



RUSD

RIVERSIDE UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special Education Instructional Assistant Handbook

Job Descriptions

Instructional Assistant - Special Education I

(Includes Mild/Moderate Classrooms, Resource Specialists Classrooms, General Education Classrooms)

Under the direction of an assigned supervisor, assist in providing instruction to individuals or small groups of students in a special education resource learning environment; assist the teacher in meeting the educational needs of learning handicapped students and students enrolled in the Resource Specialist Program (RSP), Special Day Class (SDC) or other students as assigned; perform a variety of clerical duties as assigned.

Instructional Assistant - Special Education II

(Includes Moderate/Severe Classrooms & positions in which the duties of an IA II are deemed necessary)

Under the direction of an assigned supervisor, assist a certificated teacher in providing instruction to individual or small groups of severely, physically or visually handicapped students in a classroom; monitor and report student progress regarding behavior and performance; assist students in developing various self-help, social and community skills.

Instructional Assistant - Special Education II- Sign Language

(Includes all classroom settings including Mild/Moderate Classrooms, Moderate/Severe Classrooms, & General Education Classrooms)

Under the direction of an assigned supervisor, assist a certificated teacher in providing instruction to individual or small groups of severely, physically or visually handicapped students in a classroom who use American Sign Language as their primary language; monitor and report student progress regarding behavior and performance; assist students in developing various self help, social and community skills.

Intensive Behavior Interventions Assistant

(Includes all classroom settings including Mild/Moderate Classrooms, Moderate/Severe Classrooms, & General Education Classrooms)

Under the direction of an assigned Special Education Manager, assist a certificated teacher in the supervision and instruction of special education students in a variety of educational settings including the home, community and classroom. Implement intensive behavior intervention programs for identified special education students; attend student progress meetings; assist student with and demonstrate proper procedures for physical care of hygienic needs; record-keeping techniques; and maintain student program notebooks.



Potential Tasks

Teach small group lessons



Instructional Assistants (IAs) **teach small groups** of students using lessons designed by the teacher.

Teaching lessons includes -

- modeling
- explaining concepts
- Guiding students through practice of skills
- monitoring while students work independently

Adults should be careful to **provide help, but not give answers** or do the work for the student.

Monitor during whole group lessons

While the teacher is teaching a whole group lesson, the Instructional Assistant will be **engaged in the lesson**. IAs **walk around** and **monitor** what the students are doing, and redirect students that may become distracted. If students are working independently on a task, provide **feedback** and help without giving answers. This is done by **asking questions** that allow the student to think through the problem and come up with a solution on their own.



Progress Monitoring



Instructional Assistants provide assistance with monitoring student progress toward IEP goals and grade level standards. IAs may be asked to **take data** on how a student performs on a certain task. They will assist students **during practice** of IEP goals and **administer classroom assessments** as directed by the teacher. Remember to always ask questions when you are uncertain about a task or how to take data on the student's performance.

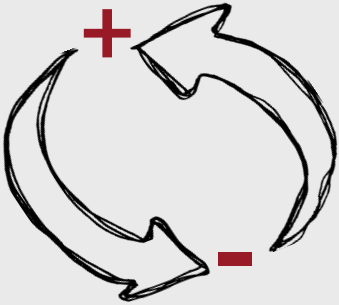
Clerical Assistance

Instructional Assistants provide help with **clerical duties** as instructed by the classroom teacher. This may include taking **attendance**, making **copies**, preparing **other items** for lessons, assisting with **updating Google Classroom** and **grading assignments**. The classroom teacher will give specific directions on what is needed. IAs should ask clarifying questions when uncertain about a task. Clerical duties **should not take priority over assisting with instruction**.



Supporting Positive Behavior

Behaviors are replaced, not extinguished



All behavior is a means of **communication**. It is the adult's responsibility to determine what the student is trying to communicate. Once we have determined what the child is expressing through the behavior, we work to **teach the child strategies** to replace the negative behavior with a positive alternative. For instance, if the child hits another student because they want to play with them, we teach the student to communicate how to ask the other child to play rather than hitting for that attention.

