

VIII. PARAPROFESSIONALS

Paraprofessionals are an integral part of the ECKCE workforce. We rely upon our paraprofessionals to work alongside the teacher to deliver supervised instruction and assistance to students as outlined within their individualized education plans. The following are guidelines for paraprofessional expectations.

ECKCE Paraprofessionals:

- Are employees of the ECKCE who function under the governance and direction of the Board Policies and Procedures.
- Shall sign a work agreement that has been approved by the director and the Board. The number of paras employed is determined by need and at the discretion of the Director in concert with the administrative team at each building.
- Shall make an application through the ECKCE approved application sites. Positions will be advertised on these sites by building or district location as appropriate.
- Shall be interviewed by the administration at each building in collaboration with the team with whom they will be assigned. Typically principals will make recommendations to the ECKCE Board for hire.
- Shall be assigned duties by the school team in conjunction with school administration and the Director. Should confusion arise as to the assigned duties, the Director will have the final authority.
- Shall be placed on the ECKCE Board approved Para wage scale by the Director in accordance with experience, assignment and education. inservice
- Shall provide information to complete a background check successfully.
- Shall work on student contact days and any required inservice hours/days. Any additional assigned time must be approved by the Director prior to the assignment.
- Must maintain confidentiality at all times. Paras may not discuss students by name in any context outside of the school environment and only with those who have cause to participate in those conversations.
- Shall serve in the appointed capacity working with students with exceptionalities as defined by IDEA and Kansas statutes. Any deviation from this must be pre approved and documented through time and effort logs per federal and state requirements.
- Shall be evaluated annually by the supervising teacher under the direction of building administration. This evaluation will be reviewed with the paraprofessional and copies given to the para, the principal and the Director by April 30. Recommendations for continued employment will be made at this time and if a recommendation for non-renewal of the agreement is necessary, the para will be notified by the Director after consulting with the Principal. Continuation of employment is at the discretion of the Director.
- Shall complete the requisite professional development hours as required by Kansas Statute. Paras are required to complete 20 inservice hours per year for the first three years of employment and 10 hours each subsequent year. These hours consist of ECKCE inservices, on-the-job training provided by the supervising teacher, building inservices and additional training opportunities such as CPR/First Aid, Crisis Prevention Intervention, etc. All sponsored inservice hours completed on workdays are compensated at the employee's regular rate of pay. If additional inservice hours to complete the 20 hour requirement are not completed during school hours, the para may choose to complete these on their own time but will not be compensated for the time spent completing them. All inservice hours, including those done as a group, must be documented on an Inservice Log form and turned in upon completion to the Paraprofessional Clerk at the ECKCE office. If the requisite number of inservice hours are not completed by March 30 of that school year, the employee may be terminated at the discretion of the director for failure to fulfill the terms of the work agreement.

A. EMPLOYMENT

Paraprofessionals (paras) are employed by the interlocal with an *agreement at will*. This is an agreement, not a contract, and is traditionally set up for one school year. This agreement also means that the para or the interlocal may terminate the employment at any point during the school year.

It is recommended that teachers, working with their building principal, notify the Director of Special Education in March their recommendations regarding para employment for the following school year. Effort will be made to accommodate these requests. Exceptions will be based on current caseload and the individual needs of students being served in each program. If greater student need exists in another classroom, paras may be transferred or re-assigned at the discretion of the Director.

All paraprofessionals working for ECKCE are public employees and therefore subject to KPERS enrollment, as long as they are working more than 21 hours per week, or 630 hours per year (.6). KPERS contributions will be withheld and applied to KPERS retirement accordingly. Paraprofessionals working less than .6 will not be KPERS eligible.

B. QUALIFICATIONS

A high school diploma is required. Experience with children is preferred. “Every Child Succeeds Act” requires instructional paraprofessionals *in Title 1 buildings* meet one of three criteria: have 48 hours of college; have an Associate’s Degree or higher; or pass a test that assesses the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and mathematics.

C. PARAPROFESSIONAL IN-SERVICE

Paras with less than three years of experience **must** complete **20** hours of in-service per school year, or a minimum of 2 hours per month for each month of employment. Paras with more than three years of verified experience **must** complete **10** hours of in-service per school year. Fewer hours may lead to probation, freeze in wages, and/or dismissal. It is the **joint** responsibility of the supervising teacher and the para to make certain in-service hours are completed. It is recommended that in-service be completed, documented and on file in the director’s office by the last Friday of February. Forms for documenting in-service will be provided by the director’s office. Paras are encouraged to keep a copy of the in-service form for their records; a master file for each para is kept at the director’s office.

Each local education agency must adopt and have on file a plan for staff development for special education instructional paras. Each local education agency must prepare and maintain documentation of the annual staff development provided for paras for a period of at least 3 years.

