

Qualifications of Title I Paraprofessionals

Did You know...

- That any Title I paraprofessional who has been assigned ANY instructional duties must meet the NCLB standards
- That at the beginning of very school year, every Title I school must notify all parents of children attending Title I schools that they may request information about whether paraprofessionals assigned instructional duties meet the NCLB qualifications.

NCLB contains provisions designed to:

- Upgrade the qualifications for Title I paraprofessionals who assist teachers with instruction
- Give assurance that Title I students who need the most help are taught by highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals

NCLB definition of “paraprofessional”

Under Title I, Part A, a paraprofessional is an employee who:

- Provides instructional support, even if it is only part time
- Is under the direct supervision of a teacher, and
- Is in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds.

NCLB allows paraprofessionals to be assigned the following responsibilities:

- Provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher
- Assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials
- Provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory
- Conduct parental involvement activities
- Provide support in the media or library center
- Act as a translator providing instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher
- *The US Department of Education added a new requirement that public school Title I paraprofessionals providing services in private schools must meet the NCLB “highly qualified” definition

The law requires:

- **EVERY Title I paraprofessional must have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent including paraprofessionals who serve as translators or who conduct parent involvement activities**

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- **Every new paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002 with Title I funds must have:**
 - **Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education;**
 - **Obtained an associate's or higher degree, or**
 - **Met a rigorous standard of quality, and can demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment— subject knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, as appropriate,**
 - ◆ **Reading, language arts, writing, and mathematics; or**
 - ◆ **Reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness**

Exceptions to the Paraprofessional Qualifications

All paraprofessionals must have a high school diploma or its equivalent, however they do not need to meet the qualifications if the paraprofessional is:

- Proficient in English and a language other than English.
- Acts as a translator to enhance the participation of limited English proficient children, or has instructional-support duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities.
- Works in food services, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance, and similar positions.
- Works in a school district or school that does NOT receive Title I, Part A funds. Even if a school district receives Title I funds, but the school does not, these requirements do not apply.
- Is classified as an unpaid volunteer who assists teachers in the classroom and support local schools by performing a variety of tasks for limited periods of time.
- Works in a Title I school, but with programs that may not be part of Title I such as Head Start, state-funded early childhood, or community-based before and after school programs.

Paraprofessional Assessments

SEA's and school districts have the flexibility to determine the content and format of any assessment of paraprofessionals. The assessment could be entirely a written test, or it could be a combination of a written test on content (reading, writing and math) and a demonstration of competence in instruction assessed through observation via a series of rubrics.

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NCLB Paraprofessionals Timeline

Paraprofessionals regardless of their hiring date must have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent

← January 8, 2002 →

All Title 1 paraprofessionals who were hired before January 8, 2002 must meet at least one of the NCLB requirements by at least January 8, 2006

All Title 1 paraprofessionals whose duties include instructional support and who were hired after January 8, 2002 must meet the NCLB and state required qualification.

January 6, 2006

All paraprofessionals must be "highly qualified" based on meeting one of the specified NCLB requirements

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

On the state level

- Find out how the state defines "highly qualified" and disseminate to the community (see [Teacher Quality Action Brief—www.PublicEducation.org/nclb_tq.asp](http://www.PublicEducation.org/nclb_tq.asp))

On the district and local level

- Talk with school board members and school administrators and make sure they are aware of the requirements for paraprofessionals.
- Find out how many paraprofessionals are teaching in your district and how many of them do not meet the qualifications set by the law.
- Find out what steps are being taken to support paraprofessionals both financially and through professional development activities to help them become qualified.
- Find out how new paraprofessionals are being recruited. Work with your community colleges, colleges and universities to attract new recruits.
- Build statewide and community-based coalitions and partnerships to inform the public about the requirements for paraprofessionals.
- Find out if there is a formal state or local assessment available to evaluate the subject knowledge of paraprofessionals. Review it and give feedback to the assessment committee.

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Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

On the state level

- Find out how the state defines “highly qualified” and disseminate to parents (see Teacher Quality Fact Sheet)
- Inform state parent organizations such as the state PTA, state Parent Resource Information Center, the Parent Training Information Center and other advocacy groups about the law for paraprofessionals. Find out what they are doing to support paraprofessionals in need of further studies.

On the district and local level

- Find out how many paraprofessionals are teaching in your district and/or school and how many of them do not meet the qualifications set by the law.
- Find out what roles they play. Are they teaching academic subjects?
- Find out what steps are being taken to support paraprofessionals both financially and through professional development activities to help them become qualified.
- Work with your school to determine the best ways for the school to communicate the qualifications of paraprofessionals to parents (i.e. in writing, internet, etc.)
- Work with your community colleges, colleges and universities to attract new recruits.
- Work with your school to determine best ways to communicate.
- Make sure all members of your school community know about these standards for paraprofessionals, particularly those whose home language is other than English. Make sure information is appropriately translated.
- Involve faith-based organizations and community-based organization in getting the information into the hands of those who need to know.

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Resources

AdultGegaSkills.org – www.adultmegaskills.org/

American Association of School Administrators – www.aasa.org/NCLB/paraeducator.htm

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) – www.aft.org/eses/downloads/qaparas.pdf

IDEA Practices - Professional Development Resources
www.ideapractices.org/resources/topic.php?subcatID=87

MegaSkills® Online – www.megaskillshsi.org/Default.htm

National Council on Teacher Quality – <http://www.nctq.org/bulletin/index.html>

National Education Association (NEA) – www.nea.org/esphome/issues/eseapara.html

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals – www.nrcpara.org

Parent Information Resource Centers – www.pirc-info.net

Parent Training Information Centers – www.taalliance.org

Research Triangle Institute, Center for Research in Education
www.dpi.state.nc.us/esareports/2_ta.pdf