



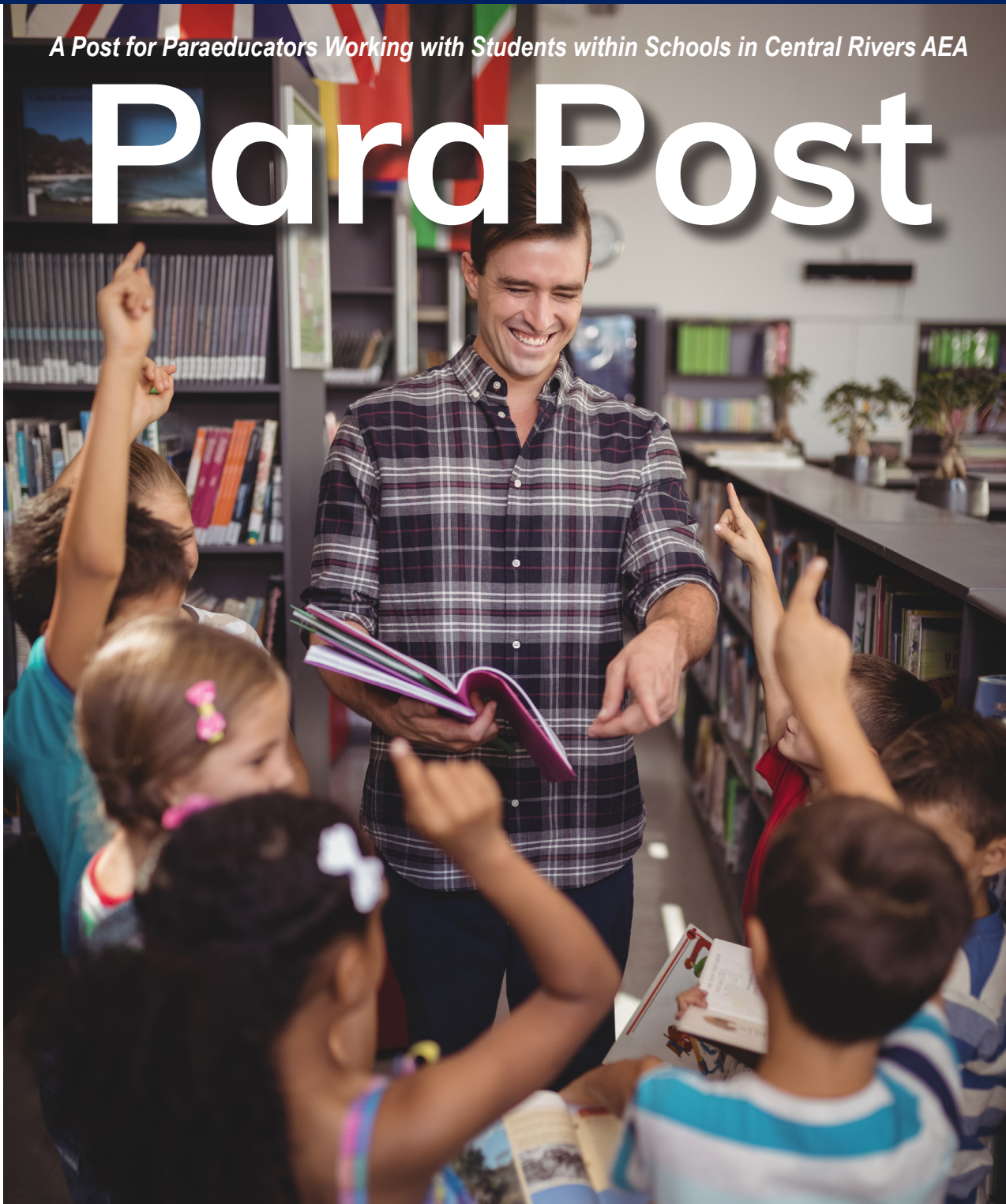
CENTRAL RIVERS
AREA EDUCATION AGENCY

January/February 2024 • Volume 2, Issue 3

www.centralriversaea.org

A Post for Paraeducators Working with Students within Schools in Central Rivers AEA

ParaPost



Welcome to the next ParaPost! A Post for Paraeducators Working with Students within Schools in Central Rivers AEA. We at Central Rivers are looking forward to supporting you in your role as a paraeducator and hope that you find this information useful.

