Special education teachers shape the future by providing K-12 students who have a broad range of special needs with an educational foundation for life. And they do so with a great level of autonomy in their classrooms, applying trusted, proven strategies for engaging students while coming up with creative solutions to meet new educational challenges.

**INDUSTRY GROWTH IS TIED TO:**
- Increasing enrollment in a number of states.
- Better identification of various disabilities in children.
- Teacher turnover resulting from job stress.

**2016 MEDIAN SALARY:** $57,910

**JOB GROWTH HIGHEST FOR:**
- Early childhood intervention
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Learning disabilities
- Speech and language impairments

**REWARDS OF TEACHING SPECIAL EDUCATION**
- Seeing results in action as students progress
- Personal relationships with students and parents
- Long vacations
- Respect and admiration
- Dynamic work environment
- Lifelong impact on students
- New learning opportunities
- Autonomy
- Job stability

**JOB TASKS AND DUTIES**
- Work with students with a wide range of abilities.
- Adapt general education lessons for students.
- Motivate and encourage students with special needs.
- Create IEPs (individual education programs) for students.
- Make recommendations to promote learning at home.
- Evaluate students to monitor progress.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF GREAT TEACHERS**
- Good organization and communication skills
- Creativity
- Patience
- Stamina
- Resourceful
- Passionate
- Flexible
- Fun-loving and a sense of humor

SPECIAL EDUCATION MAY BE A GOOD FIT IF YOU…

- Have a love for learning new things.
- Enjoy working with children with a variety of special needs.
- Receive great satisfaction from helping others learn.
- Have excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Know how to work collaboratively for the good of all children.
- Enjoy the challenges of a dynamic workplace.
- Want to shape future generations.
- Can be an innovative and creative problem solver.
- Want to advocate for people with disabilities.

CLASSES MAY INCLUDE:

- Speech and language development
- Educational psychology
- Culture of special education
- Individual education programs
- Assessment in special education
- Teaching methods
- Behavior of special education students
- American Sign Language
- Student teaching
- Technology in education
- Human growth and development

LOOK FOR A PROGRAM THAT OFFERS:

- Supportive faculty who are experienced professionals and share your passion for educating children.
- Connections with a number of school districts for job shadowing, student teaching, and mentoring.
- Cutting-edge research and innovation for special education.
- Graduates successfully passing state certification exams on their first try.

Before you declare your major in Special Education:

- Volunteer at a local school or children’s hospital or start babysitting to gain experience working with children.
- Tutor students struggling with schoolwork.
- Shadow and talk with a special education teacher to see what a typical day is like.

“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.”

—Ignacio ‘Nacho’ Estrada, educational consultant and motivator

To learn about the Special Education program at the University of Northern Colorado, visit us at UNCO.EDU/PROGRAMS/SPECIAL-EDUCATION/SPECIAL-EDUCATION-GENERALIST-BA