

IDENTIFICATION

Job Title: Special Needs Assistant	Location:	School/Office:
Position Number: 9910178		

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

(The main reason for the position, in what context and what is the overall end result)

The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is primarily responsible for assisting with instruction and providing literacy support and encouragement to students who require additional attention in order to ensure success and a meaningful learning experience. The SNA operates under the Education Act and the policies and procedures established by the district, region and school.

SCOPE

(The way that the position contributes to and impacts on the organization)

At the direction of the Principal, the Special Needs Assistant reports to the Principal, Literacy Coach and/or Program Support Teacher. He/she is responsible for assisting with implementing specialized and modified learning and literacy activities in order to provide a positive learning experience for students. The SNA is responsible for working with students either individually or in small groups to provide academic assistance in areas such as reading and writing.

Providing these services in an adequate manner will have a direct impact on students and their families. It will increase the chances of having these students succeed in the education system by helping them to become more independent readers and in gaining the literary skills required to be successful in life. It will also have a direct impact on the ability of the Classroom Teacher to maintain order in the classroom as many children with special needs may become frustrated and demonstrate inappropriate or disruptive behaviors in the classroom without special or additional assistance. Providing these services will also have a direct impact on other students within the classroom who may not otherwise receive the required level of attention from the Classroom Teacher.

Secondly, working closely with the Student Support Worker, the SNA will provide assistance and support of the lunch hour programming offered within the school. Specifically, the SNA will help to monitor students eating their lunch in their classrooms for the first half of the lunch hour, then assist on the playground with the supervision of students for the second half of the lunch hour and until the start of afternoon classes.

RESPONSIBILITIES

(Major responsibilities and target accomplishments expected of the position including the typical problems encountered in carrying out the responsibilities.)

The specific duties of the SNA will be determined by the Principal, Program Support Teacher and/or Literacy Coach based on the needs of students within the school. These duties vary from year to year and from time to time. In general, these duties will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

1. Deliver appropriate and general learning programs and activities based on students' needs in order to ensure students have an opportunity for a successful learning experience

Main Activities:

- Assist the Literacy Coach, PST and Classroom Teacher in delivering specialized or modified literacy programming
- Assist by tutoring individual students, working with small/large groups of students or in a team teaching situation with the teacher, always under the supervision of the Classroom Teacher, Literacy Coach or PST.
- Provide assistance to designated students to ensure the highest possible degree of inclusion within the educational and social programs of the school
- Follow Literacy Coach, Program Support and Classroom Teacher manuals and instructions
- Provide appropriate learning activities
- Provide assistance to students based on individualized needs
- Perform general duties as assigned by the Literacy Coach or PST
- Reinforce classroom instruction with individuals and/or small groups
- Assist in the management of the classroom environment
- Ensure the safety of all students
- Promote the growth and independence of each student
- Assist the teacher with classroom discipline according to guidelines developed in cooperation with the teacher
- Assist in evaluating students' understanding of directions, concepts and/or progress
- Clarify teacher's and school expectations, directions for students and vice versa
- Encourage students to develop independent skills in working, thinking and communicating
- Administer appropriate tests
- Operate equipment such as computers and media equipment
- Keep records and logs of activities and students

2. Assist with preparing specialized learning activities

Main Activities:

- Consult with Literacy Coach, Program Support Teacher and Classroom Teachers on student needs (i.e. disability, learning delay, student at risk, etc.)
- Conduct research into area of disability, learning delay, risk, etc.
- Consult with Literacy Coach, Program Support Teacher and Classroom Teachers on lessons plans and appropriate learning activities
- Plan regularly with the Literacy Coach, PST and Classroom Teachers
- Identify and develop strategies to assist special needs/additional needs students
- Be aware of various learning styles and abilities
- Prepare and organize learning materials and resources, including the literacy classroom and work areas

3. Prepare reports in consultation with the supervisor(s) concerning student achievements and limitations in order to provide a realistic perspective on the abilities of each student

Main Activities:

- Maintain a record of student achievements and limitations
- Prepare anecdotal reports for the Literacy Coach, PST and/or Classroom Teacher on student achievements and limitations
- Prepare reports for the Classroom Teachers on student behavior and behavioral problems as required
- Provide Literacy Coach, PST and Classroom Teachers with summaries of test results
- Provide input for reporting to parents
- Consult with Literacy Coach, PST and Classroom Teachers on student progress
- Facilitate communication between the family, community, school and students in consultation with the Classroom Teacher and/or Literacy Coach/PST.

