

Inclusion Field Experience Activities — Guidelines

Required Field Experience Activities

Candidates seeking additional certification in Teaching Students with Disabilities in Early Childhood, Childhood, Middle Childhood and/or Adolescence are required to complete a number of additional tasks during their Field Experiences, as identified in this document. To document their completion of and learning in these activities, candidates are also required to complete (a) a detailed description of the activities, using the guidelines provided, and (b) a personal reflection on each experience. These field experience activities should be included as artifacts in your Comprehensive Portfolio (see *Inclusion Portfolio Guidelines*).

Field Experiences:

In their initial field experience, candidates will successfully complete the following activities, designed to address specific CEC standards as indicated below*:

1. School Structure Observation. Observe and articulate in writing the school's structure for meeting the needs of all students, including students with disabilities. (CEC 1, *Foundations*)
When observing the school's structure, please consider the following:
 - The continuum of services offered at the school
 - Special programs offered in the school
 - Physical and human resources available to meet the needs of students
 - Push-in and pull-out services (occupational, physical, speech and language therapies)
 - Direct and indirect services
 - Other services such as services for English Language Learners, gifted and talented, Title I services, Reading First
 - How students' communication needs are met (please include culturally and linguistic diversity, augmentative and alternative communication [AAC] in your consideration)
 - School demographic information (interview principal, asst. principal, or other administrator):
 - Ages / grades served
 - Total school enrollment
 - Male / female ratio
 - Urban, suburban, rural?
 - Ethnic composition of school?
 - Percentage of students receiving FRL (free/reduced lunch)
 - Number of students in school with an active IEP/CSP/IFSP
 - Disability categories served at the school

2. IEP / Student Services Meeting. Attend an IEP or student services meeting, write a summary of your observations. (CEC 3, *Individual Learning Differences*) When observing the meeting, please consider the following:

- Who attended (positions, not names)?
- Describe the discussion. Was there any conflict?
- What was the resulting placement?
- What goals were set for the student?
- Were any related services needed?
- Was there a transition plan?
- Thorough and thoughtful reflection section on what you learned as a result of this project
- Were the parent(s) full participating members of the team?
- What was the apparent relationship between the school district personnel and the parents?
- What was the outcome of the meeting?
- In your opinion, was it in the best interest of the child? Why?

3. Student History. Summarize the records and history of a student with a disability label in the class in which you are participating. Write a brief report that you might use in a Committee on Special Education (CSE meeting). (CEC 3, *Individual Learning Differences*) When reviewing the records, please consider the following:

- Medical, physical development, or behavioral history
- Information acquired during observations
- Information acquired during conversations with cooperating teachers
- Any assistive technology or communication needs
- Instructional planning information from the IEP: Accommodations, adaptations, modifications, or any other supports in general and/or special education planning
- Student's academic strengths
- Student's interests
- Student's academic needs
- Student's IEP goals
- Student's learning style (e.g., is the student an auditory or kinesthetic learner?)
- What special considerations regarding this student should you know? (Ask the CT)

4. Paraprofessional Interview. Observe and meet with paraprofessionals to discuss their perceptions of their roles in the classroom and any concerns they have. Create a philosophy statement on the role of the paraprofessional in the inclusive classroom. (CEC 10, *Collaboration*) When preparing for and speaking with the paraprofessional, please consider the following:

- The job description for special education / inclusion paraprofessionals at your school
- The duties they are expected to perform
- Observe a paraprofessional during the school day; based on your observations, are the activities they perform consistent with the job description / duties expectation? Provide a rationale for your response

- Their schedule? How much time is spent in the general education classroom? How is this determined?
- How much experience the paraprofessional has
- The kinds of trainings paraprofessionals receive
- How paraprofessionals are supervised and evaluated
- What advice they would offer a beginning teacher about collaboration, the assignment of duties, schedule, training, supervision, evaluation?

5. Inclusion Teacher Interview. Observe and meet with / interview an inclusion / special education teacher about his or her range of responsibilities for working with students with disabilities. Summarize responses and discuss how they relate to what you are learning about special education and inclusion as it relates to your own philosophy of teaching and learning. (CEC 10, *Collaboration*) You should construct your own interview protocol, but you might consider the following:

- Experiences with students with disabilities in classrooms, both general education and more restrictive environments
- Role as a special education / inclusion teacher
- Responsibilities in managing an inclusive / special education classroom
- Adaptations that have been particularly helpful in promoting learning of students with disabilities in general education settings
- Adaptations that have been particularly helpful in promoting the social engagement of students with disabilities in general education settings
- Advice that the teacher would offer a beginning teacher about collaboration, working with students with disabilities, teaching in general

6. Professional Organization Membership. Join a professional organization addressing the teaching and learning needs in schools and classrooms serving children with and without disabilities. (CEC 9, *Professional and Ethical Practice*) Three national professional organizations are TASH (formerly *The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps*), the National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASSET), and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Links to these organizations and student membership forms are posted to the FE / ST section of the Inclusion Blackboard Organization.

* NOTE: If some of the above activities cannot be successfully completed during field placement, they must be completed during student teaching in addition to the assigned student teaching activities.