

# PARAEDUCATOR HANDBOOK

## **District Mission**

The mission of the La Center School District is to create a supportive learning environment that empowers students to reach their fullest potential. We will do this in partnership with families, the community, staff and students to develop confident and self-reliant life-long learners who can thrive in a rapidly changing, more technologically advanced and diverse society.

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**Introduction:**

Welcome to the La Center School District. This handbook has been put together to act as a resource for all paraeducators as they begin a new school year within the district. We appreciate and acknowledge how important our paraeducators are and wish to provide them all the opportunities for a successful career within the district and their current district assignments. As a paraeducator your job and responsibilities will vary based upon the needs of the students for whom you will be working. The nature of your position places you as an important member of the educational team who works closely, under the supervision of the teacher or other professional practitioners, to ensure and support students. At all times you will be expected to abide by the confidentiality, expectations and guidelines established within the teaching community of your assigned position within the La Center school district.

Thank you for choosing to become a Paraeducator for the La Center School District. We appreciate your commitment and caring for all our students.

**Paraeducator Resources & Websites:**

La Center School District: <http://www.lacenterschools.org/>

Legislation and Paraeducators: [www.specialednew.com](http://www.specialednew.com)

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NRCP); [www.nrpara.org](http://www.nrpara.org)

OSPI: <http://www.k12.wa.us/Paraeducators/default.aspx>

Washington State Paraeducator Guidelines (Title I)Paraeducator.Com:

<http://www.paraeducator.com/>

## **General Information:**

### **Absences**

If you will be absent from work for any reason, please submit your absence into AESOP as soon as possible. If you are past the cut off (your building secretary can provide the time) and AESOP will not let you enter the absence - call and leave a message with the Building Secretary to inform her of your absence and to provide you with a substitute for that day. Please call before the start of the school day if possible. If the absence is planned and you have arranged for a specific sub, let the building secretary know so that sub can be assigned.

### **After School Activities**

Ability to participate in activities beyond the regularly scheduled work day.

### **Attendance**

Attendance and punctuality convey how seriously you take your job. Your supervising teacher and the students you work with count on you being at work and on time every day. (*Competency #2*)

### **Cell Phone Use and Texting**

Personal texting and cell phone use is to be done on paraeducator's own time (i.e. breaks, lunch) not during class time or while working with a student. Cell phones can become a distraction and should be silenced during work time unless arrangements are made with a supervising teacher. (*Competency #4*)

### **Electronic Communication & Social Networking**

The La Center School District board of directors supports the use of technology to communicate for educational purposes. However, district employees are prohibited from inappropriate online socializing or from engaging in any conduct on social networking Web sites that violates the law, district policies or other generally recognized professional standards. Employees whose conduct violates this policy may face discipline and/or termination, consistent with the district's policies, acceptable use agreement and collective bargaining agreements, as applicable. *Refer to Policy 5253 and Procedure 5253P.*

### **Concerns**

If work problems arise, an initial attempt should be made to alleviate them with your supervising teacher. If the problem is not resolved through this discussion, it should be brought to the attention of the Principal and in cases of a Special Education situation notify the Special Education Director. (*Competency #5*)

### **Dress Code**

Dress appropriately and professionally at all times. Check district school handbook for appropriate work attire. Working with some students or certain environments may require further consideration of appropriate dress.

**E-mail**

You will be assigned an email address and you should check it daily.

**Evaluations**

Paraeducators who work in Special Education will be evaluated once a year by their Supervising teacher. When the evaluation form is completed the teacher will discuss the evaluation with the paraeducator and make suggestions for improvements. The paraeducator signs the evaluation form to show that he/she has conferred with the supervising teacher about the evaluation. The paraeducator and supervising teacher are provided a copy of the completed evaluation form and the original is sent to the Special Education director or Principal to review and sign off.

**Trainings**

Training opportunities will be made available throughout the school year.

*(Competency #13)*

**Leaving the Grounds During the Day**

Do not leave the grounds during the day without first clearing it through your supervising teacher. If leaving for a particular reason is part of your regular work schedule let your teacher and/or building secretary know when you leave the grounds. Leaving the grounds for a scheduled meal or rest period does not require clearing with a supervising teacher or notifying a building secretary. *(Competency #2)*

**Time Sheets**

Paraeducator time sheets will be accessible through their school email in Google Drive. All hours put in should match leave that has been taken in AESOP. Time sheets indicate the hours the paraeducator worked each day during the pay period. Your time sheet must be date signed electronically by you and the Special Education Director/Principal. It is the paraeducator's responsibility to get their time sheet signed electronically by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. (If the 10<sup>th</sup> falls on a day off-the last working day prior will be the cut off.)

