

# SPANISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

## SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TRAINING



**Vocational Educational Training = Formación Profesional  
(VET/FP)**

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## **- Spain -**

### **Legal system**

The legislative framework governing and guiding the Spanish education system comprises the Spanish Constitution (1978), the Organic Act on the Right to Education (LODE, 1978) and the Organic Law of Education 2/2006, 3rd May (Ley Orgánica de Educación LOE 2006) which develops the principles and rights established in it.

The Spanish Constitution recognises the right to education as one of the essential rights that public powers must guarantee to every citizen.

The Organic Law of Education offers (at national level) the legal framework to provide and assure the right to education (The Autonomous communities will be able to regulate the adaptation of this Law to their territories).

*“The Spanish education system, set up in accordance with the values of the Constitution and based on the respect for the rights and liberties recognized therein, is inspired by the following principles:*

- a) Quality education for all students, regardless of their condition and circumstances.*
- b) Equity that guarantees equal opportunities, educational inclusion and non-discrimination and that acts as a compensating factor for the personal cultural, economic and social inequalities, with special emphasis on those derived from disabilities.*
- c) The transmission and application of values that favour personal liberty, responsibility, democratic citizenship, solidarity, tolerance, equality, respect and justice and that also help to overcome any type of discrimination.”*

Organic Law of Education 2/2006, 3rd May. Preliminary Title Chapter I. Principles and Aims of Education. Article 1. Principles.

The State is responsible for education and for offering all pupils cost-free and compulsory education until 16 years of age. The Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport has the responsibility for central administration. Schools are classified as public schools, private schools and publicly-funded private schools. Public schools are those owned by a public administration. Private schools are those owned by a person or legal entity of a private nature. Publicly-funded private schools are private schools which are under the system of legally-established agreements. The provision of the public education service is carried out in public and publicly-funded private schools. Schools have got pedagogic, organisational and management autonomy within the current legislation. They have the autonomy to draw up, approve and execute an education project and a management project, as well as the organisational and running procedures of the school.

Provisions for students with special educational needs are governed by principles of normalisation and inclusion and will ensure non-discrimination and real equality in the access to the education system and continued attendance, allowing flexibility in the different stages of their education when necessary. The schooling of these students in special education centres or units, which may be extended to the age of twenty one, will only take place when their needs cannot be met by the special needs provisions available in mainstream schools.

Royal Decree 696/1995, of 28 April, arranges the education of pupils with special educational needs and establishes the conditions for educational provision for this

population. These pupils are educated at mainstream schools and under mainstream curricula; only when it is objectively established that the needs of the above pupils cannot be properly met at a mainstream school, is a proposal made for them to be educated at special schools

The different stages constituting the Spanish education system are:

1. Preschool education (0-3 years): on a voluntary basis for families where the purpose is to give educational assistance and attention to early childhood education.
2. Infant education (3-6 years): is voluntary, cost-free and constitutes the first level of School Education. It is organised into a single three-year cycle.
3. Compulsory Education

The basic, compulsory, and free of charge education comprises Primary Education and Compulsory Secondary Education, from 6 to 16 years. It lasts for ten years and is divided into two educational levels:

1. Primary education (6-12 years): comprises six academic years and is organised into three, two-year cycles. It is compulsory and cost-free.
2. Secondary education comprises Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO), Bachillerato and Intermediate Specific Vocational Training:
  - Compulsory Secondary Education (12-16 years): covers ages 12 to 16 and comprises four academic years organised into two, two-year cycles. When passing these two cycles, the pupils receive the Compulsory Secondary Education certificate. It is compulsory and cost free.
  - Bachillerato: is a two-year non-compulsory education level, which complements Compulsory Secondary Education. The Secondary Education Certificate is a prerequisite for entering Baccalaureate. The theoretical ages for commencement and completion are 16 and 18, respectively
  - Specific Vocational Training: is a non-compulsory education level and its purpose is to prepare pupils to work in a specific professional field by providing them with an all round and practical education that enables them to adapt to the changes affecting their trade, which may take place during their working lives.

## Financing

The total budget allocated to education in Spain comes from: public funds, which are provided by State, autonomous and local authorities; private funds, which are provided by families; and to a lesser extent, from private institutions. The public or private nature of the ultimate funding agent, rather than the recipient of the services, is what determines whether spending on education is considered to be public or private. 80% of education expenditure in Spain is financed through public funds, while the remaining 20% comes from private funds. In 2005 Spain devoted 4.2% of its gross domestic product to education.

