



The Paraprofessional in Education Certificate Program at Cypress College will provide qualified Instructional Assistants with specialized expertise to assist in classrooms and in the community.

The program prepares students through coursework, hands-on activities, and career information for a vocational certificate or AA degree and design a pathway for transfer to the Liberal Studies and Child Development majors, as well as the Human Services major (as an optional pathway to producing a Specialist Credential from the Department of Special Education)

The program also provides students training and education to those already supporting individuals working in the classrooms and community.

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**The
Paraprofessional
In
Education
Certificate**



**Specialized Quality
Training
For
Paraprofessionals**

Why Specialized Training For Paraprofessionals?

The importance of training Paraprofessionals and their supervisors is now being recognized at both the state and national levels. The changing landscape of public education has had a significant impact on the roles of the personnel who serve in our schools. Teacher shortages, increasing numbers of English language learners and rising enrollment of students with disabilities and other special needs are just some of the factors that make the need for a dynamic school team more necessary than ever. In this challenging environment, Paraprofessionals play an increasingly critical role in improving student achievement.

Paraprofessionals – sometimes known as Paraeducators, instructional assistants, educational assistants or teacher aides – are school employees who work under the direction of certified or licensed staff members to help provide instructional and other services to students and their families. Para means “along side of” and like their counterparts in the legal and medical fields, (e.g. paralegals and paramedics), Paraprofessionals assist and support the work team in a variety of ways (Gerlach, 2002). In many districts Paraprofessionals live in the school neighborhood. They sometimes speak the language of the students and provide a special liaison to the community and culture. Educational Paraprofessionals assist in instruction and support under the guidance of the classroom teacher. They tutor children, supervise them in and outside of class, create projects and prepare other materials for instruction. Most Paraprofessionals work the typical school calendar of nine to ten months.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) 2002, aka “No Child Left Behind Act”, requires that each state receiving funding under Title 1 Part A, develop a plan to ensure all new Paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002 and working in a program supported with Title 1 funds have met specific requirements. The need for Paraprofessionals in California has increased dramatically when AB 2042 became law. Now all Paraprofessionals working in Title 1 schools in California must possess a high school diploma

(or GED), must pass a rigorous test created and validated by the district, and have two years of college-level units, or hold an Associate of Arts degree. This legislation applies to all Title 1, bilingual, special education paraprofessionals. While budget shortfalls within the public school system may not allow for great expansion in the number of aides hired in the next few years, there will be many current aides who will choose not to go back to become “highly qualified”. Therefore, many positions will be open between 2003 and 2006 and beyond. Furthermore, aspiring credentialed teachers will now find this position very attractive since after completing an Associate of Arts degree, they can work as teacher aides while continuing their education in the evenings.

In addition, many schools in California and nationwide need credentialed teachers, and the coursework required for these credentials dovetails into an Associate of Arts degree sequence which easily transfers to any CSU should current or future teacher aide desire to acquire the advanced degree and be in charge of their own classrooms.

...So if I get specialized training, what is the job outlook for Paraprofessionals?...

Employment of teacher assistants is expected to [grow somewhat faster than the average](#) for all occupations through 2012. Although school enrollments are anticipated to increase only slowly over the next decade, the student population for which teacher assistants are needed, includes special education students and students with limited English language skills, is projected to increase within the general school-age population. Legislation requiring students with disabilities and non-native English speakers to receive an education “equal” to that of other students will create some teaching assistant jobs to accommodate students’ special needs. Opportunities for teacher assistant jobs are expected to be best for persons with a minimum of 2 years of formal post-secondary education after high school. Candidates fluent in a world language will be in demand in school systems with large numbers of students whose families do not speak English at home.

Course descriptions:

PSY 139 C

This is a study of emotional, intellectual, social and physical growth patterns from conception to death. It emphasizes an integrated approach to each life phase. It also examines the influence of heredity and environment in the life span. The study also includes applicable theories of development.

PSY 240 C

This course explores the physical, cognitive, communicative/linguistic, and socio-emotional development of the child from conception through adolescence across diverse cultures with an emphasis on the learning process. Education and teaching issues related to children are highlighted.

EDU 204 C

This course provides an overview of special education. It includes the theoretical and educational foundations of special education, a historical background to the field of special education, legal issues, and techniques for inclusion of individuals with special needs in all settings. Various implications of full inclusion are discussed.

EDU 209 C

This course is an overview of the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals including legal, instruction, evaluation and behavioral components. It is designed to train persons to work as classroom teaching assistants in public schools. This course meets the current legislative requirements for paraprofessionals.

EDU 211 C

Course is designed for those who are or will be assisting in the elementary through secondary educational setting. Students will be prepared to facilitate classroom and community practices for diverse learners (individuals who have disabilities, are second language learners, are gifted, etc.). Topics will include literacy, language, and behavior support. Introductory knowledge in assessment, design, and implementation of life-span curriculum and methodology will be covered.

HUSR 200 C

This course covers the history and philosophy of the human services; function and orientation of human services agencies and institutions; human services as careers; opportunities and qualifications at various entry levels of human services employment.