**Work Schedule**

Paraeducators work only those days when school is in session with students present. It is expected that they will report to work at the time specified by the supervising teacher. If a student is not at school, the supervising teacher will have work for you to do. Any additional working hours/days must be approved by the Principal/Special Education Director.

**School Policies and Procedures**

Paraeducators are responsible to go over the district's school handbook and be familiar with the school policies and procedures. A handbook can be obtained from each school office.

*(Competency #2)*

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment information can be found in each staff break room located in each building and is covered in the La Center School District annual staff training.

## **Individualized Educational Programs (IEP):**

Each student in the special education program has an IEP which the teacher uses as a guide for that child's school activities. This program was developed in a combined meeting of a school administrator, the child's teacher(s), the child's parents and/or guardians, support personnel, and other professionals. It is usually written for one year and periodically reviewed throughout the year by the teacher to note progress. Paraeducators may or may not take part in the committee meeting where the IEP is written, but undoubtedly you will be carrying out learning activities and recording progress concerning the IEP goals and objectives. Paraeducators will have access to IEP documents regarding the student(s) they work with and must at all times keep the confidentiality of these documents. (*Competency #7*)

## **504 Plan**

Section 504 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving Federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or (2) have a record of such an impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

## **Student/Paraeducator Safety:**

### **Confidentiality**

The family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) are federal laws intended to protect an individual's right to privacy with respect to medical or educational records maintained regarding that individual.

Paraeducators should refrain from giving out or discussing personal information from any student files without first addressing the issue with the supervising teacher. These considerations may sound like simple common sense, but it is a good idea to keep them in mind. (*Competency #4*)

The issue of confidentiality is an important ethical consideration for all staff members. Because paraeducators have daily contact with students and access to confidential information, and may often interact with families and community members, they need to be aware of FERPA and HIPAA laws. Additionally - this not only applies to students - but staff members as well. If you need further clarification or assistance please speak with your supervising teacher.

## **Medication**

Under normal circumstances prescribed oral or over the counter oral medication, topical medication, eye drops and ear drops should be dispensed before and/or after school hours under supervision of the parent or guardian. Oral medications are administered by mouth either by swallowing or inhaling including through a mask that covers the mouth or mouth and nose. If a student must receive prescribed or non-prescribed oral medication, topical medication, eye drops and ear drops from an authorized staff member, the parent must submit a written authorization accompanied by a written request from a licensed health professional prescribing within the scope of his or her prescriptive authority. The health professional must also provide written, current and unexpired instructions for the administration of the medication. *Refer to policy 3416.*

Each school principal shall authorize two staff members to administer prescribed or non-prescribed oral medication, topical medication, eye drops and ear drops. Oral medications are administered by mouth either by swallowing or inhaling and may include administration by mask if the mask covers the mouth or mouth and nose. These designated staff members will participate in an in-service training session conducted by a physician or registered nurse prior to the opening of school each year.

Prescribed or over-the-counter oral medication, topical medication, eye drops and ear drops may be dispensed to students on a scheduled basis upon written authorization from a parent with a written request by a licensed health professional prescribing within the scope of their prescriptive authority. The written request must be accompanied by written instructions from a licensed health professional. Requests shall be valid for not more than the current school year. The prescribed or non-prescribed medication must be properly labeled and be contained in the original container. *Refer to procedure 3416P.*

## **Suicide Awareness**

All staff members and volunteers shall be made aware of their responsibilities in the event of a potential, attempted, or actual suicide incident. Staff and volunteers are expected to follow the procedures as specified.

## **Suicide Ideation – No Physical Evidence**

Any staff member or volunteer who receives from any source or discovers information about a potential suicide ideation (notes, threats, conversations, and/or indications of thoughts of killing oneself) will immediately notify the principal or designee as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the school day.

## **Attempted Suicide**

Any staff member or volunteer who discovers or is informed of physical evidence relating to an attempted suicide (drug overdose, self-mutilation, etc.) by a student at school, on school district

property, or at school-sponsored events, shall take, or arrange for another adult to escort, the student immediately to the office and inform the principal or designee. *Refer to policy 3420.*

The following actions shall be taken by the principal or designee:

1. Contact 911 if there is any question that a life-threatening situation is involved;
2. Assign a staff member or volunteer who will remain with the student at all times;
3. If warranted, clear the immediate area;
4. Contact and advise the parent/guardian/custodian of the situation and what actions are being taken;
5. Notify appropriate staff members for consultation during the crisis;
6. Community Crisis Mental Health Services shall be contacted for consultation and recommendation.
7. Accompany the student to the hospital, if such action is necessary; and
8. Following the crisis, staff will:
  - a. Contact the parent/guardian/custodian for a follow-up;
  - b. Contact other professionals involved in the case for educational planning and follow-up services;
  - c. Develop and monitor a follow-up plan.

