

Special Education Teacher

Making

A

DIFFERENCE in the **lives**
of **students** with
special needs

Being a special educator is an opportunity to have a positive, lasting impact on the lives of children and youth with special needs.

Special Education is specially designed instruction, that often incorporates related services, to meet the educational, social, emotional, and vocational needs of students with disabilities.



C A R E E R S

in **Special
Education
and Related Services**

Who are Special Education students?

Students with disabilities who receive special education instruction and related services vary greatly in their needs. Like all children, they differ from one another in ability, age, learning style, and personality. Students with disabilities come from all cultural backgrounds and may even speak languages other than English.



They all have unique learning needs based on their disabilities that require a variety of special education and related services, such as specially designed instruction, adapted materials, speech-language therapy, adaptive physical education and school to work transition planning.

Some students with disabilities have cognitive impairments, such as mental retardation, which can range from mild to profound. Others have specific learning disabilities that require specific teaching strategies, including accommodations and modifications to the general education curriculum. Still other students have physical disabilities that require the use of wheelchairs or other assistive devices. Some students' impairments are sensory, such as hearing loss and vision impairments. Others have emotional conditions. In addition, chronic health problems and multiple disabilities complicate learning for some.

WHAT DO SPECIAL EDUCATORS DO?

Special Educators provide specially designed instruction to individuals with disabilities. They adapt and develop materials to match the special needs of each student. They work to ensure that students with disabilities reach their learning potential. There are specialty areas within special education.

As students with disabilities are more routinely included in general education classrooms and in their neighborhood schools, special education teachers often work in teams with general education teachers. Special education professionals also provide consulting services to general education teachers.

Special educators work in many settings. Settings in public schools include general education classrooms, resource rooms, and self-contained classrooms. Other public or private school settings include hospitals, medical centers, private practice environments, correctional facilities, and the child's own home. Some public and private school settings also include direct services to the youngest of students with disabilities - infants and toddlers ages birth to three.

WHAT KIND OF PREPARATION WILL I NEED TO BECOME A SPECIAL EDUCATOR?

Becoming a special educator requires specialized professional education and skills.

At least a bachelor's degree is required to become a special education teacher. In some states, a graduate (master's) degree may be required. Professional preparation includes specialized course work, field experiences with children with disabilities, and student teaching. The types of professional preparation programs offered in colleges and universities can vary widely but generally lead to eligibility for special education teacher licensure in the state where the program is offered. Only special education programs accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in

conjunction with the Council for Exceptional Children have met national professional standards. Information about specific programs can be obtained from the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education at 1-800-641-7824 or online at www.special-ed-careers.org. You should also contact the Department of Special Education at the college or university of your choice to discuss course and career options open to you.

WHAT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE FOR ME AS A SPECIAL EDUCATOR?

There is an increasing demand for special educators across the nation. In every state the demand for qualified special educators exceeds the available supply. Vacancies vary by state, according to the type of special educator needed and the regions within the state. Generally, rural and urban areas have the greatest need for professionals across all areas of special education. There is a need in all areas for culturally and ethnically diverse professionals, particularly in urban areas; there is also a high need for professionals who are bilingual.

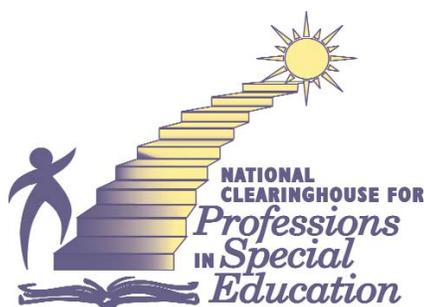
Many states operate employment clearinghouses or placement services that match professionals looking for jobs with educational settings that have positions available. Information about these services is available from the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education. Contact them at 1-800-641-7824 or visit them online at www.special-ed-careers.org



HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION AS A CAREER CHOICE?

The best way to learn more about careers in special education is to talk to professionals already practicing in the field. Contact special educators in your local school system as well as faculty at nearby colleges and universities. Ask professionals in the field questions about what they do, why they chose their professions, and what they find challenging and rewarding about their work. The more you know about careers focused on children and youth with disabilities, the better able you will be to make an informed career choice.

The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education maintains a list of special education professionals. These are special educators who volunteer their time to talk with career information seekers about the rewards and challenges of being a special education professional. They can advise interested career seekers on necessary college coursework, state licensure requirements, job descriptions, and local salary scales. Check out the Special Education Professionals Network online at www.special-ed-careers.org



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Professionals who teach and provide services to students with disabilities have challenging yet rewarding careers.

A career in special education offers an opportunity to work in partnership with students, parents, professional colleagues, and the community.

RESOURCES

THE NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR PROFESSIONS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

1110 North Glebe Road, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-5704
1.800.641.7824
E-mail: ncpse@cec.sped.org
www.special-ed-careers.org

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

1110 North Glebe Road, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-5704
1.800.224.6830
www.cec.sped.org



The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education is the descriptive title for the National Clearinghouse on Careers and Professions Related to Early Intervention and Education for Children with Disabilities; Cooperative Agreement H326P980002, between the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Exceptional Children. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of either the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Exceptional Children. This information in the public domain, unless otherwise indicated. Readers are encouraged to copy and share it, but please credit the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education.
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Spring 2002

CAREERS

in special education and related services