teachers with screening, benchmarking and progress monitoring assessments, recording observations of behavior and learning strategies and entering assessment data into a management system. Paraprofessionals can also serve as a member of the intervention team. On this team you can collaborate with teachers to provide support for students and implement teacher planned interventions. It is important that in each of these roles you work under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and complete specialized training and participate in schoolwide professional development to enable you to perform these duties.

**For more information regarding SRBI, please log onto: [www.ct.gov/sde/SRBI](http://www.ct.gov/sde/SRBI). For additional information regarding appropriate roles for paraprofessionals in the SRBI process, please contact Iris White, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement, 860-713-6794 or e-mail at: [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov).**

**The following are sample questions from the SRBI and Paraprofessionals Panel at the State Education Resource Center (SERC) Annual Paraprofessional Conference held on October 29, 2009.**

**Q: Are there time lines for interventions? (Tier II, III)**

A: Interventions are short term (e.g., 8 to 20 weeks) and remain part of the general education system, with supports from specialists. These interventions are supplemental to the core academic instruction and behavioral supports that are part of Tier I.

**Q: Would you continue an intervention once growth is evidenced after two weeks?**

A: Yes, if growth is evidenced (indicating that the intervention is working), an intervention should continue. Two weeks would not be sufficient time to make a decision to remove an in-

## Questions and Answers from Paraprofessionals and SRBI Panel, *continued*

intervention, whether making progress or not. Teachers would determine if the level of growth and amount of time spent on an intervention requires a change. Progress on interventions should be considered relevant to a grade level standard or benchmark.

**Q: Who is managing the progress monitoring? (literacy, math, behavior)**

A: Certified staff should manage the process of progress monitoring.

**Q: What type of training are you suggesting districts give to the paraprofessionals specific to SRBI?**

A: First, an overview of SRBI, roles of paraprofessionals and teachers in the instructional process, intervention training and data collection.

### Paraprofessional and Teacher Collaboration

Collaboration is a general term that describes an interactive process whereby persons with diverse backgrounds and expertise jointly agree to work together to generate creative solutions to mutually defined issues. Mutual trust, respect and open communication characterize collaboration.

In a school that is well underway in implementing the SRBI framework, the staff knows that collaboration is essential. Effective teacher and paraprofessional collaboration can enhance the potential for increased student learning. If all staff is taking responsibility for all students, then all staff (including paraprofessionals) takes part in the collaborative process. All staff must recognize and value the role of the paraprofessional and the input he or she provides related to students. The paraprofessional in the role of collaborator is one who works with interventionists to problem solve on behalf of students who need specialized help to meet their instructional goals. As a participating team member, paraprofessionals can attend meetings and share relevant information with other team members to facilitate problem solving, decision making, program planning and other team activities.

The Connecticut *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals* includes resources to help facilitate teacher-paraprofessional collaboration:

- sample Teacher Paraeducator Planning Tool 2;
- blank Sample Teacher Paraeducator Planning Tool 3;
- classroom Analysis Worksheet 4; and
- schedule for Paraprofessional Staff.

## Professional Development Resources for Paraprofessionals

The CSDE professional development for paraprofessionals is coordinated by Iris White, Education Consultant, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement.

**Please contact Iris White at 860-713-6794 or e-mail at [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov).**

SERC provides many professional development opportunities through its *Paraprofessionals as Partners* Initiative. Through a variety of professional development opportunities, paraprofessionals working in collaborative partnerships with general and special educational teachers and support services professionals can acquire skills to enhance their ability to effectively provide instruction and other direct services to meet the diverse needs of all students. In addition, SERC coordinates an annual paraprofessional conference in the fall of each school year. **For more information, please contact Stefanie Carbone, Consultant, SERC, at 860-632-1485, ext. 306 or e-mail at [carbone@ctserc.org](mailto:carbone@ctserc.org).**

The Capital Region Education Council (CREC) also offers a variety of professional development and job opportunities for paraprofessionals and aspiring paraprofessionals, including a comprehensive job-embedded professional development curriculum called **The Compass**. This series of modules, aligned with National Paraprofessional Standards, has been designed to enhance the paraprofessionals' skills in working with students in educational settings. **More information can be found on the paraprofessional page of the CREC Website: [www.crec.org/parprofessional](http://www.crec.org/parprofessional) or by contacting your local regional education service center (RESC):**

**ACES: Patricia Hart-Cole, [phart@aces.org](mailto:phart@aces.org)**

**CES: Dr. Christine Peck, [cpeck@ces.k12.ct.us](mailto:cpeck@ces.k12.ct.us)**

**CREC: Tricia Silva, [tsilva@crec.org](mailto:tsilva@crec.org)**

**EASTCONN: Elaine Rothenberg, [erothernberg@eastconn.org](mailto:erothernberg@eastconn.org)**

**EDUCATION CONNECTION: Jodiann Tenney, [tenney@educationconnection.org](mailto:tenney@educationconnection.org)**

**LEARN: Susan Hall, [shall@learn.k12.ct.us](mailto:shall@learn.k12.ct.us)**

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# Appendix C

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## Paraprofessional Brief: ELL



# Connecticut PARAPROFESSIONALS’ Guide to ELLs

CONNECTICUT



STATE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION

*Before making decisions regarding the appropriate role of paraprofessionals in providing support, schools and districts should examine how they are currently training, supervising, and evaluating their paraprofessionals.*

Paraprofessionals play an integral role in student achievement and are invaluable resources in providing instructional support. Before making decisions regarding the appropriate role of paraprofessionals in providing such support, schools and districts should examine how they are currently training, supervising, and evaluating their paraprofessionals. The Connecticut *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals* was published and endorsed by the CSDE to inform and guide district personnel in the many important factors to consider in the use of paraprofessionals, specifically their training and roles and responsibilities and it also clarifies the paraprofessional role as it is related to instruction. The CSDE highly recommends that the Guidelines be used as the foundation for identifying appropriate roles for paraprofessionals within Bilingual and ESL education and support services. It is important that once these roles are identified, the paraprofessional continues to work under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and receive ongoing specialized training and professional development.

We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this publication. Comments should be directed to Iris White, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement, at [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov).

## PARAPROFESSIONALS & THE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT OF ENGLISH LEARNERS IN CT SCHOOLS

Connecticut’s schools are becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse. According to data published by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) in July 2008, the population of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Connecticut schools had increased by 15.5 percent between 2003 and 2007. English Language Learners, as a percentage of all Connecticut students K-12, had increased from 4.6 percent to 5.4 percent (CSDE Data Bulletin, “English Language Learners in Connecticut,” July 2008, p. 1). In the 2009-10 school year, 72,592 students spoke a dominant language other than English, and 133 dominant languages were spoken among these students. Of those students with dominant languages other than English, 29,993 were identified as ELLs (CSDE Data Bulletin, “English Language Learners, School year 2009-10,” November 2010, p. 1). As our schools and children are becoming richer in their racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the CSDE and the State Education Resource Center (SERC) continue to offer support to districts, and have chosen to publish this document to provide guidance to districts, in their implementation of Bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) education and support services and in their use of paraprofessionals within these programs to provide instructional support to students who are ELLs.

### IN THIS ISSUE

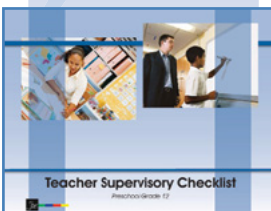
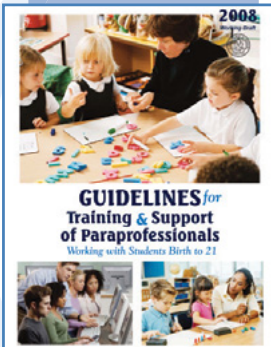
Instructional Support of English Learners in CT Schools

Guide to Bilingual and ESL Programs and Services

Questions Regarding ESL and Bilingual Education

Sample Roles

Professional Development Resources





According to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and state law, school districts must identify and report the dominant language of ALL new K-12 students. The preliminary or initial determination of a student's dominant language is made through a home language survey given to parents/guardians at the point of registration/enrollment in the school district. The preliminary determination is also the first step in a three-step process to identifying English Language Learners.

Observations, interviews, testing, and a review of student records then serve to ascertain a student's dominant language and determine the English language proficiency of a student. It is important to remember that not all students who have a dominant language other

than English are English Language Learners. Only those students whose dominant language is one other than English AND whose English language proficiency is limited may be considered for identification as an ELL.

Once a child is identified as an ELL, parents/guardians must be notified and given program/service options available to their child. Parents/guardians have the right to accept, refuse, un-enroll, and re-enroll their child in any ESL/Bilingual program/service offered to their child. In cases where parents/guardians refuse programs/services, the child is still identified as an English Language Learner as a matter of law.

In school buildings where there are 20 or more ELLs of the same language group, a bilingual program must be provided by law (CGS, Section 10-17f). Connecticut's legislation on bilingual education has existed since 1977. According to the Bilingual Education Statute, eligible students may receive bilingual education for a maximum of 30 months. Those who receive bilingual education for 30 months without attaining the English mastery criteria must then be offered Language Transition Support Services (LTSS).

All identified English Language Learners remain ELL students until the time that they attain all of the exit criteria, or mastery standards, adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education. ELL students must achieve both a linguistic and an academic mastery standard. They must achieve an overall level 4 or 5 on the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) Links in order to demonstrate English language proficiency and grade-level performance on the DRA, CMTs, or CAPT (depending on grade level) in order to demonstrate academic mastery.

### PARAPROFESSIONALS' QUESTIONS REGARDING ESL AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION

**Q: What are my responsibilities in designing and implementing instruction?**

A: Paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of teachers or other certified or licensed professionals. The ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of student's progress, is a collaborative effort of certified and licensed staff (CSDE, *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals*, 2008, p. 7).

**Q: How long are students required to remain in Bilingual or ESL education and/or support services?**

A: ELL students may remain in a Bilingual Education program for up to 30 months. After 30 months, if students have not attained the mastery criteria, they must be offered Language Transition Support Services (LTSS). There is no "time limit" on ESL support OR on a student's status as ELL. That is, a student remains an English Language Learner (ELL) until the time that he/she achieves all of the exit or mastery criteria required per the grade level of the student. ESL support should be appropriate to the student's instructional needs.

**Q: What are my responsibilities in communicating student program/services and assessment information to other educators, i.e., teachers and other certified or licensed professionals?**

A: Collaboration between paraprofessionals and teachers and other certified or licensed professionals is essential in the provision of an appropriate and effective education for English Language Learners. Paraprofessionals are key players in communicating relevant information and providing input to other educators in order to facilitate program and services planning, decision making, and problem solving, in addition to other activities decided upon by a team of educators. While paraprofessionals trained in the administration of the LAS Links may administer the test, score the test (which must be reviewed by the certified teacher), describe the test and its parts, and communicate results to other educators, the process of progress monitoring should be managed by teachers and certified and licensed professionals (CSDE, *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals*, 2008, p. 7, and SRBI Brief, “Paraprofessionals and SRBI,” Vol. 1, Issue 1, April 2010).

**Q: What are my responsibilities in communicating with parents and families?**

A: A paraprofessional’s responsibilities in communicating with parents and families usually depend on the policies and procedures of his/her district. At the same time, “paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of teachers or other certified or licensed professionals” (CSDE, *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals*, 2008, p. 7). Therefore, a paraprofessional’s communications with parents and families should be supervised by teachers and/or other certified or licensed professionals.

### **SAMPLE ROLES FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS**

Most ESL and Bilingual Education paraprofessionals provide either “push-in” and/or “pull-out” instructional support. In push-in instructional support, the paraprofessional goes into the classroom to provide linguistic and academic support to the student(s). In pull-out instructional support, the paraprofessional works with students outside of their regular classroom setting. In both contexts, paraprofessionals working in ESL programs support both students’ English language development and their access to and achievement in the general education curriculum. When working in Bilingual Education programs, they might also support the language development of the students’ first language.

Paraprofessionals in ESL and Bilingual Education programs assist both in making content (the “input”) comprehensible and in eliciting “output” from students by using specific instructional strategies that support students during the stages and processes of Second Language Acquisition. For that reason, it is extremely important that paraprofessionals be educated and experienced in, as well as receive on-going professional development on, the principles, stages, and processes of Second Language Acquisition; characteristics of ELL students; the LAS Links assessment; communication and collaboration with certified professionals and parents/families; and instructional strategies (e.g., differentiation strategies, sheltered instruction strategies, and strategies appropriate to specific content areas).

It should not be forgotten that in both “push-in” and “pull-out” contexts, paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of teachers or other certified or licensed professionals, and that the ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of student progress, is a collaborative effort of certified and licensed staff (Ibid). Therefore, certified staff – in most cases, certified general education teachers and certified TESOL or Bilingual Education teachers; and, in some cases, additional certified professionals, including but not limited to reading instructors, integrated student support services professionals, and special education teachers – should be collaborating on the design and implementation of the instruction provided to English Language Learners in all contexts and settings. Such design and implementation includes initial assessment and identification, parent meetings and notification, program placement, daily instruction, progress monitoring, annual assessment, and reporting of scores and information for ELL students.

# Professional Development Resources for PARAPROFESSIONALS

The CSDE professional development for paraprofessionals is coordinated by Iris White, Education Consultant, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement. The CSDE Consultant for Bilingual/ELL Education is Marie Salazar Glowski, also with the Bureau of Accountability and Improvement. Iris White can be contacted at [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov) or at 860-713-6794, and Marie Salazar Glowski can be contacted at [marie.salazar.glowski@ct.gov](mailto:marie.salazar.glowski@ct.gov) or at 860-713-6750.

The **State Education Resource Center (SERC)** provides many professional development opportunities through its *Paraprofessionals as Partners* Initiative. Through a variety of diverse professional development opportunities, paraprofessionals working in collaborative partnerships with general and special education teachers and support services professionals can enhance and acquire skills to improve their ability to effectively provide instruction and other direct services to meet the needs of all students. SERC also coordinates an annual paraprofessional conference in the fall of each year. In addition, SERC offers professional development and technical assistance on topics relevant to educators working with English Language Learners.

For more information, contact Stefanie Carbone, Consultant with SERC's *Paraprofessionals as Partners* Initiative at [carbone@ctserc.org](mailto:carbone@ctserc.org) or at 860-632-1485, ext. 306, or Maria Carillo, Consultant with SERC's *Initiative on Diversity in Education* at [carillo@ctserc.org](mailto:carillo@ctserc.org) or at 860-632-1485, ext. 389. More information can also be found on SERC's Web site: [www.ctserc.org](http://www.ctserc.org).