Before readmission, the appropriate health care provider must provide a risk assessment and a statement that the student is suitable for readmission. *Refer to procedure 3420P.*

Three steps are vital in a suicide prevention program:

1. Ensuring the short-term physical safety of the student;
2. Referring to appropriate professional or agency; and
3. Communicating with appropriate school personnel, parents/guardians/ custodians and local support personnel and establishing an interim plan of action. *Refer to procedure 3420P.*

## **Seizures**

Paraeducators should learn the procedure to follow if a child has a seizure and discuss with your supervising teacher about specific procedures regarding seizures. Paraeducators should follow the emergency care plan for each student. In general, a student having a seizure should be kept from harming himself or others, but should be allowed to have the seizure without restriction. Adults should keep hands and objects out of the student's mouth. When the seizure is over, the student should be kept warm and quiet and allowed to lie down and rest. Your teacher should make contact with the principal, parents, and possible medical personnel. The district nurse should be made aware of the seizure and will handle the situation if available. In the event you feel emergency medical service is required-dial 911 first-then notify the office. (*Competency #12, #14*)

## **Reporting of Child or Adult Dependent Person Abuse**

Child abuse, neglect and exploitation are violations of children's human rights and an obstacle to their educational development. The board directs that staff shall be alert for any evidence of such abuse, neglect or exploitation. *Refer to policy 3421.*

## **Reporting Responsibilities**

Staff are expected to report every instance of suspected child abuse or neglect. Since protection of children is the paramount concern, all staff should first discuss any suspected evidence with the principal or school nurse regardless of whether the condition is listed among the indicators of abuse or neglect. All staff are reminded of their obligation as district employees to report suspected child abuse, and professional staff are reminded of their legal obligation to make such reports. Staff are also reminded of their immunity from potential liability for making such reports in good faith.

Staff shall advise the principal or designee regarding instances of suspected abuse or neglect who reports suspected abuse to state authorities or law enforcement.

*Refer to Procedure 3421P.(Competency #7 ,#12)*

## **Best practices for a Paraeducator**

The mission of the La Center School District is to create a supportive learning environment that empowers students to reach their fullest potential. We will do this in partnership with families, the community, staff and students to develop confident and self-reliant life-long learners who can thrive in a rapidly changing, more technologically advanced and diverse society.

## **The Characteristics of Effective Paraeducators**

- Good interpersonal skills
- A positive attitude
- A desire for self-improvement
- Self-confidence
- Patience
- Empathy and concern for children

## **Paraeducator Responsibilities**

The primary responsibilities of the paraeducator are to perform the tasks assigned by the supervising teacher to ensure and support student independence. *(Competency #2)*

### **A paraeducator may be asked to:**

1. Work with any student regardless of their different ability levels.
2. Follow through with the IEP objectives, including math, reading, writing, social, behavior, speech, and developing independent skills.
3. Implement teacher lesson plans.
4. Supervise and assist students in the special education classroom as well as, when included in general education classes.



5. Communicate pertinent information to teachers.
6. Collect data, maintain records.
7. Assist in supervision of students during recess and lunch periods and accompany student on community experiences.
8. Strictly adhere to **confidentiality** requirements regarding all matters pertaining to student, parents, parent communications, and/or classroom activities. (**NOTE:** Unless instructed otherwise by supervising teacher, all parent communication must come directly from certified personnel.)
9. Assist with activities or prescribe programs including those written by related service personnel such as Physical Therapist (PT), Occupational Therapist (OT), and Speech.
10. Assist in development of independent skills through self-care activities such as toileting, clothing routines and personal hygiene.
11. Implement behavior management techniques in accordance with the direction given by the supervising teacher (reinforcing appropriate behaviors in accordance with the teacher's plan, supervising timeout, etc.)
12. Provide support to students with health care needs as well as, any personal hygiene needs. (i.e. use of bathroom, diapers, etc.)
13. Other duties as assigned by supervisor such as provide clerical assistance (type and duplicate materials, make instructional games, etc.)
14. As applicable, assist with the job coaching at community sites as well as with transportation to and from job sites.
15. Give their full attention to students and are there to monitor, assist and aid student in learning and building independent skills.

All decisions and /or questions regarding Special Education services are to be referred to the supervising special education teacher.

**Paraeducators will not be asked to:** (*Competency #2*)

1. Be solely responsible for a special education instructional or related service.
2. Be responsible for selecting formal diagnostic or psychological instruments or for interpreting the result of those instruments.
3. Be responsible for selecting, programming or prescribing educational activity or material of the student without the supervision and guidance of the teacher.
4. Be assigned to implement the individual education program for disabled students without direct supervision and involvement from the professional.
5. Be employed in lieu of certified special education personnel.
6. Perform nursing procedures or administer medications without appropriate supervision from an approved health care professional.

