

Paraprofessional Guidance

Purpose of Guidance Document

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide information regarding the specific roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional when utilized to assist with certain duties and tasks within a classroom and/or speech-language program. This document will also provide information regarding how to document services in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Paraprofessional Qualifications

All Georgia Paraprofessionals must hold a valid state license issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). Georgia educators who hold a valid professional certificate may serve as Paraprofessionals without holding a specific Paraprofessional license.

An individual must be employed as a Paraprofessional in a Georgia local unit of administration (LUA) in order to qualify for a Paraprofessional license, which is valid for five years. In addition to employment, the applicant must meet one of the following qualifications:

- Hold an associate's degree or higher in any subject from a GaPSC - accepted accredited institution;
- Have completed two years (60 semester hours) of college coursework above the remedial level at a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution with a grad of "C" or better;
- Hold a minimum of a high school diploma or GED equivalent and have passed the GACE Paraprofessional Assessment.

[GaPSC - Paraprofessionals](#)



Overview

Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) and Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) **do not** recognize Speech-Language Pathology Aides or Assistants. Currently, GaDOE has a board rule that contains guidance regarding the use of a Communication Paraprofessional, which is located under the Speech-Language Impairment eligibility rule. Although, the board rule contains guidance regarding the use of a paraprofessional to support the speech-language program, this should not be interpreted to mean that there is a separate certification or different set of allowable duties and responsibilities for those paraprofessionals. The paraprofessional providing support under the direction of a speech-language pathologist is the same as a paraprofessional providing support under the direction of a certified teacher. GaPSC **does not** have a certificate for a Communication Paraprofessional. The approved certificate is for a Paraprofessional.

Georgia State Rules: Eligibility Determination and Categories of Eligibility [160-4-7- \(doe.k12.ga.us\)](https://doe.k12.ga.us/160-4-7-)

Communication Paraprofessionals: A communication paraprofessional is an adjunct to the Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) and assists with certain duties and tasks within the speech-language program. The communication paraprofessional is under the supervision of a certified or licensed SLP. The communication paraprofessional cannot carry their own caseload, nor do they increase the certified SLP's caseload outside of a self-contained classroom. The primary responsibility for the delivery of services, as indicated on the IEP, remains with the certified or licensed SLP. Children who receive services from the communication paraprofessional shall also receive services from the supervising SLP and/or licensed or certified SLP a percentage of the time designated in the IEP for speech-language services, but no less than one hour per month. Each LEA should develop and implement procedures for the training, use and supervision of communication paraprofessionals.

Paraprofessional Guidance for Special Education Services and Supports

The paraprofessional ***shall only*** engage in those duties and tasks planned, designed, and supervised by a certified or licensed speech-language pathologist or teacher, to include the following:

- assist with classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials,
- provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory,
- conduct parental involvement activities,
- provide instructional support in a library or media center,
- act as a translator, or
- provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. [*Title I, Section 1119(g)(2)*]

[U.S. Department of Education: Paraprofessionals - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Title I Paraprofessionals Non-Regulatory Guidance](#)

The paraprofessional ***shall not*** engage in the following duties and tasks, to include:

- Paraprofessionals ***cannot*** carry their own caseload. The primary responsibility for the delivery of services remains with the certified or licensed Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) or teacher.
- Not represent himself/herself as a speech-language pathologist or a teacher.
- Not perform standardized or non-standardized diagnostic tests or formal or informal evaluations.
- Not participate in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings without the presence of the supervising speech-language pathologist or teacher.
- Not provide interpretative information to the student, the parents of the student, or others regarding the student's status or services.
- Not write, develop, or modify a student's IEP.
- Not sign any formal documents in lieu of the supervising speech-language pathologist or teacher.
- Not identify student for service, exit a student from special education services and supports or determine the need for additional services.
- Not disclose confidential information either orally or in writing to anyone other than the supervising speech-language pathologist or teacher.

[Georgia Board of Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology: Speech-Language Pathology Aide](#)
[American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\)- Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice](#)

Supervision of Paraprofessionals

- Accept full and complete responsibility for the duties and tasks performed by the paraprofessional.
- Retain the legal and ethical responsibilities for all students.
- Make all decisions relating to the evaluation, services and supports provided to the student.
- Develop, review, and modify IEPs for students that receive assistance from paraprofessionals.
- Prior to services, the student and parents must be informed in writing through the IEP process, that certain duties and tasks will be rendered by the paraprofessional.

Documentation of Paraprofessional Services in the IEP

Paraprofessionals assisting speech-language programs should be documented in the IEP in the same manner as services provided by any other paraprofessional. There are only **two** options available for paraprofessional services.

- Provide supportive services within the general education setting under the supervision of a certified teacher. When this option is utilized, the LEA reports the services as Supportive Services/Instruction. The IEP Team will determine the amount and frequency of supportive services based on the needs of the student.
- Assist the SLP during a small group or individual services. The paraprofessional will provide assist during the same session with guidance from the speech-language pathologist. When this option is utilized, the LEA reports the services as speech-language services in small group or individual session. The IEP Team will determine the amount and frequency of services for small group and individual services.

Note: For FTE purposes, supplemental speech are services provided by an SLP only not the paraprofessional.