Credentialing for Classroom Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessional Pathways

LOUISIANA COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM
Postsecondary Pathways to Becoming a Highly-Qualified Paraprofessional

Paraprofessionals play a vital role in elementary and secondary classrooms assisting teachers and creating an environment that improves learning outcomes for children. As you may know, there are new requirements to become or to remain a paraprofessional educator. If you have felt confused by these requirements and how to meet them, or if you wonder how to make a decision that is right for you, perhaps this guide will help.

You will learn about the options that are available and what your choices concerning those options can mean for you. As you read, ask yourself questions to determine the kind of career you would enjoy and whether you are willing to take the necessary path to get there.

Am I ready to take a test? Do I want someone to look at my college credits and tell me my options? Do I eventually want to go on to manage a child care center? Have I always wanted to be a classroom teacher in the local school system?

Consider what you really want for your career, and then follow the pathway, or combination of pathways, that lead to your goal. Pathways are color-coded and named to make selecting the appropriate information easy for you. Directions assist in your journey and let you know when you should move to another pathway.

At the end of this guide are lists of places and people you can contact to further answer your questions. Enjoy your journey and the rewards that await you in the winners’ circle – pride in yourself for the contribution you make and appreciation on the faces of the children you help.
Credentials Avenue:
Credit hours that lead to a credential. Particular to a given school system.

Testing Lane:
Testing Only for Paraprofessionals

48 Credit Hours Highway:
Leading to credit hours. Acceptability particular to a given employer or to a college credential.

Technical Diploma Intersection:
Certificate or Diploma

Associate Degree Street:
Associate Degree. For transfer or career preparation

Baccalaureate Boulevard:
Baccalaureate Degree. Elementary Teacher, Headstart Director, Child Care Manager.

Winners’ Circle:
Rewards at the end of your pathway

Contacts Court:
List of important names and numbers.
Getting Credit Hours that Lead to a Credential
Particular to a given school system

School systems have joined with their local community or technical colleges and four-year institutions to develop a list of acceptable college credit courses that will apply to your career/job needs. They can discuss your future educational plans with you and can help you to plan a pathway that will lead toward your goal(s).

Here are the options available to you:

- Testing
- 48 credit hours
- Technical Diploma
- Associate Degree
- Baccalaureate Degree

Do you want to know more about your options? Review all of the options that follow.

To discuss the most appropriate option for you, first contact the paraprofessional contact person in your local district. (See Contacts Court)
Testing Only
For paraprofessionals.

You want to take the test required of paraprofessionals. You want to stop there.

Here is the pathway:

• The PRAXIS Para Pro Test (Educational Testing Services) can be taken. You will need to attain a score established by the Louisiana State Department of Education.

• The WorkKeys Test can be taken if accompanied by observations for paraprofessionals hired prior to January 8, 2002.

Check with the paraprofessional contact person in your local school system about these programs and the required scores for these tests.

Preparation opportunities for you to take a practice test or preparatory work are available. Contact the paraprofessional contact person in the local school district, college or university nearest to you for such help.

Ask yourself:
Do I want someone to look at my college credits and tell me my options? If yes, go to 48 Hours Highway.
Leading to Credit Hours
Acceptability is particular to a given employer or to a college credential.

You can meet the requirements of the highly qualified paraprofessional (as defined by No Child Left Behind) by earning 48 credit hours from an accredited college or university. They need to be credit hours that support your academic classroom performance.*

Here are the options:

Your local employer will analyze your college credits for acceptability toward meeting your career/job goals......

BUT

you might want your local college advisors to analyze your college credits for applicability toward a college or university credential (ex: certificate or degree).

Here are the pathways:

Talk to your paraprofessional contact person with your employer about meeting your job requirements. (See Contacts Court)

Talk with your local college/university contact person about the college credential that interests you. (See Contacts Court)

*Examples: reading, writing, mathematics, school readiness
Going for a Technical Diploma

Choose whether you want to stop with a technical diploma or move on to a degree. This is a critical juncture in your pathways.

What is a technical diploma for paraprofessionals at the postsecondary level?

A Technical Diploma is a program study that prepares a person for a particular career. For additional information contact the designated paraprofessional contact person for your local community or technical college. (Refer to Contact Court)

With a Technical Diploma such as this (ex: Child Care Management, etc.), course work may not transfer or apply to an associate or baccalaureate degree.

