

# THE T/TAC TELEGRAM

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T/TAC

Linking People & Resources

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## *Paraprofessional Responsibilities in Special Education Programs: How They Have Evolved*

Shanon D. Hardy, Ph.D.

Forty years ago, "teacher aides" or "secretaries for teachers" (Turney, 1962) were introduced into American classrooms to free teachers from routine and repetitive tasks, so they could spend more time in planning and implementing instructional and related activities (Pickett, 1999). In today's schools, paraprofessional, paraeducator, instructional assistant, educational assistant, therapy assistant, transition trainer, job coach, and home visitor are some of the titles used to describe staff members who provide support to students with disabilities and their families in educational settings. Regardless of the accepted term, special education literature generally agrees that paraprofessionals provide direct or indirect instructional or educational services to children, youth and/or their families but work under the supervision of teachers or other professional practitioners who are responsible for the design, implementation, and assessment of learner progress (Katsiyannis, Hodge, & Lanford, 2000; Pickett, 1989).

The progression of name changes has also coincided with changes in roles and responsibilities of this population of school personnel. Increasingly, paraprofessionals have become important members of a team who assist in educating students with a range of disabilities in general education classrooms (Blalock, 1991; Downing, Ryndak & Clark, 2000; Riggs & Mueller, 2001). Many teachers and researchers in the field of special education see the utilization of paraprofessionals as

the key to successful inclusion of students with special needs (Blalock, 1991; Parsons & Reid, 1999; Salzberg & Morgan, 1995; Wadsworth & Knight, 1996; Werts, Zigmond, & Leeper, 2001). Under the direction of teachers or other service related supervisors, paraprofessionals may perform activities such as observing and documenting data on learner performance and behavior, implementing behavior-management programs, instructing individuals and small groups, and assisting teachers with modifying programs (Moshoyannis, T., Pickett, A. L., & Granets, L, 1999).

As responsibilities for paraprofessionals have expanded, there has also been an increase in the number of paraprofessionals working in schools. In the early 1960s, there were approximately 10,000 paraprofessionals working in

schools, primarily in noninstructional areas (Jones & Bender, 1993). In 2000, the U. S. Department of Labor reported that results of their self-reported survey estimated approximately 1.2 million paraprofessionals employed in Title I, multi-lingual, inclusive general and special education programs, libraries, computer laboratories, and other educational settings. Administrators and policymakers often turn to the growing pool of paraprofessionals to support and expand program management and administrative functions of teachers that have changed due to federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (Katsiyannis, Hodge, & Lanford, 2000).

The Council for Exceptional Children

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(CEC, 2001), the largest international special education professional organization, has recognized the new knowledge and skills that paraprofessionals in educational settings must possess to effectively implement their responsibilities and improve the educational experiences for all students. Standards specific to paraprofessionals were created and approved in 2001.

The standards are guidelines for state and local educational agencies to address when planning training or creating job descriptions for paraprofessionals. To view the complete list of CEC's knowledge and related skills for paraprofessionals, visit [http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf\\_based\\_stdts/knowledge\\_standards.html](http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stdts/knowledge_standards.html) and click on paraeducator.

**The following are knowledge base indicators for the standards from CEC.**

**Special Education – Standard #1: Foundation**

Purposes of programs for individuals with exceptional learning needs  
Basic educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities

**Special Education – Standard #2: Development and Characteristics of Learners**

Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life

**Special Education – Standard #3: Individual Learning Differences**

Rights and responsibilities of families and children as they related to individual learning needs  
Indicators of abuse and neglect

**Special Education – Standard #4: Instructional Strategies**

Basic instructional and remedial strategies and materials  
Basic technologies appropriate to individuals with exceptional learning needs

**Special Education – Standard #5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions**

Demands of various learning environments  
Rules and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