Provide positive reinforcement

Students thrive when provided **positive reinforcement**. When we see a student who may need redirection to behave in a more positive manner, we can attempt to ask the student to change their behavior. This is not always effective. More often students will respond when they are **praised for their positive behavior**. Look for ways to praise students for doing what is right. When praise is not as effective, try **rewards** (stickers, treats, etc.). Work with the teacher and other staff to determine the best forms of positive reinforcement for each student.



Be consistent



When students require redirection or correction, it is important that we are **consistent**. If we tell a student they will have a certain consequence, we must **follow through** with that consequence. **Be consistent** with students and **avoid power struggles**. If a student argues with you, pick a phrase to respond and **repeat that phrase** like a broken record. For example, if the student gives excuses for doing their work, one might say, "First you must finish this, then you can do...". Students need to know what is expected and have clear communication about those expectations.

Give choices



Often students have a need to feel like they have more **control** over their lives. Most students are told when and what they are going to do day and night. This can result in feeling as if they have no control. By **offering a choice** between two things, students are given a **sense of control**. Choices should include two things that the teacher/assistant are willing to allow to happen. For instance, for a child who does not want to complete a writing assignment, one might offer, "Do you want to write with a pen or a pencil?" This allows choice **without forfeiting the end goal** of completing the assignment.

Professional Expectations

Maintain professionalism in difficult situations



There may be moments in which a student's behavior conflicts with your expectations. It is imperative that adults **model the behavioral expectations** for students in all settings. Mindfulness activities can assist with **keeping our own emotions grounded** while supporting students in de-escalating from their own emotions. Remember that the student may not be processing the situation clearly when he/she is escalated. The adult should gently shift the tone of the situation to achieve positive outcomes.

Use communication instead of physical prompts

When situations cause students to **escalate** or the student refuses to comply to directions, professionals are required to **prompt the student using verbal communication**. At **no time** should any adult **touch** a student to get them to comply to requests. This includes picking up preschool aged children or taking a student's hand and pulling them along to keep up with the class. Instead, **use verbal communication to guide** the student to make the choice to comply.



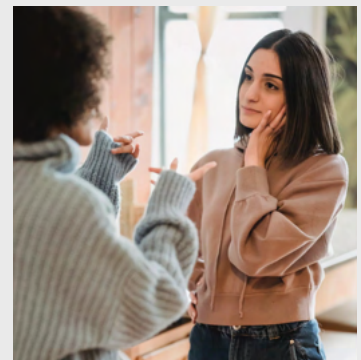
Consistent attendance supports learning



In order to **effectively assist** a certificated teacher in the supervision and instruction of special education students in a variety of educational settings, **consistent and regular attendance is essential**. Continuity of instructional support plays a significant role in the academic, social, and behavioral achievement of students. Excessive employee **absences can adversely impact** the educational environment and some of our most vulnerable students.

Conflicting opinions

One wonderful aspect about being a part of an educational team is that we each come with our own background and experiences to contribute to make the **learning environment a positive place** for students. At times we may not always agree with how the other members of our team are handling a situation. As a professional in an educational setting, it is important to **communicate clearly** and express your opinions; however, these conversations should happen only when **students are not present**. Please avoid holding adult conversations in front of any student.



When to ask for help



All educators need support. Instructional assistants support the teacher with instruction and behavior. In turn, the teacher will support the instructional assistant. **Do not hesitate to ask for help** at any time that you need clarification or advice. The team works together to support one another. **Open communication** is the key to a healthy team.

Support Team

When Instructional Assistants have questions or are in need of support, the following people are available.

Site Support

1. Classroom Teacher/s
2. Other Classified Staff (IA's, custodian, office staff, etc)
3. Inclusive Practices Specialist
4. Speech Pathologist
5. School Psychologist
6. Principal or Assistant Principal

District Support

Program Specialist (SpEd district administrator assigned to your site) **(951) 352-1200**

Kelly Sugden Ext. 83516 (Staff Development Specialist- for training opportunities)

Melody Hopewell Ext. 83623 or Erika Miramontes Ext. 83303 (IBI Aides only)



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Notes

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In collaboration with
Department of Special Education
Kelly Sugden, Staff Development Specialist
Department of Personnel - Leadership and Development