The **Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)** also offers a variety of professional development and job opportunities for paraprofessionals and aspiring paraprofessionals, including a comprehensive, job-embedded professional development curriculum called *The Compass*. This series of training modules, aligned with the *National Paraprofessional Standards*, has been designed to enhance paraprofessionals' skills in working with students in educational settings. More information can be found on the paraprofessional page of the CREC Web site, [www.crec.org/paraprofessional](http://www.crec.org/paraprofessional), or by contacting your local regional educational service center (RESA):

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# Appendix D

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## Paraprofessional Brief: ADHD/ADD

# Connecticut PARAPROFESSIONALS' Guide to

## Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

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STATE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION

*Before making decisions regarding the appropriate role of paraprofessionals in providing support, schools and districts should examine how they are currently training, supervising, and evaluating their paraprofessionals.*

Paraprofessionals play an integral role in student achievement and are an invaluable resource in providing instructional support. Before making decisions regarding the appropriate role of paraprofessionals in providing such support, schools and districts should examine how they are currently training, supervising, and evaluating their paraprofessionals. The Connecticut *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals* was published and endorsed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to inform and guide district personnel in the many important factors to consider in the use of paraprofessionals, specifically their training and effective use of their skills. The CSDE highly recommends that the Guidelines be used as the foundation for identifying and clarifying appropriate paraprofessional roles related to instruction. It is important that once these roles are identified, the paraprofessional continues to work under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and receive ongoing specialized training and professional development.

We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this publication. Comments should be directed to Iris White, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement, at [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov).

### A PARAPROFESSIONALS' GUIDE TO ADD/ADHD

According to the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-4th edition revised (DSM-IV-TR)** (APA, 1994), a prominent characteristic of ADHD is “a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequently displayed and is more severe than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development.” Students identified with the ADD/ADHD disability are eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. In order for a child in a public school to be identified with ADD/ADHD, the child must first meet the overall eligibility requirements for “other health impairment” (OHI), and then meet the more specific requirements for ADD/ADHD. According to IDEA, other health impairment means having limited strength; vitality alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli; and limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma or ADD/ADHD, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Symptoms of ADHD must be present before age 7 years, and must interfere with developmentally appropriate social, academic, or occupational functioning in at least two settings (for example, at home and at school, or at home and at work).

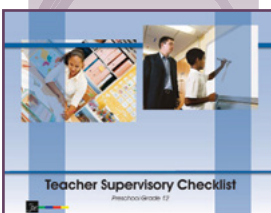
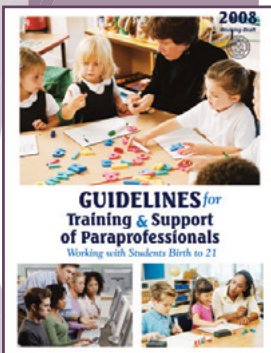
#### IN THIS ISSUE

Guide to ADD/ADHD

Facts about ADD/ADHD

Instructional Strategies to Support Students with ADD/ADHD

Professional Development Resources



## FACTS ABOUT ADD/ADHD

- Estimates of incidence rates of ADHD vary widely, from less than 1 percent to more than 20 percent of the population. This variation occurs because of the imprecision of terms such as “hyperactivity” and “impulsivity.” The best current estimates are that between 3 percent and 5 percent of school-age children have this disorder.
- Although it is most often diagnosed in children, ADD/ADHD is a lifespan disorder that affects individuals at all ages.
- Boys are diagnosed at least 3 times more often than girls, although available evidence indicates that girls are probably underdiagnosed.
- ADHD is often inherited. It is very common to find that relatives of a child with ADHD were, or are, considered to be hyperactive, impulsive, inattentive, or all three, at school, in the community, or at work.

### SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of ADHD are divided into inattentiveness, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Those children with the inattentive type are less disruptive and are more likely to miss being diagnosed with ADHD.

#### **Inattentive ADHD symptoms:**

1. Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork.
2. Has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play.
3. Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.
4. Does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace.
5. Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities.
6. Avoids or dislikes tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork).
7. Often loses toys, assignments, pencils, books, or tools needed for tasks or activities.
8. Is easily distracted.
9. Is often forgetful in daily activities.

#### **Hyperactivity symptoms:**

1. Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat.
2. Leaves seat when remaining seated is expected.
3. Runs about or climbs in inappropriate situations.
4. Has difficulty playing quietly.

### APPROACHES:

**Behavioral Approaches:** Used in treatment of ADHD to provide structures for the child and to reinforce appropriate behaviors. Best practice research indicates a child may benefit from a positive behavioral intervention plan that clearly outlines expectations and includes positive support.

**Pharmacological Approaches:** Decision to prescribe any medicine is the responsibility of medical -not educational- professionals, after consultation with the family and agreement on the most appropriate treatment plan.

Children with ADHD are often bright, enthusiastic, creative individuals. With early diagnosis, understanding, treatment, and management, they can be helped to realize their potential and make valuable contributions to society. The successful social and academic education of the child with ADHD, however, cannot be left to chance. It requires long-term cooperation and collaboration among family members, educators, physicians, and other professionals. Behaviors of impulsivity, inattention, and hyperactivity can make functioning in the school setting difficult. The following chart lists some of these behaviors and possible strategies.

# INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH ADD/ADHD

BEHAVIORS	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES/TOOLS
<p><b>Difficulty Getting Started</b> - slow/ unable to begin a new task, activity, assignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide written AND oral directions;</li> <li>• check that directions are clear;</li> <li>• begin work with mentor;</li> <li>• segment the work into small initial steps; and</li> <li>• fold student's paper in halves, quarters, accordion patterns and ask him or her to work on just the first space.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disorganized</b> - poor time management skills; inability to plan ahead; difficulty with sequencing; messy desk/locker; failure to turn in work although it is complete; misplaces books/materials; written work appears messy and lacks coherence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• external organizers (calendars, watch with alarm);</li> <li>• instructional chart with sequence of steps articulated;</li> <li>• instruction chart posted on index cards or stickies;</li> <li>• daily schedule, routines, rituals;</li> <li>• study buddy;</li> <li>• assistive listening devices; and</li> <li>• keyboarding instruction and computer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Distractable</b> - not responding when called upon; poor task completion; difficulty distinguishing important information/main idea from less important; skipping from one activity to the next</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preferential seating;</li> <li>• instruction on appropriate academic level;</li> <li>• assignments that are highly engaging;</li> <li>• hands-on learning, based on interests and strength;</li> <li>• reducing the number of items per assignment;</li> <li>• alternating response modes;</li> <li>• permitting students to work problems in an unusual order (bottom to top);</li> <li>• using external nonverbal cues to prompt student to return to task;</li> <li>• increasing the amount of immediate feedback (e.g., circulate during independent work and correct some of each student's work to provide immediate feedback); and</li> <li>• using cooperative learning after the strategies have been taught to whole class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hyperactive</b> - difficulty staying in chair; high level of gross-motor activity (younger children); restlessness (adolescents); seeks sensory stimulation (chewing, tapping, leg swinging)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide acceptable opportunities for movement rather than attempting to restrict activity;</li> <li>• providing a specific number of walking passes (e.g., sharpening pencil, drinks of water, access to books, wall charts);</li> <li>• providing small manipulatives to channel activity from gross to fine motor (e.g., clay, stress balls);</li> <li>• establishing work centers as opportunity to move to choice activity;</li> <li>• standing-random drills;</li> <li>• restating rules before the opportunity for rule infraction;</li> <li>• increasing proprioceptive feedback (consult with OT or PT); and</li> <li>• use of tactile materials.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impulsive</b> - shouts out answers without being called upon; exhibits risk-taking behaviors; does not think about consequences of behavior; difficulty following rules; difficulty taking turns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teaching self-monitoring skills;</li> <li>• teaching self-regulating skills;</li> <li>• teaching the behavior you want to see;</li> <li>• giving positive feedback 5 to 8 times more frequently than negative ones; and</li> <li>• teaching student verbal or motor response to use while waiting (e.g., holding up a "HELP" card, writing note to self so he will remember).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Memory</b> - inconsistent and/or poor recall of previously learned information; reduced reading comprehension with long and/or complex sentences; forgetting assignments, social commitments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• segment study time into smaller units;</li> <li>• structured breaks, alternating subject matter;</li> <li>• multisensory instruction;</li> <li>• establish lesson context and links to prior knowledge;</li> <li>• highlight most important features (color coding, shapes, size emphasis); and</li> <li>• provide opportunity for novel repetitions until student achieves automaticity of basic skills/facts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-Monitoring and Evaluation</b> - lacks "internal voice," the internal dialogue to self-coach and/or guide thinking and behavior; unaware that his/her behavior is inappropriate, annoying to others; difficulty checking work once completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• role model by thinking out loud;</li> <li>• provide nonjudgmental feedback to establish sequence and causality of events; and</li> <li>• provide rubric on desktop for correcting work and provide structured practice in using it.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transition</b> - difficulty transitioning between activities, subjects, classes; repeats same idea/question after receiving a response; repeats same error even when told it is incorrect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide three-part transition cues (stopping, moving to, and starting);</li> <li>• develop transition rituals; and</li> <li>• create transition songs, games, activities (primary grades).</li> </ul>



# Professional Development Resources for PARAPROFESSIONALS

The CSDE professional development for paraprofessionals is coordinated by Iris White, Education Consultant, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement. Iris White can be contacted at [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov) or at 860-713-6794.

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For more information, contact Stefanie Carbone, Consultant with SERC's *Paraprofessionals as Partners* Initiative at [carbone@ctserc.org](mailto:carbone@ctserc.org) or at 860-632-1485, ext. 306. More information can also be found on SERC's Web site: [www.ctserc.org](http://www.ctserc.org).

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## References

**Connecticut ADHD Task Force, Report on ADHD, 3rd Edition, Spring 2005.** [http://www.ctserc.org/initiatives/teachandlearn/ADHD\\_report\\_5-2-05.pdf](http://www.ctserc.org/initiatives/teachandlearn/ADHD_report_5-2-05.pdf).

**National Resource Center on ADD/ADHD, [www.help4adhd.org](http://www.help4adhd.org)**



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# Appendix E

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## Paraprofessional Professional Development Survey Results

**Total number of respondents: 232**

**Breakdown:**

Administrators (64)  
Paraprofessionals (125)  
Teachers (38)  
Consultants (5)

**Participants were asked to identify their 6 top choices for paraprofessional professional development.**

1. Positive behavior supports and implementation of behavior management plans (185)
2. Knowledge of and skills to assist in reading/reading readiness (146)
3. Knowledge of and skills to assist in mathematics/mathematics readiness (137)
4. Facilitating inclusion in general education (133)
5. Knowledge of and skills to assist in writing/writing readiness (130)
6. Knowledge of specific disabilities (129)
7. Reinforcing Teacher Planned instruction (119)
8. Assistive Technology (75)
9. Tie Collaboration with the teacher (75)
10. Communication skills (oral and written) (70)
11. Confidentiality/Ethics (60)
12. Knowledge of Federal, State, and District Regulations (52)
13. Health and Safety (Communicable Diseases, Bloodborne Pathogens, Ergonomics) (30)
14. Time Management (25)
15. ParaPro Assessment Preparation (24)
16. Other: train teachers on the role of the paraprofessional, DCF mandated reporting, specific interventions on Autism, how to meet the needs of a special education student, Autism, Professionalism, computer skills-power point, technology, participants in meetings related to PPTs, how paraprofessionals can stand up for themselves, mental health knowledge, classes offered to continue education, roles and responsibilities, and classroom management.

**What obstacles, if any, have you encountered when trying to provide professional development for your paraprofessionals?**

1. Lack of time (61)
2. Money (63)
3. Lack of resources (35)

4. Other: sub coverage, lack of interest, scheduling, administration, lack of discussion about para professional development, contractual obligations (2), collective bargaining, resistance from administration.

**With which district RESC is your program/district affiliated?**

CREC (98)  
ACES (49)  
EASTCONN (41)  
LEARN (29)  
CES (17)  
Education Connection (7)

**To which Community College is your district/program nearest?**

Capital (57)  
Gateway (46)  
Tunxis (38)  
Three Rivers (29)  
Quinebag (24)  
Manchester (23)  
Housatonic (9)  
Asnuntuck (3)  
Northwestern (1)

Additional comments:

- The state's interest in increasing the training of paraeducators is a welcomed development. To this point in time, training has not been mandatory for districts, which has proven to be a disservice to not only the paras but to the staff and students with whom they work.
- The job titles of paraprofessional and teacher assistant are often used interchangeably. A true paraprofessional (in my opinion) is the individual who follows through on and reinforces the teacher's initial instruction. These people should have ongoing professional development if they are to be truly effective. The teacher assistant who is more of an extra set of hands and more involved in supervision and "crowd control" doesn't require the same level of training. I think a definition of the two roles should be developed.
- Teachers and Paraprofessionals need to attend Professional Development sessions together. Too many teachers do not know how to work with a Para in their classroom. Communication between teacher and Para is always a problem. Attending workshops together would solve many problems
- Thank you for taking the time to inquire about services needed in this area.
- It would be great to see worthwhile programs for veteran paraprofessionals in the northeast region. It is difficult to send hourly employees to conferences and workshops in Hartford or farther since the timeframe clearly go out of their regular working hours. Also, the needs of small rural towns' paraprofessionals may be different from the needs of counterparts in the cities and suburban areas.

- We would LOVE to have students from Three Rivers - I'll have to look into that. THANK you for supporting districts in the proper utilization of paraeducators!
- Many times we have the paras that desire to attend various workshops but administration denies the request because of cost or hours away from job. Most of our paras have a second job which makes after school hours difficult especially when the workshop pertains to the first job.
- I am a college professor but have over 25 years in the public school as a speech pathologist. There is a need to train paras on how to facilitate (e.g., scaffold) information so that they neither simply provide the answer for the student nor "babysit" while the student struggles. It would be excellent if skills such as scaffolding and visualizing could be taught to the paras so that they may use these with their students.
- Having workshops at Eastconn to reduce travel time and expense is important.
- As a trained facilitator, and not having a set budget for training purposes, I have to spend a great deal of my own personal time, getting ideas together and trying to find free or cheap ways to get the information to my districts paras. They do not want to do anything outside of school time as they won't be reimbursed and that sets the tone for a lot of my workshops.
- All of Madison's paraprofessionals are highly qualified--they have degrees, 60 credit hours or have passed ParaPro. They also receive 30 hours of training in their first year and 18 hours of training in subsequent years. Madison is implementing RTI, the academic and behavior interventions; this explains our need for skilled paraprofessionals.
- Paras should be kept up with new technology and curriculums.
- East Hartford is extremely supportive and provides as many dollars and as much time as possible. However, 2 major problems persist. We lack the logistics and time to provide "collaboration between paras, special ed teachers, and REGULAR ED TEACHERS." Since this is critical for the success of inclusion, we keep pushing for it. The other problem is that many of our paras have been to workshops on the same topics year after year. We need new topics to keep the paras fresh and interested in training. I would like to talk to you about some of the workshops presented by the National Resource Center for Paras last April, as well as new topics presented at the AFT PSRP Conference also in April. I was able to get copies of the PowerPoint presentations of several along with handouts, and am excited about finding a way to share the knowledge with paras here in Connecticut. Please feel free to call me to discuss. On a personal note, Iris, the SDE is fortunate to have you. You are an incredibly effective person and can't imagine anyone better. I am also proud to know one of the SDE's newest recruits, Stefanie Carbone. I've worked with Stef and was thrilled to hear she will be working with the paras. Looking forward to seeing both of you again and helping in any way I can to improve the capacity of Connecticut paraeducators.
- The ongoing training of paraprofessionals is a high priority for our district and we would appreciate any support or resources you can provide. The major challenge we face is finding the time to offer the training. It is not practical to release the paraprofessionals from their assignment during the school day taking them away from their students.