Questions? Contact - Kay Schmalen, Director of Professional Learning • (641)-329-4271 • kschmalen@centralriversaea.org



How to Establish Relationships with Students and Keep It Professional as a Paraeducator

Paraeducators play a vital role in the education of students, and establishing positive and professional relationships with them is essential. By building trust and rapport, paraeducators can create a safe and supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and taking risks.

Here are some tips on establishing relationships with students and keeping it professional as a paraeducator.

- Be respectful. This means treating students with courtesy and kindness, even when they are behaving poorly. It also means respecting their privacy and confidentiality.
- Be supportive. Let students know that you believe in them and their ability to succeed. Offer encouragement and praise, and be there to help them when they need it.
- Be fair. Treat all students equally, regardless of their background, abilities, or behavior. Be consistent in your expectations and discipline.
- Be professional. This means maintaining a professional demeanor at all times, even when interacting with students outside of the classroom. Avoid discussing personal matters with students or becoming too close to them.

Here are some additional tips for keeping your relationships with students professional:

- Avoid physical contact with students, except for what is necessary to maintain their safety.
- Do not gossip about other students or staff members with students.
- Do not share students' personal information with anyone outside the school community.
- If you have any concerns about a student, report them to the appropriate staff member.

Since paraeducators are school team members, reach out and/or accept invitations to collaborate with teachers and other staff members to develop and implement lesson plans, behavior management strategies, and other interventions. Working together can create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

Facebook is a common social media tool that is used by many students, parents, community members, and others outside of your school community. Here are some tips for keeping your relationships with students professional on Facebook:

- Do not engage in private conversations with students on Facebook. If a student messages you privately, direct them to message you through your school email address or another school-approved communication platform.
- Do not accept friend requests from students on your personal Facebook account.
- Do not post photos or videos of students on your personal Facebook account without their permission.
- If you see a student posting something inappropriate on Facebook, report it to the appropriate school staff member.

By following these tips, you can establish positive and professional relationships with students on Facebook while maintaining your role as a paraeducator.

Para Help Line

Submit any questions you have and we will share the answers, advice and guidance. Please submit your questions to tkesler@centralriversaea.org and our team will address them.

One student asks me to “go away” when I work with them. I cannot just let them sit there and fail. What should I do?

Listen to the student. If a student requests that you not work with them, do not support the student at that time. Instead, figure out how you might provide support without being physically next to the student. Depending on what the student is doing while you are away, you might set some boundaries. Walk away and check back in 5 minutes. Just be mindful of getting into a power struggle. Find a time later to problem solve. “What do you need in those moments, and what is our plan?”

When a direction is given, a student just calls my name and asks me to come and help. I am trying to fade my support, but the student will not do anything without me by their side. What should I do?

This student has become very dependent on adult support. We would suggest talking to the student about the need to try things on their own or asking peers for help. Encourage all students in the class to use and provide help to one another. Also, be sure to involve your team in determining ways to increase the student’s independence. You want the solutions to make the student feel empowered to become more independent-not punished for their dependence. Consider having different student roles at the table groups. One person can be responsible for fielding any question the tablemates may have.

I am really just left to figure out how to support my students. What should I do if I receive almost no direction from a teacher?

This is unfortunately a common and major problem. You should first set aside time with the teacher who is directing your work. Be prepared with a list of questions. Ask for the support you need to do your job. Here are some questions to get you started:”

- “Could I have a written plan to follow throughout my day?”
- Could you please tell me specifically what to do when the student gets anxious, gets out of their desk, or [fill in a concerning behavior here]?”
- When I support the students in math, could you give me an outline telling me what to do?”
- Can I shadow you for a day to get a better sense of what I am expected to do?”
- If the student you serve has an IEP you can ask for a copy.

When you meet with the teacher, be specific and ask your questions directly. If you still do not get the answers you need to effectively support the student, consider going to someone else (e.g., the director of special education, the principal) and letting them know you need more support. The bottom line is that you are required by law to receive support and supervision by a certified teacher, so you may be responsible to ensure that is happening.

