

2008

Working Draft



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



Connecticut State Department of Education

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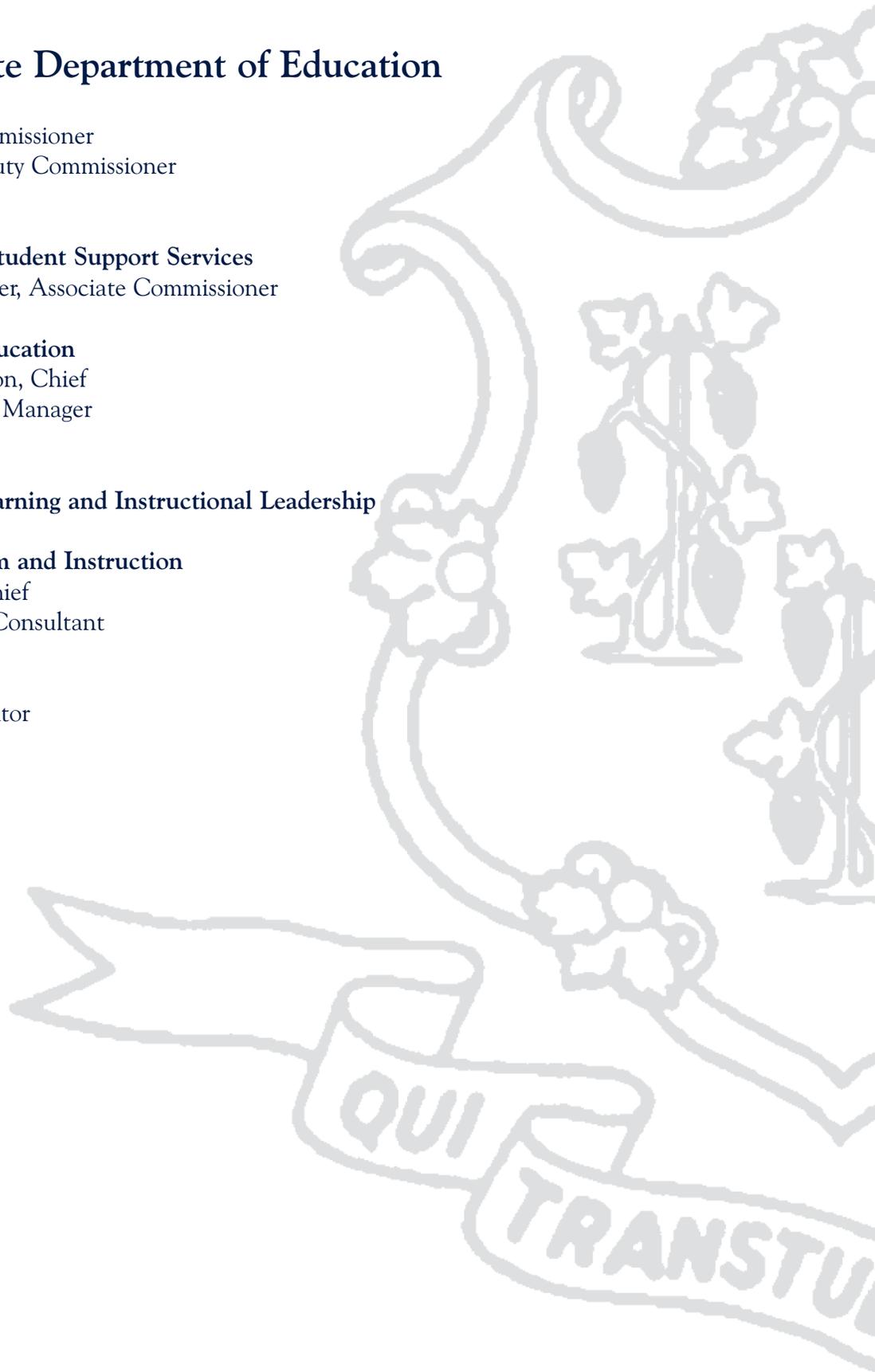
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Guidelines *for*
Training & Support
of Paraprofessionals
Working with Students Birth to 21

Connecticut State Department of Education

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Foreword

Paraprofessionals play important roles in improving student achievement. To this end, the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act both state that paraprofessionals are to be appropriately trained and supervised. The previous guideline document for paraprofessionals, a collaborative effort between the Connecticut State Advisory Council on Special Education and the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, outlined appropriate roles and responsibilities and also provided numerous resources for training. Continuing in a tradition steeped in the assurance that public schools have the tools necessary to provide all students with an appropriate education experience; the Connecticut State Department of Education is pleased to present this revision to the *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students, Birth to 21*.

This 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 Connecticut State board of Education *Five-Year Comprehensive Plan for Education 2006-2011* outlines actions to address high academic achievement for all students. One such action is to provide training and technical assistance to educators with the goal of increasing student achievement and leading to a superior education. Our intent is to assist educators in meeting this challenge by providing this revised publication, *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students, Birth to 21*.

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Rationale

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 2005-06, about 37,000 noncertified full-time equivalent staff who work in grades K-12 were employed by local school districts. Of these, about 25,000 were noncertified, noninstructional staff, while 12,046 were noncertified, instructional paraprofessionals. This is an increase from the 2004-05 data on paraprofessionals indicating a work force that continues to grow (Connecticut State Department of Education, ED 162 Non-Certified Staff Report 2006, 2005).

“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

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, 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

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. A recent report by the National Center for Educational Statistics indicates that there are more than 700,000 paraprofessionals in America's public schools. This represents continued growth in the field with about 550,000 paraprofessionals across the United States just five years ago (Pickett, Likins and Wallace 2002). Connecticut data indicate that there were 12,046 noncertified instructional paraprofessionals working in the role of paraprofessional in the 2005-06 school year.