**Information to Ask the Supervising Teacher:** (*Competency #5*)

- Clarify hours and days you will be working – ask for a school calendar.
- What records are you responsible for keeping?
- What special services are available to the classroom and the school in which you work?

- What schedules are you responsible for following?
- When do students arrive and depart?
- What are the playground rules and regulations?
- When is your lunch scheduled?
- Where are the supplies kept and how are they obtained?
- How much time will you spend in inclusion classrooms? How much time in the special education classroom?
- What is the line of communication and authority you are to follow?
- With whom should you discuss a problem concerning relationships? School policy?
- What should be my response when a parent raises questions on their child's functioning in the classroom?
- What student records are available to you?
- What is expected of you in terms of student discipline?
- What course should you follow if you feel that you do not have enough to do?
- How does your teacher view the teacher/paraeducator relationship?
- What is expected of you in terms of confidentiality of student records?

## **Guidelines for Working with Students**

### **Working with Students in all Settings**

Each individual student a paraeducator will work with has their own specific needs. As a paraeducator your responsibility is to aid in meeting each students needs and assisting them with becoming successful and independent within their environment. You are always encouraged to give verbal praise to children or high fives for good work, avoid hugging. Physical reprimanding should never occur.

#### *General Guidelines –*

- Treat each student as an individual.
- Be kind, consistent, and firm.
- Allow each child to be as independent as possible.
- Be positive with each child.
- Give many nonverbal and verbal praises.

### **Working with Students in Inclusion Classroom (these are guidelines-talk to your supervising teacher)**

- Work closely with supervising teacher as well as classroom teacher to aid in student(s) success.
- Talk to general education teacher about student(s) expectations within the classroom and how behavior may be dealt with, if needed. Talk with general education teacher in advance about what assignments, tests etc. are going to be taught so paraeducator can support modifications made by the teacher.
- Life Skill Students can perform as well as general education students with the proper supports and modifications.

- Para educators should always be in the classroom with the student(s) and focused on what student(s) is doing and providing a least restrictive environment for the student.
- Sit within proximity of students(s) so you can provide as much or as little support as necessary.
- Try to do what the class is doing, as much as possible, notes, discussion, group work etc. If not possible, do less problems, work as a group, change question to make it easier to understand, provide more time if needed.
- Reading assignments can be read together and questions discussed.
- Strive to keep your interactions with a child positive. Talk in depth to your supervising teacher to find the best ways to work with each student. (*Competency #6, #11*)
- If student(s) are absent, they need to follow classroom policy to receive makeup work.
- Sometimes it is necessary to use material that is at a lower level than the general education assignment to support quality learning.
- Behavior is very important. The General Education teacher is responsible to redirect student, don't micro manage the situation. Give support when directed by the General Education teacher to do so.
- Each student is different and requires a different strategy to manage their behavior.
- Give students positive reinforcement.
- Have clear expectations of the student and make sure student understands what you and general education teacher expect, such as get your journal or notes out each day.
- Special education teacher is always the primary communication between teachers, staff, and paraeducators. If teachers, staff or paraeducators have concerns direct them to the Supervising teacher.

### **Guidelines for Lifting Students:**

- Proper lifting maintains the back health and safety of the lifter and the student's
- independence, function, and range of motion. (*Competency #12*)

### **When lifting students . . .**

- Clear both transfer surfaces and the movement path.
- Stabilize the transfer surfaces. Lock wheelchair brakes and any wheeled support.
- Wear non-skid shoes.
- Tell the student what you will do in the lift and what they will be expected to do.
- Unfasten all straps and belts.
- Keep feet shoulder-width apart to improve balance.
- Bend mainly at the hips and knees while maintaining normal back alignment, including an arch in the lower back.
- Lift the student as close to his or her center of gravity as possible, by the waist or crossed arms.
- Hold the student as close to your body as possible to decrease the weight of the load.

- Instruct and enable the student to help you as much as possible.
- Complete the lift before turning; do not twist your body while lifting.
- Use safety devices, including a gait belt, whenever possible.
- If the student is heavier than 35% of your body weight . . . Use two people to lift.
- Transfer the student, rather than lift. Examples of transferring include moving the student from the floor to a standing position; from a wheelchair to a mat or chair; and from a standing table to a wheelchair.
- Use adaptive equipment to help lift the student.
- Always *transfer* rather than lift students who can assist you.
- Remember in lifting, transferring, and carrying, your personal safety and that of the student are the primary concern.
- Consult with the physical therapist or nurse if you have questions.

