

## **KEY Tasks of the Special Education Professional**

As an educator of special needs children, it is important to understand the needs of the children. Educators must know how to create a positive environment for children with special needs in their care. Select a stage of development and complete the chart with the appropriate information.

**Circle a Stage of Development:**

Infants and toddlers (newborn through two years)

Preschoolers (ages three through five years)

Early to middle childhood stage (ages six through ten years)

Tasks of special education professional	Description	Advantages to special needs children/students
<b>Appreciate individual differences</b>	Each child has special qualities which make him or her different from every other child. Caregivers should develop positive attitudes about individual differences in children. Such attitudes help caregivers serve as role models for children in their care. Caregivers should be aware of their own biases and feelings about children with disabilities or gifted children.	Answers will vary
<b>Arrange learning environment</b>	Rooms should be arranged so that children can move around freely and have easy access to all areas used. There should be a large open area for group activities and large muscle play. Several small areas should be planned for learning centers, small group activities or private, quiet activities. Avoid rearranging rooms, especially when children have physical or visual disabilities.	Answers will vary
<b>Encourage participation/cooperation</b>	Promote positive interactions by providing materials and learning experiences which encourage cooperation. Such materials as blocks, dramatic play props and table games encourage children to play together. Plan learning experiences that give children a chance to interact positively.	Answers will vary

<b>Encourage independence</b>	Independent living is a major lifetime goal of children with disabilities. Caregivers may be tempted to perform tasks for children with disabilities but should avoid these temptations. Children with disabilities should be allowed to perform everyday tasks that they can do for themselves. This accomplishment builds self-confidence and gives a sense of independence to these children. Children can learn to care for their own needs through new and repeated experiences.	Answers will vary
<b>Encourage positive interactions</b>	There are many benefits when all children, with and without special needs, are educated and cared for together. Positive group interactions do not happen automatically. Caregivers must work to encourage positive group interactions. Plan and follow a well-balanced daily schedule to allow time to for positive interactions.	Answers will vary
<b>Provide structure /schedule planning</b>	The daily schedule may need to be more structured than usual for children with special needs. Much unstructured playtime may be difficult for such children. During a scheduled free choice time, limit the number of choices given. Spend a few minutes directing the child in a specific activity.	Answers will vary

What are four guidelines for educators working with children with disabilities?

1. Answers will vary
2. Answers will vary
3. Answers will vary
4. Answers will vary