

Special Education Technology Specialist

Making

A

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

Technology specialists are resourceful, persistent, patient, and creative. They are problemsolvers who work well with both children and adults and can juggle a variety of tasks at the same time. These professionals also have excellent observation and communication skills. They analyze complex information easily and use sound judgement. They combine technical expertise with insight into how to help others become confident users of technology.



CAREERS

in **Special
Education**
and **Related Services**

What is a Special Education Technology Specialist?



A special education Technology Specialist evaluates students with disabilities and helps them become more productive and independent with the use of appropriate technology. They provide telephone and classroom technology support and train both the teaching staff and students in the proper use of assistive technology. Technology Specialists recommend software and hardware as well as suggesting specific devices or equipment for use or training. Their expertise helps them to assist in accommodating the limitations of students with disabilities.

EDUCATION REQUIRED

Some states require a teaching license to be employed as a technology specialist, but others do not. Generally speaking, job applicants who have strong computer skills combined with experience in special education or teaching, are most likely to be hired in entry level jobs. Several colleges and universities offer undergraduate classes in special education technology. Entrance to a master's degree program generally requires a strong background in teaching, curriculum and instruction, special education, or a related service field. A typical sampling of courses includes strategies for integrating technology into early childhood, elementary, and secondary education; technology for educating students with multiple disabilities or pervasive developmental disorders; computer applications; and transdisciplinary approach to rehabilitation.

JOB OUTLOOK AND ADVANCEMENT

Although there is no national data collection on job outlook specifically for technology specialists. Through the year 2005 employment for all special education teachers is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations. In 1993-94, more than 5 million infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities received special education services. As the school population rises, manufacturers of equipment and devices for students with disabilities are expected to offer a greater variety of products at more affordable prices. School systems that do not currently employ technology specialists will have even more incentive as the number of children needing special education services increases. Medical

advances (that result in more survivors of accidents and illnesses) and the expected increase in the general population will require all schools to expand their special education services. Technology specialists with master's or doctoral degrees may advance to supervisory positions, sometimes overseeing a large number of schools

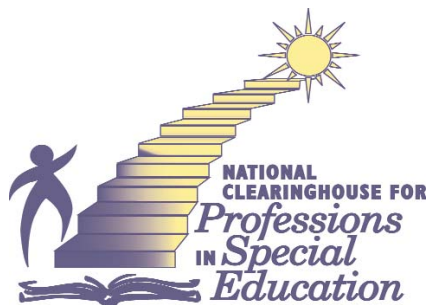
HOW TO PREPARE FOR A CAREER

High school students considering this profession should take classes in science, math, and English, as well as courses in business or industrial arts. Excellent computer skills in both software and hardware will be required in all courses of study beyond secondary school. Teenagers can gain valuable experience toward becoming technology specialists when they work with children who are learning how to use computers. They can gain valuable experience working with children with disabilities by volunteering to assist youngsters in the Special Olympics program.



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



1110 N. Glebe Road, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-5704
800.641.7824
TTY: 866.915.5000
FAX: 703.264.1637
ncpse@cec.sped.org
www.special-ed-careers.org

Professionals who 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

TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA DIVISION COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

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

NATIONAL CENTER TO IMPROVE PRACTICE(NCIP)

Educational Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02158
617-969-7100 x2387
E-mail: ncip@ed.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.

U. S. Department of Education Project Officer
Martha B. Bokee

Fall 2002

CAREERS

in special education and related services