- I would appreciate if you send the brochures to my school, American School for the Deaf to the paraprofessionals whom they really need update with their skills and cues.
- I make it a point to attend the annual para conference in order to keep up with as much as I can but I know there is more out there but I don't have the money to take the courses or the time.
- Paraprofessionals who support students with special needs (Autism, ADHD, and OPP) should have consistent relevant training to meet the needs of their students. This training should include college level courses and workshops with specialists for the specific disability who can help with curriculum modifications. General education teachers are not trained to deal with these students in an inclusive classroom.
- Paraprofessionals would benefit if they had prep time along with classroom teachers. Coordination is key. Also, administrators must stop using paras as substitute teachers! Often paras are pulled from their regular assignments to substitute. The only benefit is that the district saves money. No benefit to the children who are supposed to receive the extra support.
- I have done para in-service training in the summers for one day trainings; it was not enough to help. Also, their role and job descriptions need to be clearly defined by the system.
- It would be great if paras had more "teacher" help with their student...they are the teacher and we are there to "help" not teach per say. If so I would receive a teachers pay check and not a paras.
- As a new special ed para, I feel it is imperative to have training BEFORE working with this population. It is unfair to both student and teacher to go to work with no training.

# Appendix F

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## Title I Paraprofessionals

*Non-Regulatory Guidance*



*March 1, 2004*

## **TITLE I PARAPROFESSIONALS NON-REGULATORY GUIDANCE**

### **Summary of Major Changes**

#### **A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

- A-1. Title I, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act, has new requirements for paraprofessionals. Why is this important? A-2. What is a paraprofessional?

#### **B. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS**

##### **What are the requirements?**

- B-1. What are the qualification requirements for Title I paraprofessionals? B-2. Are there any requirements outside of Title I that apply to the hiring of paraprofessionals?

##### **To whom do the requirements apply?**

- B-3. How do the new requirements apply to paraprofessionals in a schoolwide program?
- B-4. How do the new requirements apply to paraprofessionals in a targeted assistance program?
- B-5. How do the requirements apply to paraprofessionals, such as home-school liaisons, whose duties consist solely of parental involvement activities?
- B-6. How do the requirements apply to paraprofessionals who work solely as translators or bilingual aides?
- B-7. How do the requirements apply to persons who work with special education students?
- B-8. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to persons paid with funds under Title I, Part B (Student Reading Skills Improvement Grants and all subparts, including Even Start), Part C (Education of Migratory Children), or Part D (Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk)?
- B-9. Must a paraprofessional who provides services to eligible private school students and is employed by an LEA with Title I funds meet the new requirements?
- B-10. How do the requirements apply if a person performing non-instructional duties becomes an instructional paraprofessional?
- B-11. What if a person has both instructional support and non-instructional duties?
- B-12. Do the new requirements for paraprofessionals (explained in B-1) apply to LEAs or schools that do not receive Title I funds?
- B-13. Do existing paraprofessionals have until January 8, 2006 to meet the requirement that paraprofessionals have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent?
- B-14. Would a paraprofessional, hired on or before January 8, 2002 and currently working in an LEA in a non-Title I program, be considered a "new" paraprofessional (and subject to the requirements for new

paraprofessionals) if that individual is re-assigned to a program supported with Title I funds?

- B-15. Do the Title I requirements for new paraprofessionals (explained in B-1) apply to paraprofessionals who are laid off and then recalled? In other words, are these individuals “new” or “existing” paraprofessionals?
- B-16. Once a paraprofessional has met the requirements in B-1, is the status of being qualified “portable”? That is, can the paraprofessional be deemed qualified in other LEAs within a State?
- B-17. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to people working in schools as part of the AmeriCorps program?
- B-18. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to volunteers?
- B-19. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to people working in 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs?
- B-20. Do the requirements apply to paraprofessionals working in Head Start programs?
- B-21. Some paraprofessionals work in programs for children ranging in age from birth to age 20 that are supported by Title I, Part A funds. Are they required to meet the Title I requirements?

**What is the requirement for two years of study at an institution of higher education?**

- B-22. The statutory language refers to “two years of study at an institution of higher education.” [Section 1119(c)(1)(A)] What does “two years of study” mean?
- B-23. What does the term “institution of higher education” mean?
- B-24. Is a paraprofessional required to take a specific course of study?
- B-25. May continuing education credits (CECs) be used to meet the requirement that paraprofessionals complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education?

**C. PARAPROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT**

- C-1. One option for meeting the new educational requirements for paraprofessionals is to test their knowledge and ability through a formal State or local academic assessment. What is the purpose of this assessment?
- C-2. Does “assessment” mean a “paper and pencil test” only, or could the assessment be a performance assessment evaluating demonstrable skills?
- C-3. When must the assessment be administered for newly hired paraprofessionals?
- C-4. What factors should States take into consideration in approving State or local paraprofessional assessments?
- C-5. May Title I funds be used to pay for the paraprofessional assessment?

**D. PROGRAMMATIC REQUIREMENTS**

- D-1. What are the requirements for the supervision of paraprofessionals?
- D-2. Do the direct supervision requirements apply to paraprofessionals who provide services under contract?



- D-3. Must a paraprofessional who provides services to eligible private school students and is employed by an LEA with Title I funds be under the direct supervision of a public school teacher?

## **E. FUNDING ISSUES**

- E-1. What funds are available for helping paraprofessionals in Title I schools meet the new requirements?
- E-2. May Title I and Title II funds be used for professional development to help paraprofessionals become certified and licensed teachers?

# Summary of Major Changes

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This updated version March 1, 2004, of the Title I Paraprofessionals Non-regulatory Guidance is reorganized so that all questions addressing similar topics are in the same section. In addition to a number of minor and technical changes, the following questions are new or have been significantly revised:

- B-15 is revised to highlight the discretion LEAs have for distinguishing “new” and “existing” paraprofessionals in the case of paraprofessionals hired before January 8, 2002, but laid off and subsequently rehired after January 8, 2002. The revised response includes an example of what a district policy addressing this issue might say.
- B-16 clarifies that LEAs have the discretion to determine that a paraprofessional meets Title I qualification requirements if the individual was previously determined to meet those requirements when employed by another LEA.
- A new question (B-19) is added to say that, in general, the paraprofessional requirements do not apply to individuals working in 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs.
- A new question (B-20) is added to clarify that the requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working in Head Start programs unless the paraprofessional is working in a Head Start program jointly funded with Title I, Part A funds and the paraprofessional’s salary is paid with Title I, Part A funds.
- B-22 is revised to clarify that “two years of study” at an institution of higher education means the equivalent of two years of study defined by the institution of higher education rather than the State educational agency.
- The guidance includes a new question (B-25) describing how continuing education credits may be used to meet the requirement that a paraprofessional complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education.
- A new question (C-5) is added stating that Title I, Part A funds may be used to pay for the paraprofessional assessment.
- D-1 addressing the requirements for the supervision of paraprofessionals is expanded to include examples of programs that are inconsistent with the statutory and regulatory requirements.
- A new question (D-2) is added to clarify that the direct supervision requirements apply to paraprofessionals who work for a third-party contractor.

## A. GENERAL INFORMATION

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### A-1. **Title I, Part A as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act, has new requirements for paraprofessionals. Why is this important?**

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, is designed to help disadvantaged children reach high academic standards. Properly trained paraprofessionals can play important roles in improving student achievement in Title I schools where they can reinforce and augment a teacher's effort in the classroom. Unfortunately, studies indicate that paraprofessionals are used in many Title I schools for teaching and assisting in teaching when their educational backgrounds do not qualify them for such responsibilities.<sup>1</sup> Title I of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB Act requires that paraprofessionals meet higher standards of qualification, and ensures that students who need the most help receive instructional support only from qualified paraprofessionals.

### A-2. **What is a paraprofessional?**

For the purposes of Title I, Part A, a paraprofessional is an employee of an LEA who provides instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds.

"Paraprofessionals who provide instructional support," includes those who: (1) provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher; (2) assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional materials; (3) provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory; (4) conduct parental involvement activities; (5) provide instructional support in a library or media center; (6) act as a translator; or (7) provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. [Title I, Section 1119(g)(2)]

Because paraprofessionals provide instructional support, they should not be providing planned direct instruction, or introducing to students new skills, concepts, or academic content.

Individuals who work in food services, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance, and similar positions are not considered paraprofessionals under Title I, Part A.

## B. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

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### **What are the requirements?**

#### B-1. **What are the qualification requirements for Title I paraprofessionals?**

(1) All Title I paraprofessionals must have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

(2) Additionally, except as noted below, paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, and working in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds must have—

- Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education; or

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1. See Chambers et al., Study of Education Resources and Federal Funding: Final Report, Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, 2000.

- Obtained an associate (or higher) degree; or
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and be able to demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics (or, as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness).

Paraprofessionals hired on or before January 8, 2002, and working in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds must meet these requirements by January 8, 2006. [Section 1119(c) and (d) of Title I]

Paraprofessionals who only serve as translators or who only conduct parental involvement activities must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but do not have to meet the additional requirements. [Section 1119(e)]

**B-2. Are there any requirements outside of Title I that apply to the hiring of paraprofessionals?**

Yes. Under section 2141(c) of Title II of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB Act, if a State educational agency (SEA) determines that an LEA (1) has failed to make progress toward meeting the annual measurable objectives established by the State for increasing the percentage of highly qualified teachers in each LEA and school and for increasing the percentage of teachers receiving high quality professional development, and (2) has failed to make adequate yearly progress for three consecutive years, the SEA must enter into an agreement with the LEA. This agreement must include a plan that the LEA will use to meet its annual measurable objectives and that prohibits the use of Title I, Part A funds to fund any paraprofessional hired after the date the initial determination was made, with two exceptions. The exceptions are—

- The agreement must permit the use of Title I, Part A funds to hire a paraprofessional after the date of the determination if the hiring is to fill a vacancy created by the departure of another paraprofessional paid with Title I funds and the newly hired paraprofessional meets the statutory qualification requirements; or
- The agreement may allow the use of Title I, Part A funds to hire a paraprofessional after the date of the determination if the LEA can demonstrate—
  - ◊ that a significant influx of population has substantially increased student enrollment; or
  - ◊ that there is an increased need for translators or assistance with parental involvement activities.

**To whom do the requirements apply?**

**B-3. How do the new requirements apply to paraprofessionals in a schoolwide program?**

The requirements in B-1 apply to all paraprofessionals in a Title I schoolwide program, without regard to whether the position is funded with Federal, State, or local funds. In a schoolwide program, Title I funds support all teachers and paraprofessionals.

**B-4. How do the new requirements apply to paraprofessionals in a targeted assistance program?**

In a Title I targeted assistance program, the requirements in B-1 apply to all paraprofessionals who are paid with Title I, Part A funds (but not to paraprofessionals paid with State or local funds in targeted assistance programs).

**B-5. How do the requirements apply to paraprofessionals, such as home-school liaisons, whose duties consist solely of parental involvement activities?**

A paraprofessional with duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but does not have to meet the other educational requirements in B-1.

**B-6. How do the requirements apply to paraprofessionals who work solely as translators or bilingual aides?**

A paraprofessional who is proficient in English and a language other than English and acts solely as a translator to enhance the participation of limited English proficient children under Title I, Part A, must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but does not have to meet the other educational requirements in B-1.

**B-7. How do the requirements apply to persons who work with special education students?**

The requirements for persons who work with special education students differ depending upon their duties.

If a person working with special education students does NOT provide any instructional support (such as a person who solely provides personal care services), that person is not considered a paraprofessional under Title I, Part A, and the requirements in B-1 do not apply.

If a person works in a Title I targeted assistance program, has instructional support duties, and is paid, in whole or in part, with Title I, Part A funds, the requirements in B-1 apply. If the person is not paid with Title I, Part A funds, however, the requirements in B-1 do not apply.

If a person works in a Title I schoolwide program and has instructional support duties, the B-1 requirements apply without regard to the source of funding that supports the position.

**B-8. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to persons paid with funds under Title I, Part B (Student Reading Skills Improvement Grants and all subparts, including Even Start), Part C (Education of Migratory Children), or Part D (Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk)?**

The paraprofessional qualification requirements in B-1 do not apply to individuals paid with funds under Title I, Part B (Student Reading Skills Improvement Grants and all subparts, including Even Start), Part C (Education of Migratory Children), or Part D (Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk), unless these individuals are working in a schoolwide program under Part A or the paraprofessional is paid, in whole or in part, with Part A funds. (See B-3.)

**B-9. Must a paraprofessional who provides services to eligible private school students and is employed by an LEA with Title I, Part A funds meet the new requirements?**

Yes, such a paraprofessional must meet the requirements outlined in B-1.

**B-10. How do the requirements apply if a person performing non-instructional duties becomes an instructional paraprofessional?**

In this case, the person is a “paraprofessional” as defined for Title I purposes and must meet the requirements in B-1. In other words, the individual would have to hold a secondary diploma or its equivalent and meet the new qualification requirements. However, as an existing employee of the LEA, the individual would be considered an existing paraprofessional and would have until January 8, 2006 to demonstrate

competency through postsecondary education or a formal State or local assessment.

**B-11. What if a person has both instructional support and non-instructional duties?**

In this case, the person must meet the requirements in B-1, because he or she carries out some instructional support duties.

