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**An Examination of the Role of Teacher Aides Who Work
with Children with Traumatic Brain Injury**

**A thesis presented in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

Children with traumatic brain injury (TBI) often return to school requiring modifications to their learning environment due to the subsequent effects resulting from a brain injury and one of the most common practices is to provide the child with a teacher's aide (TA) to assist the child in meeting the learning objectives set out by professional staff. The current study examined the role of TA's who work with children with traumatic brain injury. Using questionnaires, the views of TA's, parents and teachers of 16 children who had sustained a traumatic brain injury were sought and compared on a number of issues, including TA's knowledge about the effects of brain injury, nature of lesson planning, attendance at IEP meetings, job preparation and training, tasks and responsibilities, problems relating to TA's effectiveness, and TA's overall performance and effectiveness. Participants were also asked to describe ways in which the TA's performance could be improved and to describe any further thoughts they had regarding the role of the TA. The overall group differences between TA's, parents and teachers were examined as well as the individual responses of the TA, parent and teacher of 7 children. Key findings included, TA's should know a lot about the effects of brain injury, however, most were found to have some or very little knowledge; TA's should develop written lesson plans together, although most received instructions from the teacher; TA's should attend IEP meetings and most were found to attend all or some; TA's did not hold primary responsibility for a range of tasks; TA's required further training, particularly in the areas of brain injury, teaching strategies, and communication, and the majority of respondents believed TA's performance to be excellent or very good and TA's to be effective. Additional issues raised were, the TA's proximity to the child, the type of person employed as a TA and schools' lack of knowledge about the extent of the child's problems. Although there were some discrepancies in responses between individual TA's, parents and teachers of the 7 children, overall, TA's, parents and teachers' views regarding the TA's role did not differ significantly.

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