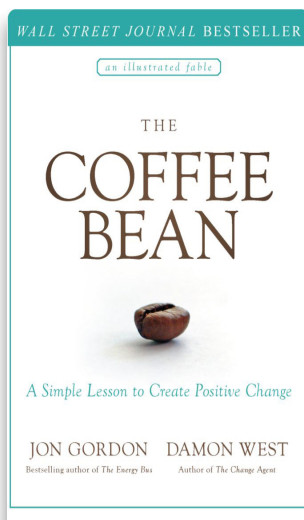
Excerpt From

Facilitator's Guide to The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms, Second Edition

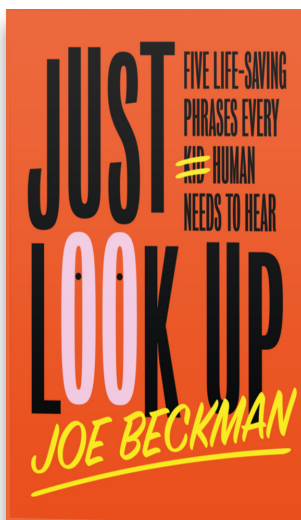
Julie Causton

This material may be protected by copyright.

Recommended Reading

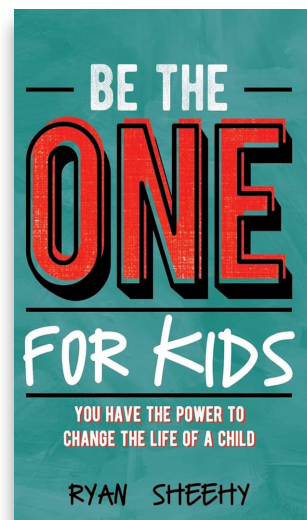


The Coffee Bean
(A simple lesson to create positive change)



Joe Beckman-
Just Look Up!

The most important messages every human needs to hear in today's world.



Be the One for Kids:
You Have the Power to Change the Life of a Child

Students need guidance to succeed academically, but they also need someone to help them survive and thrive in today's world. That someone is you.



Technology Tip for Paraeducators: How to Pick Up Where You Left Off in Chrome

As a paraeducator, you're likely using Chrome to access a variety of resources for your students, including lesson plans, worksheets, and educational websites. With so many tabs open at once, it can be difficult to keep track of where you are. Fortunately, Chrome has a few features that can help you pick up where you left off, even if you close the browser.

1. Set Chrome to reopen your previous tabs when you start it up.

To do this, click the three dots in the top right corner of the browser window and select Settings. Under On start-up, choose Continue where you left off. Now, whenever you open Chrome, it will automatically restore the tabs that were open when you last closed it.