**B-12. Do the new requirements for paraprofessionals (explained in B-1) apply to LEAs or schools that do not receive Title I, Part A funds?**

No. If an LEA does not receive Title I, Part A funds, the requirements do not apply. Similarly, if an LEA receives Title I, Part A funds, but a school within that LEA does not receive Title I, Part A funds, the requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working in that school.

**B-13. Do existing paraprofessionals have until January 8, 2006, to meet the requirement that paraprofessionals have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent?**

No. Section 1119(f) requires that all paraprofessionals have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent without regard to the date they were hired. This requirement took effect on the date of enactment of the NCLB Act (January 8, 2002) and was, for the most part, already in effect because the prior law required most paraprofessionals to hold a secondary diploma or its equivalent.

**B-14. Would a paraprofessional, hired on or before January 8, 2002, and currently working in an LEA in a non-Title I program, be considered a “new” paraprofessional (and subject to the requirements for new paraprofessionals) if that individual is re-assigned to a program supported with Title I funds?**

A new paraprofessional is a paraprofessional who is newly hired by an LEA. If a person is working as a paraprofessional in a non-Title I school in the same district, he or she is not considered to be a new paraprofessional if he or she transfers to a Title I school within that district.

**B-15. Do the Title I requirements for new paraprofessionals (explained in B-1) apply to paraprofessionals who are laid off and then recalled? In other words, are these individuals “new” or “existing” paraprofessionals?**

The statute and regulations state that “new” paraprofessionals are paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002 (the date of enactment of the NCLB Act), and “existing” paraprofessionals are paraprofessionals hired before that date. An LEA has discretion to define its policies for distinguishing “new” and “existing” paraprofessionals in the case of paraprofessionals hired before January 8, 2002, but laid off and subsequently rehired after January 8, 2002. These policies might say, for example: A paraprofessional who was initially hired on or before January 8, 2002, but who, because of the LEA’s fiscal constraints, was laid off at the end of one school year—

(1) Is considered an “existing” paraprofessional if the individual was rehired when the LEA recalled laid-off paraprofessionals such that the individual has continuous years of employment; (2) Is considered a “new” paraprofessional if the individual did not rejoin the LEA when it recalled laid-off paraprofessionals if and when the individual is rehired.

**B-16. Once a paraprofessional has met the requirements in B-1, is the status of being qualified “portable”? That is, can the paraprofessional be deemed qualified in other LEAs within a State?**

An LEA may, at its discretion, determine that a paraprofessional meets the Title I qualification requirements if the individual was previously determined to meet these requirements when employed by another LEA.

**B-17. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to people working in schools as part of the AmeriCorps program?**

The National Community Service Act states that AmeriCorps volunteers are not considered employees of the entities where they are placed [42 U.S.C. 12511 (17B)]. Unless AmeriCorps volunteers are considered employees of a school district under State law, the paraprofessional requirements in section 1119 (see items B-1 and B-5) do not apply. However, even though the requirements do not apply, districts should make every effort to ensure that AmeriCorps volunteers who provide instructional support in a Title I program have the skills necessary to assist effectively in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics or in reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.

**B-18. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to volunteers?**

No. Volunteers are not paid employees of an LEA and the paraprofessional requirements do not apply to them. However, school officials are encouraged to work with volunteers to ensure they have information and training necessary to carry out the activities they are performing, as appropriate.

**B-19. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to people working in 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs?**

In general, the requirements do not apply to individuals working in 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs. However, the requirements would apply to paraprofessionals paid with Title I, Part A funds in a 21st Century afterschool program funded jointly with Title I funds in a targeted assistance school, and to paraprofessionals working in a 21st Century afterschool program that is part of a Title I schoolwide program. The requirements do not apply to staff of 21st Century programs who are not employees of the LEA.

**B-20. Do the requirements apply to paraprofessionals working in Head Start programs?**

In general, the requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working in a Head Start program. However, the requirements would apply to paraprofessionals working in a Head Start program that is jointly funded with Title I, Part A, funds and the paraprofessional is paid with Title I funds; for example, a program where Title I funds the instructional component and Head Start funds the remainder of the program activities. The requirements would also apply when a Head Start program is part of a Title I schoolwide program.

Note: Although Head Start funds may not be combined in a Title I schoolwide program school (Federal Register notice of Thursday, September 21, 1995), all staff working in a Title I schoolwide program school are considered Title I staff and all students are Title I students.

**B-21. Some paraprofessionals work in programs for children ranging in age from birth to age 20 that are supported by Title I, Part A, funds. Are they required to meet the Title I requirements?**

Paraprofessionals in a targeted assistance program who are paid with Title I, Part A, funds or paraprofessionals with instructional duties in a schoolwide program school must meet the qualification requirements regardless of the age of the children being served.

**What is the requirement for two years of study at an institution of higher education?**

**B-22. The statutory language refers to “...two years of study at an institution of higher education.” [Section 1119(c)(1)(A)] What does “two years of study” mean?**

“Two years of study” means the equivalent of two years of full-time study, as defined by the institution of

higher education (IHE). For some IHEs that may mean

12 credit hours per semester (requiring a total of 48 credit hours), while in others it may mean 15 credit hours a semester (requiring a total of 60 credit hours).

**B-23. What does the term “institution of higher education” mean?**

Section 9101(24) of the ESEA, amended by the NCLB Act, incorporates the definition of institution of higher education found in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act. It defines an “institution of higher education” as an educational institution in any State that -

- 1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- 2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- 3) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree or provides not less than a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
- 4) is a public or other non-profit institution; and
- 5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association or, if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

**B-24. Is a paraprofessional required to take a specific course of study?**

No. However, paraprofessionals must be able to demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics, or reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness [Section 1119(c)(1)(C)]. For this reason, a paraprofessional who chooses to meet the qualification requirements by completing two years of study in an institution of higher education and has coursework to complete in order to do so, is encouraged to take courses that will enable the paraprofessional to demonstrate knowledge of these subject areas.

**B-25. May continuing education credits (CEUs) be used to meet the requirement that paraprofessionals complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education?**

A State or LEA, as appropriate, may count CECs toward the requirement that a paraprofessional complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education if the CECs are part of an overall training and development program plan and an institution of higher education accepts or translates them to course credits.

## **C. PARAPROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT**

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**C-1. One option for meeting the new educational requirements is for paraprofessionals to demonstrate their knowledge and ability through a formal State or local academic assessment. What is the purpose of this assessment?**

To help improve student achievement, Title I paraprofessionals must have the appropriate knowledge and ability to assist in instructing students and be competent in required instructional techniques and academic



content areas. Additionally, because students need good language role models and because communication is essential to effective instructional support, Title I paraprofessionals should also demonstrate that they are competent in basic literacy skills, including the ability to speak and write standard English.

The assessment is one way for Title I paraprofessionals to demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading arts, writing, and mathematics; or reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

**C-2. Does “assessment” mean a “paper and pencil test” only, or could the assessment be a performance assessment evaluating demonstrable skills?**

The law does not require a paper and pencil test. However, there must be evidence that the assessment is valid and reliable. Also, the assessment results must be documented, i.e., there needs to be a record of the assessment and the individual’s performance on that assessment. Should a State or LEA decide to use or allow more than one type of assessment, each assessment should be evaluated against the same standards.

**C-3. When must the assessment be administered for newly hired paraprofessionals?**

For a paraprofessional hired after January 8, 2002, the assessment must be administered and passed before an individual is hired to work as a Title I paraprofessional.

**C-4. What factors should States take into consideration in approving State or local paraprofessional assessments?**

The following guidelines may assist an SEA in approving assessments:

- SEAs and LEAs have flexibility to determine the content and format of any assessment of paraprofessionals. For example, while an appropriate assessment might be entirely a written test, it alternatively could be a combination of a written test on content (reading, writing, and math) and a demonstration of competence in instruction (assessed through observations via a series of rubrics).
- The content of the assessment should reflect both the State academic standards and the skills expected of a child at a given school level (preschool, elementary, middle, or high school), and the ability of the candidate to effectively provide instructional support to assist students in mastering the content. Clearly, the assessment should be rigorous and objective. Furthermore, each evaluation should have a standard that the candidate is expected to meet or exceed. These standards for evaluation must be applied to each candidate in the same way.
- The results of the assessment should establish the candidate’s competence as a paraprofessional relative to the standards in section 1119(c)(1)(C), or target the areas where additional training and staff development may be needed to help the candidate meet those standards before being hired. The results should be documented and the LEA should retain that documentation.

Moreover, an SEA may wish to officially establish the assessments it has determined meet the statutory requirements, the extent to which State policies permit LEAs to develop, select or implement their own assessments for paraprofessionals, and the requirements, if any, the State places on any local assessment. Keeping such formal approvals on file, along with an explanation as to how the State (or local) assessments meet these requirements, would be one way of making sure that the State (or local) assessments on which LEAs rely comply with the law. The SEA could then communicate this information to LEAs, so that each LEA is clear as to what the options are when it comes to assessing paraprofessionals.

**C-5. May Title I funds be used to pay for the paraprofessional assessment?**

Yes.

## **D. PROGRAMMATIC REQUIREMENTS**

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**D-1. What are the requirements for the supervision of paraprofessionals?**

Paraprofessionals who provide instructional support must work under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. [Sections 1119(g)(3)(A)] A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if: (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher. [§200.59(c)(2) of the Title I regulations] As a result, a program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not permitted.

A program where a paraprofessional provides instructional support and a teacher visits a site once or twice a week but otherwise is not in the classroom, or a program where a paraprofessional works with a group of students in another location while the teacher provides instruction to the rest of the class would also be inconsistent with the requirement that paraprofessionals work in close and frequent proximity to a teacher.

**D-2. Do the direct supervision requirements apply to paraprofessionals who provide services under contract?**

Yes, paraprofessionals hired by a third-party contractor to work in a Title I program must work under the direct supervision of a teacher. That teacher does not have to meet the teacher qualification requirements if he/she is also employed by the third party connection.

**D-3. Must a paraprofessional who provides services to eligible private school students and is employed by an LEA with Title I funds be under the direct supervision of a highly qualified public school teacher?**

Yes, a paraprofessional who provides services to eligible private school students and is employed by an LEA must be under the direct supervision of a highly qualified public school teacher throughout the duration of the services/program being offered. [§200.59 (c)(1)]

## **E. FUNDING ISSUES**

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**E-1. What funds are available for helping paraprofessionals in Title I schools meet the new requirements?**

A number of key ESEA programs authorize funds that may be used:

- Under section 1119 of Title I, an LEA must use not less than five percent or more than ten percent of its Title I allocation in school year 2003-2004 (and not less than five percent in subsequent years) for professional development activities to ensure that teachers and paraprofessionals meet the qualification requirements including paying for the paraprofessional assessment. [Section 1119(l) of Title I, §200.60 of the Title I regulations]
- LEAs also may use their general Title I funds “to support ongoing training and professional development to assist teachers and paraprofessionals, including paying for the paraprofessional assessment.” [Section 1114(b)(1)(D) and Section 1115(c)(1)(F) of Title I]

- Schools and LEAs identified as needing improvement must also reserve funds for • professional development and these funds may be used for training paraprofessionals. [Sections 1116(b)(3)(A)(iii) and 1116(c)(7)(A)(iii)of Title I]
- Title II, Part A, Improving Teacher Quality State Grants funds may be used to provide professional development that “improve[s] the knowledge of teachers and principals, and, in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals concerning core academic subjects and related activities to improve student academic achievement.” [Section 2123(a)(3)(A)]
- Title III, Part A, the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, authorizes LEAs to use formula grant funds for professional development of teachers and other instructional personnel providing instruction to students needing English language acquisition and language enhancement. [Section 3111(a)(2)(A)]
- Title V, Part A, Innovative Programs, authorizes LEAs to use funds innovatively in certain areas for professional development of teachers and other school personnel. [Section 5131(a)]
- Title VII, Part A, subpart 7, the Indian Education Program, requires LEAs receiving formula grants to carry out a comprehensive program for meeting the needs of Indian children that, among other things, may include professional development to ensure that teachers and other school professionals have been properly trained. [Section 7114(b)(5)]
- Title I and Title II funds may be used jointly for professional development consistent with the statutory requirements of the two programs.

**E-2. May Title I and Title II funds be used for professional development to help paraprofessionals become certified and licensed teachers?**

Yes. Title I and Title II funds may be used for that purpose.

# Appendix G

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## Legislative Program Review and Investigations Study Executive Summary

### School Paraprofessionals

The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee authorized a study of school paraprofessionals in April 2006. The study focused on whether Connecticut should establish minimum standards for public school paraprofessionals who perform instructional tasks for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) and whether different categories should be established for different duties. Findings and recommendations were made in several areas affecting paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities, including the development of a state credential, professional development, supervision, implementation of guidelines for paraprofessionals established by a previous state task force, and data collection.

Overall, the program review committee found that the recurring themes identified in past studies of paraprofessionals in Connecticut, the sentiments expressed by existing paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities regarding their place in the education system, and the recent creation of federal standards for paraprofessionals working in Title I schools justify the creation of a set of state standards.

Establishing a state-issued credential based on specific standards would be a significant step toward enhancing the overall professionalism of paraprofessionals in Connecticut, while at the same time balancing the needs of local school districts. The committee determined that any state standards for paraprofessionals should be developed through the State Department of Education (SDE) and balance three goals: 1) the needs of paraprofessionals; 2) the autonomy of local school districts regarding education issues; and 3) the resources of state government.

### Report Content

A key component of the report is a detailed profile of paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities working in Connecticut's local public schools, which was never previously developed on a statewide basis. The profile -- developed through information collected from school districts and contained in an in-house database -- includes an analysis of various demographic characteristics of instructional paraprofessionals, a summary of wages and benefits provided to instructional paraprofessionals, a synopsis of their main duties and responsibilities, and the educational backgrounds and tenure of paraprofessionals.

The report also contains an analysis of the degree to which individual school districts in the state have implemented specific standards. A summary of the other states that have implemented standards for instructional paraprofessionals is included, as are the various federal requirements for paraprofessionals and the changes made to those requirements over time.

State-level efforts in Connecticut over the past several decades to study specific issues relevant to instructional paraprofessionals were also reviewed in the study. A synopsis of the national literature regarding the overall effectiveness of instructional paraprofessionals on student achievement is provided.

### Paraprofessionals in Connecticut

The role of paraprofessionals has changed over time from when paraprofessionals first began working in public schools several decades ago. Originally used as an additional resource to provide clerical assistance to teachers, paraprofessionals in the modern-day classroom perform multiple functions. Chief among those functions is assist-

ing teachers to instruct a wide array of students, particularly students with special needs.