Degree Planning

If you plan to move into a degree program and continue your education and earn an associate or baccalaureate degree, check with the institution conferring the final degree to ensure that the courses will apply toward your major.

Ask yourself:

Do I want to move toward a transferrable degree? This will take careful planning. Go to Associate Degree Street.
Going for the Associate Degree
For transfer associate degree or career development

The best way to avoid “slipping” on your career pathway to your goals is to know your final destination. Not all associate degrees are the same.

Option 1
Any degree carrying the term APPLIED (ex. Applied Associate of Science, Applied Associate of Technology, Baccalaureate of Applied Science, etc.) is designed for Workforce Preparation and not for college transfer. If you plan to stop at the Associate Degree level, earning an appropriate Applied Degree will fulfill current requirements of the current Federal Headstart legislation and No Child Left Behind.

Option 2
If you choose to continue, you have reached another CRITICAL JUNCTURE in your pathways. The Associate of Science degrees are generally designed for transfer. For example, the Associate of Science in Elementary Education and Associate of General Studies are designed for transfer into a baccalaureate degree program that will lead to a BESE-certified Teacher Preparation program.

If you choose to prepare to work with young children (birth to age 8), you have reached another critical juncture in your pathways.

Option 3:
If you want to to complete an Associate Degree in General Studies, you will be prepared to apply for entry into Baccalaureate Degree programs leading toward either Option 1 or Option 2. You may however, decide that you will lose too many credits by doing this. Again, check with the university to which you want to transfer. [See University Contact List at Contacts Court]

Ask yourself:

Do you plan to go on to earn a Baccalaureate Degree to be a Child Care worker, manager, or owner? Go to Baccalaureate Boulevard.

Do you plan to go on to earn a Baccalaureate Degree to be a BESE-certified Elementary teacher in either grades PreK–3 or Grades 1–5? Go to Baccalaureate Boulevard.
Baccalaureate Degree

Each Baccalaureate degree program carries its own admissions requirements. Check these with the admissions office of the college/university.

Pathway Options:

Option 1: Headstart/Child Care Manager

If you want to be a Headstart director or Child Care owner/manager, the programs that you will need are housed in the Departments of Family and Consumer Sciences or Human Ecology at most universities. You will want to talk to the appropriate person in the department of the college at the university from which you plan to graduate. (See University Contact List at Contacts Court)

Option 2: BESE Certification

You want to be a BESE-certified teacher. The programs that will help you to accomplish this are housed in universities’ colleges of education. You will want to talk with the appropriate person in the college. (See University Contact List at Contacts Court)
Welcome to the Winners’ Circle!

You have the pathways and made the contacts necessary to achieve your goals!

So…congratulations!!! You can now look forward to a rewarding career in the classroom.

Brought to you as a partnership service of the Louisiana Board of Regents, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Louisiana State Department of Education, Louisiana Headstart Office, and participating colleges and universities.
Local Community and Technical College Contacts:

- Baton Rouge Community College (225) 216-8700, www.mybr.cc
- Bossier Parish Community College (318) 746-9851, www.bpcc.edu
- Delgado Community College (504) 485-2378, www.dcc.edu
- L.E. Fletcher Technical Community College (985) 857-3659, www.lefletcher.edu
- Louisiana Delta Community College (318) 362-5483, www.ladelta.cc.la.us
- Nunez Community College (504) 680-2240, www.nunez.edu
- River Parishes Community College (225) 675-8270, http://rpcc.cc.la.us
- South Louisiana Community College (337) 984-3684, www.slcc.cc.la.us
- SOWELA Technical Community College (337) 491-2698, www.sowela.net

Other 2-year Colleges:
- LSU–Eunice, (337) 550-1308 www.lsue.edu
- Southern University–Shreveport, (318) 674-3431

Contacts for Departments of Human Ecology, Family, and Consumer Sciences

- Grambling State University, (318) 274-2781
  Dept of Home Economics (318) 274-2249 and 2311
- Louisiana Tech, Dean of the Colleges of Applied Natural Sciences
  School of Human Ecology/ Child and Family Studies, (318) 257-3727
- LSU A&M, School of Human Ecology, (225) 578-2404
- Nicholls State University, Department of Family, Consumer and Agricultural Sciences (985) 448-4691
- Northwestern State University, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Dr. Patricia Pierson, (318) 537-5587
- Southern A&M, School of Human Ecology, Child and Family Studies, (225) 771-4660
- University of Louisiana at Lafayette, School of Human Ecology/ Child and Family Studies, (337) 482-6967
- University of Louisiana at Monroe, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, (318) 342-1903 or 343-5690

