

**Job title**

Special education teacher

**General overview**

Special education teachers are specifically trained to work with children and youth that have various learning and developmental disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dyslexia, and Down syndrome (O\*Net, 2013). They make it possible for children to achieve their highest potential by offering the tools and guidance to fit their particular needs (Faculty of Education, 2014).

**Job duties and responsibilities**

According to the Ontario College of Teachers (2014), special education teachers usually teach a small group of children who have various disabilities. This requires teachers to develop and adapt their teaching methods specifically to the needs of every child. In order to accomplish this successfully, special education teachers carry out thorough assessments and set learning goals for each child. Nevertheless, they also complete regular teaching duties like marking, preparing lessons, and occasional behaviour management.

In addition to the classroom duties, they perform administrative tasks such as updating and maintaining records (O\*Net, 2014). This is an important responsibility as special education teachers have frequent meetings with the child's caregivers to report and discuss their progress as well as other professionals like speech and language therapists and psychologists (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). These meetings are extremely important for the children's advancement and success. The recommendations received from these professionals help teachers personalize the children's curriculum to their specific needs.

**Typical workday**

Special education teachers typically work regular school hours as most teach in a classroom setting. Nonetheless, special education teachers working with older individuals can also work in hospitals, family centers and residential care facilities (Service Canada, 2014). Their day is composed of different teaching activities that focus on social, functional, academic and self care skills (O\*Net, 2014). Administrative duties are accomplished after the school day or the end of the teaching session. As mentioned previously, they might be required to work in liaison with other professionals in the field or have special skills like American Sign Language and Braille (O\*Net, 2014). This is because some children might have difficulties learning verbal language due to their disabilities in which case sign language is taught (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). In other cases, the children could simply be deaf or blind.

**Educational requirements and other qualifications**

As indicated by the Faculty of Education (2014) and the Ontario College of Teachers (2014), in order to become a special education teacher, individuals need to accomplish the same requirements as regular teachers. This means at least a three-year undergraduate degree and a two-year teacher education program. Once this is achieved, candidates need to qualify to be a registered teacher through the teachers college of their province. Aspiring teachers must pass the written test, pay the annual fee and meet the specific qualifications listed above. At this point, teachers can participate in a professional development program that specializes in teaching

children with disabilities also offered by the teachers college. It is important to note that employers may ask for additional requirements like CPR and First Aid certification or a swimming and water safety course.

### **Related skills, interests, and abilities**

A special education teacher should have excellent communication skills in addition to being creative, motivated, and a team player (O\*Net, 2014). Strong communications skills will ensure teachers can communicate the lessons clearly to the children (O\*net, 2014). Communication skills are also important for engaging and maintaining positive rapport with caregivers, social workers, psychologists, language therapists, and colleagues. Creativity is important for engaging children and motivating them as not all children learn in the same manner. These individuals have a strong desire to help families and children. More importantly, they are caring, understanding and patient towards children and their disabilities (O\*Net, 2014). These teachers have a lot of knowledge about the various disabilities and the resources available in the community. Special education teachers might have additional training or abilities in languages, sports or art therapy (Ontario College for Teachers, 2014).

### **Relevance of Psychology undergraduate degree**

An undergraduate degree in Psychology is extremely useful for anyone aspiring to become a special education teacher. Courses such as child development and exceptional children specialize in the development of typical children and children with disabilities. These courses can help prepare special education teachers for working with children and youth that have disabilities. These courses help differentiate disabilities and their unique characteristics. They also provide resources and initiatives already existing in the community that are dedicated to helping these children. Students learn the barriers associated with the diagnosis of a disability as well as the struggles encountered.

Additionally, psychology courses such as exceptional children and abnormal psychology provide general information on assessment, treatment and interventions. The general knowledge is important for understanding the process that families undergo before and after the diagnosis of a child. Psychology undergraduate students are also equipped with strong research skills allowing them to acquire more resources as needed.

Moreover, undergraduate students in psychology learn about personalities, motivation and performance. This knowledge is very useful for special education teachers as they are required to develop unique curriculums according to the various needs and learning styles of a child. In fact, acknowledging these differences can help children succeed.

Finally, psychology majors have the opportunity to refine the skills and knowledge they have acquired throughout their undergraduate studies in the Honors Project course. This course focuses on communication and writing skills. The students learn important research tools and skills while exploring a topic of their choice. This assignment promotes creativity, organization, and initiative.

**Salary potential**

The starting salary for this career is around \$30,000 while the potential salary is approximately \$40,000. According to a Canadian report on special education teachers, 31.1% make over \$50,000. (Service Canada, 2013)

**Job outlook**

Over the next few years, the projected outlook for this career is sensible. The Canadian report explained that services in special needs are growing and the government intends on prioritizing health care and social services to meet this demand (Service Canada, 2013).

**To apply**

Qualified special education teachers can apply for jobs online through specially designed websites used by school boards. Teachers colleges can help candidates with this search. (Ontario College of Teachers, 2014)

**To know more**

For additional information, the following websites are recommended.

<https://www.oct.ca>

[http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job\\_futures/statistics/4215.shtml#stats](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job_futures/statistics/4215.shtml#stats)

General Information	Deep understanding	Writing	Formatting	Revisions	Total
45%	20%	15%	5%	15%	
37.75	17.5	13	4.75	9	82

Overall, you addressed some of my concerns and when you did so, those sections improved. However, many of my concerns were not addressed and many sections remained relatively unchanged, meaning that I simply couldn't give you any more marks. I was expecting you to not only take into account my review but also go through the entire assignment and do a substantial edit on your own.

### References

- Faculty of Education. (2014). *Teacher education program*. University of Ottawa. Retrieved from [http://education.uottawa.ca/sites/education.uottawa.ca/files/viewbook\\_prem\\_en.pdf](http://education.uottawa.ca/sites/education.uottawa.ca/files/viewbook_prem_en.pdf)
- O\*Net Online. (2013). Special education teachers, kindergarten and elementary school. Summary Report 25-2052.00. Retrieved from <http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/25-2052.00>
- Ontario College of Teachers. (2014). *Jobs in education*. Ontario College of Teachers. Retrieve from <https://www.oct.ca/becoming-a-teacher/jobs-in-education>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *An introduction to special education in Ontario*. Queens's Printer for Ontario. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/ontario.html>
- Service Canada. (2013). *Instructors and teachers of persons with disabilities*. Government of Canada. Retrieved from [http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job\\_futures/statistics/4215.shtml](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job_futures/statistics/4215.shtml)