

Tips for Special Education Teachers

Special education can be one of the most rewarding careers, but it can also be one of the most challenging. Creating a classroom environment that supports your teaching and enhances your students' educational experience is vital. This article offers basic tips to help ensure the success of your classroom.

Keep Paperwork Organized

From Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to lesson plans to student work portfolios, one of the easiest ways to keep yourself ahead is to make sure all of your [paper help](#) work is organized. Filing cabinets, folders, and binders are especially useful. The exact organization technique that works will differ from teacher to teacher, but if you start with a system, it will be much easier to maintain it throughout the year.



Use Forms and Checklists

Checklists and pre-made forms will help you stay organized and efficient. Create checklists for yourself and for your students so that everyone stays

on task. Use pre-established forms, such as behavior slips, feedback sheets, and communication logs, whenever possible.

Maintain Adequate Supplies

Keep track of your supplies, from simple stationary to devices and manipulatives for your students. Always make sure you have more than enough supplies available by ordering before you run out.

Create and Adhere to a Schedule

Schedules help create comfort through consistency. Create a schedule for your classroom and post it where it's visible to your students. Go over the schedule with your students daily and make sure to stick to it. If you need to deviate from the schedule, give your students as much notice as possible.



Allow for Extra Time and Extra Activities

When creating your [lesson plans](#), allow for extra time for your students to complete tasks. Similarly, have extra activities prepared in case your students finish early. Not having enough time can cause your students to become frustrated, while having extra time can cause them to become

bored and disruptive. Preparing for both possibilities will help you maintain a successful classroom.

Keep Communication Open

Open communication helps keep educators, students, and students' families on the same page throughout the year. Make sure your students know that they can always speak to you, send regular notes home to parents and keep an open-door policy, and communicate with administrators, supervisors, and specialists as often as possible.

Professional Development

The field of special education is constantly growing and developing. Updates in information, new techniques, and even new requirements are ongoing. Professional development will help you stay on top of what's current and teach you new ways to best educate your students. Professional development opportunities can be found through your employer, in your community, and through local colleges and universities.

Each special education teacher's methods will differ based on classroom dynamics, school policies, and personal preferences, but utilizing these basic tips will help make any classroom successful.