Roles and Responsibilities

The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals 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 49.

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 Paraprofessionals 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: Title I Paraprofessionals: Non-Regulatory Guidance
Appendix B: Legislative Review and Investigations Committee Study on
Paraprofessionals: Executive Summary and Recommendations
Appendix C: AFT: Status of State Paraprofessional Certification
Appendix D: Community Colleges, Regional Educational Service Centers, and Other
Organizations Offering Programs for Paraprofessionals
Appendixes E&F: The Use of Paraprofessionals in Connecticut's Birth to Three System,
Public Schools and Private Special Education Programs: Survey and
Executive Summary

Section 1

Terminology and Job Titles

- **Terminology and Job Titles**

Terminology and Job Titles

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

- **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**

IDEA 2004, 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 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)

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 six 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 \$40. 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. 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

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 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.

Section 3

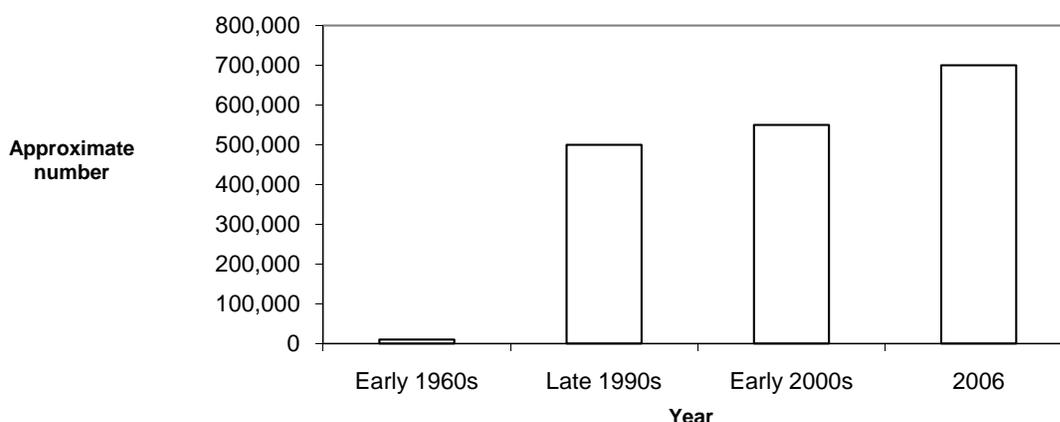
Paraprofessional Data

- **National and Connecticut Data**
- **Credentialing and Paraprofessionals**

National and Connecticut Data

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), in a study conducted by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals, found that there were about 550,000 paraprofessionals employed in full-time equivalent positions across the nation in 2002, and in 2006 the National Center for Educational Statistics (<http://www.nces.ed.gov/>) indicates that more than 700,000 paraprofessionals* are in America’s public schools. The data in Figure 1 below indicate continued growth in the field of paraprofessionals.

Fig. 1. Paraprofessionals in Public Schools Across the U.S.



*NCES uses the term instructional aide.

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 Information Management and Analysis, annually conducts a fall hiring survey to determine areas of teacher and administrator shortage. The Hiring Survey for the 2006-2007 School Year for Special Education Paraprofessional positions identified 208 full-time positions, and 29 unfilled part-time positions, available statewide. Of these positions, 22 full-time (three because no qualified applicant could be found) and four (one 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 2006).

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 Paraprofessionals (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

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

- **National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals 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

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

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

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding of the value of serving all children and youth in the least restrictive and in supportive learning environments. 2. Understanding of the distinctions and similarities in teacher/provider and paraprofessional roles and responsibilities for creating and maintaining supportive learning environments. 3. Awareness of district/agency procedures for protecting the safety, health and well-being of learners and staff. 4. Awareness of district/agency policies and procedures for managing and disciplining all children and youth. 5. Awareness of district policies, procedures and methods for managing learner behaviors that are disruptive and/or aggressive. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to implement proactive behavior and learning strategies developed by teachers/providers that maintain supportive learning environments. 2. Ability to follow and use prescribed district/agency policies and procedures to ensure the safety, health and well-being of learners and staff. 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. 4. Ability to use universal health precautions for preventing illnesses and infections and proper body mechanics for lifting learners and heavy objects.
Level 2	<p><i>(The scope of responsibilities for level 2 paraprofessionals as team members includes all the responsibilities of level 1 paraprofessionals as team members.)</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Understanding strategies that support families strengthens their ability to assist with learning activities and encourage participation in the learning environment. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Ability to implement procedures or plans for managing individual student behavior.
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Assisting teachers/providers with involving families in their child’s learning experiences. 4. Assisting teachers/providers with communicating with child/families through interpretation of native language. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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.

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

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

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

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

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
		<p>11. Awareness of different strategies used by teachers/ providers to support learners who come from different ethnic, cultural and language minority backgrounds.</p> <p>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.</p>	
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.</p> <p><i>For level 2 paraprofessionals who are providing language interpretation:</i></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>

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 3	7. Carrying out learning activities for children, youth and their families in homes, educational settings, work sites and other community-based settings.	18. Understanding of the purpose and need for learning and performance standards. 19. Understanding of the validated practices for working with individuals with severe and challenging behaviors.	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. 13. Ability to carry out teacher/provider plans in community-based vocational and transitional programs for students entering the work force. 14. Ability to assist student with activities as designed and identified by physical and occupational therapists and speech language pathologists.