### **Guidelines for Toileting, Diapering, and Feminine Hygiene:**

- Respect the student's privacy.
- Remember important safety issues, such as how to handle body fluid and using correct transferring techniques.
- Allow the student as much independence as possible.
- Learn how the student communicates the need to go to the bathroom.
- Maintain the student's privacy by closing the door or using a screen.
- Wear gloves and bag and seal diapers or body fluid.
- Dispose diapers and other supplies in a proper container.
- Wash students, as well as your own, hands.
- *(Competency, #14)*

### **Universal Precautions:**

Use Universal Precautions at all times- gloves, masks, etc. If in doubt contact custodial services for proper cleanup. Always assume that any body fluid is contaminated and treat it accordingly. More information is located in the comprehensive safety manual - located in each building office. Final note: If it is sticky and wet and it's not yours, don't touch it! *(Competency #12) Refer to Annual Staff Training*

### **Prompting:**

A prompt is a stimulus (cue) given by a teacher/paraeducator to a student in order to elicit a specific response (behavior). Prompts are generally used in conjunction with reinforcers to teach new behaviors. The following is an illustration of the hierarchy of prompts that are commonly used in the classroom. **Note:** It is always desirable to use the least intrusive prompt that is necessary to elicit the desired response. *(Competency #10)*

## PROMPTING LESS TO MOST

### Least Intrusive to Most Intrusive

1. Independence – the student performs the desired step on his/her own
2. Indirect Verbal/Non verbal Prompt – the student performs the desired step within a task with a subtle verbal or nonverbal message from the teacher which infers that a specific step needs to occur next (e.g. “What do you need to do now?” or pointing to task).
3. Direct Verbal Prompt – the student performs the desired step within a task with direct and specific instructions from the teacher (e.g. “Pick up the \_\_\_\_\_”).
4. Gestural Prompt – the student performs the desired step within a task with a motion or signal from the teacher (e.g. the teacher points to the “finish box”).
5. Modeling Prompt – the student performs the desired step within a task by imitating the teacher’s motion (e.g. the teacher performs the task prior to, or during, performance by the student).
6. Partial Physical Assistance – the student performs the desired step within the task with light physical guidance from the teacher (e.g. The teacher taps the student’s elbow to remind him/her to move it forward).
7. Full Physical Assistance – the student performs the desired step within the task with light, but firm guidance from the teacher (e.g. The teacher lightly holds the student’s forearm and guides it forward).
8. **Remember:** there should always be at least three positive reinforcers given for each prompt given throughout the day. These reinforcers should be individualized to the student because students vary in the kinds of things they like. For example, some will like “high fives” handshakes or a pat on the shoulder. Others might prefer verbal praise, a nod, or getting to participate in a favorite activity. The reinforcers should also vary with each student. When you use the same reinforcers all the time it loses its effectiveness because it becomes ordinary. ***Remember the 3 to 1 ratio of positive reinforcers to prompts is very important!***

### Points to remember for the use and selection of prompts:

- A prompt should occur before an error is made. If an error is made, then you will be correcting an error instead of giving a prompt. Less assistance is indicated if a student responds correctly several times to the prompt that you are currently using. This is called fading. Since our goal should always be to get the student to respond to natural, inherent cues, we should always be thinking of fading our instructional prompts.
- Remember to always allow students processing time before prompting. Some students need this extra processing time, not another prompt. After a natural cue has been given, allow the student to process before adding the prompt, move physically/visually away from the student (count to 10 in your head if needed).
- Communication and Prompting, things to remember, 90% of communication with students is non-verbal. Be aware of your body language and facial expressions. Use a

neutral tone of voice; avoid blame, shame, sarcasm. Always allow extra processing time and keep directions simple and explicit.

- When selecting appropriate prompts, you should consider the following questions:
  1. What level of prompts has been used successfully in the past with the student?
  2. Does the prompt selected to use with the student make sense to the student?
  3. Is the chosen prompt the least intrusive one that is effective?

## **Fostering Confident, self-reliant and life-long learners**

### **Obstacles to Student Independence (student becomes dependent on partnership)**

- To much assistance from paraeducator
- Time – Quicker for paraeducator to do work
- Outside Pressure – Family wants, teacher wants paraeducator to fill expectations
- Lack of proper paraeducator training- best practices, structured planning time

### **Student Independence (self-reliance)**

- Paraeducator lets student take risks and make mistakes
- Paraeducator focuses on students strengths and skills
- Paraeducator allows time for student processing of information
- Paraeducator allows for environmental arrangement
- Paraeducator allows peer support
- Paraeducator prompts using least to most
- Paraeducator has a plan for fading support

