

Press Release: *Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities Announces 2026 Paraeducator of the Year*

(For Immediate Release)

January 5, 2026

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) is pleased to announce Tiffany Garnett as the 2026 Paraeducator of the Year Award recipient. This award recognizes exceptional paraprofessionals who work in some capacity with students who have autism, intellectual disability, or other developmental disabilities.

Ms. Tiffany Garnett is a Paraeducator at C. O. Harrison Elementary School in Cincinnati, OH, where she is widely recognized for her dedication, compassion, and advocacy for students with autism and other disabilities. In addition to working full-time in the classroom, Ms. Garnett is currently pursuing dual certification in General Education and Special Education. Over the past year, she has balanced her professional responsibilities and academic studies while also becoming a kinship and foster parent to support children impacted by trauma, demonstrating an extraordinary commitment to the well-being of students both in and beyond the school setting.

Colleagues consistently highlight Ms. Garnett's passion and leadership as defining qualities of her work. Her school-based Intervention Specialist noted that "Tiffany exudes confidence in her capabilities, love in her expectations, and patience in her attitude when working with kids of a variety of needs." Nominators emphasized her ability to build strong, collaborative support teams, create instructional resources and data tools, and advocate tirelessly to ensure students receive the education and care they deserve. Through her professionalism, empathy, and unwavering dedication, Ms. Garnett exemplifies the spirit of service and impact celebrated by the DADD Paraeducator of the Year Award.

This distinguished award is presented by DADD, a special interest association within the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the largest international professional organization dedicated to supporting students with disabilities. Since 1963, DADD has been a leading voice in educating students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities, contributing to research dissemination, developing professional practice standards, and fostering robust professional networking. The sponsor for this year's Paraeducator of the Year award is ACE® ABA Software System, bringing evidence-based teaching technology to support ABA classrooms or programs.

The award ceremony is scheduled for January 16, 2026, at DADD's annual conference in Long Beach, CA. For further information, please contact DeVoshia Mason Martin, DADD Awards Chair, at awardschair@daddcec.com. Additional details about the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities can be found at <http://www.daddcec.com/>.