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

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 1	1. Data collection on learner activity as designed by teacher/provider.	1. Awareness of the distinctions in the roles of teachers/providers, other licensed district/agency professionals and paraprofessionals in the assessment process.	1. Assist in data collection as designed by certified professional.
Level 2	2. Carrying out functional (informal) assessment activities to assist teachers/providers in documenting information about learner strengths and needs.	2. Awareness of the reasons for conducting different types of evaluations to assess learner strengths and needs.	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.
Level 3	3. Providing information and assisting in administering standardized tests based on the paraprofessional's qualifications to carry out assigned tasks. 4. Assisting teachers/providers and other team members with maintaining learner records required by the district/agency/state.	3. Understanding of the differences of standardized (formal) assessment instruments and teacher/provider developed functional (informal) assessment tools. 4. Awareness of district policies and procedures for maintaining learner records required by the district/agency/state.	3. Ability to assist with student modifications for standardized tests based on a state/district /agency policies (e.g., Connecticut Mastery Test). 4. Ability to assist teachers/providers in conducting functional behavioral analysis. 5. Ability to assist teachers/providers in maintaining learner records as required by the district/agency/state.

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

	Responsibilities	Knowledge Competencies	Skills
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assisting school/agency administrators and teacher/providers with protection of the civil, legal and human rights of children, youth and their families. 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. 3. Following the chain of command established by the district/agency to address policy questions, systems issues and personnel practices. 4. Following guidelines established by the district/agency to protect the health, safety and well-being of children and youth. 5. Respecting individual differences among children, youth, their families and school/agency personnel. 6. Providing administrators and other stakeholders input in creating professional development activities for paraprofessionals. 7. Participating in continuing professional development. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding of the civil, legal and human rights of children, youth and their families. 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. 3. Understanding of district/agency standards for professional and ethical conduct for all personnel. 4. Understanding of the district /agency’s chain of command for decisions making and addressing policy questions, systems issues and personnel practices. 5. Understanding of the district/agency’s guidelines for protecting the health, safety and well-being of children and youth. 6. Awareness of and sensitivity to diversity and individual differences among learners, their families and school/agency personnel. 7. Understanding of opportunities for professional growth and career advancement for paraprofessionals. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 2. Willingness to participate in professional and career development opportunities. 3. Ability to confer with principals/administrators and supervising teachers/providers to identify strengths and professional development needs.
Level 2 and Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Participating with administrators and other stakeholders in creating and implementing comprehensive systems of professional development for paraprofessionals. 		

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals Model (1999). Reprinted by permission.

Appropriate Roles for Paraprofessionals

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 14):

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.
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.

Connecticut Birth to Three Paraprofessionals

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 transdisciplinary 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

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

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).

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

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

Hiring and Orientation of Paraprofessionals

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 has identified a central office employee 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.

Job Descriptions for Paraprofessionals

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

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.
6. Ability to work with and meet individual needs of children as directed by teachers and other professional staff.
7. Ability to work or learn to work various office machines.
8. For paraprofessionals hired in Title I positions, see requirements on Page 18.

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.
2. Climatic environment: Most district classrooms and other work areas are not air-conditioned and are subject to extremes of temperature and humidity.
3. 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

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 (Pages 28-35). 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

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

Supervision and Evaluation

“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.

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.

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.

“Principals are responsible for creating school environments that support and recognize the value of teacher and paraeducator 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 67.

Effective Use of Paraprofessionals

“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).

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
<p><i>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.</i></p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>

Indicator 4: The general education teacher is the main provider of the instruction or assessment or as a 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).

Little or No Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
<p><i>Paraprofessional or special education teacher who is not teaching lesson checks for understanding. Special education teacher not part of dynamic co-teaching arrangement.</i></p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>

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/>.)

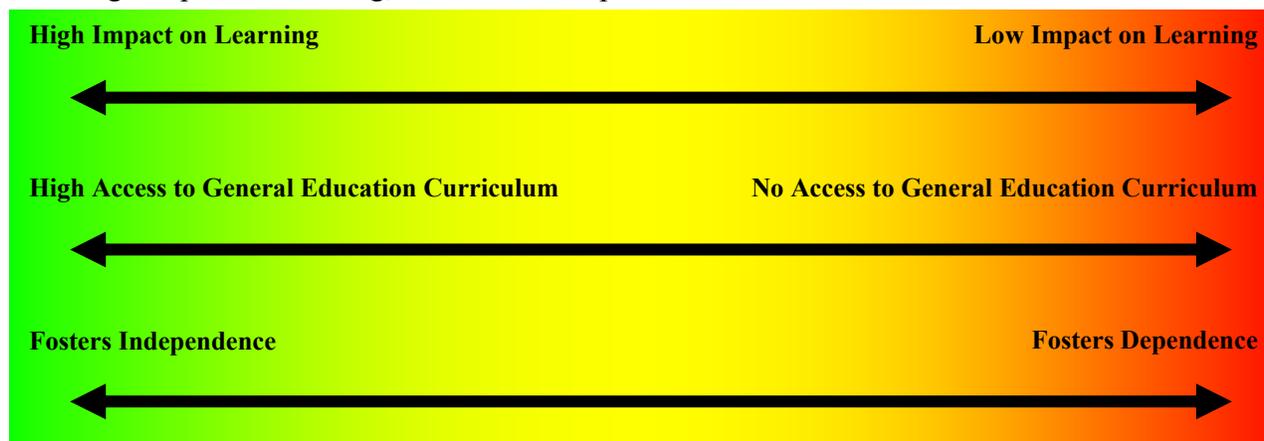
Examining Impact

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

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.

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.

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 individual 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

- 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 tools: What is my role as a Paraprofessional?, Classroom Activity Analysis Worksheet, Schedule for Paraprofessional Staff

Standards for Teacher / Provider Supervisory Competencies

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.

