

Sonoma County Office of Education – Job Description

Classified

TEACHING ASSISTANT, SPECIAL EDUCATION

Definition:

To provide assistance to certificated staff in the instruction, supervision and training of individuals or groups of students (ages 3 to 22 years) with a variety of special education needs; perform a variety of instructional services within a well-defined framework of policies and procedures; provide a range of instructional training experiences in a variety of educational environments which may include specific classrooms, learning centers, vocational programs, the community and/or other instructional facilities and to perform related duties as assigned.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

Incumbent works closely with the teacher and follows detailed instruction and/or established practices and procedures. Uses judgment and initiative in performing job and works with students with severe medical and physical disabilities or behavior disorders. Incumbent in this job class may be assigned to a specific classroom or multiple classrooms; may serve students with any, or combination of, the following conditions: limited- or non-English population, intellectual disability, autism, severe physical/medical involvement (i.e., cerebral palsy, seizure disorders), communication disorders (including non-verbal); hearing/vision impairment, learning disorders, emotional disturbances, behavior disorders.

Supervision Exercised and Received:

General direction is provided by the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Example of Duties and Responsibilities:

Duties and Responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assists in direct instruction, including:
 - Vocational skills, job- and work-related tasks.
 - Academics—reading, writing, math concepts.
 - Motor skills—physical education, body awareness.
 - Speech/language—communication skills.
 - Leisure/recreation skills.
 - Independent living and domestic skills.
 - Self-help—toileting, feeding, personal hygiene, dressing, etiquette and manners.
 - Other specialized health care—diapering, toilet training.
 - Community-based instruction.
 - Specialized subject areas, based on individual needs.
- Maintains an effective learning environment through student supervision, class management and student discipline.
- Assists students with various physical and instructional-related equipment such as computers, tablets, ELMO software, playground equipment and physical therapy equipment.
- Makes effective use of materials, media, audio-visual, equipment and supplies.

- Accompanies students to general education classes as assigned and assists teachers and students as needed.
- Prepares instructional materials to include worksheets and manipulatives.
- Performs a variety of clerical tasks, including typing, making copies, collating, gathering resource information and materials, filing, food program record keeping, fundraising activities, answering phones, taking and relaying messages, word processing.
- Participates in job-related meetings as requested.
- Contributes relevant feedback/information on student progress through observation, interaction and maintaining accurate records.
- Maintains informational and operational records and files, including test/homework scores, student work, meal counts, incident reports and other records related to student instruction.
- Monitors and assists students in using adaptive devices; i.e., electric wheelchairs, hearing aids, speech synthesizers, cassette players, VCRs and various recreational equipment.
- Provides direction and support to peer tutors/student assistants including lifting of students, safe and healthful work habits.
- Maintains cooperative relationships with all parents/care providers, staff and students.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

Employment Standards:

Knowledge of:

- General classroom procedures and equipment.
- Pertinent academic areas and learning situations.
- Indoor/outdoor recreational activities suitable for handicapped students.
- Standard English usage, spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Standard office machines, including computers.
- Safe work practices and proper lifting techniques.

Ability to:

- Respond promptly to request of internal and external clients; provide them needed information, assistance, training, materials and resources.
- Communicate effectively in both oral and written form, using standard English correctly.
- Maintain student and classroom records.
- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with those contacted during performance of job duties.
- Work independently with general guidance as needed.
- Develop rapport with all students, being fair, consistent and respectful.
- Plan, organize and prioritize own work to meet deadlines and accomplish assigned tasks within established deadlines.
- Perform competently and demonstrate skills and knowledge in the area of responsibility.
- Establish an instructional environment to meet individual student need.
- Learn child and/or adolescent development and/or psychology.
- Learn assistant teaching strategies and behavior and anger management techniques.
- Work effectively with students during activities which require twisting, pushing, pulling, bending, lifting, climbing, kneeling and other physical activities as needed.
- Take appropriate action in emergency situations; follow procedures in a calm, responsible manner.

- Facilitate age-appropriate interactions, activities and instruction to all students regardless of disability.
- Analyze situations including instruction, class and behavior management and implement an effective course of action.
- Recognize, stimulate and solicit student interest, input and participation to the fullest extent of each student's potential.
- Maintain and improve professional skills and knowledge.
- Be flexible and receptive to change.
- Learn basic first aid and CPR.

Desirable Qualifications:

- Knowledge of general needs and behaviors of students with special needs.
- Knowledge of behavior and anger management techniques.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of education and experience that would provide the knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

Education:

- NCLB requirements for paraprofessionals working in Title I programs:
 - High school diploma or the equivalent, **and**
 - Two years of college (48 units), **or**
 - A. A. degree (or higher), **or**
 - Pass a local assessment of knowledge and skills in assisting in instruction.

