

# PLACE<sup>®</sup>

## STUDY GUIDE

20 Special Education Generalist



**Program for Licensing Assessments  
for Colorado Educators<sup>®</sup>**

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## **PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLACE® AND TEST PREPARATION**

Part 1 of this study guide is contained in a separate PDF file. Click the link below to view or print this section:

[General Information About the PLACE and Test Preparation](#)

## PART 2: FIELD-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

### TEST FIELD 20: SPECIAL EDUCATION GENERALIST

#### INTRODUCTION

This section includes a list of the test objectives, immediately followed by a set of practice multiple-choice questions. For test areas that include a performance assessment (Basic Skills, all languages other than English, Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired), one or more practice performance assignments (as applicable) will also be included.

**TEST OBJECTIVES.** As noted earlier, the test objectives are broad, conceptual statements that reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding an entry-level educator needs to teach effectively in a Colorado classroom. The list of test objectives represents the **only** source of information about what a specific test will cover.

**PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS.** The practice multiple-choice questions included in this section are designed to give you an introduction to the nature of the questions included on the PLACE test. The practice questions represent the various types of multiple-choice questions you may expect to see on an actual test; however, they are **not** designed to provide diagnostic information to help you identify specific areas of individual strengths and weaknesses or to predict your performance on the test as a whole.

When you answer the practice multiple-choice questions, you may wish to use the answer key to check your answers. To help you identify how the test objectives are measured, the objective statement to which each multiple-choice question corresponds is listed in the answer key. When you are finished with the practice questions, you may wish to go back and review the entire list of test objectives and descriptive statements for your test area.

## OBJECTIVES



### TEST FIELD 20: SPECIAL EDUCATION GENERALIST

Knowledge of Students with Disabilities  
Assessing Students with Disabilities and Developing, Implementing, and Monitoring Individualized  
Education Plans  
Promoting Development and Learning in Students with Disabilities  
Foundations of Special Education and Working in the Professional Environment

#### KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

##### **Understand human development and learning.**

Includes:

- child and youth growth and development (e.g., behavioral, cognitive, communicative, emotional, physical, psychological, social)
- the development of language, literacy, and numeracy skills
- research-based learning theories and application to students with disabilities

##### **Understand the various characteristics and needs of students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- types and characteristics of various disabilities (e.g., cognitive, learning, communication, sensory, physical, emotional)
- definitions, issues, and trends related to the identification of individuals with disabilities
- health and physical requirements related to individual student needs

##### **Understand factors that affect development and learning.**

Includes:

- individual strengths and needs of students with disabilities as related to the acquisition of academic content, knowledge, and skills
- role of families in the development and learning of students
- role of the diverse backgrounds and needs of students

## **ASSESSING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND DEVELOPING, IMPLEMENTING, AND MONITORING INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS**

### **Understand procedures for selecting and conducting assessments of individual strengths and needs of students to ensure appropriate identification and planning.**

Includes:

- characteristics, strengths, and limitations of various formal and informal assessments (e.g., criterion- and norm-referenced tests, observations, record reviews, interviews, rubrics, checklists) for appropriate identification and progress monitoring
- procedures for selecting and using a variety of assessment tools in screening, prereferral, referral, multidisciplinary assessment, and progress monitoring
- development, selection, adaptation, and modification of assessments for students with diverse needs and/or from diverse backgrounds (e.g., related to age, communication modes, culture, language, nature and severity of disabilities, socioeconomic status)
- strategies for developing valid and reliable assessment tools for progress monitoring
- assessment techniques and appropriate accommodations to ensure student learning within a standards-based curriculum

### **Understand procedures for interpreting and communicating assessment results.**

Includes:

- specialized terminology used in the assessment of students with disabilities
- knowledge of various types of formal and informal assessment data (e.g., proficiency levels, standard scores, percentile ranks, age/grade equivalents)
- procedures for interpreting assessment data for various purposes (e.g., determining an individual's level of functioning, appropriate identification of an educational disability, recommending services to meet identified needs, planning for standards-based instruction, monitoring individual progress)
- strategies for communicating assessment results to relevant stakeholders (e.g., students with disabilities, parents/guardians, general educators, administrators, other support personnel)
- knowledge of culturally responsive strategies for ensuring effective communication among stakeholders involved in the assessment process

