



www.careersinghana.com

Email : info@careersinghana.com

Tel: +233 245649846

Special Education Teaching Careers, Jobs, and Employment Information

Career and Job Highlights for Special Education Teachers

- Reported shortages of qualified teachers coupled with increasing enrollments of special education students will likely create favorable job opportunities.
- To qualify applicants must obtain a license, complete an approved teacher preparation program, and receive a bachelor's and in some States a master's degree.
- In order to draw people into these positions, a number of States offer alternative licensure programs.

Special Education Teaching Career Overview

Children and youths with a variety of disabilities are taught by special education teachers. A small percentage of special education teachers instruct basic literacy and life skills to students with mental retardation or autism. However, most students in special education have mild to moderate disabilities and teachers modify the general education curriculum to meet the individual needs of their students. Although some teachers work with pre-school-aged children such as infants and toddlers, the majority of special education teachers work with students at the elementary, middle, and secondary school level.

Examples of disabilities that qualify students for special education programs are traumatic brain injury, combined deafness and blindness, autism, visual impairments, orthopedic impairments, multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, speech or language impairments, specific learning disabilities, and other health impairments. Students entering a special education program are sorted into the categories to help special education teachers prepare to work with specific groups of learners. It is important for special education teachers to identify a child's special needs as early as possible to help increase their success in school.

Special education teachers use many teaching methods to help their students learn. Techniques can include small-group work, problem-solving assignments, or individualized instruction depending on the disability. Special education teachers make sure that special accommodations are provided for students taking exams when they are needed. These adjustments may include

lengthening the time allowed to take the test or having the questions read orally to the student.

Each special education student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) partly drafted by the special education teacher. The IEP sets appropriate goals for each student based on their individual learning style and ability. The program outlines detailed steps designed to help students progress to a level at which they may transition to middle, high school, or for older students to study beyond the secondary level or to employment. The student's parents, school administrators, and teachers, including the special education and the general education teachers, review the IEP. Teachers frequently communicate with parents to recommend methods that will help learning at home and inform them on their child's development.

Special education teachers help their students' progress not only academically but also behaviorally by helping them develop emotional awareness, conduct themselves in a manner that is socially acceptable, and feel comfortable in social situations. Teachers strive to help their students obtain certain academic and behavioral levels so they can be prepared for everyday life after they complete school. Teaching routine skills such as writing a check or making a grocery list or providing career counseling are ways special education teachers can help their students succeed after graduation. In addition to these tasks, special education teachers must also grade tests and homework assignments, assign work appropriate for each student, and design and teach suitable curricula.

Special education teachers spend much of their time communicating with school administrators, occupational and physical therapists, school psychologists, social workers, and parents. They may also communicate with other teachers, especially their students' general education teachers, whom they may work with in the same classroom as schools aim to become more inclusive. General educators adjust their curriculum and teaching strategies with the help of special education teachers to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. The work of teachers, teacher assistants, and other faculty, such as therapists and social workers, is coordinated by special education teachers to make sure the requirements of inclusive special education programs are met.

There are many different settings in which a special education teacher may work. A few teach only special education students in their own classroom; some work with general education teachers as education resource teacher to provide individualized assistance to students with disabilities; others team teach with general education teachers in classes comprised of both general and special education students. Some teachers work with special education students for only part of the day in a resource room apart from their general education classes. A small number of special education teachers tutor homebound or hospitalized students or teach in other residential facilities.

Many parents who have infants with medical problems that slow or inhibit their normal development hire special education teachers to work with the child and themselves. These teachers demonstrate activities and strategies to stimulate the infant and encourage development of the child's skills. Toddlers with disabilities work with special education teachers at preschool where—through play—they learn to develop motor, cognitive, language, self-help, and social skills.

Technology is proving to play an important role in the developments of special education. Teachers are helping children learn through the use of equipment such as audiotapes, interactive educational software programs, and computers with synthesized speech.

Special Education Teacher Career Training and Job Qualifications

In order to teach special education, teachers must have a license in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Licensure differs according to State and is typically awarded by a licensure advisory committee or the State board of education. In order to teach special education in many states, teachers obtain a license to teach general education, kindergarten through grade 12. A specific license in general special education is offered in some States, while other licensures acknowledge varying specialties within special education. Some states even require teachers to obtain a general education license and then another license in special education to be qualified.

