



South Slave Divisional Education Council

Special Needs Assistant Position Description

South Slave Divisional Education Council

The South Slave Divisional Education Council strives to provide relevant programs and resources to the students of the South Slave communities so they may fulfill individual education goals and become contributing members of society.

IDENTIFICATION

Job Title: Special Needs Assistant	Location:	School/Office:
Position Number: 99-12232		

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 responsible for assisting with instruction and providing support and encouragement to students diagnosed with special needs and/or who require additional attention in order to ensure all students have the opportunity for a successful and 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 discretion of the Principal, the Special Needs Assistant reports to the Principal, Program Support Teacher and/or Classroom Teachers. He/she is responsible for assisting with implementing specialized and modified learning and education activities in order to provide a positive learning experience for students with special needs or students who require additional support. The SNA is responsible for working with special needs/additional needs students either individually or in small groups to provide academic assistance in mainly core areas such as reading and math. The SNA is also responsible for ensuring that special needs/additional needs students are provided with positive learning environments and have an opportunity to learn effective listening and communications skills and good work habits. In particular, the SNA is responsible for assisting with implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) so that students are provided with a learning environment that promotes a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence.

Providing these services in an adequate manner will have a direct impact on special needs/additional needs students and their families. It will increase the chances of having these students remain in the education system and gaining the 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.

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 Classroom Teacher(s) 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 Teacher in delivering specialized or modified programs and IEPs
- 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 teacher
- Provide assistance to designated students to ensure the highest possible degree of inclusion within the educational and social programs of the school
- Follow Program Support and Classroom Teacher manuals and instructions
- Provide appropriate learning activities
- Provide assistance to students based on individualized needs including assisting with transportation, wheelchair access, physical challenges, toileting, feeding, etc.
- Perform general classroom duties as assigned by the Classroom Teacher
- 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
- Maintain prosthetic devices or aids such as wheel chairs and advise when repairs are required

2. Assist with preparing specialized learning activities including Individualized Education Plans for special needs/additional needs students

Main Activities:

- Consult with Program Support Teacher and Classroom Teachers on student needs (i.e. medical condition, disability, learning delay, student at risk, etc.)
- Conduct research into area of disability, learning delay, risk, etc.
- Consult with Program Support Teacher and Classroom Teachers on lessons plans and appropriate learning activities
- Consult with Specialists (i.e. Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists) on appropriate learning activities
- Plan regularly with the classroom teacher or other designated supervisor
- Assist in the development and signing of IEP forms with the parent/guardian
- 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

3. Prepare reports in consultation with the supervisor(s) concerning student achievements and limitations and communicate with parents 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 Classroom Teacher on student achievements and limitations
- Prepare reports for the Classroom Teachers on student behavior and behavioral problems as required
- Provide Classroom Teachers with summaries of test results
- Provide input for report cards
- Consult with Classroom Teachers on student progress
- Facilitate communication between the family, community, school and students in consultation with the Classroom Teacher and/or supervisor(s)
- Explain school policies and programs to parents in consultation with the Classroom Teacher
- Attend parent teacher interviews when requested by the Classroom Teacher

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 ground and in other locations
- Patrol school grounds and halls at recess and lunch hour as per duty schedule

- 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 committees (i.e. literacy, beautification, 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 core academic subjects (reading, writing, mathematics) to 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 and mathematics textbooks 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. An ability to speak the local Aboriginal language and knowledge of sign language is considered a strong asset for this position.

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 speak the local language may be a requirement dependant on the students who have been identified with special needs
- ✓ ability to use sign language in special cases
- ✓ ability to read instructions, IEPs, 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 training in working with special needs students and experience in an educational environment. Given the uniqueness of this assignment, the successful applicant will have education and experience working with autistic children with significant 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 is physically demanding. Special needs students often require physical lifting and/or manipulation such as dressing, feeding, toileting, etc. 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. 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.