### **Understand procedures for developing, implementing, monitoring, and amending individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- strategies and procedures for developing standards-based IEPs and other plans (e.g., transition plans, medical plans, behavioral intervention plans) in collaboration with students with disabilities, parents/guardians, and other education professionals
- strategies and procedures for implementing standards-based IEPs in collaboration with students with disabilities, parents/guardians, and other education professionals (e.g., transition plans, medical plans, behavioral intervention plans)
- procedures for assessing and reporting student progress and for modifying IEPs based on data related to students' performance
- strategies for using technology to manage student education plans and to communicate relevant information to a wide variety of stakeholders, and strategies for applying technology to data-driven assessment(s) of learning

**Understand strategies for conducting functional behavioral assessments and for developing and implementing positive behavior support plans.**

Includes:

- strategies and procedures for conducting and interpreting functional behavioral assessments
- techniques and procedures for collaboratively interpreting, designing, and implementing appropriate positive behavior support plans based on data drawn from functional behavioral assessments and other information sources (e.g., formal and informal measures)
- techniques for designing positive behavior support plans that incorporate research-based instructional strategies to foster skill development (e.g., problem-solving, conflict-resolution, and social-interaction skills)
- strategies and procedures for maintaining adequate and appropriate behavioral data to monitor progress and/or to determine whether student actions are a manifestation of a disability and to address the implications of such a determination

**PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING IN STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Understand strategies for planning and managing the learning environment for students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- strategies for establishing a safe, equitable, and effective learning environment that is responsive to the needs of students (e.g., academic, cognitive, cultural, functional, linguistic, physical, social)
- effective classroom- and instructional-management techniques (e.g., time management, communication, accurate and timely record-keeping, consistent classroom routines, the application of consistent and fair disciplinary practices) that support student learning and foster self-management
- strategies for collaborating with general educators regarding research-based practices, including classroom-management, instructional, and organizational techniques that support students with varying needs

**Understand collaborative principles and methods of curriculum planning for students with diverse needs.**

Includes:

- techniques for designing short- and long-range instructional plans that are consistent with state content standards, accreditation requirements, and school and district priorities
- strategies for selecting and developing curricula to address the strengths and needs of students with disabilities, including students from a wide variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and English Language Learners
- specialized materials that are appropriate for students with disabilities (e.g., taking into account age, content, culture)
- strategies for enriching and enhancing the general education curriculum to extend student learning in the content areas
- strategies for collaborating with general educators to incorporate literacy and mathematics into standards-based, content-area instruction

**Understand principles and methods of delivering instruction for students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- strategies for differentiating instruction to facilitate individual students' growth (e.g., academic, social), including students from a wide variety of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds
- advantages and limitations of various research-based instructional strategies
- differences between and appropriate uses of accommodations and modifications
- instructional accommodations and modifications that promote students' success in the general academic content areas (e.g., history, science, music, visual arts)
- strategies for providing effective verbal and written feedback to students to help them meet content standards and raise their academic performance over time
- appropriate techniques for teaching cognitive and metacognitive processes, learning strategies, and study skills to enhance student learning
- strategies for using and maintaining appropriate educational and assistive technologies to deliver instruction and support student learning

**Understand strategies for developing emergent literacy skills in students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- skills and concepts related to emergent literacy skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, concepts of print, other word identification strategies)
- principles and methods for teaching emergent literacy skills to students, including students who are English Language Learners
- research-based practices that promote students' early reading success
- strategies for designing instruction in emergent literacy skills based on individual student strengths and needs

**Understand strategies for developing reading skills in students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- strategies for designing, planning, and organizing reading instruction based on ongoing assessment to meet individual student strengths and needs
- research-based strategies for developing reading skills (e.g., phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency) of diverse learners
- strategies for enhancing students' reading skills to access content-area literacy within a variety of genres
- methods for incorporating the Colorado Model Content Standards into strategies for teaching reading
- strategies for developing independent reading
- strategies for using assistive and instructional technology to support students' reading

**Understand strategies for developing oral and written language skills in students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- research-based strategies for developing oral and written language skills (e.g., voice, ideas, organization, fluency, vocabulary, conventions) of diverse learners
- strategies for designing, planning, and organizing oral and written language instruction based on ongoing assessment to meet individual student strengths and needs
- methods for incorporating the Colorado Model Content Standards into strategies for teaching writing
- strategies for using assistive and instructional technology to support students' writing