In Connecticut, the State Department of Education reported about 37,000 noncertified staff (i.e., paraprofessionals) were employed by the state's local public schools for School Year 2005-06. Of those, roughly 12,000 paraprofessionals provided instructional services to students, with nearly two-thirds working in the area of special education.

Analysis conducted as part of the program review committee study revealed the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals assisting with student instruction in Connecticut's public schools are extremely diverse, and a multitude of titles are used by districts across the state for such employees. Over 50 different job titles are used to describe paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities in Connecticut's public schools.

Because data at the state level about paraprofessionals are limited, a key source of information used in the review was a database developed from information collected from 119 of the 169 (70 percent) public school districts in the state. Information about paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities was collected in several areas, including general demographics, wages and benefits, qualifications, duties and responsibilities, professional development, turnover, and student performance. Using this information, a profile was developed of public school paraprofessionals in Connecticut who assist with student instruction.

Results from the data collection effort showed that, as of October 1, 2005, a majority of the roughly 8,700 instructional paraprofessionals employed by the local public school districts that responded to the program review data request were:

- working at the elementary school level;
- female;
- white;
- under the age of 50;
- high school graduates (and 48 percent had at least two years of college);
- working full time during the 10-month school year;
- not new employees, having worked as instructional paraprofessionals in the district for at least two years;
- earning a minimum of \$11.72 per hour (based on SY 2004-05 data);
- offered some type of health and dental insurance and the opportunity to participate in a retirement plan; and
- covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

In terms of the 119 local school districts that provided information to the program review committee, the database indicates that on average (using median numbers) the districts:

- employed 47 instructional paraprofessionals each in October 2005;
- evaluated their performance annually;
- provided some form of periodic training;
- required full-time paraprofessionals to work 32.5 hours per week;
- paid such full-time employees at least \$11.49 per hour during SY 04-05; and
- retained at least 90 percent of existing paraprofessionals from year to year.

Information received from the school districts also indicated that many paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities were actively involved with students for the entire workday. However, the total number of students who interacted with paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities on a daily basis was low in many districts.

## **Standards for Paraprofessionals**

The changes evident in the modern-day classroom have brought increased attention to the quality of the personnel assigned to help students learn. Although no state-level education or training standards exist in Connecticut for instructional paraprofessionals, the committee found various school districts throughout the state have established their own requirements for paraprofessionals. Of the 119 districts responding to the data request, 60 districts had some form of standards for paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities, while another four districts had preferences. Typically, districts required some form of formal education -- either a high school diploma or at least two years of college -- for their paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities.

Federal standards. The issue of standards for paraprofessionals was heightened by the imposition of federal requirements for some paraprofessionals in 2002. Following a study by the federal Department of Education, which found a high percentage of paraprofessionals in schools supported with federal funds were instructing students even though they did not have the proper education qualifications to do so, standards for instructional paraprofessionals were implemented under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The standards apply to paraprofessionals working in any “schoolwide” school supported with Title I funds, regardless of whether the funds are used to pay for the paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals working in “targeted assistance” schools that use Title I funds to pay for those positions must also meet the federal standards.

The program review committee found that several local school districts in Connecticut now require all newly hired paraprofessionals providing instructional services to meet the federal standards, even if the paraprofessionals are not covered under the federal law.

Other states. Nationally, 17 states have established statutory standards for individuals who are instructional paraprofessionals (as defined by the program review committee). The requirements vary from state to state and are optional in one state (New Hampshire). The three requirements used most frequently in other states for instructional paraprofessionals include possessing a high school diploma, obtaining a specific number of college credits, and having relevant work experience.

## **Previous Studies in Connecticut**

The question of establishing minimum standards for instructional paraprofessionals is not new in Connecticut. Multiple state-level groups have examined this issue and have produced several reports on the topic dating back to the mid-1970s. Although none of the previous studies outlined a state credential based on specific requirements as a condition to work as an instructional paraprofessional, the most recent study in 2001 outlined a draft set of “guidelines” for school districts to use for paraprofessionals working with special needs students. The guidelines, modified from those developed by the National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model in 1999, sought to clarify the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals and develop a framework of key competencies for instructional paraprofessionals in Connecticut. They also identified methods and resources for the training, supervision, and evaluation of instructional paraprofessionals.

To date, the guidelines have been distributed to all local public school districts in the state, yet are still considered draft. Moreover, neither the State Board of Education nor the State Department of Education has officially endorsed or adopted the guidelines. The department is currently working with the State Education Resource Center to broaden the guidelines to include paraprofessionals working with all types of students, not just those with special needs.

## **Professional Development**

Based on information received from school districts as part of the committee’s data request, a high percentage of districts are cognizant of the need for professional development for paraprofessionals and are addressing the issue in various ways. What is not indicated by the results, however, is the specific nature of the training, the overall

quality of the training whether the training helps instructional paraprofessionals become more effective in their profession, or the paraprofessionals' satisfaction level with the training they receive.

There are no statewide standards for the amount or type of professional development paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities working in local public schools must receive. Further, there was general consensus among paraprofessionals, school principals, and special education supervisors interviewed during the study that professional development for paraprofessionals needs to be strengthened.

The committee found concerns among some that there is not enough training for paraprofessionals, not all districts pay the cost of training, and paraprofessionals have to attend training on their own time. Although some of those issues are part of the collective bargaining process and thus outside the scope of the study, the committee believes adequate and appropriate training should be available to instructional paraprofessionals. Any state requirements, however, must be balanced with the needs of paraprofessionals and the autonomy of local school districts regarding education issues.

Professional development is not limited to paraprofessionals. The program review committee found a need for teachers, particularly new teachers, to receive training on the purpose of instructional paraprofessionals and how to interact with paraprofessionals, especially within the classroom. At present, there is variability in training provided to teachers regarding the overall duties and responsibilities of instructional paraprofessionals.

In terms of overall coordination at the state level, the education department works with various groups to ensure professional development for paraprofessionals is offered. The department, however, does not assess the overall professional development needs of paraprofessionals from a statewide perspective. As a result, additional emphasis is needed at the state level to identify and coordinate the training needs of paraprofessionals.

## **Supervision**

State regulation requires anyone employed by a local public school district and not directly supervised in the delivery of instructional services to students to have the appropriate state educator certification. The committee received anecdotal information that there have been instances where paraprofessionals may be put in situations that could be considered "teaching" without the presence or guidance of a certified employee. There is no way of fully knowing the extent this is occurring statewide, yet it is important that local districts make certain that noncertified staff are not placed in situations that violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the law. The Department of Education should take steps to ensure school districts follow state regulations in this regard.

## **Data Collection**

Overall, the information at the state level on paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities employed by local public school districts is limited. The Department of Education collects information about noncertified staff, including paraprofessionals, yet any type of statewide analysis of paraprofessionals based on this information is limited. The department, however, has recently required school districts to report specific information to the department regarding Title I paraprofessionals, which the program review committee believes is important and should be made available publicly.

## **Recommendations**

The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee adopted the following recommendations:

**1) The State Department of Education shall develop a state-issued credential for paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities working in Connecticut's K-12 public schools and submit a plan to implement the credential by January 1, 2008, to the legislative committee of cognizance over education. The State Department**

of Education shall require that any applicant seeking the credential be a citizen of the United States or an alien legally resident in the United States.

2) The Department of Higher Education should begin working with institutions of higher education in Connecticut to establish a network of programs within the community-technical college and state university systems that will provide instructional paraprofessionals with career development opportunities through relevant, accessible, and affordable programs.

3) The State Department of Education should periodically contact a sample of paraprofessionals, teachers, and administrators -- through unions, school districts, the State Education Resource Center, and Regional Education Service Centers -- to identify the professional development needs of instructional paraprofessionals and any problem areas that may exist. Following such an assessment, the department should begin coordinating, from a statewide perspective, professional development offerings that meet the needs of instructional paraprofessionals. As part of that effort, SDE should report the results of the assessment to the Department of Higher Education.

4) The State Department of Education should encourage all local public school districts to provide training to teachers, particularly new teachers at the beginning of each school year, on the role and effective use of instructional paraprofessionals. The department should also encourage school districts to develop intradistrict methods and strategies whereby paraprofessionals, teachers, and administrators periodically discuss issues or concerns involving the use of paraprofessionals in providing effective student instruction.

5) The State Department of Education should periodically remind local school districts that existing regulations prohibit the use of noncertified personnel in an initial teaching role. Further, the department should develop a mechanism to periodically monitor local school compliance with this requirement.

6) The State Department of Education should finalize those portions of the May 2004

Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21: Working Draft concerning roles, responsibilities, and training that it believes would be helpful to all paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities in Connecticut and submit that document to the State Board of Education by September 2007 for its approval.

7) The State Department of Education should summarize the information about Title I paraprofessionals that it will collect annually and post the information on the agency's website. At a minimum, the posted data should include the number of paraprofessionals covered by No Child Left Behind requirements, the number who have not met the NCLB requirements, the number of districts with paraprofessionals out of compliance, and the types of actions taken by those districts to comply (i.e., terminated staff, transferred staff, or did nothing).



# Appendix H

## AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS: STATUS OF STATE PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

ALABAMA LETTER OF APPROVAL	Required. 30 hours of formal training; permanent.
ALASKA	Alaska State Paraprofessional Performance Standards with three levels: entry, intermediate and advanced
ARIZONA	NONE
ARKANSAS	Training standards established for paraprofessionals in special education programs.
CALIFORNIA	NONE
COLORADO	NONE
CONNECTICUT	NONE
DELAWARE STATE PERMIT	Requirements not specified. Must have “evaluated experience and training” and “skills relevant to the position”; permanent.
FLORIDA	Legislation outlining career ladder with LEA option (not mandatory) passed in 1998.  Current regulations specify standards and procedures that apply to teacher aides, including health, age, knowledge of policies and instructional practices.
GEORGIA STATE LICENSE	2 years of college or 50 hours required. Renewable every 2 years, requires additional 50 hours of instruction or inservice.
HAWAII	Three-tier training program for special education. State in the process of expanding to accommodate Title I positions.  Level 1 and 2 training provided by state.  Level 3 training provided by community colleges.
IDAHO	Idaho Paraprofessional Standards and Competencies outline recommended training and evaluation procedures.
ILLINOIS STATE CERTIFICATE	Completion of a teacher aide training program approved by the superintendent or 30 semester hours required; permanent. Legislation pending for revision and creation of task force to study issue.
INDIANA	Special education, appropriately trained paraprofessionals may work under the direction of a teacher or related services personnel. Public agencies must provide preservice and inservice training.
IOWA	New hires must complete inservice in first year of employment.  LEAs must have staff development plan that includes paraprofessionals.  Special education, preservice and inservice requirements.  Level 1 Certificate granted to those who complete a recognized paraprofessional preparation program with 90 clock hours of training.  Level 2 Certificate granted to those who complete AA degree or 62 hours of college education and two semester hours of coursework with 100 hours of supervised practicum.

KANSAS STATE PERMIT	<p>Special education only.</p> <p>Effective May 2000. No longer in state regulations, but districts must follow these standards in order to receive state reimbursement of about \$8,000 per special education paraprofessional.</p> <p>Level 1 -- 20 hours, renewable every year.</p> <p>Level 2 -- 20 to 30 semester hours, 450 hours of inservice and 2 years experience at Level 1; renewed every 3 years.</p> <p>Level 3 -- 60 semester hours or AA degree, 900 hours of inservice and 3 years at Level 2; renewed every 3 years.</p>
KENTUCKY	NONE
LOUISIANA	NONE
MAINE STATE CERTIFICATE	<p>Education Technician / Level 1 -- high school diploma, orientation and ongoing inservice.</p> <p>Education Technician / Level II -- 2 years of college and inservice.</p> <p>Education Technician / Level III -- 3 years of college and inservice. All are renewed yearly.</p>
MARYLAND	<p>State task force report recommending licensure standards presented to State Legislature in 1998. 2002 -- State standards establish high school diploma as baseline for employment. Paraprofessional certificate requires 15 hours of training and 750 hours of employment. Renewable every 5 years with completion of additional training.</p> <p>Certificate is not required for employment.</p>
MASSACHUSETTS	NONE
MICHIGAN	NONE
MINNESOTA	Knowledge and skill standards for special education established in 1997. State law requires LEAs to ensure paraprofessionals in special education have sufficient skills and also requires LEAs to provide training opportunities.
MISSISSIPPI	Assistant teacher -- Complete the reading, language arts and math portions of a current nationally-normed eighth grade standardized achievement test (exempt are those holding a teaching certificate); HS diploma or GED; participation in annual training provided by the district.
MISSOURI STATE REQUIREMENT	Instructional aides only; 60 hours college study required; renewed yearly.
MONTANA	Training standards established for special education paraprofessionals.
NEBRASKA	NONE
NEVADA	NONE
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE CERTIFICATE	<p>HS diploma, 1 year experience, and completion of a 2-week orientation session on special education.</p> <p>Tier 1 certified paraprofessionals must complete 50 hours in areas determined by the professional development master plan for their district.</p> <p>Tier 2 and 3 paraprofessionals must complete additional training.</p>
NEW JERSEY	Paraprofessional positions are approved by the county superintendent of schools, who must develop job descriptions and standards for appointment.
NEW MEXICO STATE REQUIREMENT	A paraprofessional must complete a training program designed by the local school district to meet competencies defined by the state. Training varies according to district and how it uses paraprofessionals.

