

Special Education

Because all students deserve to learn, teachers must accommodate special learning needs of those students who do not easily succeed in all areas. Jefferson County calls this attention to special needs students “ECE” or “Exceptional Child Education.” For those teachers who are not certified in special education, teaching ECE students who have been mainstreamed into regular education classrooms can be daunting. Often regular education teachers will be expected to work with a collaborating ECE teacher. At the same time, teachers seeking certification in Special Education may not be fully prepared for what to expect from JCPS or their individual school. We include this section to prepare you for some of the challenges you may face, as well as to provide some helpful insights into the world of accommodation and differentiated learning.



<http://www.lavc.edu/StudentServWebsite/images/disableddept.jpg>

In this initial entry, Ruth Chaffee clearly explains the details of special education for any teacher challenged by the special needs of his or her students. She provides helpful information for those who may be entirely unfamiliar with the field, as well as helpful tips for teachers who plan to be certified in special education or who will collaborate with a special education teacher in their classrooms.

Question and Answer: Special Education

Q: What do “mainstreamed” and “self-contained” mean?

A: When an ECE student is “mainstreamed” it means that he or she takes regular education classes with an ECE teacher in collaboration with the regular education teacher. When a student is “self-contained” it means that he or she is in a specific ECE classroom, isolated from regular education students. The modern ideology is that ECE students should be mainstreamed whenever possible, so that they receive the best education possible, and learn to interact cooperatively with peers.

Q: What determines “EBD” or “Emotional Behavior Disorder”? How is it distinguished from poor behavior?

A: There are numerous behavior observations, doctor’s reports, or behavior rating scales used to determine if they have a psychological condition, such as bipolar disorder, or other emotional and behavioral problems that do not diminish within a standard system of rewards and punishments.

Q: What causes EBD?

A: Because EBD is not any single disorder, it’s hard to say what causes it. In some cases the child may be responding to emotional, verbal, or physical abuse. In some cases the child may have a chemical imbalance, which is sometimes caused by prenatal exposure to debilitating substances, such as alcohol or crack cocaine.

Q: What happens when the students have a substitute? Do the ECE kids still have their needs met?

A: In order to ensure that they do, it is imperative that you leave detailed notes and a seating chart for your substitute.

Q: How much work should we keep to track the progress of our ECE students?

A: As much as possible.

Q: How many ECE students will I have?

A: If you are a special education teacher you will have between ten and twenty. If you are a regular education teacher you may see any number of ECE students throughout the day, but you will be aided by a collaborating ECE teacher who will most likely be in the room with you and the students. It is important that you collaborate effectively with your ECE teacher so that the students will have the best chance possible of success.

Q: What if students no longer qualify for ECE status? Doesn't that punish students for improving?

A: In some ways, yes it does. That is why it is important to develop a "Transition Plan" in which teachers are not legally bound to continue providing services, but where they will be encouraged to scaffold the student off the extra assistance.

Q: Can you write on an IEP?

A: Yes. Hi-light them, make notes on them, or whatever you need to do to be sure you are providing the student with the required accommodations.

Glossary of Terms: Special Education

- **Accommodations** – Special changes in pace, intensity, size, or expectations given to students who require those changes on their IEP. For example, reading aloud to a blind student or providing extra scaffolding for a student with a learning disability. *See IEP.*
- **Alpha-Smart** – A piece of technology on which students may type if they are unable to write.
- **Autism (A)** – A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for students who have Autism.
- **Collaboration** – Working with an ECE teacher as a regular education teacher, or working with a regular education teacher as an ECE teacher. Collaborating teachers may aid in planning, accommodation, or teaching.
- **Deaf-Blindness (DB)** – A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for students who are both deaf and blind.
- **Developmentally Delayed (DD)** - A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for students under the age of nine, used rather than defining the student's specific disability.
- **ECE Referral** – Recommendation for consideration of a student's need for special, legally mandated accommodations.
- **Emotional Behavioral Disorder** – Behavior control and social skills difficulties. More severe cases are typically taught in a self-contained room.
- **Exceptional Child Education** – Jefferson County's Special Education program.
- **Extra Time** – An accommodation often given to students as a means of assistance in meeting their goal or objective.
- **Functionally Mentally Disabled (FMD)** - A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for students with an IQ below 50.
- **Hearing Impaired (HI)** – A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for students who are deaf or near deaf.
- **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** – A legal document mandating a student's specific needs and the accommodations you must, under the law, provide for him or her.
- **Least Restrictive Environment** – The area in which the student will receive instruction.
- **Mildly Mentally Disabled (MMD)** – IQ from 50-70 and adaptive skills (a.k.a., social skills) are two standard deviations below average.
- **Multiple Disabilities (MD)** - A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for students who have more than one disability.
- **Other Health Impaired (OHI)** – A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations, which accounts for students with ADHD or other study skills deficiencies.
- **Orthopedic Impairments (OI)** – A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for students who have disorders of the skeletal system and associated muscles, joints, and ligaments.

- **Paraphrase** – An accommodation often given to students to enhance comprehension; restating directions in less complex or multiple ways.
- **Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEP)** – A form that explains the current levels of the student’s performance in communication, academic performance, physical functioning, social and emotional competence, and cognitive or general intelligence *before* that child has been defined as needing specific accommodations on an IEP. Presented as a preliminary step toward enrolling that child in ECE program.
- **Reader** – A student, collaborating teacher, or other school aid who reads aloud to the ECE student for individual work, tests, other assessments, and standardized tests.
- **Scribe** – A student, collaborating teacher, or other school aid who writes verbatim what the ECE student dictates.
- **Self-Contained** – The opposite of being “mainstreamed”; a class or a student taught in an isolated room, separate from his or her peers, with a small number of students, who also require special accommodations.
- **Specially Designed Instruction** – Lesson plans that are tailored to meet the individual accommodations for each ECE student to reach the objective or goal of the lesson. *See Differentiated Instruction in Lesson Planning.*
- **Specific Learning Disability (SLD)** – A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations, specified as either reading comprehension, reading decoding, or math computation.
- **Speech or Language Impaired (S/L)** – A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for students who have speech impediments or other speech problems.
- **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** – A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for students who have various disabilities (such as short-term memory loss) as the result of a severe injury to the brain.
- **Visually Impaired (VI)** – A category of eligibility for ECE accommodations for blind or nearly blind students.

Suggested Further Reading List: Special Education

Special Education in Contemporary Society by Gargiulo

Teaching Students with Learning Problems by Mercer & Mercer

The Special Educator's Survival Guide by Roger Ph.D. Pierangelo

Complete Learning Disabilities Handbook: Ready-to-Use Strategies & Activities for Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities by Joan M. Harwell