### **Focus on Student Strengths and Skills (confidence)**

- Provide positive information and strategies
- Answer the question, “What works for this student?”
- Encourage and motivate the student
- Build self-esteem in student
- Focus on student’s strengths to address the challenges they face

### **Planned Fading (Life-long learner)**

- Fading: The process of gradually and systematically reducing the amount of assistance a student receives from staff
- Allows student to respond to natural cues
- Reduce intensity of prompts while maintaining reinforcement
- Can reduce by intensity or frequency
- Plans to fade should be done in collaboration and based on data, student’s strengths and needs

### **Challenges to providing Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

- Allowing student to become unnecessarily dependent upon paraeducator
- Interfering in students appropriate interactions with peers

- Taking over student’s responsibilities, not providing student with choices creating loss of independence for student
- Separating student from classroom by sitting in back or away from others
- Sitting always next to student (allow student to be on own if applicable)
- Interfering with teacher engagement, not allowing teacher to work with student or answer students questions
- \*Providing a student with paraprofessional support has been a way to assist students in maintaining in the LRE (Least Restrictive Environment). It is important to make sure the student has the opportunity to be learning within an environment that supports him as well as allows for student to be as independent, successful, and involved as possible.

## Qualifying Students for Special Education

**Washington Administrative Code (WAC 392-172A-01035)** defines a student eligible for special education as a student who has been evaluated and determined to need special education because of having a disability in one of the following eligibility categories and because of the disability and adverse educational impact, has unique needs that cannot be addressed exclusively through education in general education classes with or without individual accommodations, and needs special education and related services.

### Eligibility Categories:

#### Specific Learning Disability

Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia, that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

**Characteristics:** A student may have one or several

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• short attention span</li> <li>• easily distracted</li> <li>• difficulty decoding written language</li> <li>• poor reading comprehension</li> <li>• organizational difficulties</li> <li>• poor coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor handwriting</li> <li>• impulsive</li> <li>• immature for their chronological age</li> <li>• inconsistent performance</li> <li>• slow completing tasks</li> <li>• easily frustrated - doesn't persevere</li> </ul>
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### Ideas for supporting these students:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use variety.</li><li>• Avoid distractions (background noises, foot traffic, etc.).</li><li>• Offer choices of ways to accomplish a task or assignment when possible.</li><li>• Use lots of gestures and body language.</li><li>• Give specific, honest praise to help students realize their strengths.</li><li>• Provide extra time and space while they process information.</li><li>• Teach learning and organizational techniques when possible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate (don't just explain) tasks.</li><li>• Give clear, concise directions – don't use too many words.</li><li>• Use visual progress charts.</li><li>• Use peer tutors when possible.</li><li>• Use concrete examples whenever possible. Abstract ideas are often confusing to them.</li><li>• Present new information in small doses–Let them master it before presenting more information.</li><li>• Don't give “busy work”–make sure all written work is meaningful.</li></ul>
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### Intellectual disability

Intellectual disability means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

### Characteristics: A student may have one or several

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• limited problem solving skills</li><li>• low academic skills (reading, writing math, etc.)</li><li>• needs extensive practice to learn new skills</li><li>• forgets easily</li><li>• may “parrot” back information without understanding what she is saying</li><li>• may tell you he understands when he doesn't</li><li>• tends to mimic behaviors she doesn't comprehend</li><li>• demonstrates few pre--vocational or vocational skills</li><li>• has fewer work experiences (babysitting, lawn mowing, etc.) typical for their age group</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• slower rate of speed</li><li>• needs immediate positive feedback</li><li>• limited vocabulary</li><li>• inability to put her thoughts into words</li><li>• low frustration level</li><li>• poor concentration</li><li>• unable to generalize new concepts –for example, he can count change at school but doesn't know how to use that skill on a job</li><li>• doesn't understand abstract ideas</li><li>• doesn't comprehend amounts (time, space, numbers, etc.)</li><li>• immature social skills and emotional reactions</li><li>• below average motor skills</li></ul>
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**Ideas for supporting these students:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teach new skills in smaller steps –one step at a time.</li> <li>● Make sure they master each step before moving on.</li> <li>● Review often.</li> <li>● Give lots of practice.</li> <li>● Demonstrate (don't just explain) tasks.</li> <li>● Give multiple opportunities to practice a new skill. She may forget it easily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use positive reinforcement often.</li> <li>● Provide extra time to process information –don't rush her.</li> <li>● Use concrete examples whenever possible.</li> <li>● A Student may tell you that he understands even when he doesn't.</li> <li>● If he can tell you the idea in his own words he probably understands it.</li> <li>● Avoid distractions.</li> </ul>
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**Hearing impairment (including deafness)**

Hearing impairment means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a student's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section. Deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

