

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS TOWARD LEARNERS OF SPECIAL NEEDS

In a developing country like India, the facilities available to educate exceptional children are not as sophisticated as in developed countries.

A teacher always tries to bring out the best in each child. When children stay away from their family, the teacher is a person who contribute a lot for them. Again teachers for deaf and disabled children have special roles in schools. Besides some additional qualities, they must have the primary aim of teaching and guidance. To make the children interested in the class is very important for a teacher. The teacher must try to satisfy the needs of children as far as practicable, so that the relationship becomes strong. He/She should remain alert always in order to meet the needs of the students.

Again, the teachers should have pleasant personalities. They must try to develop a tendency to understand the child and the situation. Readiness to work hard is highly appreciated. Good teachers always have knowledge of new methods of teaching. Some teachers must develop skills in teaching and handling the problems of exceptional children.

No doubt, the education of exceptional children either in special school or in an integrated set-ups depends on the efficiency of the teacher. The following steps are noteworthy for effective teaching.

1. Problems of children should be intimated to the parents by the teacher within a minimum span of time.
2. Records of every child should be maintained properly by the teacher, so that a program of action can be executed immediately.
3. A teacher must have a clear concept of special education and integrated education.
4. Remedial teaching program should be worked out by the teachers which may be conducive for children with specific educational needs.
5. A teacher should prepare instructional materials to teach in integrated set-ups.
6. Cooperation of other faculty members must be sought by the teacher to provide best possible education for disabled children.
7. Every child in this world is unique. First, each exceptional child is a child. He has the same right to acceptance and understanding as other children. So, he should get the same educational privileges.
8. Early screening, identification and placement in special education program are essential because exceptional children make optimal progress in educational institutions.

9. In order to have proper placement, a team approach is essential. The team should consist of psychologists, educational specialists and medical personnel.
10. A special curriculum should be prepared to match the needs of exceptional children.
11. The domains of exceptionality will determine the quantity and nature of materials required.
12. Emphasis must be placed on the fact that education for exceptional children should form an integral part of a total educational program.
13. To ensure progress, there must be continuous reassessment of exceptional children.
14. The school must take responsibility of placement assistance for each student.
15. When clarification is sought by the public and parents, special educational program should be interpreted lucidly.
16. For promotion of research activities, selection of teachers and training program, the central, state and local agencies should have joint responsibility.
17. In institutions where special educational program are to be taken up, trained professional personnel should be appointed by the authorities. They should include teachers, teachers administrators, consultants, psychiatrists , psychotherapists, psychoanalysts, speech therapists and physiotherapists.
18. Special courses of study suiting different areas of exceptionality should be prepared by experts. Depending on the severity of the problem, specialized courses should be undertaken for mental retardation, giftedness, deafness, blindness, orthopaedic handicaps, cerebral palsy, etc.
19. Exceptional children should be provided greater facilities than normal children. These should include special building features, equipment, materials and crafts.
20. Teachers who work with exceptional children need to have abundant self-confidence, self-control and self-direction. Sometimes, patience and perseverance bring success.
21. The teachers should keep them physically and mentally fit, otherwise they are likely to develop a habit of fault finding or become over-critical towards the children.
22. A teacher must help the child to accept his handicap to prevent psychological crippling. Genuine efforts must be made to assist the child to the maximum extent possible, to be self-reliant and adjust to their limitations.
23. Vocational training should be given to these children as far as possible.
24. Parents and teachers must try to reduce the gap of emotional distance between themselves and the students. It is possible by participation and understanding.

25. The most important goal of special education is to consider both physical and mental hygiene of exceptional children. Priority to be given to the development of motivational patterns and a realistic self-concept in them for effective living.

Very often, it is said that education begins where medicine ends. Providing a hearing aid to a hard-of-hearing child is, of course, of medical concern. But teaching a child to use his vision or hearing capacities effectively is certainly an educational function.

The special education may be imparted in the regular classroom, special classroom or in a combination of both. Previously it was primarily confined to special classes. But now, a special education program development for exceptional children is a part of total general education.