

### Philosophy of Special Education

As a future regular classroom educator, I have a strong belief that each and every student deserves the best education that they can be offered. A teacher is many things, and wears many hats in the classroom, and many times, we as educators will be faced with the task of educating students that learn differently than we do. Some of these students require more help, and are considered “special education” students. The new title of these students does not change the fact that we still have to love them and help them learn in the best way we can, and the best that they can. We must adapt the classroom to be more than just a classroom, and we have to make learning happen everywhere. Every student has the ability to learn, we have wonderful legislation that impacts special education, obstacles come in the way of student learning, and sometimes, students don’t learn best in a classroom. We as teachers have to show and encourage and love all students through any of their struggles, that doesn’t change just because one student may struggle more than another.

I believe that all children have a capacity for learning. Learning is something that I have always loved as both a child and an adult, and students and children across the world learn every day. I think learning is something that happens naturally, and is something that never ceases. A special education child should never be excluded from the joy of learning just because they have difficulty. I’ve worked, and am working with, children who have intellectual learning disabilities, trying to help them in the classroom, and for me to be able to reach them, I’ve had to turn whatever it is that we’re working on into something that they learn easy, and something they love learning, and by doing that they have a new love of learning the new subject. As an educator you have to be willing and be prepared to present a lesson multiple ways so every student can

learn, and if that means typing presidents in with mathematics then that's why we do because we want to see that spark and love of learning in each and every student.

IDEA and Section 504 are great tools for both the teacher and the student. IDEA and Section 504 for are both action plans for students with special education needs to target their learning and make sure they are getting the most out of their education. Teachers have to use an IDEA plan or a 504 plan and tailor their classroom to meet the needs of the child so that child enjoys learning. IDEA and Section 504 make it possible for students with special education needs to be included and learn with every other student. These plans change over time, with the student, as progress is made or as strategies aren't working. Since IDEA and Section 504 has been implemented, special education students have been receiving a better, more personal education experience of inclusion across the country.

Students with disabilities face obstacles those without disabilities would never think about. Depending on the disability of the student, the obstacles they face can vary. A student with a physical handicap or disability often find it difficult to keep up with the hustle and bustle of the classroom, and we, as teachers, have to adjust and slow down so these students aren't left behind. Students with physical disabilities may not struggle with the intellectual demands of the classroom, but fun, hands-on tasks may be more difficult. As a future regular classroom teacher, I would include less hands-on activities for my students that have physical disabilities and let them shine in their own way. Another common obstacle faced by students with special education needs are ADHD/ADD. To combat the struggles of ADHD/ADD as a teacher I would allow my students the time and means that they need to let out the extra energy that they have. Most students that I have been in contact with that have been diagnosed with ADHD/ADD have

benefitted greatly from a few extra minutes of talk time or having something to fidget with.

Some students also benefit from working standing up.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states, that a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the student's specific learning needs is right held by all individuals with a learning disability. This brings forth the discussion for the child's parents, teacher, and other school personnel, what is the best learning environment for the students. They collaborate and decide where a student's needs would be met, either fully inclusive in a regular classroom, part time between a regular classroom and a special education specialist, full time with a special education specialist, or in some cases, at home with their parents. The most important things to consider, I think, is first the behavior of the child around other students. If a special education student generally has no problem socially in the classroom, or keeping up with the demands of a regular classroom, then taking them away from that completely will only hurt them. However, if the demand of the regular classroom becomes too much for the special education student, then other arrangements may need to be made. Also, if a student is struggling socially, then other arrangements may need to be considered.

The most important role performed by the special education teachers is curriculum development. I believe that this is the most important role for special education teachers because they are the front lines for how, and how well, special education students perform and learn. Arguably, they know more about how that student learns than anyone else, and they are the most equipped at building and preparing a curriculum plan for a student with special education needs. This curriculum needs to be tailored to the specific student, and to do that, one must know the student and how they work. For the curriculum to be effective, it must be have all of the

previously stated factors, and there is no one better to make the perfect curricula for a student than their special education teacher.

The role of the regular teacher in the instruction of students with disabilities is similar to that of the special education teacher. The regular classroom teacher works with the special education teacher in building curricula for the child, and adapting her curricula and lesson plans for that student. The regular education teacher also is typically the one to introduce the material to the student initially. They plant the seed of knowledge in the student's head, which is so very important for any student, but for a special education student the initial placement of knowledge into their head is the most crucial. The regular education teacher lays the foundation for everyone else that is working with the special education student to build off of so that the student can learn to the best of their ability. The regular classroom teacher also plays a crucial role in mainstreaming the special education student. They allow for the student to adjust socially to the regular world, and help them interact with other students appropriately. Special education students rely heavily on both their special education teacher and their regular classroom teacher, however the delivery of learning from their regular classroom teacher is the most important because it will serve as a basis for the learning of that particular student.

In conclusion, I feel very passionately that every child, regardless of intellectual abilities, is capable of learning. Each child, I feel, is born with a love of learning, and with the desire to learn, and it is our job to make sure each child is able to do that to the best of their ability. IDEA and Section 504 have both made it a right for special education students to receive an education, and regulated the education that they receive to be universal and up to par with that of the education received by non-special education students. Special education students often face

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obstacles that we cannot dream of, some of which are physical, and others intellectual, and it is our job as educators to adjust and help the student overcome these obstacles so that they reach their maximum learning capability. Curriculum development is the most important role of a special education teacher, because the special education teacher is the most familiar with the learning abilities of the student, and the most important role of the regular classroom teacher for special education students is the delivery of the curriculum developed by the special education teacher. All in all, special education students deserve to learn, and enjoy learning just as much as regular students do, and it is our job as educators to educate everyone, by any means.

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### Works Cited

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