**Special Education – Standard #6: Language**

Characteristics of appropriate communication with stakeholders

**Special Education – Standard #7: Instructional Planning**

**Special Education – Standard #8: Assessment**  
Rationale for assessment

**Special Education – Standard #9: Professional and Ethical Practice**

Ethical practice for confidential communication about individuals with exceptional learning needs  
Personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's ability to work with others

**Special Education – Standard #10:**

Common concerns of families of individuals with exceptional learning needs  
Roles of stakeholders in planning an individualized program

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being utilized. Many districts hired large numbers of paraeducators and began assigning them instructional tasks, working under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher. Then, in 1975, with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), which provided a legal mandate to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, states and localities again looked toward the paraeducator as an invaluable partner in the delivery of special education services. Since then, many more paraeducators have been added to the faculties of thousands of schools. The services and expertise they provide to a broad range of students has become commonplace in schools and classrooms across the country.

Teachers and paraeducators working closely together to provide the very best in instructional services to students has led some to compare their partnership to a marriage of sorts. Though I don't necessarily assign nuptial status to the relationship, it is indeed a relationship that at times needs a measure of TLC to ensure that both individuals feel valued and are contributing in a manner that provides the maximum benefit to students.

Borrowing a journalistic tool from the English classes that I often slept through, I offer "5 Ws and an H" to keep the Teacher-Paraeducator relationship growing strong.

**"5 Ws and an H":**

**The Teacher-Paraeducator  
Partnership  
by Brad Abel  
Inclusive Schools  
Resource Teacher**

**Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia**

Throughout the last 50 years or so, education has experienced a virtual explosion in both the numbers of students being served and in the number of staff members it takes to adequately meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. In the "Baby Boom" years following World War II, schools across the country struggled to find enough teachers to staff the growing number of classroom positions. Colleges and universities were not able to keep pace with the demand for graduates with teaching degrees. Paraeducators had long been used by schools as office assistants, library aides, hall monitors and the like, however, the shortage of qualified teachers led many school districts to rethink how paraeducators were

**WHO**

Linda Tilton (1996) identifies eight areas of paraeducator concerns. Top on the list is the need to orient the paraeducator to both the position and to the school climate. To clarify their responsibilities at the school, they must be told who their immediate supervisor will be, who will coordinate their schedule, who to call when they are sick, and who will evaluate their work. Additionally, they need to know who is responsible for distributing classroom supplies and, most importantly, who can provide them with specific information related to the students, particularly information on disability and classroom accommodations/modifications. The paraeducators should be given a staff list in order to have the names of general education teachers, special education teachers, speech clinicians, occupational therapists, psychologist, and other related service providers. Helping the paraeducator become an integral part of the school culture shouldn't be left

to chance. It should be a part of a comprehensive orientation process that takes place during the first days of employment.

### **WHAT**

Paraeducators need to be provided with a written job description that is comprehensive in scope. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, they need frequent communication from their teacher-partner about specific tasks that need to be accomplished with specific students. This shouldn't take the form of "Please work on long division with Felix." Teachers need to take the time to convey specific methods and techniques they want students to learn. Lesson plans and instructional objectives should be shared and, when feasible, paraeducators should have the opportunity to observe the teacher implementing a similar lesson. This is not only important to students who may receive confusing messages from teachers and paraeducators, but it decreases the likelihood that a skill will have to be re-taught "the right way."

Paraeducators also need to know what the behavioral expectations are for a given classroom. Teachers vary greatly in their behavior management techniques. A behavior that is tolerated in one classroom may be a punishable offense in the next. Be sure to communicate procedures for student water and bathroom breaks, collecting assignments, the level of assistance that is appropriate, etc. When I was a paraeducator in a classroom for students with learning disabilities, I helped a student sound-out words he was attempting to spell in a writing assignment. I was unaware that my teacher-partner was collecting a mid-year writing sample to assess students' progress on all aspects of the writing process. The student had to complete another writing sample that would provide a more valid assessment.