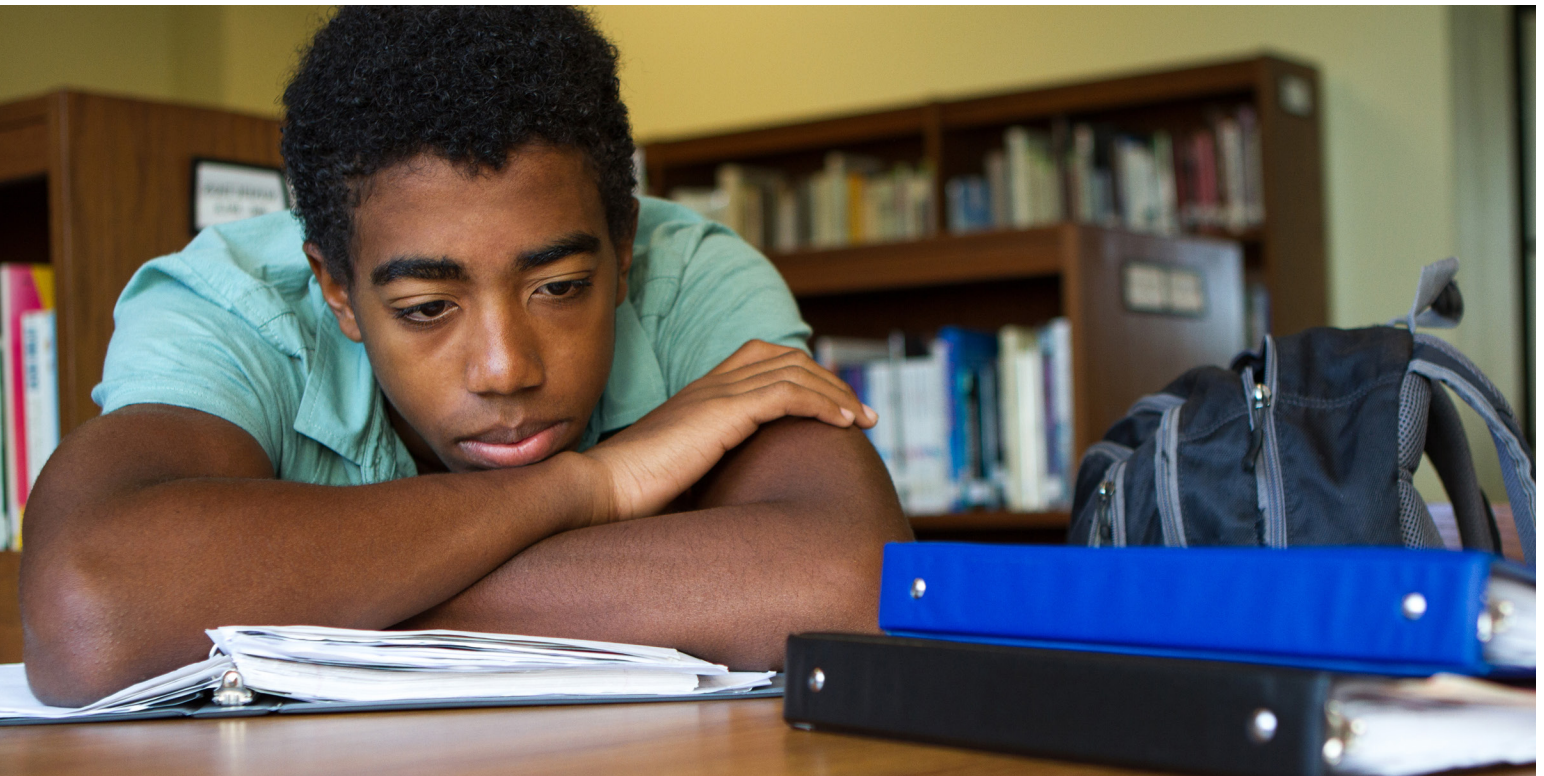
2. Use the **Ctrl+Shift+T** (on a PC) or **Cmd+Shift+T** (on a Mac) keyboard shortcut to reopen a recently closed tab.

If you accidentally close a tab, don't worry! You can easily reopen it by pressing **Ctrl+Shift+T** (on a PC) or **Cmd+Shift+T** (on a Mac) on your keyboard. This shortcut will reopen the most recently closed tab. You can continue pressing the shortcut to reopen older tabs, one at a time.

3. Use **Session Buddy** to save and restore multiple groups of tabs at once.

Session Buddy is a Chrome extension that allows you to save and restore multiple groups of tabs at once. This is a great feature for paraeducators who have different groups of tabs open for different lessons or subjects. To use Session Buddy, install the extension from the [Chrome Web Store](#). Then, click the Session Buddy icon in the top right corner of the browser window to save or restore a group of tabs.

By following these tips, you can easily pick up where you left off in Chrome, even if you close the browser. This can save you a lot of time and frustration, so you can focus on what's important: helping your students succeed.



Thinking Differently about Challenging Behaviors

1. Focus on the Function of the Behavior

Understanding the function of the behavior---what the student is trying to achieve by acting out---is essential. Focusing on the function helps you address the root cause of the behavior instead of the behavior itself.

2. Focus on the Skills Students Have, or Still Need

Social-emotional skills help students address their own needs more effectively, and they can be learned, practiced, and strengthened. Focus on the skills students have, and support students in acquiring the skills they still need.