Public funds earmarked to finance Spanish education are provided mainly by the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport as well as the Education Authorities of the corresponding autonomous communities. Other ministries as well as other local and regional authorities also provide funding.

Regardless of the authority providing funding, public spending is not earmarked for public education only, but is also allocated to subsidise private establishments and finance student scholarships and grants.

Education funding comes from the following sources:

- National Budget
- Autonomous communities
- Ministry budget

The Budget for Special Education covers the following spending lines:

- Staff expenses
- Operational expenses
- Furniture and inventoried equipment expenses
- Expenses for alterations
- Grants to NGOs
- Grants to private schools with an educational co-operation with the Ministry
- School Canteens
- Hostels located inside the schools
- Financial support for mainstream schools with integration of pupils with SEN
- School transportation
- New building improvement
- Removing architectural, physical barriers

The autonomous communities finance special education in a similar way

## **Special needs education within the education system**

The educational system will arrange the necessary resources in order for pupils with temporary or permanent special educational needs to achieve the objectives established within the general programme for all pupils. The public administrations give pupils the necessary support from the beginning of their schooling or as soon as they are diagnosed as having special needs. School teaching is adapted to these pupils' needs. The schools develop the curriculum through didactic plans, which have to take into account the pupils' needs and characteristics. They also develop an Educational Project, where the objectives and the educational priorities are fixed along with the implementation procedures. In order to prepare this project, they consider the school characteristics, its environment, and the pupils' educational needs.

LOE, as it was mentioned above, considers three types of specific educational support needs:

1. Students with special educational needs
2. High ability students
3. Late entries into the education system

### **Students with special educational needs**

Students with special educational needs refers to those who require, certain support and specific educational attention due to disability or serious behavioural disorders, either for a period or throughout the whole of their schooling.

These pupils require specialised support in accordance with non discrimination and educational normalisation principles, and with the purpose of achieving their inclusion. These pupils are schooled in accordance with their characteristics, either integrating them in mainstream groups, in specialised classrooms within mainstream schools, or in special education schools, depending on the form determined by the professional teams, taking into account their parents' and teachers' opinions. Thanks to the successive developments by each educational establishment and group, the curriculum foresees many possibilities for adjusting to these differences so that pupils may overcome any difficulties encountered. However, all through the school period, and perhaps to a greater extent at stages in which studies become progressively more complex, there will be certain pupils who for very different reasons find it more difficult to reach the objectives and contents laid down for everyone in the common curriculum for all. These pupils will consequently be in need of another type of more specific adjustments.

Among the ordinary measures (offered to all pupils) contemplated by the educational system for attending to diversity, the following are to be mentioned: successive levels of curricular formulation, involving the progressive adaptation of the official curriculum and optional areas and subjects, which constitutes a resource in the hands of the pupil to enhance and develop his or her personal preferences; the organisation of reinforcement and support activities in educational establishments, a very generalised measure of attention to diversity which is usually aimed at the instrumental areas (mathematics and language) and specific grouping. Once ordinary measures of attention to diversity have been applied and have proved to be insufficient to respond to the educational needs of an individual pupil, the education system considers a series of extraordinary measures. These are: repeating a cycle or school year, significant curricular adaptations, support measures for pupils with special educational needs, curricular diversification and, as a last resort, Social Guarantee Programmes.

Curricular adaptations signify adaptations to the curriculum made for one specific pupil. When the student body shows itself to have educational needs which in view of their permanent nature, source or the type require modification of central features of the curriculum to be followed by the majority of the pupils of that age, significant curricular adaptations may be carried out. The application of these extraordinary measures signifies the modification of content, objectives and assessment criteria of the ordinary curriculum. The necessary point of departure for such a measure is a previous psycho-pedagogical assessment (performed by the specialised guidance services) and an ongoing follow-up that allows the pupil to access the standardised curriculum whenever possible.

Pupils with special educational needs can attend both special education and mainstream establishments. Schooling should preferably be provided in mainstream establishments, adapting such programmes to each pupil's capacities.

Hence, in ordinary infant education, primary education and secondary education establishments, these pupils are enrolled as part of the mainstream pupil body. These establishments, in addition to adapting the physical and material conditions to the needs of the pupils enrolled there, should have the necessary resources available (special teachers, qualified professionals, etc.) and must likewise take the pedagogical, organisational and operational measures for accommodating pupils with special educational needs within their programmes. Furthermore, all the autonomous communities consider the possibility of appointing preferred centres for the enrolment of pupils with specific special educational needs, who may require a particular type of environment or a professional specialisation difficult to find in many places. In this fashion, suitable educational attention may be guaranteed for such pupils. The schooling of pupils with special educational needs in non-compulsory education stages, if the requirements are met, will be one form of inclusion with the necessary curricular adaptations or the total or partial exemption of subjects. The establishments providing such education must possess the necessary physical and material adaptations in order to guarantee the principle of equal opportunities.