ECKCE staff development program will include the following:

1. Orientation annually to ensure compliance with confidentiality and other requirements, maximum of four hours (Note: beginning of year in-services in which special education issues are on the agenda is considered orientation.); and
2. Staff development activities specifically related to the type of program in which the para is employed.
3. Staff development activities for paras will include various levels of staff development opportunities:
knowledge/learning: in-service, workshop, study group, observation, child-specific presentations;
application/skill development: guided practice, implementing strategies/ideas, peer coaching; and

impact: documenting the effect of implementation with students. Knowledge hours are based on one hour for each contact hour.

D. TIME AND ATTENDANCE

All the paraprofessionals will use Time Management Systems for clocking in and out.

The clock-in time should not be more than 8 minutes prior to their assigned clock-in time unless prior arrangements are made. Likewise, paras should not clock out more than 8 minutes after their assigned clock out time. Paras are assigned a 30-minute lunch period and must clock out and back in for lunch.

E. LEAVE FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

The Interlocal shall allow **10** days of leave each year for full time paraprofessionals, accumulative to **50** days. During the first year of employment, the paraeducator shall be granted ten (10) days of discretionary leave to be allocated in five (5) day increments the first day of each semester. **Paid leave may not be used within the first 30 days of employment. Leave days should not be used in the first or last two weeks of school or to extend holiday breaks by more than 3 days.** Any leave requests of multiple days must be approved by the director; extenuating circumstances will be considered. Part time employees, those working 21 hours a week or less (.6), are not granted paid leave or holiday pay. Those working between .6 and full time will be granted leave on a pro-rated basis. In the event of serious illness of the employee or family member during the first semester, as substantiated by doctor's notes, the director shall have the authority to advance the second semester days for use by the employee. When leave for any semester is exhausted any additional missed days will be without pay. When a paraprofessional has accrued 15 days (105 hours) of leave time, they may choose to sell those days back to the interlocal at a rate of \$30 per day at years' end. The paraprofessional must notify the interlocal of their intention to do so by April 1; if notification is not made, the days will continue to accrue up to 50 days. All accrued leave will be forfeited upon employee involuntary termination. Should the employee leave employment through KPERS retirement or death, the employee or their beneficiary will receive compensation for any accrued leave at the rate of \$30 per day, pursuant to meeting the required minimum 15 days.

The Interlocal shall also pay for six specified holidays as follows; **Labor Day, Thanksgiving (2 days) Christmas (2 days)** and **New Year's Day**, during the contracted year.

In the event of inclement weather school closure, paraprofessionals will be compensated for the first two school days of every year in addition to their discretionary leave. Consideration for additional compensation in the event of excessive closure days will be made by the board when necessary.

F. TRANSFERS

Transfer to another program may be requested, in writing, to the director. Teacher, para, and building administrators must be in agreement to the change of placement prior to the transfer.

G. UTILIZATION OF PARAPROFESSIONALS IN THE CLASSROOM

The special education para is a team member who works alongside the special education teacher. S/he not only frees the teacher from the more routine tasks of the classroom, but also serves as an effective part of the educational team. With differentiated responsibilities, s/he carries out the programs developed by the special

education professionals. However, it is important to note that paras are not teachers and should not be used to take the place of one during instructional time.

In order to use a para effectively, the teacher must first have a clear vision of his/her own role as a teacher. S/he needs to understand the hierarchy of the instructional tasks and then decide which ones best involve his/her time and which ones should be delegated to his/her assistant. The amount and quality of professional supervision given is crucial in deciding what duties paras can and should perform. There is almost universal agreement that the diagnosis of educational needs and the planning and design of programs and procedures to meet those needs are professional functions. The role of the para is to provide support to the approved special education personnel in the educational program, management of students, and assistance with non-instructional tasks. It is not the purpose of para support to foster dependence in a student. Data should be kept to determine the kind and the amount of support that meets the needs of the student. As the child gains skills and confidence, this support should be faded. As it pertains to IEPs, inclusion time (which actually translates into the amount of time a para spends with a student) should not be given in a blanket statement. Rather, it should be given in terms that provide coverage during specific kinds of activities. Again, this should be based on the needs of the student and data should be kept. The principal and special education director are available for consultation with the teacher if questions or problems related to supervision of a para arise.

The following chart differentiates between teacher and para responsibilities in the classroom.

<u>Supervising Teacher</u>	<u>Paraprofessional</u>
1. Diagnoses educational needs associated with testing and other types of assessment.	1. Scores and compiles data
2. Plans instructional programs and process; copies, transcribes	2. Assists with the planning files, etc.
3. Grades students' performance	3. Checks and scores student work
4. Takes responsibility for teaching new concept and skill in classroom activity	4. Reinforces and reviews concepts and skills. Assists students in performing activities initiated by the supervising teacher
5. Revises instructional programs	5. Monitors student progress in instructional programs and relates findings to supervising teacher
6. Designs instructional materials	6. Helps develop instructional materials designed by the supervising teacher
7. Designs and implements behavior intervention plan	7. Monitors and reinforces student performance on behavioral interventions through observation; may assume data collection and other record keeping duties
8. Communicates with parents	8. Maintains records associated with the parent conferencing procedures; may confirm conference dates
9. Implements behavior programs	9. Manages students during times when the teacher is involved in the regular performance of professional duties or has emergency reasons for being out of the classroom; plays supportive management role when supervising teacher is present

The delineation of supervising teacher and paraprofessional responsibilities offered above may be further clarified by the following list.