Experience:

- Any paid or volunteer experience working in an instructional environment.

Physical Abilities (Level 1):

The physical abilities described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job; the frequencies noted below may vary depending on the assignment and the level of the students being served.

Note -Terms used in this section are defined as follows: Rarely: 1 to 10%; Occasionally: 11 to 33%; Frequently: 34 to 66%; and Continuously: 67 to 100% of the workday.

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| • Sitting: | Rarely |
| • Standing/Walking: | Frequently |
| • Waist Bending: | Occasionally to Frequently |
| • Neck Bending: | Occasionally to Frequently |
| • Squatting: | Frequently |
| • Climbing: | Rarely |
| • Kneeling: | Frequently |
| • Crawling: | Rarely |
| • Neck Twisting: | Occasionally to Frequently |
| • Waist Twisting: | Occasionally |
| • Pushing/Pulling: | Frequently to Continuously – up to 100 to 150 lbs. at a time (such as pushing wheelchairs) |

- Running: Occasionally
- Reaching:
 - Above Shoulder: Occasionally
 - Below Shoulder: Frequently
- Lifting/Carrying:
 - 0-10 lbs: Frequently - weights carried 50 to 100 feet at a time
 - 11-25 lbs: Occasionally- weights carried up to 100 feet at a time
 - 26-50 lbs: Occasionally - weights carried 10 to 100 feet at a time
 - 51-75 lbs: Frequently - *with assistance* - weights moved several feet at a time for toileting and transfers
 - 76-150 lbs: Occasionally - *with assistance* - weights moved several feet at a time for toileting and transfers
- Hand Activities:
 - Repetitive Hand Use: Occasionally
 - Simple Grasping: Frequently
 - Power Grasping: Occasionally
 - Fine Manipulation: Rarely
 - Hand and Arm Twisting/Turning: Occasionally to Frequently
 - Computer Operation/Writing: Rarely

- Meet sometimes, strenuous physical requirements necessary to safely and effectively perform assigned duties, including lifting 50 pounds on a regular basis and periodically lifting in excess of 50 pounds with assistance. For Preschool positions, this may include moving preschool equipment such as cots, tables, chairs; lifting infants and young children; perform twisting, bending, pushing, pulling, lifting, stooping, reaching motions during interaction with students and their children.
- May be required to accompany students on field trips, which may require maneuvering into awkward positions or in narrow bus aisles.
- Must be able to lift and physically restrain students at times; to take appropriate action in emergency situations; and follow procedures in a calm, responsible manner.
- Must be able to communicate and exchange information, effectively, discreetly, and accurately in a high activity environment with staff, students, parents and individuals who may have limited expressive and receptive conversational capacities.
- Must be able to detect visual and non-visual warning signs of developing physical and emotional situations that may require attention from certificated staff.
- Must be able to express self effectively, verbally and non-verbally in classroom with staff, student and parents.
- Must be able to discern visual and non-visual signs of physical and non-physical issues that may negatively affect the learning environment.
- Must be able to monitor students and staff visually and non-visually to effectively assist in the management of an orderly and safe learning environment.
- Must have normal vision (20/20), corrected or uncorrected.

Work environment:

- Walking on uneven ground when outdoors.
- Exposure to student illnesses, injuries, infections and bodily fluids.
- May be exposed to chemicals contained in cleaning products.
- May be required to maneuver into awkward positions.

Other Requirements:

- Must be fingerprinted and satisfactory Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation records checks must be received by Sonoma County Office of Education, prior to employment.
- TB testing will be required upon employment.
- Must pass a pre-employment physical (if applicable).
- Visual acuity sufficient to read manuals, video display screens, and other related material and work at a computer screen frequently and throughout the day.
- May be required to obtain first aid and CPR certificates within the first 6-12 months of employment.
- May be required to drive with or without students; some positions may require a current California driver license, proof of insurance and possible participation in the DMV Pull Notice Program once employed.

Additional Information:

- When a position is designated as requiring a second language proficiency; signing proficiency; braille proficiency; or certification as a nursing assistant, the employee may be entitled to a five (5) percent premium based on demonstrated proficiency in the skill area required.
- An employee assigned to work three days or more per week without the teacher present in a community-based instruction program will also receive a five (5) percent premium.
- An employee who has education above the minimum required (e.g., BA or BS degree in a related field, or 24 units in Child Development) may apply for a five (5) percent premium.

Other:

- Revised: August 17, 2015
- FLSA Status: Non-Exempt
- Bargaining Unit: SEIU
- Approved by: Personnel Commission