### **Specific support measures**

#### **Alterations to school building facilities**

All educational establishments must meet the hygienic, acoustic, habitability and security conditions stipulated in the legislation in effect. The places devoted to instruction must have ventilation and natural lighting. They will also have to possess the necessary architectural conditions to facilitate access, movement and communication, in accordance with what is laid down in the legislation with regard to promotion of accessibility and elimination of barriers.

#### **Special adaptations to the curriculum**

Schooling at the various levels and stages of the system for pupils with special educational needs linked to personal disabilities will begin and end at the ages set down by the education regulations, with the exceptions listed below. The necessary adaptations or modifications within the established curriculum are carried out so that pupils with special educational needs may achieve the objectives and contents generally laid down. These adaptations may take two different forms: curriculum access adaptations (modifications or predictions related to spatial resources, introduction of new materials and use of additional communication systems) and curricular adaptations such as modifications in the objectives, contents, methodology, activities and



assessment criteria and procedures, which are carried out within the classroom planning. Curricular adaptations may, in turn, be grouped into two large sections: significant and non-significant adaptations. The first ones do not affect the basic teaching, whereas the second ones imply the elimination of certain basic teaching included in the official curriculum (objectives, contents and assessment criteria). Some of the latter adaptations require additional human and material resources to carry out adaptations which entail changes in the organisation of educational establishments and methodology, substitution or introduction of new areas or subjects, contents and objectives.

On the other hand, the possibility of making the length of compulsory schooling in primary education and in compulsory secondary education for highly-gifted pupils more flexible, under exceptional circumstances, is also present.

The link-up and co-ordination between mainstream schools integrating pupils with special educational needs and in specific special education establishments is one of the principles guiding school integration. The aim is for special educational establishments to progressively become open educational resource centres for the professionals working in the district's mainstream establishments.

### **Additional support provided by specialist teachers**

The decision to enrol pupils in a mainstream or special educational establishment, as well as the guidelines on the most suitable educational treatment to offer (types of schooling, curricular adaptations, etc.) is made subsequent to a diagnosis and is the responsibility of the services established by each autonomous community in order to respond to the educational and psycho-pedagogical counselling demands of establishments, pupils and teachers.

Most autonomous communities have regulated and organised these services through sector educational and psycho-pedagogical interdisciplinary guidance teams and through the guidance departments of secondary education establishments. Apart from the guidance teams working for the educational establishments of a district or area (zone or sector teams), specialised specific teams and early intervention teams, with a different geographical sphere, have been set up in some autonomous communities. Regardless of the education authority to whom they report, guidance teams have among their functions the detection, assessment and diagnosis of special educational needs as well as counselling, collaborating and participating in the educational process of pupils with special educational needs.

In the majority of autonomous communities, guidance teams are still part of an external support network for schools. It is frequent for the members of the teams to be part of the school staff (either through the Teachers' Council, the Guidance Department - when it exists - the Pedagogical Co-ordination Commission, etc.).

In almost all autonomous communities, guidance departments have been set up in secondary education establishments and, in some communities, in infant and in primary education schools. The result has been a closer bonding between specialised support services and schools, which has improved the response to special educational needs.

For pupils who have serious developmental disorders and cannot attend school to receive their education, for pupils who are hospitalised, or for pupils who must be absent from school for long or repetitive periods of time for medical reasons, the autonomous communities have formulated and implemented various organisational alternatives, among which should be mentioned: peripatetic special education teachers who go to pupils' homes, so that they may receive their educational schooling; itinerant



attention on the part of special education centres for under school-age pupils with special educational needs or those who are enrolled in mainstream centres; the setting up of itinerant school support units and school support units in hospitals.

### **Special teaching methods and materials**

There are more specific guidelines according to the type of special educational need of the pupil. Therefore, in the case of those having sensorial alterations (visual, auditory), strategies aiming at fostering and promoting alternative ways to the altered ones, strategies which enable to relate, in a explicit way, learning experiences, space organisations, pupils grouping, in order to take advantage of their visual and auditory possibilities, and the teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction, have to be prioritised. The reading-writing teaching methods for pupils with visual disabilities should be mentioned. Those pupils who cannot have access to the ink reading-writing method will have to use Braille. In this case, tact sensorial stimulation and space-time orientation will have to be fostered.

