



# November 2009 Update for District Contacts for Paraprofessional Issues



The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), established the District Contacts for Paraprofessional Issues to disseminate information of importance to paraprofessionals and their supervisors.

## **Positive Behavior Supports for Individual Students:**

### **How Paraeducators Can Have a Meaningful Impact within the School Day**

*This professional development series will help paraeducators understand the importance of forming positive relationships with students and will provide multiple strategies for preventing and dealing with their challenging behaviors.*

Participants in this four evening professional development activity will:

- Develop appropriate relationship-building strategies for students with challenging behaviors, including students with disabilities;
- Relate environmental, physiological, and communicative antecedents of behaviors to the types of challenging behaviors they encounter;
- Demonstrate competencies in preventing challenging behaviors from occurring in deescalating challenging behaviors of individuals or small groups of students prior to the crisis state, and in discussing challenging behaviors with professional colleagues as a member of the student's collaborative team; and
- Network and develop a support system of other paraeducators who have been through the same training.

#### **Presenters:**

Linda Rammler, Education Consultant, UCEDD and  
Stefanie Carbone, Consultant, SERC

#### **Dates, Times, Location:**

Monday, November 16, 2009  
Monday, November 23, 2009  
Monday, November 30, 2009, and  
Monday, December 7, 2009  
4:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

UConn Health Center, Farmington, CT

**Registration Fee: \$50.00**      **CEUs: 1.5**

#### **More information contact:**

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## **Distribution of this Newsletter**

This newsletter is sent monthly to district contacts for paraprofessional issues. These individuals were chosen by the district superintendent to act as a liaison with the CSDE regarding paraprofessional issues. The CSDE encourages these contacts to share this newsletter with teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators by:

- Forwarding newsletter to educators in the districts;
- Posting on school and/or district websites; and
- Distribute at faculty meetings, professional development workshops, etc.

These newsletters will now be posted on the CSDE Paraprofessional Information and Resources page at: [www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali](http://www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali).

## **What resources are available to help paraprofessionals prepare for the ParaPro Assessment?**

**Test-at-a-Glance (TAAG)** contains the test specifications and sample questions with answers and explanations. It is available free of charge from the ETS Web site at: [www.ets.org/Media/Tests/ParaPro\\_Assessment/0755.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/ParaPro_Assessment/0755.pdf).

**Reducing Test Anxiety** helps test-takers learn how to recognize and cope with test anxiety. It is available at: [www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/01361anxiety.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/01361anxiety.pdf).

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

1. **Call**—ETS at 1-800-772-9476, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. EST. Caller must have a valid American Express, Discover, MasterCard or VISA to purchase via the telephone.
2. **Send**—an order to ETS through the mail with the appropriate fee (\$25.00). Be sure to include the following information with the order: Paraprofessional Study Guide, Item #997331, Name, Address and Daytime Telephone Number. The mailing address is: The Praxis Series-ParaPro, Educational Testing Service, N00, P.O. Box 6058, Princeton, NJ 08541-6058.
3. **Order**—at the ETS Online Store at: [www.ets.org/store](http://www.ets.org/store). The caller will need an American Express, Discover, MasterCard, or Visa to purchase the guide online.

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

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



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**A Problem-Solving Exercise:** Each month, we will provide a case study and discussion questions to facilitate discussion among teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators.

The class is using a new approach to reading. The paraprofessional is reluctant to attempt a lesson because he hasn't had any training in this approach. He wants to refuse to do this lesson until he has had some training.

1. What is the teacher's role in advocating for training for their paraprofessional?
2. If you were the paraprofessional, would you refuse to conduct the lesson?
3. How can the administrator address this situation?

## Finding Time for Teachers and Paraprofessionals to Meet

Teacher-Paraprofessional Collaboration can be a powerful tool in meeting students' needs. However, it is often difficult for teachers and paraprofessionals to find time to meet. Below are suggestions for how time can be found in the school day to allow teachers and paraprofessionals to meet.

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

## 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. 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; and
- Any physical requirements (such as lifting).

Entry level requirements for education and skills (such as those mandated under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) qualifications for paraprofessionals in Title I programs).

*The Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals* document contains sample job descriptions. The Guidelines can be downloaded from the CSDE Paraprofessional Information and Resources page: [www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali](http://www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali).