



**Division on
Autism and
Developmental
Disabilities**

Press Release: Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities Announces 2025 Paraeducator of the Year Award Recipient

(For Immediate Release)

January 15, 2025

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities is pleased to announce Ms. Jody Vititoe as the recipient of the 2025 Paraeducator of the Year Award. This award recognizes excellence in paraeducators who support students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities.

Ms. Jody Vititoe, a paraeducator at Rineyville Elementary School in Kentucky, exemplifies dedication and passion in her work with students with extensive support needs. With over four years of experience, she has built deep connections with students and families, often called a "second parent" by parents in IEP meetings. Her commitment extends beyond her role, adapting materials, creating inclusive environments, and fostering inclusion. Celebrated for her creativity, such as organizing a mock bake sale to teach math skills, and her proactive approach to sensory needs, Ms. Vititoe embodies compassion and innovation. Described as "the most dedicated educator" by Mr. Evan Horn, she is also pursuing her teaching certificate, furthering her lifelong commitment to Special Education. Ms. Vititoe's remarkable impact makes her an exceptional candidate for recognition.

This distinguished award is presented by The Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD), a special interest association within the Council for Exceptional Children—the largest international professional organization dedicated to supporting the needs of students with disabilities. Since its establishment in 1963, DADD has been a leading voice in the field of education for students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities, actively contributing to research dissemination, the creation of nationally recognized professional practice standards, and fostering robust professional networking.

The award ceremony is scheduled for January 22, 2025, at DADD's annual conference in Clearwater Beach, Florida. For further information, please contact Dr. Melissa Savage, DADD Awards Chair, at mns029@uark.edu. Additional details about the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities can be found at <http://www.daddcec.com/>.