### **WHEN**

This "W" is somewhat self-explanatory. Paraeducators should have a written schedule that includes the days and times they are to be in specific locations and/or performing specific tasks. A typical school day may be anything but typical. A written schedule, respected by all staff members, provides the consistency of services and gives the paraeducator a formal agenda that lays out specific daily responsibilities and expectations.

### **WHERE**

This "W" may appear to be obvious, but let me offer a few "where concerns." Paraeducator Betty has been asked to administer Frieda's modified spelling test. Most of the class receives 25 words, but Frieda is working out of an alternative textbook. Not only are her words different, she does 15 instead of 25. Where will Frieda's test be given? She is highly distractible and can't handle taking her test while hearing the other students' words. Another "where" problem may arise when the paraeducator is asked to deal with a behavior issue. There should have already been a discussion about the teacher's expectations for handling behavior issues. Is the student removed from the room? Taken to the office? Counselor? Another teacher's room? Again, different teachers have different ways of handling issues with students. This should be discussed before a problem arises.

An additional "where" issue that can lead to a paraeducator feeling undervalued is that of "home-turf." Imagine for a minute that you are unable to find a parking space. You drive around and around the parking lot, but empty spaces are nonexistent. The few that do open up are quickly filled by other drivers before you are able to occupy them. The longer you look, the more frustrating the task becomes. Paraeducators need a place to "park" their belongings, a place to call their own. By providing a desk for them to store materials in, or to place a picture of their family on, you have conveyed that they are valued. This may be in a room where two or three paraeducators share a common space, or it may be in a classroom. Whatever the physical limitations in the building, the statement that each staff member is important and has a "home," conveys a message of community and appreciation.

### **WHY**

Few things are more frustrating than performing a task without any clue as to its relevancy or whether you have achieved the correct outcome. Paraeducators should be considered to be an integral part of a student's instructional team. As such, they should be provided with pertinent information about students. This includes Individualized Education Program (IEP), behavior history, family backgrounds, medical issues, etc. In short, I believe that anything that is considered to be relevant information for a teacher to have in order to adequately teach the student should also be available to the paraeducator who is working with the student. They should be held to the same high standards of confidentiality. Additionally, paraeducators should be included in parent conferences as part of the school team.

**HOW**

The “H” word is perhaps the most important. HOW. How will paraeducators know the school climate? How will they know a teacher’s expectations for behavior? How will they be made aware of school district policies? How will they know what skills to reinforce for a given student?

The answer lies in frequent, purposeful, and respectful communication. Teachers and paraeducators need daily opportunities to share information about student needs, lesson plans, behavioral issues, and instructional concerns. Frequent communication helps develop a respect for individuality and differences in backgrounds and experiences. It may be difficult to schedule daily planning time that includes both the teacher and the paraeducator. If this is the case, develop an effective system of written communication. Curriculum-specific questions could possibly be answered in writing. The same is true for procedural questions. However, don’t substitute written notes for face-to-face planning and collaboration. At the very least, a weekly planning time is needed to ensure that communication issues don’t go unresolved.

The other “how” that comes to mind is school and district-wide trainings. Paraeducators need the opportunity to expand their skills and to learn new methods of instruction. Include paraeducators in school-wide staff development opportunities. Encourage their participation in district training programs. The opportunities we give them for enhancement of their skills will reap benefits not only for the students, but also for the entire school community.

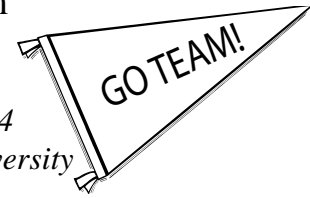
Paraeducators are an important and integral part of a school system’s ability to effectively address the educational needs of its students. By fostering positive teacher-paraeducator partnerships, we can ensure that the service to our students will always be at the highest of levels.

