



ANNOUNCEMENT: EI-10 # 07
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING
BUREAU OF EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

ISSUE DATE: June 15, 2010
EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately
SUNSET DATE: On-Going

SUBJECT:	Paraprofessional Qualifications
TO:	Preschool Early Intervention Administrators
FROM:	Todd Klunk Acting Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development and Early Learning



PURPOSE:

The purpose of reissuing this Announcement is to clarify that the Office of Child Development and Early Learning does not have to approve a local Early Intervention Preschool program's assessment of rigorous standard of quality. This Announcement provides information on the required qualifications and continued training for Preschool Early Intervention (EI) Paraprofessionals.

BACKGROUND:

In Chapter 14, § 14.105(a)(1), an instructional paraprofessional is defined as a school employee who works under the direction of a certificated staff member to support and assist in providing instructional programs and services to eligible children. Services may be provided in a special education class, regular education class or other instructional setting as provided in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Instructional paraprofessionals shall meet one of the following qualifications effective July 1, 2010:

1. Have completed at least two (2) years of postsecondary study;
2. Possess an associate degree or higher;
3. Meet a rigorous standard of quality as demonstrated through a state or local assessment.

DISCUSSION:

Qualification Requirements

The rigorous standard of quality can be demonstrated by the following:

1. Obtaining a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential through any credit bearing course work offered by an institute of higher education.
2. Completing and passing the Pennsylvania Special Education Paraeducator Credential of Competency offered through the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN).

3. An alternative rigorous standard of quality as demonstrated through a state or local assessment.

The Pennsylvania Special Education Paraeducator Credential of Competency is based on 10 performance-based standards identified by the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC), and endorsed by PDE. Training covers a broad range of topics, such as: the EI education process, assessment and progress monitoring, supporting the use of assistive technology in the classroom, effective behavior management and supporting students in inclusive settings.

Any “rigorous standard of quality as demonstrated through a state or local assessment” should, at a minimum, address the 10 CEC standards.

- Standard #1: Foundations of Special Education
- Standard #2: Development and Characteristics of Learners
- Standard #3: Individual Differences
- Standard #4: Instructional Strategies
- Standard #5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions
- Standard #6: Language
- Standard #7: Instructional Planning
- Standard #8: Assessment
- Standard #9: Professional and Ethical Practice
- Standard #10: Collaboration

Continuing Training Requirements

1. Each school year, instructional paraprofessionals shall provide evidence of 20 hours of staff developmental activities related to their assignment to their local entity.
2. It is the local entities discretion in applying training requirements to substitute paraprofessionals.

NEXT STEPS:

Preschool EI Programs shall:

1. Disseminate this Announcement to all staff.
2. Review current practices and revise any local procedures to ensure the guidance in this Announcement is implemented as soon as possible.
3. Ensure all instructional paraprofessionals meet one of the qualifications effective July 1, 2010.

Comments and Questions Regarding this Announcement Should be Directed to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Bureau of Early Intervention Services or ra-ocdintervention@state.pa.us.