**Understand strategies for developing mathematical performance in students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- appropriate methods for increasing and monitoring students' accuracy and proficiency in math calculations, applications, and problem solving
- collaboration with general educators to employ research-based strategies for developing students' knowledge and skills in the use of number systems, number sense, geometry, measurement, statistics, probability, mathematical functions, and variables
- strategies for designing, planning, and organizing mathematics instruction based on ongoing student assessment to meet individual strengths and needs
- strategies for using assistive and instructional technology to support students' mathematical performance

**Understand strategies for developing the communication skills and social competence of students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- research-based strategies for developing, maintaining, and generalizing verbal and nonverbal communication skills (e.g., developing vocabulary, incidental teaching, oral language)
- strategies for providing instruction, in collaboration with other skilled/trained professionals, in the use of alternative and augmentative communication systems
- strategies for developing, maintaining, and generalizing social skills needed to be successful in educational and other environments (e.g., giving and receiving meaningful feedback, engaging in conversations, problem solving, conflict resolution, self-determination)
- strategies for designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating instructional programs that enhance social participation within and across environments

**Understand strategies for promoting post-school outcomes of students with disabilities.**

Includes:

- research-based strategies for infusing self-care and independent living into the general education context and curriculum during typical daily routines
- strategies for designing and implementing standards-based, transition-focused instruction that reflects independent living (e.g., daily living skills; participation in civic, leisure, and recreational activities; self-management skills; self-advocacy skills) and career education
- strategies for assisting students in applying acquired knowledge and skills to home, community, and work life
- strategies for promoting students' successful transitions (e.g., between teachers, grade levels, and settings; to post-school and work life) in collaboration with students' families, educators, other professionals, and relevant community representatives

**FOUNDATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND WORKING IN THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

**Understand the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of the field of special education.**

Includes:

- the foundations of special education (e.g., history, philosophy, funding, service delivery systems, the relationship of education to democracy)
- legal regulations and guidelines (e.g., federal, state, and local laws, rules, and policies)
- rights and responsibilities of stakeholders (e.g., students, parents/guardians, teachers, community members, other professionals) related to the education of students with disabilities
- procedural safeguards inherent in due process rights, as related to assessment, eligibility, and placement
- issues and trends in the education of students with disabilities (e.g., access to technology, inclusion, the influence of nontraditional and nonpublic schools, least restrictive environment [LRE], person-centered planning, Positive Behavior Supports [PBS], Response to Intervention [RTI], standards-based reforms)

**Understand strategies for communicating and collaborating with students with disabilities and their families to help students achieve desired learning outcomes.**

Includes:

- strategies for communicating with students and engaging them as active participants in their own educational planning (e.g., goal setting and attainment, self-determination, self-advocacy)
- strategies for communicating and collaborating effectively with parents/guardians to involve them as participants and partners in students' learning (e.g., information about resources, supporting students' academic and social/behavioral development)
- strategies and procedures for accessing resources, services, networks, and organizations that are responsive to the needs of students and families, including those with diverse needs and from diverse backgrounds
- strategies that promote effective partnerships among students, families, school and district programs, and community resources

**Understand strategies and procedures for communicating and collaborating with colleagues, administrators, and service providers to support students with disabilities in achieving desired learning outcomes.**

Includes:

- the roles and relationships of educational team members, including those in instructional, noninstructional, and administrative positions (e.g., student, family, educator, bus driver, related services providers, administrators)
- strategies for communicating with others regarding the characteristics, strengths, and needs of students
- models of service delivery and strategies of consultation, collaboration, and coaching and various implementations (e.g., co-planning, co-teaching)
- strategies for collaborating with and coordinating activities of related services providers to maximize instruction for students
- strategies and procedures for coordinating, scheduling, and supervising paraeducators to ensure that students' education plans are implemented effectively
- strategies for collaborating with school and community library-media personnel and resource specialists to incorporate information-gathering literacy skills (e.g., gaining access to, retrieving, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information) into the curriculum

**Understand the professional, ethical, and legal roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher.**

Includes:

- professional ethics and responsibilities of the special education teacher (e.g., treating students and families with dignity and respect, using person-first language, advocating for students with disabilities, making ethical decisions, maintaining confidentiality, serving as a role model, providing accurate documentation and reporting in a timely manner, promoting careers in education)
- strategies for evaluating one's professional performance and for participating in professional development opportunities and organizations
- strategies for analyzing and critically reviewing research-based information related to teaching students with disabilities