A bachelor's degree is required in all States in addition to completing an approved teacher preparation program with a certain number of education and subject area credit hours and supervised student teaching. A master's degree in special education is required in numerous States. Beyond the bachelor's degree, this entails at least 1 year of added course work which includes a specialization. There are reciprocity agreements in a handful of States which allow special education teachers to transfer their licenses from one State to another, but the teacher must still complete licensing requirements of the State in which they are currently practicing. A certification awarded by a national organization may be recognized by employers in the future to solve this hassle.

Many programs in special education are offered at universities and colleges throughout the United States at the doctoral, masters', bachelor's degree level. General education teachers typically have shorter training periods than special education teachers. Many undergraduate programs last 4-years and include special education courses both general and specialized. These courses are designed to educate students in areas such as child growth and development, special education policies and legalities, educational psychology, and courses sharing knowledge and skills needed for teaching students with disabilities. A rising number of institutions are requiring an additional year of courses or other post baccalaureate preparation. A student must specialize in an area of special education in some programs, while other students may study many specialized areas to earn a general special education degree. Regardless of the details of a program, most end with a year of student teaching in a classroom supervised by a licensed teacher.

In response to the demand for special education teachers to fill vacant positions, many States award emergency and alternative licenses. These licenses help college graduates and those changing careers into teaching make a faster transition. Although requirements vary from State to State, they may be less rigorous to earn an alternative license than for a regular license. Those who begin teaching quickly with a provisional license in some programs can earn a regular license in 1 to 2 years by taking education courses and teaching under the supervision of licensed teachers. States offer emergency licenses when they have a shortage of licensed special education teachers and are unable to fill the positions.

Special education teachers spend much of their time working with students, parents, school faculty and administrators, and others. They must have the ability to communicate effectively and be cooperative. Because these teachers work with students who have learning difficulties, they must be creative and apply different types of teaching techniques to reach every student. Special education teachers should readily accept the differences of others, understand their students' special needs, act to motivate their students, and have a great deal of patience.

Special education teachers can progress to administrative or supervisory positions. Earning advanced degrees qualifies teachers to instruct at colleges in special education programs. Veteran teachers in some school systems can act as mentors to less experienced teachers, offering assistance and support to those teaches while teaching a light load themselves.

Job and Employment Opportunities for Special Education Teachers

Projected employment increases though the year 2012 indicate special education teachers to increase faster than all other occupations. Several factors will create more openings for special education teachers, such as the rising number of special education students who need services, legislation stressing adequate training and employment for individuals with disabilities, and education reforms calling for higher standards for graduation. These factors combined with openings created as current special education teachers retire, switch to general education, or completely change their careers, will override any declines in overall student enrollments to create favorable employment opportunities. Additionally many school districts have shortages of qualified teachers which also indicates good job prospects for special education teachers.

Geographic area and specialty can have a significant impact on the job outlook. While many parts of the country, inner cities and rural areas, have difficulty finding qualified applicants, other areas, such as suburban or wealthy urban areas, generate more competition for limited positions. A greater demand for special education teachers is expected in States in the West and South as a result of projected increases in student population. Significant increases in the enrollment of special education students with speech or language impairments and learning disabilities may create better job opportunities for teachers with specialties in these areas. A need for early childhood special education teachers has stemmed from legislation promoting early intervention and special education for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. As the student population becomes more and more diverse, special education teachers with multicultural experience or who are bilingual will become increasingly valuable.

As of late more students have been requiring special education. This trend is anticipated to continue, particularly as learning disabilities are identified and diagnosed at younger ages. Also, in the past children may have passed away from serious accidents or illnesses, but thanks to medical advances today many children survive these instances, although with impairments that require special accommodations. As learning disabilities in immigrant populations become more identifiable to teachers, it is expected that the numbers of special education students will enlarge. Lastly, as standards that students are expected to meet are raised, more parents are likely to look for special services for their children who struggle to reach these levels.