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**Working As A Team**

By Lynn Wiley, Ph.D.  
VDOE T/TAC, Region 4  
at George Mason University



As we celebrate the acceptance of students with diverse abilities and skills in our classrooms, we must also celebrate the efforts of the teacher-paraprofessional teams who work with those students. What are the benefits of successful teaming?

- ❑ Team members support and mentor one another, maximizing each member’s potential, strength, and contributions.
- ❑ Teams foster professional and personal growth by sharing knowledge and skills with each other.
- ❑ Teams bring different perspectives to issues and, thus, develop unique, creative, and flexible solutions to problems.
- ❑ Teams establish goals together, and team members feel a sense of ownership towards these goals.
- ❑ Teams develop a sense of camaraderie, which tends to reduce the feeling of isolation that can be common in the area of special education.

*Modified from “Let’s Team Up! A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers, and Principals.” National Educational Association of the United States, 2003.*

Working as a team means that the people involved develop a relationship built on good communication, trust, respect, and recognition. Although this relationship develops over time, there are a few things to keep in mind. These tips entitled “Tips For Teachers And Paraprofessionals Who Work As A Team” can be found in this newsletter. Discuss them with your team and use them as a guide to help you build a solid working relationship. The true beneficiaries of your efforts will be the students in your classroom!

## **TIPS FOR TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS WHO WORK AS A TEAM**

### **Tips For Paraprofessionals**

1. Communicate with the teacher(s) daily. This is essential in building a classroom community that is responsive to students needs.
2. Offer suggestions or ideas, but try not to take it personally if they are not taken.
3. Ask the teacher about your performance.
4. Discuss problems now. Don't let them grow.
5. Try to follow instructions exactly as given.
6. Remember final decisions are the teacher's.
7. Maintain confidentiality.
8. Offer the teacher feedback.
9. Let teachers know your strengths, talents, and areas of interest. You may be able to contribute to a special project or center.
10. Ask questions if you do not understand the teacher's directions.
11. Share responsibilities. Work as a team.
12. Be patient with yourself, with the teacher(s), and with the children.
13. Become familiar with every child in the room.
14. Become familiar with the academic approach.
15. Become familiar with the classroom materials.
16. Implement class rules consistently.
17. Be a self-starter. Be enthusiastic.

### **Tips For Teachers**

1. Provide an initial orientation to the school and to the classroom.
2. Familiarize yourself with the paraprofessional's personal and educational background.
3. Create an atmosphere of acceptance and community.
4. Introduce the paraprofessional to the classroom routines and instructional procedures.
5. Provide opportunities for the paraprofessional to observe and participate in various classroom and extra-curricular activities.
6. Acquaint the paraprofessional with relevant student information.
7. Be certain to explain the confidentiality policy.
8. Treat the paraprofessional as a valued team member.
9. Develop a daily schedule with the paraprofessional.
10. Guide the paraprofessional in attaining goals established together.
11. Provide the paraprofessional with the necessary inservice and training that is needed to fulfill her responsibilities.
12. Provide the paraprofessional with lesson plans.
13. Provide the paraprofessional with frequent feedback.
14. Thank the paraprofessional daily.

**\*\*Taken from the ParaProfessional Instructor Academy manual developed by Alexandria City Public Schools, Alexandria, VA.**

## Paraprofessionals Working with Students With Autism Spectrum Disorders

*Vicky Spencer, Ph.D.  
Karen Berlin, M.Ed.  
VDOE T/TAC Region 4  
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With students with disabilities spending increased time in general education classrooms, the paraprofessional has become one of the fastest growing positions in public education today (Doyle, 2002). Similarly, a steady rise in the incidence of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) has resulted in more paraprofessionals being assigned to support the education of students with ASD (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services). Although many of the responsibilities of the paraprofessional span across disability areas, there are some roles and tasks that are specific to supporting this student population. In addition to the need to possess at least a basic awareness level of the communication, social, and behavioral characteristics that define ASD, paraprofessional responsibilities may include:

**Providing Instructional Support.** One of the main responsibilities of the paraprofessional is to provide instructional support to the student. This may range from providing one-on-one assistance to a less supportive role in an inclusive classroom setting. The paraprofessional can provide direct or indirect educational services to the student but must work under the supervision of teachers or other professional practitioners who are responsible for the design, implementation, and the assessment of students (Jones & Bender, 1993).

