

IS A CAREER AS A **PARAPROFESSIONAL** RIGHT FOR YOU?



WHAT IS A SPECIAL EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL?

Paraprofessionals provide instructional supports and services for students within a school setting. A special education paraprofessional is a person who works with one or more students with disabilities under the direction of a teacher. Paraprofessionals may be known by various titles, including a teacher's aide, teacher assistant, paraeducator, one-to-one aide, instructional assistant, or job coach.

In Pennsylvania, there are two types of paraprofessionals that work with students with disabilities: **instructional paraprofessionals** and **personal care assistants (PCAs)**.



Instructional Paraprofessionals

- Work under the guidance of both general and special education teachers
- Lead activities during individual or small group time
- Collaborate with related service personnel to support the carryover of academic skills to other areas of the student's life
- Assist the teacher in observing, recording and charting behavior



Personal Care Assistants (PCAs)

- Provide one-to-one, noninstructional support to individual students in the classroom, hallways, cafeteria, and recreational areas
- Assist students with therapy programs designed by speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, or physical therapists
- Monitor the student's safety, redirect behavior, and assist in the use and care of equipment

YOU MIGHT ENJOY THIS WORK IF YOU LIKE TO:

- Be a part of an instructional team
- Work closely with students and help them during their daily routines
- Assist students in building independent skills
- Coach students through academic and behavioral tasks
- Help students make friends
- Positively impact future generations of citizens

A FEW VOICES FROM THE FIELD: MEET PARAPROFESSIONALS



It is truly amazing... to see [my students] grow and flourish within the years we spend with them.



Teara Moon
Paraprofessional
Pittsburgh Public Schools, Grandview PK-5

Scan or click the QR codes to watch the interviews.



Kristin Suter
Paraprofessional
The Learning Lamp



Teara Moon
Paraprofessional
Pittsburgh Public Schools
Grandview PK-5



Vicky DePuis
Paraprofessional
Selinsgrove Area School District
Selinsgrove Elementary School

HOW TO BECOME A PARAPROFESSIONAL IN PENNSYLVANIA:

In Pennsylvania, there are three options to become a paraprofessional:

OPTION 1

Complete 2 years of postsecondary education.

OPTION 2

Possess an associate degree or higher.

OPTION 3

Successfully complete a state or locally developed assessment. The *Entry Level Credential of Competency for Special Education Paraprofessionals in Pennsylvania* is one way to meet this requirement. The *Entry Level Credential of Competency for Special Education Paraprofessional Documentation* ensures competence in seven performance-based knowledge and skill areas.