**Ideas for supporting these students:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Remember, students who are totally deaf do not read lips and will not be communicating in their first language. English is a second language for them. Therefore, misunderstanding and miscommunications easily occur. Abstract concepts are often difficult to share.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use an interpreter if a student needs it.</li> <li>● If a student reads lips, have good lighting.</li> <li>● Use body language to supplement the spoken word.</li> <li>● Face the student while you are talking to them.</li> </ul>
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**Autism**

Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

**Characteristics:** A student may have one or several

<b>Social Deficits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hard time relating to others</li> <li>● Socially awkward</li> <li>● little or no empathy for others</li> <li>● severe problems in transitioning from</li> </ul>	<b>Communication problems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● significant problems with communication (speech)</li> <li>● peculiar speech patterns</li> <li>● very literal in understanding speech</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● one activity (or location) to another</li> <li>● developmentally behind peers and may learn skills out of typical sequence</li> <li>● has a hard time making and maintaining friendships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● and doesn't understand idioms, humor, sarcasm, word plays, etc.</li> </ul> <p>Bizarre and / or repetitive behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● may be unusually sensitive or insensitive to sensory stimuli</li> <li>● rocking, flapping, head banging, etc.</li> </ul>
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### **Ideas for supporting these students**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prepare students for upcoming changes. Give them time to make a mental transition before starting new activities or going to a new location.</li> <li>● Provide work area free of distractions</li> <li>● Provide social skills training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide training in practical areas (in addition to academics) - work experience, accessing public transportation, independent living skills, etc.</li> <li>● Avoid slang, jokes, and idioms</li> </ul>
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### **Speech or Language Impairment**

Speech or language impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

### **Ideas for supporting these students:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allow students time to process information or give information</li> <li>● Provide follow up to verbal instructions</li> <li>● Provide written outlines for lectures or notes of lectures so they can concentrate on what is being said</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrate and/or give examples of what you talk about.</li> <li>● Realize that these students often have a hard time finding the right words to express themselves and/or in organizing their thoughts.</li> </ul>
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### **Emotional Behavioral Disability**

Emotional/behavioral disability means a condition where the student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a student's educational performance: An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.

- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

**Characteristics:** A student may have one or several

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poor self control</li> <li>● Have problems associating their behavior with consequences</li> <li>● Negative self concept or lack of confidence</li> <li>● Impulsive, overactive, and restless</li> <li>● Frequently disruptive</li> <li>● Uncooperative and defiant</li> <li>● Severely depressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Destructive to themselves and others</li> <li>● Aggressive</li> <li>● Easily distracted</li> <li>● Short attention span</li> <li>● Inhibited and withdrawn or will not communicate with others</li> <li>● Imagines “the whole world is against me”</li> </ul>
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**Ideas for supporting these students:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish clear, concise expectations</li> <li>● Provide immediate feedback</li> <li>● Use high rates of specific praise</li> <li>● Provide specific instructions</li> <li>● Provide a work area free of distractions</li> <li>● Separate students that provoke each other</li> <li>● Break large tasks into smaller ones so that is is less overwhelming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When disciplining or discussing problems, don’t do it in front of an “audience”</li> <li>-Calmly discuss the problem</li> <li>-Explain when a behavior is inappropriate</li> <li>-Keep voice low and soft</li> <li>-Let the student calm down</li> <li>● Allow student to explain his point of view</li> <li>● Once the student has had an opportunity to discuss any problem, you should work together to plan some solutions</li> </ul>
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### **Traumatic Brain Injury**

Traumatic brain injury means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Traumatic brain injury applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. Traumatic brain injury does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma. The injury may be temporary or permanent. The effects of the injury can show up in areas such as:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cognition</li> <li>● Attention</li> <li>● Judgement</li> <li>● Perception</li> <li>● Language</li> <li>● Reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Speech</li> <li>● Memory (especially short term)</li> <li>● Abstract Thinking</li> <li>● Sensory</li> <li>● Personality Change</li> <li>● Problem solving</li> </ul>
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### **Other Health Impairment**

Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome and adversely affects a student's educational performance.

### **Orthopedic Impairment**

Orthopedic impairment means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

### **Deaf-blindness**

Deaf-blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness and adversely affect a student's educational performance.

### **Multiple Disabilities**

Multiple disabilities means concomitant impairments, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term, multiple disabilities does not include deaf-blindness.

### **Developmental Delay**

Developmental delay means a student three through eight who is experiencing developmental delays that adversely affect the student's educational performance in one or more of the following areas: Physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development or adaptive development and who demonstrates a delay on a standardized norm referenced test, with a test-retest or split-half reliability of .80 that is at least:

- Two standard deviations below the mean in one or more of the five developmental areas;
- or

- One and one-half standard deviations below the mean in two or more of the five developmental areas.