**Fostering Independence.** To foster student independence, the paraprofessional should provide assistance only when needed and in the least intrusive manner. The paraprofessional may develop a repertoire of visual and/or gestural prompts that enhance the student's independent functioning or provide subtle feedback so that attention is not always being drawn to the student with ASD. It is necessary to closely monitor the student's behavior so that the student does not increase his or her dependence on the paraprofessional (Sprick, Garrison, & Howard, 2000).

**Assisting in Transitions.** The paraprofessional may also be responsible for providing transitional support to the student in following his or her daily activity schedule (McClannahan, 1999). This may include guiding students in the actual use of an activity schedule and/or assisting the student in moving through the instructional and non-instructional components of the schedule. Because one of the characteristics of students with ASD is resistance to change, paraprofessionals have to be aware of problematic transitions and how to manage those situations (Quill, 1995).

**Minimizing and Preventing Challenging Behaviors.** Actively monitoring behavior, reinforcing positive behaviors, supporting the development of replacement behaviors, and preventing behavioral incidents from occurring can also be responsibilities of the paraprofessional supporting students with ASD. Paraprofessionals should become familiar with basic concepts related to behavior and be clear about what is expected of the student, as well as his/her role in responding to the behavior. It is important that the paraprofessional honor the methods, timelines, and reporting procedures set forth by the team to assure the fidelity of implementation of a student's behavioral plan (Sprick et al., 2000).

**Enhancing Socialization with Peers.** Finally, paraprofessionals may be responsible for supporting students with ASD in social interactions. The paraprofessional spends a great deal of time with the student throughout the instructional day, and therefore has insight for both planned and spontaneous practice of social skills. Opportunities to practice learned routines, such as greetings and scripts, as well as guided social interactions with peers can be identified or created by the paraprofessional. The social skills support offered by the paraprofessional should be consistent with the goals and methodology set forth by the student's IEP team (Quill, 1995).

As with all disability areas, the roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional will continue to evolve as they are asked to assist in the creation of classroom and school communities that welcome and support all students in their access to the general education curriculum.

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## DEALING WITH SCHOOL CONFLICTS

by Nikki Miller, Ed.D.  
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With increased emphasis on inclusion in the general education classroom and school wide activities, the roles of paraprofessionals are also changing. Paraprofessionals need new skills to support students in a variety of settings as they provide instructional assistance and follow through on school discipline systems and behavioral intervention plans (French & Pickett, 1997; Thomas, Correa, & Morsink, 2001). Teachers and paraprofessionals in today's classrooms understand that part of their daily role is to serve as peacemakers. Each day, they may be called upon to resolve large numbers of conflicts, both big and small. Sometimes these conflicts end easily with smiles and humor but at other times the result is hurt feelings and disengagement from

***"Teachers and paraprofessionals in today's classrooms understand that part of their daily role is to serve as peacemakers."***

learning. More often than we like, escalation to fighting and resentment occurs particularly towards the adults and other students involved. Teaching time may be lost resolving these concerns.

Student behavior is affected by the school and classroom environment (Kerr & Nelson, 2002). Simply controlling noise levels or enforcing school and classroom rules, unfortunately, does not automatically achieve a peaceful classroom and school environment where students can learn to work through conflicts effectively. Early work on conflict resolution in the classroom by Kreidler (1984) suggested some important qualities of a successful environment that still ring true today. Educators and students can resolve conflicts more constructively in an environment that directly teaches and models (1) cooperation with others, (2) accurate communication, (3) tolerance and respect for other's differences, and (4) positive, non-aggressive ways to express feelings, especially anger and frustration.

