

Paraprofessionals and SRBI

Paraprofessionals and Instructional Support

Connecticut's Definition of a Paraprofessional

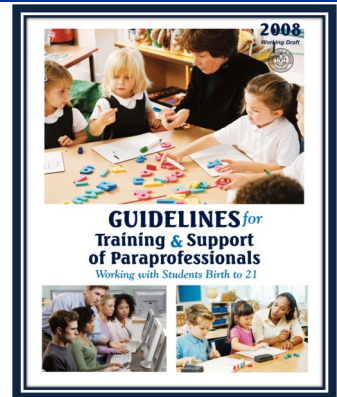
"An employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the teacher or other certified or licensed professional. The ultimate responsibility for the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

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

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

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

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



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

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For more information regarding SRBI, please log onto: www.ct.gov/sde/SRBI

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

A Paraprofessionals Guide to SRBI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q: Are there timelines for interventions? (Tier II, III)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paraprofessional and Teacher Collaboration

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

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

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

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

Professional Development Resources for Paraprofessionals

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

Please contact Iris White at 860-713-6794 or e-mail at iris.white@ct.gov.

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

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

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