

DECEMBER 2012 UPDATE FOR DISTRICT

CONTACTS FOR PARAPROFESSIONAL ISSUES Paraprofessional Providing Instructional Support

Connecticut defines a paraprofessional as follows:

A paraprofessional is an employee who assists teachers and/or other paraprofessional educators or therapists in the delivery of instruction and related services to students. A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the teacher and/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 (*Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals, p.3*).

This definition 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. Instruction should be delivered based on the plans of the certified teacher.

It is necessary for paraprofessionals to have an understanding of a child's individualized education program (IEP) information that is pertinent to their role as an implementer.

Minimally this information would include the student's goals and objectives. Specific annual goals and objectives can assist the paraprofessional with understanding a student's expected outcomes. Short-term objectives describe meaningful intermediate and measurable outcomes between a student's current performance and the annual goal. Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) for children with disabilities is a requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). SDI refers to the teaching strategies and methods used by teachers to instruct students with learning disabilities and other types of learning disorders. To develop appropriate specially designed instruction for each student with a learning disability, educators and parents work together to analyze student work, evaluation information, and any other available data to determine the student's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers continue to measure students' progress and make changes in instruction as needed.

Paraprofessionals should have knowledge of the accommodations and modifications specific and appropriate to the needs of the child as defined in the IEP. The purpose of accommodations and modifications is to enable a child to advance appropriately toward meeting his/her annual goals, to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum, and to be educated and participate with other children with or without disabilities. Accommodations are changes to instruction or assessment (such as materials, format – oral test, process – extra time, and tasks) that change how a student learns. Accommodations may include assistive technology devices and services. Examples of accommodations may include: extended time for tests, special seating (in front of the class, separated from peers), and frequent test breaks. Modifications are changes to the content, that affect what the student learns or how much work the student completes. Examples of modifications might include: modified homework, fewer questions on a test, taking a test using notes, or watching a movie instead of reading a book.

Taken from A Paraprofessionals Guide to Students with Learning Disabilities available on the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Paraprofessional Information and Resources page: www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali.



SERC's Paraprofessional as Partners Initiative 2013 Learning Seminars

All sessions will be held in the SERC Library Community Room, Middletown, Connecticut

Autism

Thursday, January 31, 2013

A.M. Session: 9:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m. **OR**

P. M. Session: 12:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

FEE: \$20.00 per person

For more information and to register online,
visit: www.ctserc.org and click on

"Professional Development

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell, CT

Understanding Challenging Behaviors

Thursday, February 7, 2013

A.M. Session: 9:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m. **OR**

P. M. Session: 12:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), established the District Contacts for Paraprofessional Issues to disseminate information of importance to paraprofessionals and their supervisors. The focus of this newsletter is to provide resources for more effective teacher and paraprofessional collaboration.



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CONTACTS FOR PARAPROFESSIONAL ISSUES

Paraprofessionals and Confidentiality

One dilemma that can arise in working with paraprofessionals is confidentiality. Paraprofessionals are bound by the same rules for preserving confidentiality as teachers, but they may not be accustomed to attending to this crucial communication matter. These are guidelines to share with paraeducators regarding confidentiality:

- Never discuss information about a student in a public place (e.g., hallway, restaurant).
- Never discuss information about a student with the parents of another student.
- Never discuss information about a student with other students.
- Never discuss information about a student with staff members who are not considered directly involved in the delivery of services to that student.
- If you have a legitimate need to access confidential information about a student, obtain permission to do so and use the established district policy for accessing it.
- Do not create your own files on a student or a family.
- Do not send information to family members via electronic communication unless directed to do so by a teacher or another professional.
- Review and adhere to any district or school policies regarding confidentiality, and ask your supervisor to answer any questions you may have.

Source: From M.B. Doyle, *The Paraprofessional's Guide to the Inclusive Classroom: Working As a Team* (2nd ed.) Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, 2002, pp.77-83.

The State of Connecticut Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, disability (including, but not limited to, mental disorder, past or present history of mental disability, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. The Department of Education does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Inquiries regarding the Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Levy Gillespie, Equal Employment Opportunity Director, Title IX /ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, State of Connecticut Department of Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457, 860-807-2071.