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS: SPECIAL EDUCATION GENERALIST



1. In the typical sequence of child development, which of the following play behaviors is generally the *last* to appear?
  - A. playing beside other children without directly interacting
  - B. pretending to speak with an absent friend or relative using a toy telephone
  - C. participating with other children in rule-based games
  - D. using found objects in imaginative play (e.g., using a leaf as a hat)
2. In general, students with cognitive impairments are likely to have the greatest difficulty with which of the following types of tasks?
  - A. directing attention to a teacher when asked to do so
  - B. demonstrating persistence when working on a favorite activity
  - C. following routine, everyday classroom procedures
  - D. applying newly acquired skills in unfamiliar contexts

Use the information below to answer the two questions that follow.

A referral has been made for Annika, a third-grade student who reads at grade level but struggles with written assignments. Ms. Winn, the special education teacher, meets with the third-grade teacher to review Annika's writing samples and then conducts an informal assessment of Annika's spelling skills. The assessment process is as follows: Ms. Winn pronounces a word, uses it in a sentence, and pronounces it again. Annika then writes the word. After Annika indicates that she has completed writing a word, Ms. Winn moves on to the next word. An excerpt from the assessment is shown below.

Ms. Winn (Oral Presentation)		Annika (Written Response)	
"chair"	"The girl sat in the chair"	"chair"	<i>chiare</i>
"slide"	[sentence]	"slide"	<i>sleids</i>
"make"	[sentence]	"make"	<i>mack</i>
"friend"	[sentence]	"friend"	<i>fraind</i>
"would"	[sentence]	"would"	<i>wholed</i>

3. The best rationale for using this type of informal assessment in this situation is that such an assessment will:
  - A. provide measurable information that will support the development of instruction based on Annika's needs.
  - B. facilitate an analysis of whether factors such as handwriting may be affecting Annika's spelling.
  - C. measure Annika's level of anxiety as she spells words.
  - D. yield statistical data that will facilitate a comparison of Annika's writing proficiency with that of her peers.
  
4. When interpreting the results of this assessment, Ms. Winn should focus primarily on:
  - A. creating a graph of the amount of time it took Annika to spell each word.
  - B. analyzing the types of spelling errors Annika made and the consistency of the errors.
  - C. evaluating the degree of discrepancy between Annika's spelling and reading performance.
  - D. identifying the assistive technologies most likely to promote Annika's success in spelling.

5. Beth, a fourth-grade student with developmental disabilities, receives her instruction and support from a variety of professionals, including a general education teacher, an occupational therapist, and a speech-language pathologist. Given the number of professionals who work with Beth, which of the following would be the special education teacher's best strategy for monitoring Beth's progress toward her individualized education program (IEP) goals?
- A. holding a brief meeting with Beth's teachers and service providers every afternoon to exchange information about her progress
  - B. creating a system through which Beth's teachers and service providers share ongoing information on her progress
  - C. collecting a written summary of Beth's progress from each professional to be shared at the annual IEP meeting
  - D. scheduling a meeting with Beth's teachers and service providers every two months to review her progress
6. Ms. Perez is a special education teacher who works in an elementary school. To build younger students' emergent literacy, she often reads Big Books to small groups. Afterward, she asks each student to draw a picture of a favorite scene or character from the story. The students then take turns showing their pictures and describing them in a phrase or sentence. Ms. Perez writes the phrase or sentence on the board and then reads it aloud, pointing to each word as she reads. This Big Book activity would be especially useful for helping students:
- A. make connections between reading, writing, and spoken language.
  - B. recognize individual letter shapes and link them with specific sounds in words.
  - C. infer the principle that each letter represents a sound.
  - D. develop the concept that whole words can be broken into discrete syllables.