STANDARD 1 (Continued):

To Serve As Leaders Of Program Implementation Teams And To Supervise Paraprofessionals, Teachers / Providers Demonstrate The Following Knowledge And Skill Competencies:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Roles of Program and Building Administrators in the Management of Paraeducators

- Ensure that teachers and paraeducators understand the distinctions in their roles and are aware of school and district policies.
- Inform parents about the roles of paraeducators in implementing their child's program.
- Involve teachers in the selection of paraeducators.
- Schedule opportunities for teachers and paraeducators to meet regularly for on-the-job training and planning.
- Provide support that will help team members to resolve interpersonal or other problems that may occur in classrooms or other learning environments.
- Ensure that paraeducators are appropriately prepared to carry out assigned tasks.
- Provide clear guidelines for the supervision of paraeducators.
- Provide leadership in the evaluation and systematic improvement of teacher supervision and monitoring of paraeducators.
- Develop, in collaboration with teachers, performance indicators and instruments for assessing the performance of paraeducators and guidelines for involving teachers in annual performance reviews of paraeducators.
- Assess emerging training needs for teachers and paraeducators as educational program team members.
- Provide teachers and paraeducators with information about career development opportunities and support services available through district or institutions of higher education.

Adapted from *Guide for Effective Paraeducator Practices in Iowa*, by Iowa Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, 1998, Des Moines, IA: Author; and *Using Paraeducators Effectively in the Classroom* [Fastback 358], by A.L. Pickett, S.F. Vasa, and A.L. Steckelberg, 1993, Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

10 Tips for Connecticut Administrators

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.
7. Assist paraprofessionals in developing career goals.
8. Provide time in the schedule for paraprofessionals and teachers/providers to plan together.
9. Provide opportunities for paraprofessionals to meet with you as a group.
10. 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, 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: _____

<u>1.0</u>	<u>Relationships with Students</u>	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: _____

<u>2.0</u>	<u>Relationship with Teacher</u>	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: _____

<u>3.0</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	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: _____

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.

	Date	Signature	Title
Rated by:			
Reviewed by:			
Approved by:			
Employee:			

**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.

1.0 Relationships with students	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: _____				

2.0 Relationship with teacher	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: _____				

3.0 Responsibilities	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: _____

Date: _____

Observer: _____ Phone: _____

Student's Schedule Matches Placement Yes or No

School: _____

Setting: _____ Reg _____ Segr _____ Resource _____ Grade _____

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

#	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Little or No Evidence</u> <i>Score point = 0</i>	<u>Sufficient Evidence</u> <i>Score point = 1</i>	<u>Score</u> <i>0 or 1</i>	<u>N/A</u> <i>(not applicable)</i>
1	The student is seated within the same seating structure as the other students in the classroom.	<i>Student is in a study carrel, separate seat apart from the reg. group, or back of the room.</i>	<i>Student is seated alongside typical peers in the general seating arrangement (i.e., whole class, groups, peer pairs, etc.).</i>		
2	The general education teacher is the main provider of the instruction or assessment or as a 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).	<i>Student is being taught by a paraprofessional or special ed teacher and is not part of the regular classroom instruction/lesson.</i>	<i>Student is receiving instruction from the regular ed teacher or there is general/special ed teacher co-teaching arrangement where shared teaching is evident.</i>		
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)	<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>		

Connecticut State Department of Education Walkthrough Protocol

Student: _____

Observer: _____

#	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Little or No Evidence</u> <i>Score pt. = 0</i>	<u>Sufficient Evidence</u> <i>Score pt. = 1</i>	<u>Score</u> <i>0 or 1</i>	<u>(NA)</u>
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).	<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>		
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).	<i>Student is assisted by para or the teacher rather than a peer, or student receives no help at all from peer(s).</i>	<i>Peer offers to help the student or student requests assistance from a peer. Teacher may pair up children to work together.</i>		
6	Peer interactions between the student and peers are comparable to other students in the class (student engages peers and peers engage the student).	<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>		

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.	<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>		
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Connecticut State Department of Education Walkthrough Protocol

Student: _____

Observer: _____

#	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Little or No Evidence</u> <i>Score pt. = 0</i>	<u>Sufficient Evidence</u> <i>Score pt. = 1</i>	<u>Score</u> <i>0 or 1</i>	<u>(NA)</u>
8	The student's IEP goals and objectives are integrated as part of the lesson design and instructional delivery.	<i>Lesson content unrelated. Little or no evidence of scaffolding of instruction.</i>	<i>Lesson content is directly aligned with IEP objective(s). Or, pre-teaching of skills, vocab., concepts are noted.</i>		
9	The student's IEP supplementary aids and services, accommodations, and modifications are applied as appropriate to the curricular activity.	<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>		
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.	<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>		

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
Period 1/History 200	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
Period 4/History 1	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 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?

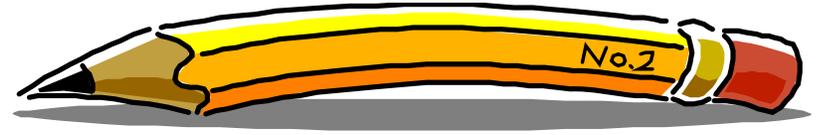
Directions: Working with a partner, indicate with an "X" the responsibilities you have been assigned and their frequencies.

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					

Form 2 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 mods	Behavioral Interventions (If yes, describe.)	External Support (adapt materials)	In-Class Support (support provided inside the general education classroom)					Specialized Support (outside the gen ed class)			
			YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO					Peer	Paraprofessional	Special Education Teacher		Spec Populations Teacher		Speech/Language Pathologist	Related Services Staff	
														SF	CT	SF	CT				

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¹ Section Adapted from: Thousand, J.S. Project Director. The Homecoming Model: Educating Students Who Present Intensive Educational Challenges Within Regular Education Environments, September 1986.

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	Spec Support	Acc	Modif	Behav	Other			√
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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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

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

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.¹ 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

What are the requirements?