Pupils with auditory disabilities have to learn to communicate by alternative means: sign language, bimodal system, etc., which have their own methodological guidelines and that can be combined, in certain occasions, with oral re-education.

Pupils with motor problems have to be assisted in the specific needs of mobility and the manipulation of objects, favouring mobility in the classroom and the access to didactic resources, as well as prioritising oral and visual explanations in order to favour the understanding of messages.

In cases of pupils with serious development disorders, it is necessary to resort to specific methodologies aiming at the development of oral communication or alternative systems. Imitation learning, modelling and mediation (physical, oral aids, etc.) techniques, incidental methodology, and reinforcement are some of the most specific guidelines.

On the other hand, space must be arranged according to their needs and adapted to the instruments, equipment and technical aids required by these pupils, favouring the possibility of creating different layouts and functional arrangements in order to promote the interaction and communication with adults and among themselves.

### **Reduced class sizes**

The number of pupils integrated in mainstream classrooms depends on the homogeneity and severity of their deficiency or maladjustment, their psychological problems and the required educational support. If they require continuous pedagogical reinforcement and specific treatments, the maximum number of pupils per classroom is two. In mainstream classrooms, where pupils are enrolled under an integrative framework, the maximum number of pupils per classroom is 25, subject to obtaining the authorisation of the education administration.

In special education classrooms, either in specific special education or mainstream establishments, the number of pupils will be reduced. The ratio is 10-12 pupils per teacher when there are pupils with psychical or auditory disabilities or pupils showing serious auditory disabilities. 8-12 when there are pupils with physical disabilities, 6-8 in the case of pupils showing several disabilities, and 3-5 when having autistic pupils and/or pupils with severe personality problems.

Apart from the ordinary teaching staff, there are also specialist teachers in charge of carrying out different tasks, as well as other professionals. In mainstream

establishments, there is a specialist teacher providing pedagogical reinforcement for every 15-20 pupils. In this type of establishment, there is also a speech therapist for every 35-40 psychic and motor disabled pupils and for every 20 auditory disabled pupils. There is also a physiotherapist for every 35-40 pupils with motor disabilities and a caretaker for every 15-20 motor disabled pupils.

There is also support staff in charge of correction and rehabilitation. Both in special education establishments and special education classrooms in mainstream establishments, there is a psychologist for every 20 autistic pupils or pupils with severe personality disorders. There is also a psychologist in those establishments having at least 100 physical, motor or sensorial disabled pupils. There is a speech therapist for every 35-40 psychic or motor disabled pupils, every 20 pupils showing severe auditory problems or every 15-20 autistic pupils or pupils with severe personality disorders. There is a caretaker for every 35-40 pupils with behavioural problems; every 15-20 motor disabled pupils, autistic pupils or pupils with personality problems.

### **Special arrangements for evaluation or progress through education**

The reply to the question as to exactly what is to be assessed is determined by the mandatory assessment criteria established by the autonomous communities. In a case of pupils with special educational needs, such criteria must be amended in conjunction with the amendments to objectives and curricular content made through curricular adaptations.

To assess entails determining the most suitable tools and procedures on one hand, and the possible adaptations of these commonly used tools on the other. The use of varied and diverse assessment tools and procedures is recommended, since a single procedure, such as a written or oral test, entails serious difficulties for some pupils with motor functional difficulties or with problems in expressing themselves. Moreover, the exclusive use of this kind of testing to assess any pupil provides only limited information on his/her comprehension of curricular content. Consequently, it is necessary to use other kinds of tools that provide information on various aspects that are difficult to assess by oral or written means, and which include observation, questionnaires, interviews, analysis of class work, etc. The use of testing and tools adapted to the 'real-life' classroom is likewise recommended, for example pedagogical tests, observation records, and follow-up sheets.

Furthermore, the educational context should be evaluated in terms of pupils with special educational needs and common criteria should be established to provide and receive information from parents and pupils, given the diversity of the professionals that on occasion work with them.

The issue of when to assess entails considering the various key moments in the development of a given teaching/learning process. Three moments can be defined: initial assessment; formative assessment; and summative assessment. At the end of the school year, the assessment teams evaluate the degree of achievement of the targets, which were established at the beginning of the school year for those pupils with special educational needs. The assessment results are to allow the introduction of the necessary adaptations, including the most suitable modality of schooling depending on the pupil's needs. This decision, if necessary, could even be adopted during the school year.