4. Participate in supervisory and extra-curricular activities in order to provide opportunities for all students to become active in cultural, sport and other activities and events

Main Activities

- Supervise students in the school, on the school grounds and in other locations during the lunch hour and according to the duty schedule
- Patrol school grounds and lunch rooms at lunch hour
- Supervise students getting on or off the buses
- Monitor students on field trips and during extra-curricular activities
- Participate in the school team upon request
- Attend committee meetings (i.e. literacy, school improvement, etc)
- Participate in staff meetings
- Take advantage of personal skills that could benefit students through participation in extra curricular activities

- Seek out work to be completed as time permits

5. Participate in ongoing professional development activities

Main Activities

- Attend teacher workshops where possible
- Participate in school professional development and activity days
- Undertake professional development opportunities not provided by the employer such as the Teacher Assistant Certificate Program

6. Perform other related duties as required

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

(The knowledge, skills and attitudes required for satisfactory job performance)

Knowledge

The incumbent must have the ability to provide instruction in Language Arts (reading, writing) in order to assist special needs/additional needs students in a wide range of grade levels. He/she must have knowledge of the goals and objectives of inclusive schooling and requires the ability to read and comprehend appropriate materials including reading materials at various grade levels. The incumbent requires an understanding of different learning styles and a basic understanding of teaching, instruction and classroom management techniques. He/she must have or be prepared to obtain First Aid and CPR Certification. The incumbent requires knowledge of the goals, objectives and operations of the school and the DEA, as well as the local people and culture.

Skills

The incumbent must demonstrate the following skills:

- ✓ excellent interpersonal skills
- ✓ team building
- ✓ analytical and problem solving skills
- ✓ planning and organizational skills
- ✓ decision making skills
- ✓ effective verbal and listening communications skills
- ✓ effective written communications skills
- ✓ conflict management and resolution skills
- ✓ stress and anger management skills
- ✓ time management skills
- ✓ ability to deal with difficult situations
- ✓ basic computer skills
- ✓ project management skills
- ✓ ability to work in a multi-cultural setting with young people, staff and parents
- ✓ ability to work with students with special needs
- ✓ ability to read instructions, minutes of meetings
- ✓ ability to write and maintain accurate student records

Personal Attributes

The incumbent must maintain strict confidentiality in performing the duties of the Special Needs Assistant. The incumbent must also demonstrate the following personal attributes:

- ✓ be honest and trustworthy
- ✓ be empathetic to student needs and circumstances
- ✓ be positive and respectful
- ✓ possess cultural awareness and sensitivity
- ✓ be flexible
- ✓ be dependable, self-motivated, demonstrate sound work ethics and act as a role model for students
- ✓ demonstrate patience and self-control

The incumbent would normally acquire the required knowledge and skills through completion of Grade 12, combined with 2 years related experience or training in working with special needs students and experience in an educational environment. The ideal candidate would have formal education and experience working with children with special needs.

WORKING CONDITIONS

(The unavoidable, externally imposed conditions under which the work must be performed and which create hardship for the incumbent including the frequency and duration of occurrence of physical demands, environmental conditions, demands on one's senses and mental demands.)

Physical Demands

(The nature of physical effort leading to physical fatigue)

The SNA position can be physically demanding. Students with behavioral or social/emotional disorders require monitoring and may require restraint or physical intervention to ensure the safety of the student and others. The SNA spends a significant portion of time standing or walking in the school. He/she is expected to participate in student activities and must regularly lift or carry materials. In certain situations, he/she may be required to intervene in physical confrontations between students. He/she is required to spend a significant amount of time each day outside supervising children in cold and inclement weather.

Environmental Conditions

(The nature of adverse environmental conditions affecting the incumbent)

Certain students may display inappropriate behaviors such as abusive language or may have personal hygiene problems or lack of personal habits. The SNA is exposed to cold and inclement weather on a daily basis while supervising outdoors. He/she is also must also deal with situations involving blood and injury and may need to provide basic medical attention. He/she may also encounter dogs and other animals in the playground.

Sensory Demands

(The nature of demands on the incumbent's senses)

Sensory demands include use of the computer, which may cause eyestrain and occasional headaches. The classroom environment can also be noisy and stressful. The personal hygiene of some students may be offensive.

Mental Demands

(Conditions that may lead to mental or emotional fatigue)

SNAs work with students who require additional assistance and support and who do not generally achieve the same level of success in the classroom as other students. Many of these students have a high level of needs and may not react in a typical manner. The high needs of the students and the lack of success often leads to frustration and emotional stress for the SNA. In some cases, students may not attend regularly and/or make the expected progress, which can lead to frustration and emotional fatigue given the time and energy provided by the Special Needs Assistant.