3. Focus on the Environment

The student's environment, which includes everything external to the student, directly impacts behavior. A well-functioning environment reduces behavioral challenges, and it is something educators can control.

4. Focus on the Hidden Impact of Trauma

Students who have experienced trauma and adversity are at a much higher risk for social, emotional, and academic challenges. Trauma-informed practices support all students, and are particularly effective in addressing the needs of students who have experienced trauma.

5. Focus on Educator Wellness

Relationships are the foundation of work in education, and the quality of our interactions with students determines how they will ultimately interact with us. If we don't take care of ourselves, we can't take care of our students.

Reminder Nominations Central Rivers AEA ABC Paraeducator Award Nominations are Open!



Deadline for submission is February 28th!

In order to honor the hard work and dedication of the paraeducators employed by the schools within CRAEA, we are excited to bring back the ABC (Above and Beyond the Call of the Paraeducator Profession) Paraeducator Award.

This award gives us a chance to highlight the incredible service that paraeducators provide to our schools and our students. Often working without fanfare and behind the scenes, paraeducators are the lifeline for teachers to provide the individual attention so many students need to unlock their academic potential. Through continuous daily successes, students are given the opportunity to maximize their education because of the efforts of paraeducators.



The nomination form is now open! Use the QR code below or <https://bit.ly/ABCparaeducator>

The form asks for 2-3 examples of how the paraeducator goes above and beyond in each competency as well how they go above and beyond the call of duty in the Paraeducator Profession professionally and by being involved in the community. You can also (but NOT required) submit letters of recommendation that may be shared with the nominee. Deadline for submission is February 28th! With regional winners announced in the spring and the agency wide winner announced in May.

Reminder! We need your input!

The Para Institute

We are planning for 2024! Our goal is to provide a learning opportunity specifically focused on all things paraeducators and we need your input! Please complete the form below so the planning committee can design the best possible experience. Share with others!

[Google Survey](#)

From our Content Experts

Empowering Dyslexic Readers: Assistive Tech, Decoding Strategies and Paraeducator Support

~ Danielle Hakeman, Consultant for Literacy

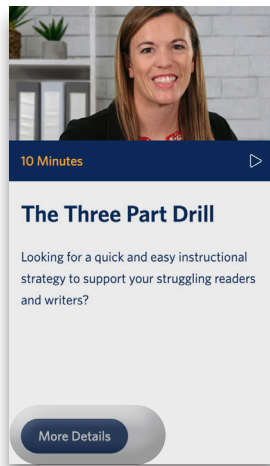
Dyslexia is a reading disability that affects up to 20% of the general population. Of people identified with learning disabilities, up to 90% have dyslexia. While dyslexia is on a spectrum, and what works for one student might not work for all, we can support students with minor changes:

Many struggling readers have assistive technology added to their IEP. Ensure that students have the support necessary to access the assistive technology they need to be successful. For students with dyslexia, it's important to encourage independence. Technology can be a good tool for supporting this goal.

When a student encounters an unfamiliar word while reading, use prompts like, "Say the sounds in that word" or "Look at all of the letters." These prompts encourage students to focus on letter sounds to decode words. Avoid prompts like, "What do you see in the picture?" and "What would make sense in the sentence?" These prompts encourage students to guess, rather than decode.

If the student has a goal in phonics, paraeducators can support them in becoming automatic with letter sounds by using a strategy called **The Three Part Drill**. This strategy focuses only on building automaticity in letter sounds that the teacher has already explicitly taught to the student, so it is a great way for paraeducators to support students. You can learn more about **The Three Part Drill** in our **On Demand Library!**

Contact Danielle at dhakeman@centralriversaea.org



10 Minutes

The Three Part Drill

Looking for a quick and easy instructional strategy to support your struggling readers and writers?

[More Details](#)

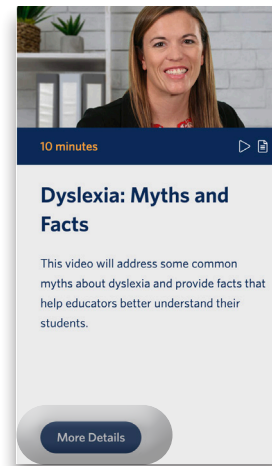


15 Minutes

An Overview of Dyslexia

Have you ever wondered what exactly "dyslexia" is? What are the common characteristics of dyslexia?