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

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

(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
- 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

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

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

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 B

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 assisting 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 Paraprofessionals 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 C

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 <i>recommended</i> 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	Special education only. 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. Level 1 - - 20 hours, renewable every year. Level 2 - - 20 to 30 semester hours, 450 hours of inservice and 2 years experience at Level 1; renewed every 3 years. Level 3 - - 60 semester hours or AA degree, 900 hours of inservice and 3 years at Level 2; renewed every 3 years.
KENTUCKY	NONE
LOUISIANA	NONE
MAINE STATE CERTIFICATE	Education Technician / Level I - - high school diploma, orientation and ongoing inservice. Education Technician / Level II - - 2 years of college and inservice. Education Technician / Level III - - 3 years of college and inservice. All are renewed yearly.
MARYLAND	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. Certificate is not required for employment.
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	HS diploma, 1 year experience, and completion of a 2-week orientation session on special education. Tier 1 certified paraprofessionals must complete 50 hours in areas determined by the professional development master plan for their district. Tier 2 and 3 paraprofessionals must complete additional training.
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	Teacher Aide - - Must fulfill civil service requirements; responsibilities are non-teaching. Teaching Assistant - - Temporary license: HS diploma; responsibilities are instructional in nature. Teaching Assistant - - Continuing certificate: 6 hours of collegiate study; one year of experience; responsibilities are instructional in

	nature. Teaching Assistant - - Level 1: HS diploma; satisfactory level of performance on the New York State Teacher Certification Examination Test. Teaching Assistant - - Level 2: all requirements of Level 1, plus 6 hours of collegiate study. Teaching Assistant - - Preprofessional Certificate: all requirements of Level III, plus must be matriculated in a program registered as leading to teacher certification.
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	Education Aide - - "Skills sufficient to do the job", 1-year permit. Education Assistant - - HS diploma and participation in unspecified inservice training under a 1-year permit; renewed every 4 years.
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	Education Aide - - HS diploma and experience working with children. Education Aide II - - 15 hours of college study or "demonstrated proficiency." Education Aide III - - 30 hours of college study and 3 years as aide at Level I or II. Legislation introduced for revision, 1999.
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/psrp/certification/status.html

revised 06/06

Appendix D

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

Regional Educational Service Centers

Organization/Contact Person

Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES)
Marge Anctil, Director
205 State St., Hamden, CT 06517
Telephone: 203-407-4443
E-mail: manctil@aces.k12.ct.us
rburdick@aces.k12.ct.us

Education Connection
Kathleen McClellan
355 Goshen Road, Litchfield, CT 06759
Telephone: 860-567-0863
E-mail: mcclellan@educationconnection.org

Cooperative Educational Services (CES)
Esther Bobowick
40 Lindeman Drive, Trumbull, CT 06611
Telephone: 203-365-8879
E-mail: bobowice@ces.k12.ct.us

LEARN
Ellen Dalton
44 Hatchetts Hill Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371
Telephone: 860-434-4890
E-mail: edalton@learn.k12.ct.us

EASTCONN
Paula Colen
322 Main St., Willimantic, CT 06226
Telephone: 860-455-0707
E-mail: pcolen@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.

Organization/Contact Person

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)
Linda Russell
111 Charter Oak Ave., Hartford, CT 06106
Telephone: 860-524-4095
E-mail: lrussell@crec.org

Type of Program: Test preparation workshops for ParaPro Assessment

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.

Organization/Contact Person

SERC
Kjell Fenn
Paraprofessionals as Partners Initiative
25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457
Telephone: 860-632-1485, ext. 343
E-mail, URL: fenn@ctserc.org, 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

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
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,
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
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,
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,
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
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,
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,
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
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,
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,
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.

Community Colleges (continued)

Organization/Contact Person

Manchester Community College

Dr. Eileen M. Furey

Disability Specialist Program, MS #4

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

Telephone: 860-512-2753

E-mail, URL: efurey@mcc.commnet.edu, asavage@mcc.commnet.edu, www.mcc.commnet.edu

Type of Program Early Childhood Education 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

Organization/Contact Person

AFT Connecticut

Iris White

35 Marshall Road, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Telephone: 860-257-9782

E-mail: iwhite@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 Raggazine

495 Blake St., New Haven, CT 06515

Telephone: (800) 832-7784

203-397-4036

E-mail, URL: draggozine@ctcharts-a-course.org, 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.

Appendix E

The Use of Paraprofessionals in Connecticut's Birth to Three System, Public Schools, and Private Special Education Programs -- A Survey:

Executive Summary

Background and Methods:

As an important segment of the work force in Connecticut, the paraprofessional has experienced an increasingly significant role in both early intervention and education. This was underscored by a specific reference in both the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) and the recent *Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA). Therefore, the Connecticut Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Council, in collaboration with the State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC), conducted a study focusing on Connecticut paraprofessionals.

The research design consisted of a descriptive survey. The sample unit for the research consisted of the professional who was considered knowledgeable about the paraprofessional work force. They were stratified into three separate environments that employ paraprofessionals:

- *Birth to Three programs;*
- *Public School Special Education programs; and*
- *Private School Special Education programs.*

One hundred (100) questionnaires were returned. This yielded a participation rate of about 38%, very satisfactory.

Findings:

Census Data

The census data on the Connecticut paraprofessional work force reflected wide ranges and should be used judiciously, as preliminary planning data. A follow-up study on the paraprofessional as a sampling unit is recommended. The census data included information on the number of paraprofessionals per site, part-time and full-time status, their wages/salaries, the student populations served, and their educational levels at first hire. All of the findings can be referred to in the full report.