There are steps that can be taken to improve the chance of resolving a conflict effectively. First, it is important to understand the underlying reason or the communicative intent of the behavior for each student. If the educator carefully notes the circumstances that occurred before and during the altercation objectively, it is possible to then make a good guess about the underlying reason for the conflict from each student's point of view. Then you can describe objectively and unemotionally what happened when you intervened. In this way you can help the students

understand the key reason for the conflict and also describe the situation accurately to others who may be responsible for the discipline or behavior plan for a student (Doyle, 2002; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004).

Two types of conflicts are commonly observed: conflicts over resources and conflicts of needs. Conflicts over resources usually occur because two people want something that is in short supply: a ball or special pens, a turn at something, a favorite activity, the teacher's attention. Conflicts of needs are more difficult to identify. Students have many needs for power, attention, affection, self-esteem, friends, or to be liked. Some students seek to avoid or escape a situation or a learning task to hide an inadequacy or anxiety over failure. Other students may even have a strong need to get revenge or "to get even" for some slight or disrespect they feel from others.

It is very important when intervening in conflicts

to monitor your own verbal and nonverbal behavior, particularly when dealing with aggressive, angry students. Maintain direct eye contact with no glaring at the student while you give a clear direction or reprimand. A calm tone of voice and a relaxed manner also reduces the tension of the situation and helps the student listen or stay in the situation rather than walking away ((Kerr & Nelson, 2002). It is very important not to yell at a student or demand attention when a student is very angry and losing self control as this usually escalates the situation and may result in directing the anger and aggression toward you. Kerr and Nelson (2002) reviewed research on reprimands and suggest that it is best to link the reprimand directly to class or school rules, avoid threats, warnings, sarcasm, and ridicule as these tend to make a student lose face and feel humiliated. It is also not effective to get into arguments with students. Reprimands should be viewed as giving the student feedback and information to help the student gain self-control and make more appropriate choices.

The best way to manage conflicts is to give clear, positive messages to students about your expectations for their behavior and to reinforce their efforts. When supervising students on the yard, in the halls, and in the classroom, stay alert and aware of the activities in order to intervene positively before a conflict occurs. Greeting students by name and listening attentively to them helps establish a trusting relationship even with students with whom you are not directly involved. Canter and Canter (1993) report that students get into antagonistic relationships with adults when they lack trust and do not believe the adult is acting in their best interest.

It is very challenging to deal with aggressive antisocial behaviors like fighting, pushing, hitting, threatening, and taunting. Breaking up a physical fight is not easy and many schools have discipline guidelines on how to handle these situations. If you are unable to stop a fight by moving close and giving clear directions to stop, it is time to implement the schools crisis intervention strategy. Once the altercation is stopped, students need to cool off before attempting to get to the bottom of the dispute. Rather than having a discussion together, it is often helpful for students to conference individually or dictate or write out their version of what started the fight and what solutions they can implement to prevent the likelihood of it happening again (Kreidler, 1984). (A sample Fight Form is included.) Students who engage in aggressive behaviors rarely engage in only one type of antisocial behavior; thus it is important to gather clear, objective records of their incidents in order to develop effective discipline plans. The role of the paraprofessional is

crucial in this effort. They are frequently present in a variety of settings throughout the school. Therefore, they are in a unique position to offer vital information in resolving school conflicts. (A sample discipline record form is included.)