[More Details](#)



10 minutes

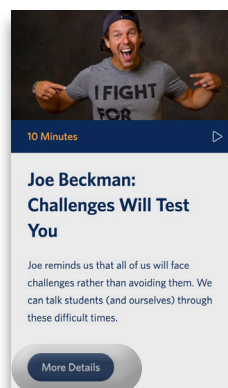
Dyslexia: Myths and Facts

This video will address some common myths about dyslexia and provide facts that help educators better understand their students.

[More Details](#)

On-Demand

Check out the latest On-Demand Learning Opportunities!

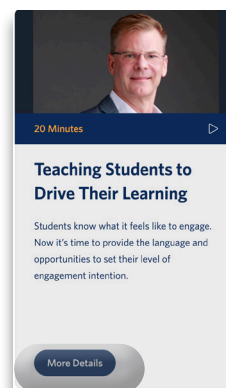


10 Minutes

Joe Beckman: Challenges Will Test You

Joe reminds us that all of us will face challenges rather than avoiding them. We can talk students (and ourselves) through these difficult times.

[More Details](#)

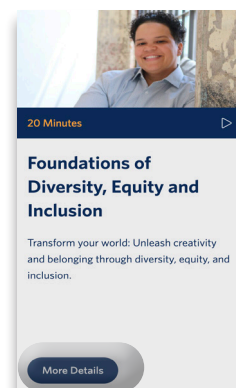


20 Minutes

Teaching Students to Drive Their Learning

Students know what it feels like to engage. Now it's time to provide the language and opportunities to set their level of engagement intention.

[More Details](#)



20 Minutes

Foundations of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Transform your world: Unleash creativity and belonging through diversity, equity, and inclusion.

[More Details](#)

Learning Opportunities!

Central Rivers AEA has a variety of learning opportunities for a variety of audiences.

Paraeducator Generalist Certification Courses

To obtain a Paraeducator Generalist Certification, you must complete the following three courses (from any AEA). Central Rivers AEA offers these courses as a blended opportunity (Virtual Face to Face and online coursework). Together, these three courses cover all six competencies.

- **#204124 CR - Paraeducator Generalist Certification Program - Course I Introduction/Foundation**
April 18, 2024 - June 13, 2024
- **#204317 CR - Paraeducator Generalist Certification Program - Course II Instructional Support**
March 28, 2024 - June 7, 2024
- **#204318 CR - Paraeducator Generalist Certification Program - Course III Behavioral Support**
March 28, 2024 - June 7, 2024

Renewal options

- **#226433 CR - The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms**
March 5, 2024 - April 9, 2024
- **#204352 CR - Literacy Development in Early Childhood**
February 28, 2024-May 22, 2024

Substitute Authorization

Paraeducators who hold a Paraeducator certificate with the limited Substitute Authorization endorsement may serve as a substitute only in their own special education classroom. Limited to 5 consecutive days in your assigned SPED classroom. The Substitute Authorization endorsement added to a paraeducator certificate only works if the Paraeducator is assigned a classroom. If they are not assigned to the classroom they may not sub for that class.

- **#204756 CR - Substitute Authorization**
April 1, 2024 - May 5, 2024

To view previous issues and/or receive our monthly email publications, visit
www.centralriversaea.org/educators/professional-learning/professional-learning-newsletters/

Questions? Contact - Kay Schmalen, Director of Professional Learning • (641)-329-4271 • kschmalen@centralriversaea.org



Central Rivers Area Education Agency (AEA) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, marital status, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background or disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices as required by all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action laws, directives, and regulations of federal, state and local governing bodies and agencies. Students, parents of students, applicants for employment and employees of Central Rivers AEA shall have the right to file a formal complaint alleging non-compliance with federal and state regulations requiring nondiscrimination in educational programs and employment. Inquiries concerning application of this statement should be addressed to: Karl Kurt, Equity Coordinator, Central Rivers AEA, 1521 Technology Pkwy, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613, Telephone: 800-542-8375.