Contact Court
College of Education Deans

Centenary College of Louisiana, Dr. Sue Hernandez (318) 869-5066
Dillard University, Dr. Kassie Freeman (504) 816-4747
Grambling State University, Dr. Andolyn Harrison (318) 274-2231
Louisiana College, Dr. Joe Aguillard (318) 487-7303
Louisiana Tech University, Dr. Jo Ann Dauzar (318) 257-3715
Loyola University of New Orleans, Dr. Kevin Fall (504) 864-7840
Louisiana State University, Dr. Barbara Fuhrmann (225) 578-1258
Louisiana State University in Alexandria, Judy Rundell (318) 799-4279
McNeese State University, Dr. Joe Savoie (337) 475-5432
Northern State University, Dr. John Tollett (337) 357-6288
LSU-Shreveport, Dr. Gale Bridger (318) 799-4279
Nicholls State University, Dr. Cleveland Hill (985) 448-4325
Our Lady of the Holy Cross College, Dr. Judith Miron (504) 398-2214
Southeastern Louisiana State University, Dr. Martha Thornehill (985) 549-2217
Southern University at New Orleans, Dr. Rose Duhon-Sells (504) 286-5091
University of Louisiana at Monroe, Dr. Luke Thomas (318) 342-1235
Southern University and A&M University, Dr. Ivory Toldson (225) 771-2290
Southern University at New Orleans (504) 286-5351
Southern University at Shreveport, Carl Grant (318) 674-3445
Tulane University, Teri Davis (504) 865-5340
University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Dr. Gerald Carlson (337) 482-1026
University of New Orleans, Dr. James Meza (504) 280-6719
Xavier University of New Orleans, Dr. Rosalind Hale (504) 483-7536

Louisiana Head Start Association

Acadia Parish School Board (337) 783-6377
Allen Action Agency (337) 639-4348
Ascension Parish School Board (225) 474-2740
Assumption Parish School Board (504) 369-9735
Avoyelles Progress Action Committee (318) 985-2717
Bossier Police Jury (318) 747-1045
Caddo Community Action Agency (318) 869-6360
Calcasieu Parish (337) 439-1344
Cameron Community Action Agency (337) 775-2910
Cenla Community Action Agency (318) 487-5879
Child Development Council of Acadia, Inc./St. Landry Parish (337) 942-9669
Community Development, Inc. (CDC) (318) 435-3148
Delta Community Action Agency (318) 574-2130
East Baton Rouge Parish (225) 358-4504
Evangeline Community Action (337) 363-5028
East Carroll Parish Police Jury (318) 559-2450
Grant Parish Police Jury (318) 627-5501
Iberville Office of Community Services (225) 685-5200
Jefferson Community Action (504) 736-6850
LaFayette Parish Council (985) 537-7603
LaSalle Community Action Association (318) 744-5445
Lincoln Total Community Action (318) 251-8864
MCIO (318) 281-7922
Natchitoches Parish Police Jury (318) 357-2220
Ouachita Multi-Purpose C.A.A. (318) 340-9677
Pine Belt Multi-Purpose Agency (318) 259-2474
Plaquemine Parish School Board (985) 564-2743 or 2661
Ponte Coupee Community Advancement (225) 638-9524
Quad Area Woodlawn C.A.A. (225) 683-4234
Regina Coelia CDC, Inc. (985) 892-1204
Sabine Parish School Board (318) 256-6143
SNJIE Community Action (337) 394-6071
Southside Development Corp. (337) 824-5430
St. Bernard Parish School (504) 301-2000
St. Charles Parish School Board (985) 785-6289
St. James Parish Council (225) 562-2359
St. John Parish School Board (985) 536-1106
St. Mary Community Action (337) 828-5703
Tensas Parish School Board (318) 467-2157
Total Community Action (504) 827-2234
St. Mary CAA at Vermillion (337) 892-2528
Vernon Parish School Board (318) 239-6899
Webster Parish Community (318) 377-7022
West Feliciana Parish School (225) 635-5449

Local School Systems

Baker City School System (225) 774-5795
Zachary City School System (225) 658-4969