



Career Focus - SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATOR

Dear Alumni, TUCSIN students & Staff

There are many rewarding careers you can pursue in working with infants, children and youth with disabilities and their families. This week we focus on **Special Needs Education**, a career that should be considered highly in demand in Namibia. - *Martina*

"In Namibia, common special needs currently include challenges with learning, communication, emotional and behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, and developmental disorders. Children with disabilities in Namibia slightly benefit from additional educational services such as different approaches to teaching, use of technology, a specifically adapted teaching area, or resource room, thanks to the late former Minister of Education Abraham Iyambo's philosophy of inclusive education for all Namibians. However, certain hurdles are yet to be overcome with the current education system, which has little regard for children with special needs. More often than not, some still regard regular education as gifted education and special education as stagey education. Namibia still faces a high level of illiteracy, lack of skills and education and training among people with disabilities 23 years after independence. In most special schools challenges still appear to be negativism towards special needs educator (s) perpetually trying to modify specific teaching methods and environments to partake and reach education equilibrium benchmarked to general or regular schooling. Our country still considers special education as less of a "place" and more as "a range of services, available in every school". Integration and inclusivity can only be reduced by eliminating social stigmas and improving academic achievement for all students, with or without disabilities "

- Excerpt from **the Namibian (20/09/2013)**

What is a SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATOR ?

Special needs or remedial educators work with children who have disabilities. These include *learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, orthopedic impairments, visual impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, and other health impairments*. Learners' disabilities are classified under one of these categories, and special education educators work with specific groups. Early identification of children with special needs is an important part of a special needs educator's job.

The majority of special education teachers work with children with minor to moderate disabilities, using the general education curriculum, or modifying it, to meet the child's individual needs. For instance a special needs educator may assist learners to overcome their specific learning disabilities therapeutically. Children with specific learning disabilities usually have average or above-average intelligence but cannot cope effectively with certain aspects of schoolwork. These disabilities manifest, for example, as an inability to integrate letters into words, reversal of letters, words and/or numbers, misspelling of words and an inability to do arithmetic.

As schools become more inclusive, special needs educators and general education educators are increasingly working together in the classroom. Special needs educators help general educators adapt curriculum materials and teaching techniques to meet the needs of learners with disabilities. They coordinate the work of educators, educator assistants and related personnel, such as therapists and social workers, to meet the requirements of inclusive special education programmes. A large part of a special needs educator's job involves interacting with others. Special needs educators communicate frequently with parents, social workers, school psychologists, occupational and physical therapists, school administrators, and with other educators.

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REQUIREMENTS & TRAINING

SATISFYING ASPECTS

- working with children who appreciate assistance
- helping children to overcome their problems
- receiving the cooperation of teachers and parents in remedial work
- seeing your learners acquire skills and meet their goals

DEMANDING ASPECTS

- dealing with the negative attitude of parents
- frustration when your efforts do not succeed
- budgets that do not allow for basic special equipment

REQUIREMENTS

- above average intelligence
- sympathetic and friendly
- an enquiring mind
- extremely patient
- high level of perseverance
- be self-confident and emotionally mature
- good health and physical stamina
- able to communicate easily and spontaneously with people, especially children
- work well as part of a team

SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Namibia National Senior Certificate meeting degree requirements for a degree course

Each institution will have its own minimum entry requirements.

Compulsory Subjects: Depends on the field of study

Recommended Subjects: Depends on the field of study

TRAINING

Most universities offer a one-year full-time or a two-year part-time course in remedial education.

Only teachers who have a three- or four-year teaching qualification, with at least two years of teaching experience, may enroll for these courses. See: Educator : Primary and Educator : Secondary School for further details

EMPLOYER

- Department of Education
- universities
- teachers' training colleges and colleges of education for further training
- private remedial institutions
- Rehabilitation centres
- Private schools
- self-employment, working on a freelance basis



CAREERS THAT INTEGRATE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

Careers that are Available in Special Education

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Considering a career in special education and thinking of working with students with autism spectrum disorders? Learn more about becoming a specialist in autism spectrum disorders!

Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

Do you have knowledge of behavioral strategies and interventions for students with emotional or behavioral disorders?

High-incidence disabilities: Resource and/or Inclusion

Thinking about working with students with learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, and speech-language disorders? Learn more about this career in special education!

Low-incidence disabilities: Sensory, Developmental, and /or Multiple/ Severe Disabilities

Want to serve students who are working on communication, basic literacy, and functional skills for daily life? Learn how you can work with students with low-incidence disabilities.

Early Intervention Specialist/Early Childhood Special Educator

Consider becoming an early intervention specialist or early childhood special educator if you have a high energy level, enjoy working with infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers and have the ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously.

Art Therapist

Are you artistic? Do you possess the capacity for insight into psychological processes? Art therapy may be in your future if you answered yes to these questions!

Educational Audiologists

Educational audiologists determine a course of treatment that will be best for students with hearing loss. Interested?

Interpreter for the Hearing Impaired

Interested in being the communication link between deaf and hearing individuals in school settings? Check out how you can become an Interpreter for the Hearing Impaired.

Music Therapist

Have you considered how music can change lives? Learn how music therapists plan, organize, and direct music activities that will produce behavior changes in persons who have mental, emotional, and physical disabilities.

Occupational Therapist

Think you might be interested in providing children with services to promote functional, developmental and academic performance? Explore a career in occupational therapy.

Physical Therapist

Not sure what to do with your interest in anatomy and physiology? If you are able to work with a variety of people and are resourceful, check out a career as a physical therapist.

Speech-Language Pathologist

Are you interested in working with small groups of students in a school setting who have communication problems? Discover a career in speech-language pathologist.

For more detail information about these careers follow this link : <http://www.pacecareers.com>

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION – ORGANISATIONS



CLaSH works to identify children with language, speech and hearing impairments as early as possible. Assessment and counseling sessions are offered at the head office in Windhoek as well as during outreach visits. Referrals are made for therapy, specific treatment and inclusive or special education.

CLaSH supports an individual, holistic approach for each child. Integration into mainstream education will be assisted wherever this is possible through awareness raising, advice and provision of resources to children, parents and the schools involved. At the same time CLaSH recognizes that inclusive education will not do justice to every child and therefore equally supports specialised educational approaches when appropriate.

Reference : <http://www.clash-namibia.org/>

AUTISM NAMIBIA



Autism Namibia is an association made up of parents, their children with ASD, adults with ASD and professionals who are interested in promoting the well-being of persons with autism spectrum disorders within Namibia, and to provide a network between the various autism organisations world-wide. Our aim is to provide support and assistance as well as training in the field of autism to parents and professionals. In the current economic climate and with the diverse needs of various members of the community this is becoming increasingly difficult.

Reference: <http://www.autism-namibia.org/autismnamibia.html>

Persons with autism may possess the following characteristics in various combinations and in varying degrees of severity.

- Inappropriate laughing/giggling
- No real fear of dangers
- Apparent insensitivity to pain
- May not want cuddling
- May avoid eye contact
- May prefer to be alone
- Difficulty in expressing needs
- Inappropriate attachments to objects
- Insistence of sameness
- Echoes words/phrases
- Spins objects or self

Autism Awareness

Food for thought:

we're on the web:
www.tucsin.org as
well as on Facebook
Please go and "like"
us on Facebook

Phone: 064 402580 / 061 224840

E-mail: williams@tucsin.org

Teaching

You laugh, you cry, and you work harder than you ever thought you could. Somedays you're trying to change the world and someday you're just trying to make it through the day. Your wallet is empty, your heart is full, and your mind is packed with memories of kids who have changed your life. Just another day in the classroom.

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