

Title I Paraprofessionals



Paraprofessionals are essential members of Title I intervention teams. Over the past few decades, paraprofessionals' roles and responsibilities have evolved as have the instructional supports needed by an increasingly diverse student population. Moreover, as the needs of the students become more intensive, paraprofessionals are required to master a complex set of knowledge and skills. "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)

Frequently Asked Questions about Title I Paraprofessionals

What is a Title I 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. The category of 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)]

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.

What are the requirements for the supervision of Title I 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, evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity to the teacher. [§200.59(c) (2) of the Title I regulations] Because paraprofessionals provide instructional support, they should not be providing core direct instruction or introducing to students new skills, concepts, or academic content.

A program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not permitted, a program where a paraprofessional provides instructional support and a teacher visits the classroom once or twice a week, 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 is also inconsistent with the requirement that paraprofessionals work in close and frequent proximity to a teacher.

Is the teacher the paraprofessional's supervisor?

There is a difference between the person responsible for hiring and evaluating performance (an administrator) and the person directing day-to-day work with students (the teacher). The teacher provides the day-to-day supervision of the paraprofessional while an administrator completes the evaluation. Teachers should have supervisory functions as to program implementation, including planning, assigning daily instructional duties, and checking with paraprofessionals as to their comprehension of their assigned duties. Teachers do not have administrative management responsibility such as the hiring or evaluation of paraprofessionals because that is an administrative responsibility.

Do schools need to document paraprofessional schedules and the teacher supervising each paraprofessional through the day?

Documentation ensures that the paraprofessional is under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. Since "Title I paraprofessionals may assume limited duties that are assigned to similar personnel who are not working in a Title I-A program," [Section 1119(g)(3)(B) this documentation ensures that the paraprofessional is not being asked to perform duties inconsistent with the guidance.

Do paraprofessionals receive professional development?

Staff development is a critical and a federally mandated aspect of paraprofessional support. Paraprofessional training days and job-embedded processes provide the knowledge and skills needed by paraprofessionals and by those persons who oversee the use of paraprofessional services. School-level paraprofessional training needs should be determined through ongoing assessment of current practices, paraprofessional knowledge/skill level, and intended outcomes.

Do paraprofessionals receive planning time?

Paraprofessional schedules should include adequate time for the supervising teacher to provide the paraprofessional with lesson plans and the direction needed to complete the assigned duties. This time may be allocated on a weekly or daily basis and will look different from school to school.