

## Special Education

The Associate of Science degree in Special Education at Walters State community College is designed to help students gain acceptance into teacher education programs at four-year institutions. The curriculum in the WSCC catalog is not designed for transfer to any specific school. Students will need to talk with a faculty advisor about a particular college or university's courses and transfer. The link for the Behavioral and Social Sciences Division at Walters State is: <http://www.ws.edu/socialsci/default.asp>

## Career and Major Information

Special education teachers work with children and youths who have a variety of disabilities. A small number of special education teachers work with students with severe cases of mental retardation or autism, primarily teaching them life skills and basic literacy. However, the majority of special education teachers work with children with mild to moderate disabilities, using or modifying the general education curriculum to meet the child's individual needs. Most special education teachers instruct students at the elementary, middle, and secondary school level, although some work with infants and toddlers.

Special education teachers use various techniques to promote learning. Depending on the disability, teaching methods can include individualized instruction, problem-solving assignments, and small-group work. When students need special accommodations to take a test, special education teachers see that appropriate ones are provided, such as having the questions read orally or lengthening the time allowed to take the test.

Special education teachers help to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student. The IEP sets personalized goals for the student and is tailored to that student's individual needs and ability. Special education teachers design and teach appropriate curricula, assign work geared toward each student's needs and abilities, and grade papers and homework assignments. They are involved in the students' behavioral, social, and academic development, helping them develop emotionally, feel comfortable in social situations, and be aware of socially acceptable behavior.

## Related Career Titles

[Psychologists](#),

[Social workers](#)

[Audiologists](#)

Counselors

Teacher Assistants

Occupational Therapists

[Recreational therapists](#)

[Teachers—preschool, kindergarten, elementary, middle, and secondary](#)

#### Web Sites

<http://www.personnelcenter.org>

<http://www.cec.sped.org>

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos070.htm>

#### Salary Information

Median annual earnings in May 2006 of wage-and-salary special education teachers who worked primarily in preschools, kindergartens, and elementary schools were \$46,360. Median annual earnings of wage-and-salary middle school special education teachers were \$47,650. The middle 50 percent earned between \$38,460 and \$61,530. Median annual earnings of wage-and-salary special education teachers who worked primarily in secondary schools were \$48,330. The middle 50 percent earned between \$38,910 and \$62,640. Local or regional salaries may be lower.

**Citation:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition*, Teachers—Special Education, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos070.htm>