7. Michael is a high school senior with a reading disability. Michael works hard to make the honor roll and has consistently done so for the past two years. He plans to attend a local community college after graduation, but he tells his special education teacher that he worries about his ability to keep up with the reading requirements of college. Which of the following would be the best *first* step for the special education teacher to suggest that Michael take?
- A. "Decide which classes you wish to enroll in, obtain the textbooks for the ones you think will be most difficult, and read the texts over the summer."
  - B. "Create a notebook of the reading strategies you use in various content areas and plan to consult the notebook regularly as you work on assignments in college."
  - C. "Meet with personnel from the disabilities services office at the college, explain your needs, and find out what services they offer."
  - D. "Ask other college-bound students with learning disabilities in reading how they plan to cope with the academic demands of college."
8. Sarah, a student with a specific learning disability in reading comprehension, will be entering the seventh grade. Her teachers for the upcoming year have reviewed Sarah's individualized education program (IEP) for the objectives and other specifications of her reading program. Which of the following would be the best step for the teachers to take *next* in lesson planning for Sarah?
- A. reviewing the International Reading Association's Standards for the English Language Arts
  - B. assembling a set of books at Sarah's reading level to use as the basis of reading instruction
  - C. considering ways to incorporate the Colorado Model Content Standards into Sarah's reading activities
  - D. selecting reading assessments likely to be useful for evaluating Sarah's progress over the upcoming year

9. Alison is a fourth-grade student with a specific learning disability in mathematics reasoning. Whenever Alison is presented with a word problem, she responds by simply adding all the numbers together. The best strategy for promoting Alison's application of higher order thinking skills to such problems would be to:
- A. teach Alison to begin by skimming through the problem and making a rough estimate of the answer.
  - B. help Alison develop the habit of first reading the problem carefully and restating it in her own words.
  - C. teach Alison to begin by writing down the numbers in a problem and looking for any obvious patterns.
  - D. help Alison develop the habit of first selecting a problem-solving strategy and then collecting appropriate manipulative materials.

10. Eric is a fifth-grade student with a learning disability. Eric's class was recently assigned to write a paragraph about their favorite hero. The following is an excerpt from Eric's paragraph.

*my favorite hero is my cousin. He plays baseball with me. I like to play baseball a lot. My cousin is a good hitter. He hits home runs.*

A teacher's best strategy for encouraging Eric to use compound and complex sentences in his paragraph would be to:

- A. talk with Eric about his hero, asking him to elaborate and taking notes of his explanations; then help him revise his paper using the notes.
- B. provide Eric with a list of descriptive words; then encourage him to incorporate the words into his paragraph.
- C. have Eric read a classmate's paper that is rich in detail; then have him use his classmate's work as a model for revising his own.
- D. give Eric a sheet of paper showing a variety of sentence types; then have him refer to the sheet as he rewrites his paragraph.

11. Which of the following assessment methods is a key component of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model that is increasingly being used to determine the presence of a specific learning disability?
- A. supports assessment
  - B. standardized intelligence testing
  - C. authentic assessment
  - D. curriculum-based assessment
12. Early in the school year, a fourth-grade teacher confers with the special education teacher about a student whose family recently immigrated to the United States. The fourth-grade teacher has noticed some learning problems that may be indicative of a learning disability. After further discussion and some informal classroom observations by the special education teacher, a meeting is scheduled with the student's parents. Which of the following should be the teachers' primary objective in their initial meeting with the parents?
- A. establishing their own credentials as experts in addressing students' learning problems
  - B. providing the parents with multiple resources to enable them to educate themselves about learning disabilities
  - C. laying the groundwork for a parent-teacher relationship characterized by trust and openness
  - D. ensuring that the parents understand that their child's learning problems are not the fault of the school or the classroom teacher

## ANSWER KEY: SPECIAL EDUCATION GENERALIST



<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Correct Response</b>	<b>Objective</b>
1.	<b>C</b>	Understand human development and learning.
2.	<b>D</b>	Understand factors that affect development and learning.
3.	<b>A</b>	Understand procedures for selecting and conducting assessments of individual strengths and needs of students to ensure appropriate identification and planning.
4.	<b>B</b>	Understand procedures for interpreting and communicating assessment results.
5.	<b>B</b>	Understand procedures for developing, implementing, monitoring, and amending individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities.
6.	<b>A</b>	Understand strategies for developing emergent literacy skills in students with disabilities.
7.	<b>C</b>	Understand strategies for promoting post-school outcomes of students with disabilities.
8.	<b>C</b>	Understand strategies for developing reading skills in students with disabilities.
9.	<b>B</b>	Understand strategies for developing mathematical performance in students with disabilities.
10.	<b>A</b>	Understand strategies for developing oral and written language skills in students with disabilities.
11.	<b>D</b>	Understand the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of the field of special education.
12.	<b>C</b>	Understand strategies for communicating and collaborating with students with disabilities and their families to help students achieve desired learning outcomes.