In relation to the process of the promotion of pupils with special educational needs, the general regulation for infant, primary and compulsory secondary education is applied

nation-wide. Therefore, a pupil may remain one more year in the second cycle of infant education when the counselling department deems that such a measure will allow the pupil to meet the objectives of that cycle or will be beneficial for his or her socialisation process. A pupil may remain one more year in primary education, and one more in each cycle or in any of the years of the second cycle of compulsory secondary education, only when the previous circumstances have not taken place. This implies that basic schooling can be prolonged up to the age of 18.

In post-compulsory secondary education there is also the possibility of prolonging schooling by two years in bachillerato. In specific vocational training, pupils with special educational needs related to disabilities can take the programmed activities for the same module up to four times.

Decisions regarding promotion or repeating will always be made on the basis of the information obtained during the assessment process and in relation to pupils' progress as compared to the programmed objectives for him/her. The decision will be accompanied, as appropriate, by complementary educational measures, intended to help pupils reach programme objectives. There is, however, no direct or automatic correlation between a pupil's failure to reach objectives and non-promotion to the following cycle.

Pupils with special educational needs, after finishing the compulsory secondary education and reaching the objectives planned, are awarded the Secondary Education Certificate, which enables them to gain access to baccalaureate and intermediate specific vocational training. In any case, all pupils receive a certificate including the (number of) years of study and the grades they have received in the different areas, together with non-prescriptive and confidential guidance regarding their academic and professional future.

The Law establishes that those pupils who do not achieve the objectives of compulsory secondary education, and who are therefore lacking a certificate and are consequently unable to continue their education, are entitled to enrol in specific social guarantee programmes. The aim of these programmes is to provide basic and vocational training, which will enable these pupils to take part in the working world. Pupils with special educational needs may enrol either in the general social guarantee programmes under the integrative framework or in social guarantee programmes specifically designed for pupils with special educational needs.

Furthermore, pupils with special educational needs who have successfully completed any of the post-compulsory stages of the system will receive the corresponding certificate. Furthermore, a proposal may be put forward to issue the Baccalaureate, Technician or Technical Superior certificate, for pupils who have studied baccalaureate and specific vocational training with significant adaptations in some of their subjects,

### **Separate Special Provision**

Special education schools are intended for pupils who are unable to be integrated into mainstream schools but who follow compulsory teaching. When there are no special education centres in the area, these pupils receive their schooling in units for special education within mainstream centres. Pupils are enrolled in separate special education units or schools only when there is sound reason to believe that their needs cannot be suitably met in a mainstream establishment. There is also specific special education establishments that enrol pupils with special educational needs associated with a very specific type of handicap.

These establishments provide basic compulsory education: primary education, with pupils between 6-12 years of age and compulsory secondary education, with pupils between 12-16 years of age. These centres can also provide social guarantee programmes. Once basic education is over, they can also provide programmes intended to facilitate transition to adult and working life. These programmes last two years, with the possibility of lasting one more; therefore, pupils here are between 16-19 years of age.

Teachers engaging in basic education in specific special education schools are generally teachers specialising in special education and/or hearing and speech. In complementary vocational training or programmes for transition to adult life, pupils receive instruction from technical teachers of vocational training, who teach technical-practical courses, as well as from the before mentioned "Maestros".

Moreover, the autonomous communities have endowed special education schools with additional support and guidance staff members. The number and specialisation of these professionals vary according to the autonomous community in question. The professional/pupils ratio varies depending on the number of pupils and the kind of curricular adaptations they may need.

### **General Objectives**

According to LOE the objectives set for pupils attending special education establishments are the same as those for all pupils. Furthermore, establishments must have the necessary school organisation and carry out the necessary curricular diversifications in order to facilitate pupils the achievement of such objectives. Therefore, the general objectives of the different educational stages constitute the necessity for individual programmes or curricular adaptations of pupils with special educational needs, studying either in mainstream or special education establishments.

Given the specific nature of the special education centres, compulsory education objectives will undergo more significant adaptations and the programmes for transition to adult life or of complementary vocational training will aim fundamentally, at developing abilities linked to professional occupations, personal independence and social integration.

The Organic Act on the Quality of Education states that the general objectives for pupils with special educational needs must be those generally established for all pupils, with the necessary curricular adaptations. For those unable to achieve the objectives, public administrations are to promote training programmes adapted to the pupils' specific needs, aiming at facilitating their social and labour inclusion.

### **Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils**

In the case of specific centres for special education that provide education for pupils who cannot enter an inclusive framework, only two educational levels are carried out: basic compulsory education (6 to 16 years of age) and complementary vocational training or programmes for transition to adult life (16 to 19 years of age). Pupils at these centres may be enrolled up to the maximum age of 20. Notwithstanding, on an exceptional basis, and subsequent to obtaining the agreement of the pupil's parents or legal guardians, the maximum age may be raised, allowing for enrolment up to the age of 21 and taking into account the grave circumstances that pupils affected by certain types of disabilities may suffer.

