

Increasing Number of Special Education Teachers Prepared August 07

The Education Specialist Instruction credential authorizes individuals to teach students with disabilities. This credential is separated into six categories of specialization: Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Disabilities, Visual Impairments, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, Physical and Health Impairments, and Early Childhood Special Education. Individuals seeking the Education Specialist Instruction credential complete a special education preparation program that includes student teaching in the area of their chosen specialization.

In 2005-06, a total of 3,514 credentials were issued in Education Specialist programs in California and another 335 credentials were issued to out-of-state prepared teachers. Among the credentials issued, more than three-fourths (79 percent) were issued in Mild/Moderate and one-sixth (15 percent) in Moderate/Severe Disabilities. Early Childhood, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, Visual Impairments, Physical and Health Impairments together consisted of 6 percent of the total credentials issued to California prepared teachers.

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	5-year change %
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing	28	45	56	38	44	57.1%
Early Childhood Special Education	82	105	90	120	123	50.0%
Mild/Moderate Disabilities	1,549	1,876	2,221	2,866	2,780	79.5%
Moderate/Severe Disabilities	240	333	430	482	535	122.9%
Physical and Health Impairments	6	16	27	8	7	16.7%
Visual Impairments	8	17	17	18	25	212.5%
Total	1,913	2,392	2,841	3,532	3,514	83.7%

In 2001-02, approximately 2,000 credentials were issued. There was a steady increase in all six areas of Education Specialist credentials, resulted in an overall increase of 84 percent in the past five years. The biggest increase was noticed in Visual Impairments (213 percent) followed by Moderate/Severe Disabilities (123 percent). Mild/Moderate Disabilities increased by 80 percent; Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and Early Childhood by 57 percent and 50 percent, respectively.

Though there was a dramatic increase in the total number of credentials issued between 2001-02 and 2005-06 (up by 1,600 credentials), the proportion of credentials issued in the six areas remained steady throughout the last five years. In 2001-02, more than three-fourths (81 percent) were issued in Mild/Moderate credentials; 13 percent in Moderate/Severe Disabilities and about 6 percent in the other four areas combined. A similar pattern was observed each of the last five years.