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# Conferences & Workshops

## ***Assistive Technology Industry Access (ATIA) 2005***

**When and Where:** January 19-22 at the Caribe Royal Resort Orlando, Florida

**Sponsor:** ATIA

**Contact:** <http://www.atia.org/>

## ***Technology, Reading and Learning Difficulties: 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual International Conference***

**When and Where:** January 27-29 at the Grand Hyatt San Francisco, California

**Sponsors:** Don Johnston, Inc.

International Reading Association

**Contact:** [www.trld.com](http://www.trld.com)

## ***The 2005 OSEP National Early Children Conference***

**When and Where:** February 7-9 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel Washington, DC

**Sponsor:** US Department of Education, Office of Special Programs

**Contact:** [www.nectac.org/~meetings/national2005/splash.html](http://www.nectac.org/~meetings/national2005/splash.html)

## ***Learning Disabilities Association of America Annual Conference***

**When and Where:** March 2-5 at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel in Reno, Nevada

**Sponsor:** Learning Disabilities Association

**Contact:** [www.ldanatl.org/conference/index.asp](http://www.ldanatl.org/conference/index.asp)

## ***Riverside School Presents: Dr. Mel Levine***

**When and Where:** March 2 at the Second Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia

**Sponsor:** Riverside School

**Contact:** (804) 741-1718 or [riversidefund@comcast.net](mailto:riversidefund@comcast.net) or [www.riversideschool.org](http://www.riversideschool.org)

## ***2005 Regional Symposium Research In Context: A Capital Idea***

**When and Where:** March 4-5 at the Dulles Hyatt in Northern Virginia Reston, Virginia

**Sponsor:** Council for Learning Disabilities Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities

**Contact:** [www.vclld.org/](http://www.vclld.org/)

## ***Early Intervention Annual Conference Creating Connections***

**When and Where:** March 7-8 at the Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, Virginia

**Sponsor:** Integrated Training Collaborative, Infant & Toddler Connection of VA

**Contact:** Cori Hill at [corihill@netelos.net](mailto:corihill@netelos.net)

## ***The Second Annual International Conference on Positive Behavioral Support***

**When and Where:** March 10-12 at the Marriott Waterside Tampa, Florida

**Sponsors:** The Association for Positive Behavior Support

OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support

**Contact:** [www.apbs.org/](http://www.apbs.org/)

## ***Autism Spectrum Disorders: Information Today, Strategies Tomorrow***

Speaker: Jed Baker, Ph.D.

**When and Where:** March 10-11 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, Abingdon, Virginia

**Sponsors:** VDOE Training and Technical Assistance Center at Virginia Tech

**Contact:** Diann Eaton, 1-800-848-2714

## ***Virginia Society of Technical Education (VSTE)***

**When and Where:** March 13-15 in Norfolk Waterside Marriott Norfolk, Virginia

**Sponsor:** Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, Dell, Inc, Apple Computers, Tool factory, Tech4learning, Gateway and others.

**Contact:** <http://vste.org/>

***Virginia Transition Forum 2005:  
Connections for Life***

Students...Community...Education...Employment

**When and Where:** March 14-16 at the Williamsburg Marriott Williamsburg, Virginia

**Sponsors:** Virginia Department of Education, T/TACs, Career and Technical Education and Instructional Services, Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services, All Transition Partners throughout the Commonwealth

**Contact:** <http://www.radford.edu/~conf-serv>

***2005 CEC Convention and Expo***

**When and Where:** April 6-9 at the Baltimore Convention Center Baltimore, Maryland

**Sponsors:** The Council for Exceptional Children

**Contact:** [www.cec.sped.org/conventions/maryland\\_2005](http://www.cec.sped.org/conventions/maryland_2005)

***Knowledge Change and Building Our Strengths: National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals***

**When and Where:** April 27-30 at the Little American Hotel and Convention Center Salt Lake City, Utah

**Sponsor:** National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals

**Contact:** [www.nrcpara.org](http://www.nrcpara.org)

***Celebrating 50 Years of Literacy Leadership: IRA's 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention***

**When and Where:** May 1-5 San Antonio, Texas

**Sponsor:** International Reading Association

**Contact:** [www.reading.org/meeting/conv/san-antonio.html](http://www.reading.org/meeting/conv/san-antonio.html)

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**Linking People and Resources**