The Para educator MAY:

The Para educator MAY NOT:

1. Be left alone in the classroom for short periods of time when the supervising teacher is away. The supervising teacher remains responsible for the classroom at all times and must remain accessible.	1. Be used as a substitute for a certified teacher.
2. Work without direct supervision with individuals or groups of students.	2. Teach independently new concepts and skills.
3. Have specific tutorial and management responsibilities for the students.	3. Be given primary responsibility for working with individual students
4. Be involved in student staffing.	4. Be assigned to attend a student staffing in lieu of the supervising teacher.
5. Be used to support the integration of exceptional students into regular classes by tutoring these students in regular class assignments and giving tests orally, etc.	5. Be given primary responsibility for mainstreaming one or more students or used to teach regular curriculum content to non-exceptional students **(see below).
6. Be assigned record keeping tasks relevant to the classroom assignment	6. Be used to carry out clerical responsibilities usually assigned to other staff.
7. Assist the supervising teacher in supervision assemblies and group field trips. Take individual students on job related activities, job interviews, curriculum-based recreation, shopping ect.	7. Take full responsibility for supervising field trips, assemblies or other on teaching duties usually assigned to teacher, e.g., hall duty, extra duty, school clubs, ect.

When a para works in an inclusion setting the para *may* provide instruction to non-handicapped students. This is allowable provided the regular classroom teacher and the para remember the para's *primary responsibility*** lies with the children with IEPs.

H. ESTABLISH TEAMWORK

Teachers often have not had the opportunity to supervise other adults. The following list suggests things teachers can do to establish a good working relationship with a para.

1. Communicate daily; this is essential to building a program which is responsive to handicapped learners.
2. Listen to suggestions or ideas. Be careful not to hurt feelings if the suggestions or ideas are not taken.
3. Give the para feedback about his/her performance.
4. Model professionalism at all times.
5. Discuss problems **IMMEDIATELY**. Do not let them grow by ignoring them.
6. Give instructions that are clear and can be followed.
7. Remember all final decisions are up to the teacher.
8. Do not talk about problems with a para to other paras!
9. Ask for feedback, it helps in communication.
10. Make sure you teach classroom procedures (i.e. to restroom, recess, lunch, drinks, and fire drills) to the para.
11. Help the para become familiar with the types of children served in the classroom.
12. Help the para become familiar with your academic approach.
13. Help the para become familiar with the various types of academic equipment and materials used in the classroom.

14. Mutual respect and support between the teacher and the para must be shown at all times.
15. Work with the para on consistency in handling rules and rewards in the classroom.
16. If work problems arise and you have discussed them unsuccessfully with your para, discuss it with the building principal. This is a personnel issue and must be handled professionally.

I. PARA'S CHECKLIST

The following list may be used to help the teacher develop an initial working relationship with a para new to the classroom.

1. What are your special and regular duties?
2. What records are you responsible for keeping?
3. What special services are available to the classroom and the school in which you work?
4. What schedules are you responsible for following?
5. What emergency provisions apply to your situations?
6. When do pupils come? When do they leave?
7. Where and when will the pupils in your classroom play?
8. What are the most significant playground regulations?
9. For what lunchtime activities will you be responsible?
10. Where are the supplies kept and how are they obtained?
11. What equipment is available and how is it obtained?
12. What is the line of communication and authority you are to follow?
13. If you are responsible for working with more than one teacher, how is your time divided?
14. What pupil records are available to you?
15. To whom should you direct questions concerning school policy?
16. With whom should you discuss a problem concerning relationships?
17. What should my response be when a parent raises a question on their child's functioning in the classroom?
18. What is expected of you in terms of pupil discipline?
19. What course should you follow if you feel that you do not have enough to do?
20. How does your teacher view the teacher/para relationship?

J. PARAPROFESSIONAL EVALUATION

Paras will be evaluated by their supervising teacher, in collaboration with their building principal when appropriate, no later than **March 31** using the evaluation form found on the ECKCE website. The evaluation must be reviewed with the para and both teacher and para will sign the document, which is then sent to the ECKCE office to be placed in the paras employment file. The paraprofessional may respond to the evaluation on the form itself, or they may attach their own response at any time. Paras receiving unsatisfactory evaluation in one or more areas may be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination at the discretion of the principal and the director.