NEW YORK STATE CERTIFIED	<p>Teacher Aide -- Must fulfill civil service requirements; responsibilities are non-teaching.</p> <p>Teaching Assistant -- Temporary license: HS diploma; responsibilities are instructional in nature.</p> <p>Teaching Assistant -- Continuing certificate: 6 hours of collegiate study; one year of experience; responsibilities are instructional in nature.</p> <p>Teaching Assistant -- Level 1: HS diploma; satisfactory level of performance on the New York State Teacher Certification Examination Test.</p> <p>Teaching Assistant -- Level 2: all requirements of Level 1, plus 6 hours of collegiate study.</p> <p>Teaching Assistant -- Preprofessional Certificate: all requirements of Level III, plus must be matriculated in a program registered as leading to teacher certification.</p>
NORTH CAROLINA	Department of Labor Teacher Assistant Certificate requires completion of inservice training, 2 years employment, and completion of related training (six core courses in an early childhood program or a teacher assistant program offered by a community college).
NORTH DAKOTA	NONE
OHIO STATE PERMIT	<p>Education Aide -- "Skills sufficient to do the job"; 1-year permit.</p> <p>Education Assistant -- HS diploma and participation in unspecified inservice training under a 1-year permit; renewed every 4 years.</p>
OKLAHOMA	NONE
OREGON	NONE
PENNSYLVANIA STATE CERTIFIED	Private schools only.
RHODE ISLAND STATE REQUIREMENT	HS diploma; training at discretion of district. Knowledge and skill standards established for special education and bilingual paraprofessionals.
SOUTH CAROLINA	HS diploma, participation in preservice and inservice training programs for aides.
SOUTH DAKOTA	NONE
TENNESSEE	NONE
TEXAS STATE CERTIFIED	<p>Education Aide -- HS diploma and experience working with children.</p> <p>Education Aide II -- 15 hours of college study or "demonstrated proficiency."</p> <p>Education Aide III -- 30 hours of college study and 3 years as aide at Level I or II. Legislation introduced for revision, 1999.</p>
UTAH	Standards for special education paraprofessionals' roles and preparation. Work is currently underway to revise for Title 1 paraprofessionals.
VERMONT STATE CERTIFIED	Personnel standards for paraprofessionals will be included in special education rules in 2002.
VIRGINIA	NONE
WASHINGTON	Current system defined but not mandatory. Core knowledge and skill competencies established for all paraprofessionals.
WEST VIRGINIA	Teacher Aides and Teacher Assistants have no standards for employment. Paraprofessional license applies to employees working at a higher level of independence, and license sets standards for training.
WISCONSIN STATE LICENSE	Standards for special education paraprofessionals.
WYOMING	NONE

Source: AFT Website Status of State Paraprofessionals and School Related Personnel [www.aft.org/issues/teaching/paracert/statelevelcert.cfm](http://www.aft.org/issues/teaching/paracert/statelevelcert.cfm) revised 06/06

# Appendix I

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## Community Colleges, Regional Educational Service Centers and Other Organizations Offering Programs for Paraprofessionals

### Regional Educational Service Centers

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#### Organization/Contact Person

Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES)  
Patricia Hart-Cole  
205 State St., Hamden, CT 06517  
Telephone: 203-407-4443  
E-mail: [phart@aces.org](mailto:phart@aces.org)

Education Connection  
JodiAnn Tenney  
355 Goshen Road, Litchfield, CT 06759  
Telephone: 860-567-0863  
E-mail: [tenney@educationconnection.org](mailto:tenney@educationconnection.org)

Cooperative Educational Services (CES)  
Dr. Christine Peck  
40 Lindeman Drive, Trumbull, CT 06611  
Telephone: 203-365-8879  
E-mail: [cpeck@ces.k12.ct.us](mailto:cpeck@ces.k12.ct.us)

LEARN  
Tracey Lamothe  
44 Hatchetts Hill Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371  
Telephone: 860-434-4890  
E-mail: [tlamothe@learn.k12.ct.us](mailto:tlamothe@learn.k12.ct.us)

EASTCONN  
Jim Huggins  
322 Main St., Willimantic, CT 06226  
Telephone: 860-455-1525  
E-mail: [jhuggins@eastconn.org](mailto:jhuggins@eastconn.org)

**Type of Program:** Test preparation workshops for ParaPro Assessment

**Description:** A series of nine training modules designed to assist paraprofessionals in meeting the requirements set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) – formal academic assessment, ParaPro.

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#### Organization/Contact Person

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)  
Donna Morelli  
Peg MacDonald  
111 Charter Oak Ave., Hartford, CT 06106  
Telephone: 860-371-1226  
Email: [dmorelli@crec.org](mailto:dmorelli@crec.org); [mmacdonald@crec.org](mailto:mmacdonald@crec.org) url: [www.crec.org/paraprofessional](http://www.crec.org/paraprofessional)

**Type of Program:** Compass Helping Paraprofessionals Navigate the Profession

**Description:** A series of basic and advanced job-embedded modules covering topics such as behavioral management, ethics and legal issues, instructional strategies, exceptional learners and others.

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#### Organization/Contact Person

SERC  
Stefanie Carbone  
Paraprofessionals as Partners Initiative  
25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457  
Telephone: 860-632-1485, ext. 306  
E-mail, URL: [carbone@ctserc.org](mailto:carbone@ctserc.org), [www.ctserc.org](http://www.ctserc.org)

**Type of Program:** Professional development and technical assistance

**Description:** Professional development designed to enhance the skills and understanding of paraprofessionals to increase their effectiveness as educational partners with general and special education teachers, student support services professionals and administrators.

## Community Colleges

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### Organization/Contact Person

Asnuntuck Community College

Sarah Garrett

170 Elm St., Enfield, CT 06082

Telephone: 860-253-3101

E-mail, URL: [sgarrett@acc.commnet.edu](mailto:sgarrett@acc.commnet.edu)  
[www.acc.comment.edu](http://www.acc.comment.edu)

Naugatuck Valley Community College

Dr. Patricia Bouffard

750 Chase Parkway, Waterbury, CT 06710

Telephone: 203-575-8040

E-mail, URL: [pbouffard@nvcc.commnet.edu](mailto:pbouffard@nvcc.commnet.edu),  
[www.nvcc.commnet.edu](http://www.nvcc.commnet.edu)

Capital Community College

Dr. Mary Ann Affleck

950 Main St., Hartford, CT 06103

Telephone: 860-520-7800

E-mail, URL: [maffleck@ccc.commnet.edu](mailto:maffleck@ccc.commnet.edu)  
[www.ccc.commnet.edu](http://www.ccc.commnet.edu)

Northwestern Connecticut Community College

Dr. Jean Wihbey

Park Place East, Winsted, CT 06089-1798

Telephone: 860-738-6300

E-mail, URL: [jwihbey@nwcc.commnet.edu](mailto:jwihbey@nwcc.commnet.edu),  
[www.nwcc.commnet.edu](http://www.nwcc.commnet.edu)

Gateway Community College

Sue Logston

88 Bassett Road, North Haven, CT 06473

Telephone: 203-285-2187

E-mail, URL: [slogston@gwcc.commnet.edu](mailto:slogston@gwcc.commnet.edu),  
[www.gwcc.commnet.edu](http://www.gwcc.commnet.edu)

Norwalk Community College

Barbara Teas-Carolan

188 Richards Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854

Telephone: 203-857-7000

E-mail, URL: [bt-carolan@ncc.commnet.edu](mailto:bt-carolan@ncc.commnet.edu)  
[www.ncc.commnet.edu](http://www.ncc.commnet.edu)

Housatonic Community College

Peter Ulisse

900 Lafayette Blvd., Bridgeport, CT 06604-4704

Telephone: 203-332-5000

E-mail, URL: [PUlisse@hcc.commnet.edu](mailto:PUlisse@hcc.commnet.edu),  
[www.hcc.commnet.edu](http://www.hcc.commnet.edu)

Quinebaug Valley Community College

Dr. Susan Huard

742 Upper Maple St., Danielson, CT 06239-1440

Telephone: 860-774-1130

E-mail, URL: [shuard@qvcc.commnet.edu](mailto:shuard@qvcc.commnet.edu),  
[www.qvcc.commnet.edu](http://www.qvcc.commnet.edu)

Middlesex Community College

Dr. Frank Samuels

100 Training Road, Middletown, CT 06457-4889

Telephone: 860-343-5800

E-mail, URL: [fsamuels@mxcc.commnet.edu](mailto:fsamuels@mxcc.commnet.edu)  
[www.mxcc.commnet.edu](http://www.mxcc.commnet.edu)

Three Rivers Community College

Ann Branchini

574 New London Turnpike, Norwich, CT 06360

Telephone: 860-886-0177

E-mail, URL: [abbranchini@trcc.commnet.edu](mailto:abbranchini@trcc.commnet.edu),  
[www.trcc.commnet.edu](http://www.trcc.commnet.edu)

Tunxis Community College

Colleen Keyes

271 Scott Swamp Road, Farmington, CT 06032-3187

Telephone: 860-677-7701

E-mail, URL: [ckeyes@txcc.commnet.edu](mailto:ckeyes@txcc.commnet.edu),  
[www.txcc.commnet.edu](http://www.txcc.commnet.edu)

**Type of Program:** Early Childhood Education Associate of Science Degree

**Description:** The Early Childhood Education Program is designed to prepare qualified students to become teachers, assistant teachers or family day care providers in the important developing field of professional childcare.

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## Community Colleges (continued)

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### Organization/Contact Person

Manchester Community College

Dr. Eileen M. Furey

Disability Specialist Program, MS #4

P.O. Box 1046, Manchester, CT 06045-1046

Telephone: 860-512-2792

E-mail, URL: [efurey@mcc.comnet.edu](mailto:efurey@mcc.comnet.edu), [asavage@mcc.comnet.edu](mailto:asavage@mcc.comnet.edu), [www.mcc.comnet.edu](http://www.mcc.comnet.edu)

**Type of Program:** Disability Specialist Associate of Science Degree

**Description:** The Disability Specialist Associate Degree and certification programs provide educational opportunities for people employed in, and those interested in working in, the disability field. Through individual consultation, each student will pursue a course of study with an emphasis on the unique vocational goals he or she wishes to achieve. While specific skills instruction is provided, the focus of the curriculum is on building a strong knowledge base coupled with a positive value base that will prepare each student to assist children and adults with disabilities toward the goals of full community inclusion and participation. There are a variety of courses available that cover topics such as children with disabilities; learning and disabilities; communication disorders and intervention; and issues and trends in disabilities.

## Other Organizations

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### Organization/Contact Person

AFT Connecticut

Carole Clifford

35 Marshall Road, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Telephone: 860-257-9782 xt. 145

E-mail: [cclifford@aftct.org](mailto:cclifford@aftct.org)

**Type of Program:** Workshops, conferences and information sessions

**Description:** Professional development programs designed to enhance the skills of paraprofessionals, and assist paraprofessionals to improve their understanding of relevant federal legislation and meet the requirements of this legislation.

### Organization/Contact Person

Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC)

Darlene Raggozine

495 Blake St., New Haven, CT 06515

Telephone: (800) 832-7784

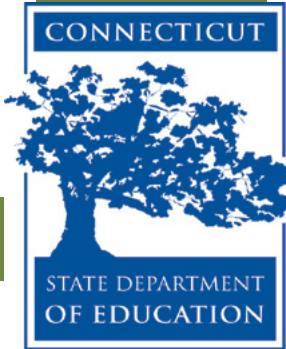
203-287-3905

E-mail, URL: [draggozine@ctcharts-a-course.org](mailto:draggozine@ctcharts-a-course.org), [www.ctcharts-a-course.org](http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org)

**Type of Program:** A statewide professional development system

**Description:** A statewide professional development system that supports career development and program improvement for early care and education, and school-age early care, through scholarships, accreditation, and education and training that lead to advancement on the career ladder.

# Connecticut PARAPROFESSIONALS' Guide to Challenging Behaviors



*Paraprofessionals often have strong relationships with the students with whom they work and can be an important support to the implementation of the Behavior Intervention Plan.*

Paraprofessionals have an important role in supporting students who exhibit challenging behaviors; they are often called upon to prevent, manage, and de-escalate problem behaviors which may include the implementation of the student's behavior intervention plan (BIP). This brief will give readers an overview of how to respond to challenging behaviors and will outline the development and implementation of a BIP.

We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this publication. Comments should be directed to Iris White, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement, at [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov).

## A PARAPROFESSIONALS' GUIDE TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

The development of a BIP occurs after the student has undergone a functional behavior assessment (FBA). The FBA determines the function or purpose of the student's difficult behavior. All behavior should be considered a means to an end. Students who are compliant behave that way because it works for them and their behavior meets their needs. Unfortunately, students who are more difficult to manage likely engage in challenging behaviors because it meets their needs. Therefore, the FBA allows educators to determine the need that the student is trying to meet and gives opportunities to find alternate, more appropriate ways to meet the student's need. This approach may seem counterintuitive. Traditionally, we approach students with challenging behaviors by trying to control them or "punish" them into producing more appropriate behaviors (see Figure 1). However, this very approach may make the behaviors that we are trying to eliminate stronger and more entrenched. If we try to understand the purpose of the behavior, we are able to give students opportunities to use more appropriate and, perhaps, more efficient behaviors instead.

## UNDERSTANDING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Challenging behaviors often occur due to some unmet need which may include the need for freedom; a desire for sense of belonging; a need for feeling of competence or recognition; a craving for attention; or quite simply pleasure or entertainment. To build effective behavioral supports, we must understand not only why the student behaves the way he or she do, but also the conditions or context under which the behavior occurs. The development of a functional behavior assessment allows us to determine both of these important factors.

## FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT (FBA)

A FBA is a problem-solving process for addressing challenging student behavior by looking beyond the behaviors to assess the purpose that it serves. The assessment

### IN THIS ISSUE

Guide to Challenging Behaviors

Understanding Challenging Behaviors

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

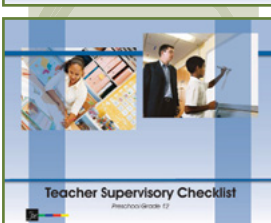
A Good BIP

Building Strong and Positive Relationships

De-escalation



**GUIDELINES** for  
Training & Support  
of Paraprofessionals  
Working with Students Birth to 21



involves teacher, student, and family interviews as well as direct observations of student behavior. The data must be organized into at least three areas: (1) events before the behavior occurs (antecedents); (2) the conduct itself (behavior); and (3) events after the behavior (consequences). This sequence of events is sometimes referred to as the ABCs of behavior.

When addressing students with challenging behaviors, we often focus on the consequences in an attempt to correct the behavior and neglect the changes we can make with the antecedents or the behavior itself. Thus, we try to punish students for poor behavior and reward them for good behavior. This can sometimes be a rather frustrating approach when students are exhibiting extremely inappropriate behaviors. If we choose the punishment route, we sometimes have to escalate the punishments in order to see the same effects – presuming that the punishment worked at all. Conversely, some students provide very few opportunities for rewarding behaviors and never get reinforcement that would encourage better behavior. Research has indicated that a positive approach to managing behavior is more effective at maintaining long-term behavioral change than punishment (Carr, et al., 2002). Prevention is the most efficacious way of addressing concerning behavior. Controlling the antecedents should eliminate the conditions under which the behavior occurs, thus preventing the need for a punitive response (Sugai, Horner, & Algozzine, 2010). This is because the manipulation of the antecedents actually may prevent the undesired behavior. If we can understand the conditions that are supporting the behavior, we limit the opportunities for students to exhibit problematic behaviors.

### **BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN (BIP)**

Based on what we learn about the student and the student's behavior through the FBA process, a BIP may be developed. The purpose of the BIP is threefold - to make the behavior irrelevant, ineffective, and inefficient. A good BIP should include components which support our efforts when working with students: Prevention, Teaching, and Responding.

