

A Career In Childcare Special Needs Support Assistant

What is a Special Needs Support Assistant?

A special needs support assistant provides support for children aged 3-11 years with additional needs. They work in primary schools often on a one-to-one basis to help them learn effectively. Special educational needs (SEN) may arise from:

- Difficulty with the school curriculum because of a mismatch between the child's learning needs and the way the curriculum is delivered;
- A physical disability;
- A problem with sight, hearing or speech;
- A specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia;
- A medical condition; or
- A social, emotional or behavioural problem.

Qualifications are not always necessary to be a special needs support assistant although experience is usually a requirement. It is a very popular career because of school hours and holidays. Candidates will be competing with applicants who have experience of working with children with special needs in a childcare setting or with those holding a relevant qualification such as classroom support assistant (CSA) or equivalent, together with an NCFE course/qualification in special educational needs.

The majority of classroom support assistant courses offer an optional unit in SEN for those wanting to specialise in this field.



What additional skills do Special Needs Support Assistants Need?

Special needs support assistants need some experience working with young children in a childcare setting. Additional skills such as sign language or lip reading would be beneficial for candidates applying for SEN related posts.

All professionals working with children must be physically fit and hold an enhanced certificate of disclosure issued by the Criminal Records Bureau.

**If you require any further information, please telephone
0800 731 1518 or visit www.childcarelink.gov.uk/oldham
or www.oldham.gov.uk/childcare**

