

# Special Education Paraprofessional (OCAS 418) & Personal Care Assistant (OCAS 419)

Special Education | Student Support



## Special Education Paraprofessional (OCAS 418)

Paraprofessionals provide *instructional support*, including:

- Provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher
- Assist with classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials
- Provide instructional support in a library or media center
- Act as a translator
- Provide instructional services under the direct supervision of a fully certified teacher

## Requirements for a Special Education Paraprofessional:

### 1. Tier 1 (Federal Programs – Title 1 Paraprofessionals)

Must meet one of the following credential requirements:

- Two years of study at an institution of higher education (48 hours of college coursework)
- An associate's degree (or higher)
- Passed the Workkeys Test (Bronze +), ParaPro Assessment (455+), or the OGET

### 2. Tier 2 (Special Education)

In addition to Tier 1, a special education paraprofessional must complete all the following requirements:

- OSDE special education paraprofessional training through Pepper, career technology centers or other state-approved training providers
- Cardiovascular Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)/First Aid, maintaining current certification
- Universal Precautions/Bloodborne Pathogens yearly training
- Six hours of professional development each year

## Training

Paraprofessional Training in Pepper is a free format for paraprofessional training. Paraprofessionals can register online for course access. The eight courses include:

- Legal Foundations of Special Education
- Responsibilities and Ethics
- IEP Participation
- Disability Awareness and Instructional Strategies
- Communication and Interaction Strategies
- Behavior Strategies, Progress Monitoring and Data Collection
- Classroom and Behavior Management for Paraprofessionals
- Supporting Instruction in the Classroom

*Note: 80% proficiency is required for each module*



## State Credentials

Paraprofessionals work with their school district to complete the application process and submit it online to OSDE's Office of Teacher Certification. The application must include all of the following:

- The completed application form
- A copy of the CPR/First Aid card
- A certificate of training completion or Pepper transcript
- District-level paraprofessional job description
- Daily work schedule outlining duties and responsibilities

## Policy Update

Districts may hire a special education paraprofessional if they obtain the required training within 120 calendar days of employment.

## Personal Care Assistant (OCAS 419)

Under the direction of licensed special education and/or related services staff, a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) assists one or more students in accomplishing instrumental activities of daily living, health-related functions, redirection of behavior and other tasks as identified in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 plan or health plan for assigned students. Personal Care Assistants may be assigned to work with students who have physical disabilities, healthcare/medical needs or require other forms of specialized care.

### Credential requirements:

- High school diploma or GED
- First aid and CPR certification
- Background check
- OSDE Paraprofessional Module on Responsibilities and Ethics under supervision of special education or related services staff
- Ongoing PD requirements (six hours per year for targeted needs)

### Examples of essential duties and responsibilities:

- Provides assistance and support, as needed, to students in accomplishing activities of daily living, including, but not limited to eating, toileting, grooming, dressing, bathing, transferring, mobility and positioning
- As needed, providing assistance and support to students in accomplishing instrumental activities of daily living, including, but not limited to meal planning and preparation, shopping, communicating by telephone or other media, and traveling from one location to another within the school and community
- Provides assistance and support for students' health-related functions through hands-on assistance, supervision or cuing, as directed by the licensed School Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist or other health care professional
- Performs other comparable duties of a like or similar nature as assigned