Online Free Professional Development Options for Colorado Educators

Supporting Special Education & Behavioral Health Re-Licensure Requirements and Paraprofessional Training

Introduction

Educators and paraprofessionals play a critical role in supporting students with disabilities. Recent legislation in Colorado established new professional development requirements for both groups—licensed educators must complete training in special education and behavioral health, and paraprofessionals must receive role-specific training to ensure they can effectively support students.

This document highlights a selection of free online professional development opportunities that may help meet these new requirements. The list is not comprehensive and does not represent an endorsement of any program or provider; it is intended as a starting point to explore available options.

Special Education/Behavior Health Re-Licensure Requirements

As a result of the passage of HB 20-1128 and HB 20-1312 during the 2020 legislative session, all licensed educators renewing a professional license must complete a minimum of 10 contact hours in special education and behavioral health. This is an ongoing requirement for every renewal cycle after that date.

Personnel Qualifications for Paraprofessionals

As of May 12, 2025, updates to ECEA Rule 3.04(1)(e) require that paraprofessionals receive appropriate training to support students with disabilities in alignment with their role. Training should cover essential topics such as confidentiality, mandated reporting, characteristics of disability categories, positive behavioral interventions, de-escalation strategies, legal requirements, and local policies and procedures.

Training must be differentiated based on role (e.g., one-to-one support, classroom instructional support, related services, or supporting students who are Deaf, blind, or nonverbal) and should occur before services begin, with refresher training provided annually.

Free Online Professional Development Options

Disclaimer: The professional development opportunities listed are provided as a resource only. This list is not comprehensive and does not represent an endorsement by CDE or any other entity. Educators and paraprofessionals are responsible for selecting training that aligns with their role and for maintaining documentation (e.g., certificates, transcripts) to verify completion for licensure renewal or role-based requirements.

Professional Development Opportunities (Click the Title to Access Training)	**Audience** (listed by license type)	**Possible Credit Hours**
CDE On-Demand Professional Development Library	All Educators	10+ Hours
Colorado Multi-tiered System of Supports Online Academy	All Educators	10+ Hours
CDE - Data Based Individualization	Principals, Teachers, Special Service Providers	3 Hours
CDE - Equipped for Reading Success	All Educators	9 Hours
CDE - Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties	All Educators	9 Hours
Colorado Educator Support	All Educators	10+ Hours
Colorado Office of School Safety Online Trainings	All Educators	10+ Hours
CDE - Expulsion Hearing Officer Training	Administrators, Principals, Special Service Providers	10+ Hours
CDE - Manifestation Determination Review	Administrators, Principals, Special Service Providers	2 Hours
CDE - Masking and Mental Health	All Educators	1 Hour
CDE - Mental Health 101	All Educators	1 Hour
CDE - Positive Behavior Reinforcement	Teachers, Special Service Providers, Paraprofessionals	1 Hour
CDE - Serving Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing: A Professional Development Course for SLPs and other Service Providers	Teachers, Special Service Providers, Paraprofessionals	8.5 Hours
CDE - Culturally Responsive School-Based Family Interviewing: Engaging in Empathic Family Partnerships	Administrators, Principals, Teachers, Special Service Providers	5 Hours
CDE - Indigenous Students with Exceptionalities Course	Teachers, Special Service Providers	4 Hours

Professional Development Opportunities (Click the Title to Access Training)	Audience (listed by license type)	Possible Credit Hours
CDE - Supporting Literacy in Individuals with Autism Through the Use of Assistive Technologies	Teachers, Special Service Providers	1 Hour
CDE - The Landscape of Wellbeing and Belonging Series	All Educators	8.5 hours
Classroom Well-Being Information and Strategies for Educators (WISE)	All Educators	10+ Hours
Colorado Behavioral Health Agency Learning Hub	All Educators	10+ Hours
Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM)	Teachers, Special Service Providers, Paraprofessional	10+ Hours
California Early Childhood Online	All Educators	10+ Hours
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Learning Libraries	All Educators	10+ Hours
CEC - Supporting Student Behavior as a Paraeducator	Teachers, Paraprofessionals	1 Hour
CEC - Effective & High-Leverage Practices for Paraeducators	Teachers, Paraprofessionals	9 Hours
Ed Web Professional Development	All Educators	10+ Hours
IRIS Center	All Educators	10+ Hours
National Center on Intensive Intervention	Principals, Teachers, Special Service Providers	10+ Hours
National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) Learning Center	All Educators	10+ Hours
Progress Online Learning Courses	All Educators	10+ Hours
Safe Spaces: Foundations of Trauma-Informed Practice for Educational Care Settings	All Educators	10+ Hours
Ultimate Behavior Toolkit: What Works	Teachers, Special Service Providers, Paraprofessionals	10+ Hours