With that caveat, these results were obtained:

- *Public schools employ the largest number of both general and special education paraprofessionals who work full-time and part-time.*
- *The average hourly rate for paraprofessionals is between \$10 and \$12 dollars per hour, whether they work full-time or part-time.*

- *Birth to Three programs employ paraprofessionals mostly to serve their birth to three populations. In the public school programs, over half of all paraprofessionals work with elementary school students. Parallel findings were reported in the data from private school programs. Middle and secondary school students are also served by paraprofessionals in both the private and public school programs. There is significantly a fewer number of paraprofessionals (10%) providing services at the preschool level. In terms of transition or post- secondary program clientele, few public or private school paraprofessionals serve this student population.*
- *The level of education for paraprofessionals is quite diverse. A few reportedly have high school preparation, but lack a high school diploma or GED. Many have a high school diploma or GED. Others have graduated from college, and some even have graduate degrees or coursework under their belt.*

Services Provided

There is great variation regarding the services provided in the three different environments, with more similarities existing between the public and private school programs.

Respondents (at least 50%) Reporting Services Delivered by Paraprofessionals: Birth to Three

1. Assisting families with meeting child's needs in daily routines
2. Facilitating inclusion in community-based settings
3. Facilitating interaction with student/child's peers
4. Attending the PPT/IFSP meetings
5. Providing service coordination
6. Conducting IFSP meetings
7. Designing or assisting in the design of IEPs or IFSPs
8. Conducting parental involvement activities

Respondents (at least 50%) Reporting Services Delivered by Paraprofessionals: Public Schools

1. Facilitating inclusion in general education classroom
2. Facilitating interaction with student/child's peers
3. Assisting or preparing student instructional activities
4. Classroom management/organizing instructional materials
5. Modifying or adapting classroom curriculum
6. Computer laboratory assistance
7. Library or media support
8. One-on-one tutoring
9. Speech and language assistance
10. Facilitating inclusion in community-based settings
11. Providing health-related support
12. Occupational Therapy assistance

Respondents (at least 50%) Reporting Services Delivered by Paraprofessionals: Private Schools

1. Assisting or preparing student instructional activities
2. Classroom management/organizing instructional materials
3. One-on-one tutoring
4. Facilitating interaction with student/child's peers
5. Computer laboratory assistance
6. Modifying or adapting classroom curriculum
7. Providing input into assessment and evaluations
8. Facilitating inclusion in community-based settings
9. Job Coaching

Supervision and Evaluation:

The primary supervisors and evaluators of the paraprofessionals vary. For Birth to Three programs, it is the director who performs both tasks. In public schools, the supervisory responsibility is shared between the special and general educators. However, the principal and the special educator evaluate performance. In private programs, it is the special educator who supervises the paraprofessional, but the principal shares in the evaluation process.

When asked if teachers generally possess the skill to direct the paraprofessional, the consensus was positive. This perception was colored by the comment that it varied among teachers depending on their experience, years on the job, and other factors.

The Current State of Affairs:

Respondents were asked about the status of what currently exists regarding paraprofessionals. Again, there were differences that can be attributed to the different environments.

Over half of the respondents in each of the three environments report having:

- written job descriptions for paraprofessionals;
- health benefits for paraprofessionals;
- permission and opportunities to attend off-site workshops for paraprofessionals; and
- formal performance evaluation/reviews by a supervisor.

Over half of the respondents in the Birth to Three and private school programs report having:

- formal orientation when paraprofessionals are hired;
- ongoing career development (PD) for paraprofessionals after they are hired;
- a paraprofessional handbook (employee handbook); and
- inclusion of paraprofessionals on committees, task forces, or program evaluation.

Over half of the respondents in the public and private school programs report having:

- substitutes for paraprofessionals.

Over half of the respondents in the Birth to Three programs report having:

- attendance at PPT/IFSP meetings by paraprofessionals; and
- inclusion of paraprofessionals as a member of the team (IFSP, EIP, etc.).

Over half of the respondents in the private school programs report having:

- reimbursement for college coursework taken by paraprofessionals; and
- opportunities for career advancement, upward mobility.

Over half of the respondents in the public school programs report having:

- a collective bargaining unit (union) for paraprofessionals; and
- written contracts for paraprofessionals.

Professional Development Needs:

An important question asked respondents to rate the need for professional development among their paraprofessional work force. There were 27 areas and each reflected a degree of need. The highest and most pressing needs are as follows and are categorized by environment where the paraprofessional works.

All Three Environments:

- positive behavioral supports and implementation of behavior management plans;
- facilitating social interactions between children and their peers; and
- teaming skills, i.e., conflict management, problem-solving, etc.

Public and Private Schools:

- knowledge of and skills to assist in the instruction of reading / reading readiness;
- knowledge of and skills to assist in the instruction of writing / writing readiness; and
- knowledge of and skills to assist in the instruction math / mathematics readiness.

Public Schools:

- curriculum modifications and instructional strategies.

Birth to Three Paraprofessionals:

- human development and milestones for identified age groups;
- cultural diversity;
- facilitating play;
- family support;
- coaching/modeling intervention strategies for families;
- knowledge of Federal, State, and district program regulations;
- safety precautions; and
- data collection.

Birth to Three Paraprofessionals and Private School Programs:

- knowledge of specific disabilities;
- state mandates (abuse/neglect reporting, universal precautions, etc.); and
- Communication skills.

Private School Programs:

- Time management.

In addition, the following areas were expressed as moderate needs for paraprofessionals in these environments.

All Three Groups:

- ethical standards of conduct (confidentiality, etc.); and
- Assistive Technology.

Birth to Three and Private School Paraprofessionals:

- Supporting independence and self-advocacy in children and families.

Public School Paraprofessionals:

- Roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals.

Birth to Three Paraprofessionals:

- supporting students in community-based or extracurricular activities;
- selecting appropriate materials and equipment;
- IFSP process; and
- preparing and implementing transition activities.

Summary:

The importance of the paraprofessional in Connecticut educational environments cannot be understated. They provide many services in Birth to Three and public and private special education programs, as documented by the survey findings.