The schooling for pupils with special educational needs is to start and finish at the ages generally established for the corresponding level and stage. There can be exceptions made in the conditions and procedures making more flexible compulsory schooling for pupils with special educational needs, but these have to be authorized. However, the age limit for schooling in a special education establishment is still 21.

### **Curriculum, Subjects**

The programmes for general studies in special education schools are those corresponding to the compulsory basic areas included in levels of primary education and compulsory secondary education. In order to organise them, the curriculum established for these stages is taken into account, particularly the primary curriculum with any necessary adjustments or adaptations made. Once pupils reach the age of 12, they are also taught subjects corresponding to secondary education, which are primarily related to pre-occupational activities.

The educational needs of pupils enrolled in such schools, as well as those related to their health and personal well-being, are often so complex and variable that it is imperative to adopt an extreme flexibility regarding curricular organisation and the necessary human and material resources for implementation. It is necessary for this organisation to be very different from the general arrangements prevailing in mainstream schools.

Reference should also be made of both vocational training, which includes both the specific category of social guarantee programmes for pupils with special educational needs and official vocational training programmes, which may be included within the training programmes for transition to adult life in special education schools. Therefore, provision has been made for pupils with special educational needs who finish basic education without having reached the objectives of compulsory secondary education to continue their schooling under three different vocational training-related options.

Some pupils with special educational needs may be able to enrol on an integrative basis in social guarantee programmes that adapt to their personal circumstances as well as to their level of skills and development. Such programmes are available under integrative conditions.

Special social guarantee programmes: specifically designed for pupils with special educational needs wishing to continue schooling beyond compulsory secondary education. This does not prevent these pupils from participating in mainstream social guarantee programmes. The special programmes are adjusted to their personal characteristics, their degree of development and skills, as well as to their subsequent employment aspirations. They have the same structure as the social guarantee programmes run for the pupil population at large and are organised around the following areas: basic training, training and career guidance, vocational training, complementary activities and educational guidance. Vocational training is particularly important, taking into account the special needs shown by this group. It should address both the acquisition of skills and abilities of a general nature and training for practising a specific trade.

These programmes are provided in secondary education establishments, in special education schools designated for this purpose and, when such is the case, wherever may be determined, pursuant to agreements signed between the autonomous communities and other authorities, town councils or non-profit organisations.

Programmes are available for the transition to adult life, designed for pupils with special educational needs associated with more severe and permanent handicaps that, in light of the low degree of development and skill achieved after basic education, are unable to take advantage of the two training alternatives discussed above. These programmes are intended to last two years, but they may be extended to three, and are generally provided in special education schools. The priority objectives are to help these pupils to develop the necessary conduct and habits to lead an adult life as independently as possible, enable them to use the services that society makes available to all citizens and, wherever possible, to train them to undertake occupational activities related to very specific and clearly defined jobs.

### **Teaching Methods and Materials**

Both in mainstream and in the specific special education schools, the methodological assistance for these pupils must comply with the educational principles established for the school-age population in general - taking the pupil's level of development as a starting point. This means accommodating each pupil's intellectual, communicational-linguistic, social-affective, and motor characteristics, since here diversity prevails.

- Guarantee significant learning. More than anyone else, pupils with special educational needs require learning to be applicable to their daily living skills and to serve as a basis to gain access to subsequent learning.
- Enable pupils to undertake significant learning on their own (learning to learn). In order to achieve this, pupils with special educational needs must be provided with the necessary skills and procedures to be able to learn on an independent basis.
- Promote both physical and intellectual activity. Such pupils must be active in their learning process in order to be able to assimilate and fully comprehend the activities and operations they are undertaking. This may be achieved with the aid of their teacher or their peers although they will admittedly need more help and/or a different kind of help in order to do so.

The implementation of the corresponding technical aids will be available when pupils' special needs require them.

### **Progression of Pupils**

The principles for assessing the progress made by pupils with special educational needs should be the same as those employed for the rest of the school age population.

The reply to the question, as to exactly what is to be assessed, is determined by the mandatory assessment criteria established by the autonomous communities. In the case of pupils with special educational needs, such criteria must be amended in conjunction with the amendments to objectives and curricular content made through curricular adaptations.

The assessment criteria for pupils with special educational needs must meet the principles generally established for the rest of the school population (see sections).