**PREVENTION.** This includes changes in the environment (physical and social) as well as changes in instructional practices. Adults can play a vital role in preventing the escalation of behaviors. The old adage, it takes two to tango, is relevant when considering adult-student interactions. While the student's role is quite obvious to us, our role in the escalation of behaviors may be less so. When a student's behavior begins to escalate, we must step back, take a breath, and consider how we can intervene rather than punish or control. Specifically, we must draw upon what we currently know about this student and their triggers.

**TEACHING.** We cannot make assumptions about students' prior learning. Therefore, the teaching of appropriate behavior is a crucial part of the plan. Teaching involves providing the student with the strategies and skills for coping as well as teaching students replacement behaviors. Students engage in behaviors that work for them and may need to be taught other behaviors that can work as well or better than the inappropriate behavior. This increases the student's ability to self-regulate and manage their own behaviors better.

**RESPONDING.** The responding section of the BIP gives information about the types of cues and feedback that the student needs as well as how to reinforce students for appropriate or close approximations to appropriate behavior.

There are two aspects to the plan: the technical and the adaptive. The technical part of the plan provides the framework of a BIP as was indicated in the previous paragraph. However, another important part of the plan is the adaptive component and this has implications for how well the plan is implemented. Paraprofessionals often have strong relationships with the students with whom they work and can be an important support to the implementation of the plan.



## STRATEGIES

Frequently, educators ask for prescriptions to improve student behavior. However, these decisions need to be made on an individual basis given our understanding of what maintains that student's behavior. It is important to remember that regardless of who students are individually, strategies will be more effective in a positive and supportive environment where faculty, staff, students, and their families feel respected and both physically and emotionally safe. In such an environment, it will be easier to build relationships with even the most challenging students and practice techniques to de-escalate problem situations when they arise.

### BUILDING STRONG AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Having strong and positive relationships with the students with whom you work may decrease the likelihood that they will exhibit inappropriate behavior. When students feel a connection with an adult they want to please that adult. Here are some ways to contribute to a positive learning environment and connect with students:

- Make an effort to get to know each student individually. Call them by name, ask them questions about their weekend, learn what they like to do in their spare time, etc.
- Communicate happiness and excitement to see each student. Remember to smile, make positive comments and always avoid sarcasm.
- Offer choices whenever possible. Allow students to make decisions such as the order in which to complete assignments, where to sit, who their partner will be, etc.
- Ask questions. Rather than assume what a student needs, ask questions such as: How can I help you? Is there an easier way for you to do this? Would you like me to repeat the directions?
- Start fresh each day. Every day is a new day and every student should begin each day with a clean slate. If you follow this guideline, students learn to trust that no matter what may have occurred the previous day, this day can be different.

### DE-ESCALATION

When it comes to the de-escalation of a volatile situation, the primary goal is to avert physical aggression and diffuse angry outbursts. The situation can then be processed at a later time with the student. Simple steps for de-escalation follow.

- Remain calm and use a quiet, even tone of voice. When being yelled at, our automatic response is to raise our voices right back. However, reacting in this way can further agitate the student. Use a quiet voice and a calming tone. An additional benefit to replying calmly is that it sets a good example for the other students.
- Listen to what the student is saying. Often students will calm down once they verbalize what is upsetting them. Interrupting them or shutting them down may have the effect of increasing the student's anger.
- Validate the student's feelings. When the student pauses, say something non-judgmental such as, "I understand that you are upset, \_\_\_" and conclude with the student's name.
- Offer choices and clear consequences. For example: "If you come back into the classroom, we can continue this discussion. If not, this discussion is over for the time being."

If you are working with a student with challenging behaviors, here are a few questions that you may want to ask your supervisor:

- Has an FBA been conducted for this student?
- If an FBA has been done, is there a BIP?
- Can you explain the BIP?
- What are your expectations for me in supporting the implementation of the BIP?

# Professional Development Resources for PARAPROFESSIONALS

The CSDE professional development for paraprofessionals is coordinated by Iris White, Education Consultant, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement. Iris White can be contacted at [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov) or at 860-713-6794.

The **State Education Resource Center (SERC)** provides many professional development opportunities through its *Paraprofessionals as Partners* Initiative. Through a variety of diverse professional development opportunities, paraprofessionals working in collaborative partnerships with general and special Education teachers and support services professionals can enhance and acquire skills to improve their ability to effectively provide instruction and other direct services to meet the needs of all students. SERC also coordinates the annual *Paraprofessional as Partners* conference in the fall of each year.

For more information, contact Stefanie Carbone, Consultant with SERC's *Paraprofessionals as Partners* Initiative at [carbone@ctserc.org](mailto:carbone@ctserc.org) or at 860-632-1485, ext. 306. More information can also be found on SERC's Web site: [www.ctserc.org](http://www.ctserc.org).

The **Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)** also offers a variety of professional development and job opportunities for paraprofessionals and aspiring paraprofessionals, including a comprehensive, job-embedded professional development curriculum called *The Compass*. This series of training modules, aligned with the *National Paraprofessional Standards*, has been designed to enhance paraprofessionals' skills in working with students in educational settings. More information can be found on the paraprofessional page of the CREC Web site, [www.crec.org/paraprofessional](http://www.crec.org/paraprofessional), or by contacting your local regional educational service center (RESC):

ACES: Patricia Hart-Cole, [phart@aces.org](mailto:phart@aces.org)

CES: Dr. Christine Peck, [cpeck@ces.k12.ct.us](mailto:cpeck@ces.k12.ct.us)

CREC: Donna Morelli, [dmorelli@crec.org](mailto:dmorelli@crec.org)

EASTCONN: Jim Huggins, [jhuggins@eastconn.org](mailto:jhuggins@eastconn.org)

EDUCATION CONNECTION: Jodiann Tenney, [tenney@educationconnection.org](mailto:tenney@educationconnection.org)

LEARN: Tracey LaMothe, [tlamothe@learn.k12.ct.us](mailto:tlamothe@learn.k12.ct.us)

## References

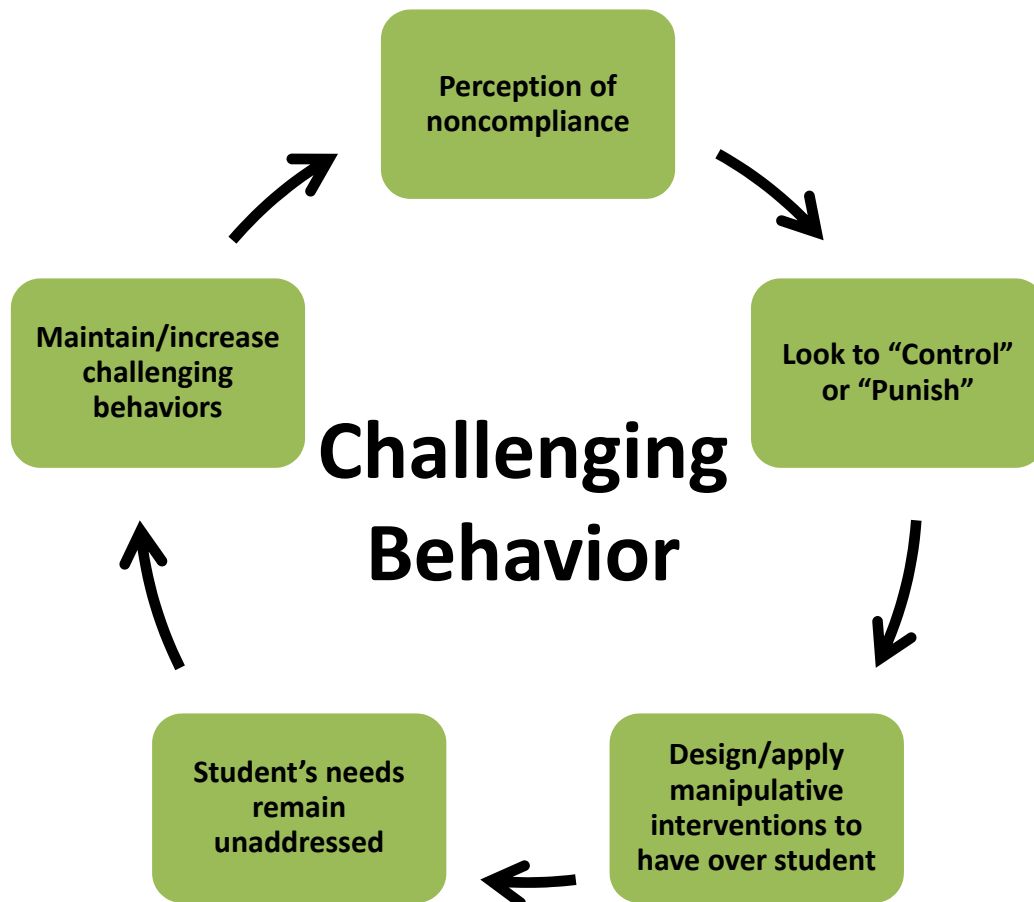
Carr, E.G., Dunlap, G., Horner, R.H., Koegel, R.L., Turnbull, A., Sailor, W., Anderson, J., Albin, R., Koegel, L.K., & Fox, L. (2002). *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 4(1), 4-16. Copyright (2002) by PRO-ED, Inc. Adapted with permission.

OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2010). *Reducing the effectiveness of bullying behavior in schools*. [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)



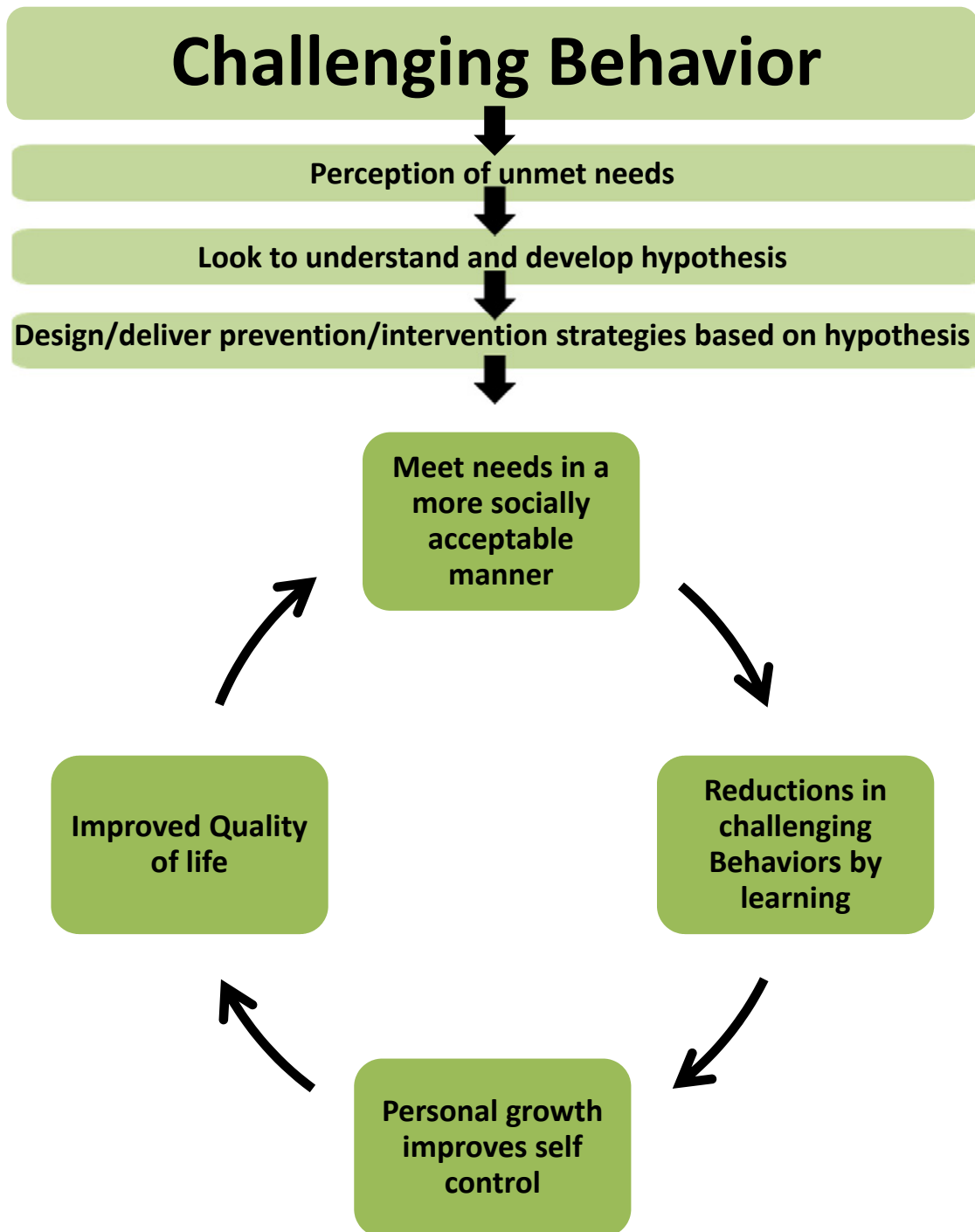
Connecticut State Department of Education  
Bureau of Accountability and Improvement  
165 Capitol Avenue, P.O. Box 2219, Hartford, CT 06145  
Telephone: 860-713-6760 ♦ Fax: 860-713-7035

Figure 1. Traditional approaches to managing behavior



(Knoster and Lapos, 1993)

Figure 2. More effective approaches to managing challenging behaviors



(Knoster and Lapos, 1993)

### Does the CSDE have paraprofessional information?

Yes, the CSDE has a Web page dedicated to Paraprofessional Information and Resources: [www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali](http://www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali). Information is also available on the State Education Resource Center (SERC) Web site: [www.ctserc.org](http://www.ctserc.org). Click on "Projects and Initiatives," then "Paraprofessionals as Partners."

### What resources are available for the training of paraprofessionals?

SERC provides many professional development opportunities through its *Paraprofessionals as Partners* Initiative. Its goal is to enhance the skills of paraprofessionals providing instructional support to students, including students with disabilities, in various educational settings. Through a variety of professional development opportunities, paraprofessionals working in collaborative partnerships with general and special education teachers and support services professionals can acquire skills to enhance their ability to effectively provide instruction and other direct services to meet the diverse needs of all students. In addition, SERC coordinates an annual paraprofessional conference in the fall of each school year. **For more information, please contact Stefanie Carbone, Consultant, SERC, at (860) 632-1485 x306 or [carbone@ctserc.org](mailto:carbone@ctserc.org).**

The *Capital Region Education Council* (CREC) also offers a variety of professional development and job opportunities for paraprofessionals and aspiring paraprofessionals, including a comprehensive job-embedded professional development curriculum called *The Compass*. This series of modules, aligned with National Paraprofessional Standards, has been designed to enhance the paraprofessionals' skills in working with students in educational settings. More information can be found on the paraprofessional page of the CREC Web site: [www.crec.org/paraprofessional](http://www.crec.org/paraprofessional) or by contacting your local Regional Educational Service Center (RESC).