Previously, not much was known about this important segment of the work force - how many were employed part-time and full-time, the wage and salary scales, the educational background, the processes of supervision and evaluation, their employment status, and their professional development needs. Some of these data have been uncovered in this research study. Substantial information on the paraprofessionals' work environments, their professional development needs, and their valuable contribution in service delivery have been quantified by hard data. Softer data were produced on the demographic or census side. A follow-up strategy may consider an actual census of the paraprofessionals. In the meantime, the need for professional development is firmly established. The investment in the training of this key work force participant will benefit schools, the classroom teacher and the students themselves.

Respectfully submitted:
Susan Carroll, Ph.D.
David Carroll, M.S.W.

July 16, 2002

Appendix F

The Use of Paraprofessionals in Connecticut’s Birth to Three System, Public Schools, and Private Special Education Programs: A Survey

1. Please estimate the **number of staff** in the following positions in your program, private school, or school district.

Birth to Three Providers:

TITLES	Number - FULL-TIME	Full-time, Hours per Week (est.)	Number - PART-TIME	Part-time, Hours per Week (est.)
<i>Early Intervention Assistants</i>				
<i>Early Intervention Associates</i>				

Public Schools or Private Schools:

TITLES	Number - FULL-TIME	Full-time, Hours per Week (est.)	Number - PART-TIME	Part-time, Hours per Week (est.)
<i>Special Education Paraprofessionals</i>				
<i>General Education Paraprofessionals</i>				

2. Please estimate the typical **salary/wage range** for each of the positions below.

Birth to Three Providers:

Positions	Full-time Salary	Full-time Hourly Rate	Part-time Salary	Part-time Hourly Rate
<i>Early Intervention Assistants</i>				
<i>Early Intervention Associates</i>				

Public Schools or Private Schools:

Positions	Full-time Salary	Full-time Hourly Rate	Part-time Salary	Part-time Hourly Rate
<i>Special Education Paraprofessionals</i>				
<i>General Education Paraprofessionals</i>				

NOTE: For the remainder of this survey, the term paraprofessional refers to school-based paraprofessionals, aides, tutors, paraeducators, and Birth to Three System Early Intervention Assistants and Associates.

As of April 25, 2002, please estimate the number of paraprofessionals at each **level**.

- Birth to Three (if different from the total number listed in Item #1)
- Preschool
- Elementary
- Middle/Jr. High
- Secondary
- Transition/Post-Secondary

3. For each level of education, please estimate the number of paraprofessionals at that **education level**.

Level of Education of Paraprofessionals at Hire	Number
1. Some high school, but no diploma or GED	
2. High school diploma or GED	
3. Coursework from community college or trade school	
4. Associate degree or two years of study	
5. Bachelor's degree	
6. Post 4-year college, graduate or certificate courses	

Comments on the above:

4. Please check all **service areas** that paraprofessionals currently provide to you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom management / organizing instructional materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Modifying or adapting classroom curriculum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting or preparing student instructional activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Translating or interpreting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designing or assisting in the design of IEPs or IFSPs | <input type="checkbox"/> Providing service coordination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attending the PPT / IFSP meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Job coaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conducting IFSP meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Providing input into assessment and evaluations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conducting parental involvement activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Providing health-related support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating interaction with student / child's peers | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech and language assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer laboratory assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> One-on-one tutoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library or media support | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapy assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assisting families with meeting child's needs in daily routines | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Therapy assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating inclusion in community-based settings | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating inclusion in general education classroom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify): _____ | |

5. Who is the paraprofessional's **immediate supervisor** (the person the paraprofessional reports to on a daily basis)? Check all that apply. Please leave blank if you are unsure.

- General Educator
- Special Educator
- Birth to Three Program Director
- Service Coordinator
- Director of Special Education / Pupil Personnel
- Title I, ELL or ESL Teacher
- Principal or Assistant Principal
- Licensed Related Services Personnel (Nurse, Psychologist, SLP, PT, OT, etc.)

Other (Please specify): _____

6. Who is responsible for **evaluating** the job performance of paraprofessionals in your program or district? Check all that apply. Please leave blank if you are unsure.

- General Educator
- Special Educator
- Birth to Three Program Director
- Service Coordinator
- Director of Special Education / Pupil Personnel
- Title I, ELL or ESL Teacher
- Principal or Assistant Principal
- Licensed Related Services Personnel (Nurse, Psychologist, SLP, PT, OT, etc.)

Other (Please specify): _____

If possible, please attach a copy of the evaluation tool presently used to evaluate paraprofessionals.

7. Please indicate whether each of the following is **present in your program or district**.
 Comment below, if necessary.

	Yes	To Some Degree	No
1. <i>Written job descriptions for paraprofessionals</i>			
2. <i>Attendance at PPT / IFSP meetings by paraprofessionals</i>			
3. <i>Reimbursement for college coursework taken by paraprofessionals</i>			
4. <i>Mentoring 1st year paraprofessionals</i>			
5. <i>Difficulty recruiting qualified paraprofessionals</i>			
6. <i>Formal orientation when paraprofessionals are hired</i>			
7. <i>Ongoing career development (PD) for paraprofessionals after they are hired</i>			
8. <i>Inclusion of paraprofessionals as a member of the team (IFSP, EIP, etc.)</i>			
9. <i>High turnover / low retention rate of paraprofessionals</i>			
10. <i>Health benefits for paraprofessionals</i>			
11. <i>Permission and opportunities to attend off-site workshops designed for paraprofessionals</i>			
12. <i>Formal performance evaluation / reviews by a supervisor</i>			
13. <i>Opportunities for career advancement, upward mobility</i>			
14. <i>A paraprofessional handbook (employee handbook)</i>			
15. <i>A collective bargaining unit (union) for paraprofessionals</i>			
16. <i>Substitutes for paraprofessionals</i>			
17. <i>Inclusion of paraprofessionals on committees, task forces, or program evaluation activities</i>			
18. <i>Written contracts for paraprofessionals</i>			

Comments on the above:

8. Please rate the **need for current professional development** for paraprofessionals in the following content areas.

(Circle a rating.)