In specific special education schools, assessment of pupil progress as provided in the corresponding programmes or curricular adaptations is incumbent on the form teacher (special education teacher) in conjunction with the rest of the professionals involved in each pupil's programme. Such professionals include: the hearing and language teacher (speech therapist), the physiotherapist, the psychologist, the pedagogue, etc.



Teaching teams act independently to establish the most relevant criteria guiding decision-making as regards pupil promotion. Criteria should be of a different nature, so that decisions are made in accordance with the different variables which may prove decisive for pupils.

The decision of promotion or continuance must be individual, without being an obstacle for the establishment of general measures to facilitate the attainment of individualised decisions. The methodology and organisation of the establishment, as well as important variables in pupil promotion decisions, are related to them.

### **High ability students**

LOE stipulates - concerning high ability students:

It is the responsibility of the Education Administrations to adopt the necessary measures to identify high ability and gifted students and assess their needs as early as possible. Moreover, they should introduce appropriate action plans to meet these needs. The government, after consultation with the autonomous communities, will establish the regulations to allow for flexibility in the length of each stage of the education system in the case of high ability students, independently of their age.

### **Late entries into the education system**

Regarding those students who enter the Spanish education system late LOE stipulates:

1. *It is the responsibility of the Public Authorities to ensure the incorporation into the Spanish education system of students who arrive from other countries or who enter the education system late for any reason. This will be guaranteed, at least, for compulsory school age.*
2. *The Education Administrations will guarantee that the enrolment of late entries into the Spanish education system is adapted to the circumstances, knowledge, age and academic record of these students to ensure they are incorporated into the academic year which is best suited to their characteristics and previous knowledge, with the relevant support to ensure that they will pursue their education as successfully as possible.*
3. *It is the responsibility of the Education Administrations to develop specific programmes for students who have serious language problems or lack basic competences and knowledge, in order to facilitate their integration into the corresponding academic year.*
4. *The development of these programmes will be simultaneous, in all cases, to the students' attendance of normal classes, according to their level and progress.*
5. *It is the responsibility of the Education Administrations to adopt the necessary measures to ensure that the parents or guardians of students who enter the education system late receive the relevant information and advice concerning the rights, obligations and opportunities which incorporation into the Spanish education system implies.*



## **Identification of special educational needs**

LOE (2006, Organic Law of Education) focuses attention on those students with SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS. This concept covers the students who require additional educational support because of special educational needs, specific learning difficulties, high intellectual capacity, late entry to the education system or due to personal conditions or past school records.

LOE (2006, Organic Law of Education) regulates and governs special education within general education and asserts the incorporation of special education into the mainstream system. It also introduces the concept of special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs can attend mainstream or special education establishments. This law also establishes that pupils with special educational needs should attend mainstream establishments and programmes, by adapting such programmes to the individual capacities of each pupil. Their schooling in special education units or establishments, or a combined schooling, will only take place when pupils' needs cannot be met in mainstream establishments. This situation will be periodically revised in order to promote, if possible, better inclusion of the pupils.

According to LOE (2006, Organic Law of Education), special education is no longer conceived as education for a different kind of pupil, but begins to be conceived as a combination of material and personnel resources available to the education system in order to be able to meet the needs (either transitory or permanent) that pupils may have. In this sense, the education system must have the necessary resources so that pupils with special educational needs may achieve the general goals set for all pupils. The principle of normalisation, with the aim of promoting school inclusion, underlies this Law.

The 2006 Organic Law of Education (LOE) stipulates that, in the case of pupils with special educational needs, the identification and evaluation of their needs will be carried out by teams of professionals with different qualifications. These professionals will establish performance plans with regard to each pupil's educational needs, taking into account both parents' and teachers' opinions, as well as the management team of the corresponding establishment. At the end of each year, the evaluation team will assess the extent to which the objectives set out in the plan have been achieved. This will facilitate the introduction of the necessary adaptations, including the most suitable type of schooling according to pupil's educational needs. If necessary, this decision can be made during the school year.

## **Teacher training - basic and specialist teacher training -**

### **Initial Training of Teachers**

The academic qualifications required to teach are uniform throughout the entire nation, although they do vary according to the various levels of the education system. In public-sector institutions, teaching staff in higher education, as well as those at lower levels, generally have permanent civil servant status. In public education, first year teachers in a public school will work under the tutorage of experienced teachers. The tutor and trainee teacher will share responsibility for the trainee's teaching plan. Three types of teachers can be distinguished, depending on the education level which they teach: the teaching staff of infant education and primary, that of secondary education, and that of higher education.