The CSDE's professional development for paraprofessionals is coordinated by **Iris White, Consultant, CSDE**. For more information, please contact her at (860) 713-6794 or [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov).

### What is the Parapro Assessment? What does it cost?

#### When is it offered?

The Parapro Assessment is a test for paraprofessionals developed by the **Educational Testing Service (ETS)** that can be used by states and school districts to comply with the **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act**. Testing is one of three options for qualifying paraprofessionals according to the law. The other two are possession of an Associate's degree (or higher) or two years of college/university coursework. The cost is \$45. More information regarding this assessment can be found on the ETS Web site: [www.ets.org/parapro](http://www.ets.org/parapro).

### What resources are available to help paraprofessionals prepare for the Parapro?

**Test-at-a-Glance (TAAG)** contains the test specifications and sample questions with answers and explanations. It is available free of charge from the ETS Web site:

[www.ets.org/Media/Tests/ParaPro\\_Assessment/0755.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/ParaPro_Assessment/0755.pdf).

**Reducing Test Anxiety** helps test-takers learn how to recognize and cope with test anxiety:

[www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0136lanxiety.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0136lanxiety.pdf).

**ParaPro Assessment Study Guide** (Print and eBook versions are available for ordering). There are three ways to order copies of this booklet:

1. Call ETS at 1-800-772-9476 Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. EST. Caller must have a valid American Express, Discover, MasterCard, or VISA to purchase via the telephone.
2. Send an order to ETS through the mail with the appropriate fee (\$25). Be sure to include the following information with the order: Paraprofessional Study Guide, Item #997331, Name, Address, and Daytime Telephone Number. The mailing address is: The Praxis Series-ParaPro, Educational Testing Service, N00, P.O. Box 6058, Princeton, NJ 08541-6058.
3. Order at the ETS Online Store at [www.ets.org/store](http://www.ets.org/store). The caller will need an American Express, Discover, MasterCard, or Visa to purchase the guide online.

**ParaPro Practice Test** is a full-length practice test that was retired after being used in actual test administrations. It will give test-takers an idea of how they might score on the test. The retired test comes with a list of correct answers plus a score conversion chart. Price per practice test is \$12.00. Purchase discounts also are available. As above, contact ETS to order.

**Online Tutorial** for the Internet-based assessment will cover all one needs to know to complete the ParaPro Assessment. To view the online tutorial, go to [www.ibt.ets.org/parapro/candidate/tutorial\\_welcome.jsp](http://www.ibt.ets.org/parapro/candidate/tutorial_welcome.jsp).

Free online practice is available at [www.testpreview.com](http://www.testpreview.com).



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## Frequently Asked QUESTIONS About PARAPROFESSIONALS



### What is Connecticut's definition of a paraprofessional?

A paraprofessional is an employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the teacher or other certified or licensed professional. The ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of student progress, is a collaborative effort of certified and licensed staff.

### What are appropriate roles for paraprofessionals?

The following are ten examples of appropriate and effective utilization of paraprofessionals, taken from the model of roles, responsibilities, and training of paraprofessionals identified in *Connecticut's Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21* (2008):

1. Participation in regularly scheduled meetings and sharing relevant information.
2. Implementation of proactive behavior and learning strategies.
3. Use of strategies that provide learner independence and positive self-esteem.
4. Assistance in accommodating and modifying learning strategies based on learning styles, ability levels, and other individual differences.
5. Review and reinforcement of learning activities.
6. Assistance in engaging learners through an awareness of cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and language development.
7. Use of developmentally and age-appropriate reinforcement and other learning activities.
8. Collection of data on learner activity.
9. Carry out functional (informal) assessment activities.
10. Participation in continuing professional development.

### Is the teacher the paraprofessional's supervisor?

Yes, but there is a difference between the person responsible for hiring and evaluation of performance (an administrator) and the person directing day-to-day work with students (the teacher). Often the teacher provides the day-to-day supervision of the paraprofessional, while an administrator, such as a principal, program manager, or special education director, completes the evaluation. According to the Guidelines, "Teachers should have supervisory functions as to program implementation, including planning, assigning duties, and checking with paraprofessionals as to their comprehension of their assigned duties. Teachers must not be expected to have administrative management duties such as the hiring or firing of paraprofessionals. Those duties belong to the administration."

### What is the definition of "direct supervision?"

According to federal guidelines in the **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act**: "A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher."

### Can a paraprofessional see a student's Individual Education Program (IEP)? Attend a student's PPT meeting?

There is no state or federal regulation prohibiting a paraprofessional from seeing a student's IEP. In fact, the *Connecticut State Department of Education* (CSDE) encourages paraprofessionals whose support includes students with disabilities to have an understanding of the IEP information that is pertinent to their role as an implementor.

Paraprofessional attendance at Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings is an individual district and school-based decision. It is important that district or school personnel explain their policy on the attendance of paraprofessionals at PPTs to both parents and school staff. If a paraprofessional spends an extensive amount of time with a student, a decision might be made for that paraprofessional to attend the student's PPT. If a paraprofessional is required in the IEP and does not attend a student's PPT meeting, it is the responsibility of the student's teacher and the paraprofessional's supervisor to communicate in detail with the paraprofessional about the student before and after the PPT.

### Is there any research that shows a relationship between paraprofessionals and student achievement?

Recent studies demonstrate the positive impact that paraprofessionals can have on student achievement when they receive ongoing professional development, training, and supervision. The Rhode Island Technical Assistance Project has compiled a list of research studies that link paraprofessionals and student achievement: [www.ritap.org/TA/content/ResearchOnTAs.pdf](http://www.ritap.org/TA/content/ResearchOnTAs.pdf).

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has composed a list of study abstracts linking paraprofessionals and student achievement: [www.aft.org/psrp/topics/download/ParasandStudAchieve.pdf](http://www.aft.org/psrp/topics/download/ParasandStudAchieve.pdf).

### Is there any research on strategies for assigning paraprofessionals year to year?

This specific question has not been explicitly researched. Dr. Michael Giangreco, a professor at the University of Vermont, has conducted a number of research studies regarding the effects of paraprofessional support on students with disabilities. Full-text pdfs are available on his project Web site: [www.uvm.edu/~mgiangre](http://www.uvm.edu/~mgiangre).

### What is the paraprofessional's role in Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI)?

SRBI is *Connecticut's Framework for Response to Intervention (RTI)*, a process used to determine if and how students respond to instruction, including social/emotional learning. RTI provides a framework for school teams for designing, implementing, and evaluating educational interventions in a timely manner. Collaboration among all school staff ensures positive learning experiences and outcomes for struggling students whose needs are identified early. Paraprofessionals can be a valuable part of SRBI teams by assisting classroom teachers and special educators with screening, assisting teachers with benchmarking and progress monitoring assessments, recording observations of behavior and learning strategies, entering assessment data into a management system, serving as a member of the intervention team, and collaborating with teachers to provide support for students, implementing interventions, and participating in school-wide professional development.

### Can a paraprofessional act as a substitute for a teacher if the paraprofessional is not certified?

Paraprofessionals who have a BA can serve as a short-term substitute (in the same position for up to 39 days). Districts must get approval for any substitute who is serving in the same classroom/position for more than 39 days. Districts can also allow a person who does not hold a BA to serve as a short-term substitute with the approval of the CSDE Bureau of Certification.

### Can a paraprofessional serve in an in-school suspension room if the paraprofessional is not certified?

The new in-school suspension legislation does not require certified staff to oversee the in-school suspension room, so a paraprofessional would be allowed to do so. Appendix E of the new *Guidelines for In-School and Out-of-School Suspension* (2009) provides CSDE's position concerning what an effective in-school suspension program should look like: [www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/In\\_School\\_Suspension\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/In_School_Suspension_Guidance.pdf).

### Can a paraprofessional be asked to perform personal care duties (i.e. toileting)?

Toileting is an activity of daily living and generally falls under the responsibility of a paraprofessional. If the child has special needs, the *Guidelines for Special Health Procedures for School Nurses* (1997) does say that the school nurse should assess the situation to ensure that the proper position, equipment available, etc., are in place and that any training for the paraprofessional should be provided. This document is available in school nurses' offices or by calling (860) 807-2108.



# Resources

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American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Standards for a profession efforts to assist paraprofessionals in meeting NCLB requirements. [http://www.aft.org/psrp/certification/midterm report/index.html](http://www.aft.org/psrp/certification/midterm%20report/index.html)

Ask Eric Home Page This website provides access to the ERIC database and other information about the Educational Resources Information Center. <http://www.eduref.org/>

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) This website provides information about ASCD's professional development activities, and affiliates and networks. <http://ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/index.jsp/>

B.E.S.T. Education Search by Topic Search by keyword or by the topic list, or browse the awards for extensive reviews on current education sites. <http://education-world.com/>

Career Development for Non-Traditional Community College Students as Special Education Paraprofessionals. <http://schoolhousedoor.com/media/teacher/pickett-careerdevt.txt>

Center on Disability and Community Integration. Paraeducator Support of Students with Disabilities in General Education

Classroom. <http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/> The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (CCSRI) CCSRI houses a variety of tools, guides, and links relating to school improvement. <http://www.centerforcsri.org>

Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education (COPSSE) paraprofessional issue brief <http://www.coe.ufl.edu/copsse/> Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Paraprofessional Information and Resources Page: [www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali](http://www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali).

Council for Exceptional Children information on CEC's knowledge and skill standards for beginning paraeducators in special education. <http://www.cec.sped.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&WebsiteKey=ccc2b576-80bf-48af-8827-0acb530166fb>

Council of Great City Schools This website contains links and resources selected by this coalition of school districts in the 66 largest U.S. cities. <http://www.cgcs.org/>

The Education Alliance This Brown University organization offers research-based solutions for school reform. The Education Alliance addresses the needs of diverse student populations in the public schools by offering a variety of educational resources. <http://www.alliance.brown.edu/>

Education Testing Service: Parapro Assessment. <http://www.ETS.org/parapro/index.html> The Education Trust Ed Trust is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to make schools and colleges work for all of the young people they serve. This organization provides credible information about what works in high performing, high poverty schools. <http://www.edtrust.org>

ERIC Database of publications pertaining to Paraprofessionals, U.S. Department of Education. <http://eric.ed.gov/>

Guide for Effective Paraeducator Practices in Iowa. This guide describes the services that are necessary to support effective paraeducator services in Iowa schools. <http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/paraeducators/index.php?page=guidelines>.

IDEA Practices Home Page <http://www.ideapractices.org/>

IMPACT: Explores the growing role of paraeducators in our schools. <http://www.ici.umn.edu/products/newsletters.html>

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium <http://ici2.umn.edu/para/>

National Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching <http://nccrest.edreform.net/portal/nccrest/people/paraeducators>

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducators <http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html>

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) NCPIE is a coalition of major education, community, public service and advocacy organizations working to create meaningful family-school partnerships in every school in America. This website offers up-to-date information about policies and practices that affect education, and practical ways that parents can become effective partners with schools in improving their children's education. <http://www.ncpie.org>

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources Resources for paraeducator training programs. [http://www.special-ed-careers.org/educator\\_resources/para\\_osep\\_grants.html](http://www.special-ed-careers.org/educator_resources/para_osep_grants.html)

National Education Association – Education Support Professionals <http://www.nea.org/home/3165.htm>

National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities Discusses ethical responsibilities, educational requirements, roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, plus responsibilities of qualified teacher/service providers. <http://www.ldonline.org/about/partners/njclld/paraprof298.html>

National Resource Center for Paraeducators. Addresses paraeducator policy questions and other needs of the field, provides technical assistance. <http://www.nrcpara.org/>

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, The <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>

No State Left Behind: The Challenges and Opportunities of ESEA 2001 <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/32/37/3237.doc>

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Policy paper designing state and local policies for the professional development of instructional paraeducators. <http://www.nwrel.org/planning/reports/paraeducator.pdf> “Working Together for Successful Paraeducator Services: A Guide for Paraeducators, Teachers, and Principals.” <http://www.nwrel.org/request/may2002/index.html> “Designing State and Local Policies for the Professional Development of Instructional Paraeducators.” <http://www.nwrel.org/planning/reports/policypaper2002.pdf>

OSPI Successful Assistance in the Classroom: A Teacher's Guide to Working with Paraeducators [http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/pubdocs/Paraeducator\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/pubdocs/Paraeducator_Guide.pdf)

PARA2 Center University of Colorado in Denver <http://www.paracenter.org>

Paraeducator Career Profile [http://www.special-ed-careers.org/career\\_choices/profiles/profession/para\\_edu.html](http://www.special-ed-careers.org/career_choices/profiles/profession/para_edu.html)

Paraeducator Support of Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms, University of Vermont <http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/>

Paraprofessional Academy <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/case/paracad/index.htm>

Paraprofessional Database Research Navigator. The Education Commission of the States has compiled a large



amount of research from each of the 50 states regarding paraprofessional certification and qualification requirements, professional development for paraprofessionals and assessment tests and passing scores for those tests, which are accepted and designated by states. <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/63/52/6352.pdf>

Professional Development for Paraprofessionals Across the States Describes what states are doing regarding competency for paraprofessional requirements. Professional development has come to the forefront of the paraprofessional occupation with new requirements and timelines for “highly qualified” status under NCLB. <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/63/53/6353.pdf>

Project Para – University of Nebraska Lincoln Online Training. <http://www.para.unl.edu/>

Rhode Island Teacher Assistants Project Focuses on policy, skill standards and training for teacher assistants <http://www.ritap.org/ta/>

SERC Paraprofessionals as Partners Initiative. [http://ctserc.org/s/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=90:paraprofessionals&Itemid=110&layout=default](http://ctserc.org/s/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=90:paraprofessionals&Itemid=110&layout=default).

Special Education News Focuses on special education and current legislation affecting paraeducators. <http://www.specialednews.com/>

Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPENSE) Fact Sheets <http://ferdig.coe.ufl.edu/spense/>

Technology, Research and Innovation in Special Education Provides information on training programs for paraprofessionals and supervising teachers and includes links to dozens of other sites. <http://www.trisped.org/>

Washington State Guidelines and Competencies for Paraeducators <http://www.paraeducator.com/>

WestEd WestEd provides valuable information on improving learning from infancy to adulthood, both while in and out of school. This website also contains numerous sources of research-based products and resources. <http://www.wested.org/cs/we/print/docs/we/home.htm>

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