Content and Skill Areas	Extreme Need	High Need	Moderate Need	Low Need	No Need
1. <i>Knowledge of and skills to assist in the instruction of reading/reading readiness</i>	5	4	3	2	1
2. <i>Knowledge of and skills to assist in the instruction of writing/writing readiness</i>	5	4	3	2	1
3. <i>Knowledge of and skills to assist in the instruction mathematics/mathematics readiness</i>	5	4	3	2	1
4. <i>Roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals</i>	5	4	3	2	1
5. <i>Human development and milestones for identified age groups</i>	5	4	3	2	1
6. <i>Ethical standards of conduct (confidentiality, etc.)</i>	5	4	3	2	1
7. <i>Supporting independence and self-advocacy in children and families</i>	5	4	3	2	1
8. <i>Positive behavioral supports and implementation of behavior management plans</i>	5	4	3	2	1
9. <i>Facilitating social interactions between children and their peers</i>	5	4	3	2	1
10. <i>Curriculum modifications and instructional strategies</i>	5	4	3	2	1
11. <i>Supporting students in community-based or extracurricular activities</i>	5	4	3	2	1
12. <i>Knowledge of specific disabilities</i>	5	4	3	2	1
13. <i>Cultural diversity</i>	5	4	3	2	1
14. <i>Facilitating play</i>	5	4	3	2	1
15. <i>Family support</i>	5	4	3	2	1
16. <i>Coaching / modeling intervention strategies for families</i>	5	4	3	2	1
17. <i>Selecting appropriate materials and equipment</i>	5	4	3	2	1
18. <i>Knowledge of Federal, State, and district program regulations</i>	5	4	3	2	1
19. <i>State mandates (abuse/neglect reporting, universal precautions, etc.)</i>	5	4	3	2	1
20. <i>Safety precautions</i>	5	4	3	2	1
21. <i>Data collection</i>	5	4	3	2	1
22. <i>IFSP process</i>	5	4	3	2	1
23. <i>Preparing and implementing transition activities</i>	5	4	3	2	1
24. <i>Assistive technology</i>	5	4	3	2	1
25. <i>Communication skills</i>	5	4	3	2	1
26. <i>Teaming skills (conflict management, problem-solving, etc.)</i>	5	4	3	2	1
27. <i>Time management</i>	5	4	3	2	1

Comments on the above:

9. To what degree are teachers / related services personnel / Birth to Three providers skillful in **directing and supervising** the tasks of a paraprofessional?

____ Very ____ Moderately ____ Somewhat ____ Not Very ____ Not At All

Comments on the above:

10. What **RES**C (regional education service center) is your program/school district nearest to?

____ ACES ____ CES ____ CREC ____ EASTCONN ____ Education Connection ____ LEARN

11. Which Connecticut **community-technical college** is your program/school district nearest to?

____ Asnuntuck ____ Capital ____ Gateway ____ Housatonic ____ Manchester ____ Middlesex
____ Naugatuck ____ Northwestern ____ Norwalk ____ Quinebaug ____ Three Rivers ____ Tunxis

12. Please add comments or suggestions related to any areas covered in this survey.

Name of Person Completing
Survey: _____

District or Birth to Three Program
Name: _____

Position/Title: _____

Phone
Number: _____

Thank you for helping the Connecticut CSPD Council and State Advisory Council to collect this important information.

If you have any questions about this questionnaire, do not hesitate to contact
Words & Numbers Research, Inc. at 860-489-5639, or e-mail wordsnum@snet.net

Resources

American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Standards for a profession efforts to assist paraprofessionals in meeting NCLB requirements. www.aft.org/psrp/certification/midtermreport/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-careerdev.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/>

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. 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://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust>

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.iowa.gov/educate/component/option,com_docman/task,doc_view/gid,2438/

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 (NCPPIE) NCPPIE 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

National Education Association – Education Support Professionals <http://www.nea.org/esphome/index.html>

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 Paraprofessionals. 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 ESEA Core Team Paraprofessionals and the ESEA: Questions and answers.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/Pubdocs/ParaproQA.pdf>

PARA2 Center University of Colorado in Denver <http://www.paracenter.org>

Paraeducator Career Profile http://www.special-ed-careers.org/career_choices/profiles/professions/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://www.ctserc.org/initiatives/paras/index.shtml>

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>

References

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- Connecticut Comprehensive System of Personnel Development and State Advisory Council 2002. Survey on the Use of Paraprofessionals in Connecticut's birth to Three system, and Public and Private Special Education Programs.
- Connecticut General Assembly December 2006. Legislative program Review and Investigations committee. *School Paraprofessionals*
- Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Information Management and Analysis. 2006. ED 163 Non-Certified Staff Report.
- Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Information Management and Analysis. 2006. ED 156 Fall Hiring survey Report.
- Connecticut State Department of Education. March 1990. Report of the Committee to Study the Role of Paraprofessionals to Commissioner Gerald N. Tirozzi.
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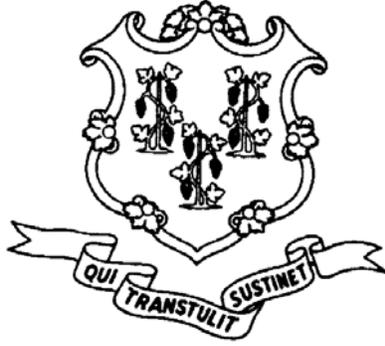
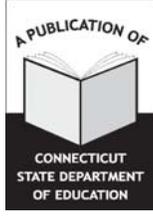
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