**Visual Impairment**-Visual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

**Washington's Guidelines to Fulfill the No Child Left Behind (NCLB)  
Title I Paraeducator Requirement (*Competency #2*)  
(taken from OSPI website)**

**<http://www.k12.wa.us/Paraeducators/pubdocs/FulfillRequirements.pdf>**

Title I Section 1119(g) mandates paraeducators meet new Title I requirements through:

- two years of study at an institution of higher education, **or**
- an associate (or higher) degree, **or**
- a formal assessment

Washington's paraeducators have multiple pathways to meet the formal assessment option of the Title I requirements. All formal assessment pathways are developed on a common set of knowledge and skill requirements in reading, writing, and mathematics and are approved by OSPI. **School districts are responsible for determining which options and/or pathways best meet the needs of their staff and district policies.** Recordkeeping for all options and pathways will be documented through *Record of Verification of NCLB Title I Paraeducator Requirements*, Form SPI 1581 (1/04). (See Data Collection and Recordkeeping Section)

Section 1119(g) options and Washington's formal assessment pathways for paraeducators to meet the Title I requirements are listed below.

**PARA I - SUPPORT: ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:**

- Assist the teacher with instructional programs; provide one-on-one, small group, clerical and behavior management support; supervise student activities as directed
- Assists in the supervision of students during recess and lunchtime programs when accompanying assigned students to these activities
- May attend to physical needs of students, including moving and positioning students and assisting with personal hygiene needs

- Communicate with staff and parents as instructed by the teacher
- Administer tests, collect data, and report student progress
- Maintain accurate data collection records and assist with completion of reports
- Contribute to the collaborative effort of all staff to meet individual instructional needs of students through participation in staff meetings, in service programs, workshops and seminars
- Ability to participate in activities beyond the regularly scheduled work day
- Communicate effectively with students, parents, staff and community partners
- Ability to facilitate student learning by incorporating working knowledge of Board Policies E-1 to E-4 into daily practices
- Other duties as assigned

## **PARA II - INSTRUCTION: ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS**

- Assist the teacher in lesson plan preparation; provide one-on-one and small group instruction and classroom management; perform student observation and assessment and communicate with parents and staff while working in a variety of classroom settings
- Supervise students
- Provide positive behavior management support
- Identify areas of concern and provide developmentally appropriate remediation
- Attend training meetings to broaden expertise in working with remedial students
- Participate as a member of the education team; may attend parent conferences
- May attend to physical needs of students, including moving and positioning students and assisting with personal hygiene needs
- Communicate with staff and parents as appropriate
- Administer tests, collect data, and report student progress
- Maintain accurate data collection records and assist with completion of reports
- Contribute to the collaborative effort of all staff to meet individual instructional needs of students through participation in staff meetings, in service programs, workshops and seminars
- Ability to participate in activities beyond the regularly scheduled work day
- Communicate effectively with students, parents, staff and community partners
- Ability to facilitate student learning by incorporating working knowledge of Board Policies E-1 to E-4 into daily practices
- Other duties as assigned

To work in education and related services programs for children and youth with disabilities, paraeducators will demonstrate the following *core competencies*:

1. understanding the value of providing instructional and other direct services to all children and youth with disabilities;
2. understanding the roles and responsibilities of certificated/licensed staff and paraeducators;
3. knowledge of (a) patterns of human development and milestones typically achieved at different ages, and (b) risk factors that may prohibit or impede typical development;
4. ability to practice ethical and professional standards of conduct, including the requirements of confidentiality;
5. ability to communicate with colleagues, follow instructions, and use problem solving and other skills that will enable the paraeducator to work as an effective member of the instructional team;
6. ability to provide positive behavioral support and management;
7. knowledge of the legal issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities and their families;
8. awareness of diversity among the children, youth, families and colleagues with whom they work;
9. knowledge and application of the elements of effective instruction to assist teaching and learning as developed by the certificated/licensed staff in a variety of settings;
10. ability to utilize appropriate strategies and techniques to provide instructional support in teaching and learning as developed by the certificated/licensed staff;
11. ability to motivate and assist children and youth;
12. knowledge of and ability to follow health, safety, and emergency procedures of the agency where they are employed;
13. awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning; and
14. awareness of personal care and/or health related support.

## Paraeducator Signature Sheet

After you have read the Special Education Paraeducator Handbook and have had any areas of concern addressed for parts that were not clear to you, please complete the lines below and tear off the last page and return it to your supervising teacher.

I have received and read a copy of the Paraeducator Handbook for the La Center School District Department of Enhanced student learners.

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Print name

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Signature

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Date

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Assigned School