



**POSITION STATEMENT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION CUTS  
[PARAPROFESSIONAL CUTS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS]**

The Arc Tennessee has a longstanding commitment to inclusive education. We actively support the efforts of Tennessee school districts to shift toward a more inclusive model of education to better serve Tennessee's students with disabilities.

In the challenging fiscal climate, Tennessee school systems must take care to ensure that budget cuts do not disproportionately affect students with disabilities, or reduce their opportunities to be educated alongside their typical peers. Meaningful inclusive education requires that students, educators and classrooms be afforded the supports they need.

Well-trained paraprofessionals can play a crucial supportive role in the education of students with disabilities. Under the supervision of a certified teacher, paraprofessionals assist with academic, behavioral, physical and safety needs, particularly in general education classrooms, where student/teacher ratios are typically higher. Paraprofessionals can contribute greatly to the development of successful learning environments in which students with and without disabilities learn together.

We understand that the current budgetary constraints may require difficult decisions about how dollars are allocated. However, The Arc Tennessee believes that school systems across the state must ensure that sufficient, effective personnel, including paraprofessionals, are in place to serve students with disabilities in inclusive settings. We are concerned that deep cuts and budget reductions, such as the recent elimination of paraprofessional staff in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, will prove shortsighted.

We cannot afford to hinder the significant progress many Tennessee school systems have made toward a high quality, truly inclusive system of education which prepares *all* students for life in our communities.

For more information contact:

Carrie Hobbs Guiden

Executive Director

[cguiden@thearctn.org](mailto:cguiden@thearctn.org)

615-248-5878 x14