

# Special needs assistant requirements



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Dec 2008 How do I become a Special Needs Assistant? Special Needs Assistants. Job Description Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist schools in providing the necessary non-teaching services to pupils with assessed educational needs. Their duties are assigned by the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management. Their work is supervised either by the Principal or another teacher as determined by the Principal. Those duties involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

1. Preparation and tidying up of classrooms.
2. Assisting school children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort during school hours on school buses may be required.
3. Special assistance as necessary for children with particular difficulties e. g. helping special needs pupils with typing or writing or computers or other use of equipment.
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene and being mindful of health and safety needs of the pupil.

5. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks, examinations and similar activities.
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreation and dispersal from the classroom for one reason or another.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act as either substitute or temporary teachers.

In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class or group of children).

9. Participation with school development planning, where appropriate, and co-operation with any such changes with policies and

practices arising from the school development process. 10. Engagement with parents of special needs pupils in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management. 11. Other duties appropriate to the grade as may be determined by the needs of the pupils and the school from time to time.

Special Needs Assistants may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the grade when special needs pupils are absent or when particular urgent work demands arise. Qualifications required: The minimum level of qualification required is a Junior Certificate with passes in English, Maths and Irish. In reality many SNA applicants will have further qualifications such as the FETAC level 5 SNA certificate (single subject or full award) or the FETAC Level 5 qualification in Childcare.

Some may also have third level qualifications in related fields such as Montessori, Early Childhood Education or Psychology. Experience Relevant work experience with children is very important. This can include time spent as a volunteer in a homework club, summer camp leader, sports coach, as well as being active in your childrens' school, for example in the parents association. More information on working as a SNA is available in the Education Personnel section of the Dept of Education & Science website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) or from AEGIS. Local Courses. • FETAC level 5 Special Needs Assistant single subject certificate courses have been offered as a part-time course in Abbeylax Further Education Centre and Portarlinton Adult Education Centre. Check [www.laoisvec.ie](http://www.laoisvec.ie) • Portlaoise College offers a full FETAC level 5, Special Needs Assistants course as well as a Childcare programme at the same level.

www. portlaoisecollege. ie Information taken from Dept of Education & Science Website www. education. ie and INTO website www. into. ie