### **Pre-primary and primary education teaching staff**

Teaching in infant education and in primary education requires a teacher certificate on the corresponding speciality, which is a university grade where they get a speciality: infant education, primary education, music, physical education, foreign language, special education and speech therapy.

LOE states that "Maestros" teaching in primary education are allowed to teach in all areas of knowledge of this educational stage and at students' tutorials. However, they can get a speciality: infant education, primary education, music, physical education, foreign language, special education, and speech therapy. The study programme is focused on both academic and theoretical aspects and on pedagogical practice. The basic training on special education for all students is one core subject and the specific training for the specialist is much wider.

Likewise allowed to participate in the first cycle of Infant education, in addition to maestro degree holders, are other professionals trained in the nursery school or the infant education specialities of vocational training.

For the care of pupils with special needs education, the educational system offers teachers help through teacher's specialists in special education, speech therapy and qualified professionals

### **Secondary education teaching staff**

Teaching in secondary education requires a post-grade. In addition, it is necessary to have a professional certificate of pedagogical specialisation obtained after doing a course of pedagogical qualification.

### **Higher education teaching staff**

Initial training for higher education teaching staff takes place primarily in university establishments or institutions for first, second or third cycle studies alike.

### **In-service training**

In-service training is the right and obligation of all teachers and the responsibility of the education administrations and schools. In-service training programmes will adapt knowledge and teaching methods to trends in education sciences and specific methodologies, as well as to all the aspects of co-ordination, guidance, tutoring, attention to diversity and organisation aimed at enhancing the quality of education and the functioning of schools.

## **Development of inclusion**

Since school inclusion began in Spain in 1985 some things have been achieved although some of them still need to be worked on.

The 1990 Organic Act on the General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE) regulates and governs special education within general plan education, asserts the incorporation of special education into the mainstream system and also introduces the concept of special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs can attend mainstream or special education establishments. This Act also establishes that pupils with special educational needs should attend mainstream establishments and programmes, by adapting such programmes to the individual capacities of each pupil. Their schooling in special education units or establishments, or a combined schooling, will only take place when pupils' needs cannot be met in mainstream establishments. This situation will be periodically revised in order to promote, if possible, the better inclusion of pupils.

Later, the 2002 Organic Act on the Quality of Education (LOCE) established a new framework, which gives attention to those pupils with 'specific educational needs'. This new concept covers highly-gifted pupils, pupils with special educational needs, foreign pupils and those who require educational compensation. The above Act establishes that pupils with special educational needs can attend mainstream establishments with specialised classrooms, or ordinary groups in special education establishments or combined schooling, according to their abilities. Education authorities, in turn, anticipate the existence of specialised mainstream establishments in order to meet the needs of this last type of schooling. As regards the other groups which constitute the concept of "pupils with special educational needs", the Act stipulates that the schooling of foreign pupils will be facilitated, by arranging specialised classrooms in mainstream establishments for those who do not have knowledge of the Spanish language and culture or lack basic knowledge.

Education authorities will take the necessary measures to facilitate the schooling of highly-gifted pupils in establishments where the adequate attention can be provided. Coinciding with the European Year of People with Disabilities, the 2 December 2003 the Act on Equal Opportunities, Non-Discrimination and Universal Accessibility for Disabled people has been passed. This Act complements the 1982 Act on Social Integration of Disabled People (LISMI).

Nowadays LOE, The Organic Law of Education 2006 says: The Education Administrations will dispose of the necessary measures to ensure that all students reach their maximum personal, intellectual, social and emotional potential, as well as the objectives of a general nature established in the present Law." And it also adds "In order to put into practice the principle of equality in the exercise of education rights, the public authorities will carry out compensatory measures with disadvantaged people, groups and regions and provide the necessary economic resources and support. The final goal should be a school for all.

## **Historical Overview**

Initial experiments in special education in Spain can be traced back to the sixteenth century and were intended for children with sensory handicaps. The same line of thought was followed over the next two centuries, although there were occasional experiments unrelated to general education with the deaf, blind, etc.

During the nineteenth century, schools and institutions of a purely charitable and aid-providing nature were set up for the education of children with sensory disorders and for the attention to the mentally ill and misfits. The segregation of the handicapped in institutions providing fundamental aid and medical care went on well into the twentieth century. The focus on rehabilitation and education was only slowly introduced. After the civil war, the development of special education was left in private hands, which fostered the setting up of specific centres.

The questionable results obtained by segregated institutions, international normalisation trends, as well as a growing social awareness all led to a change in the concept of the educational treatment to be received by social maladjusted and the handicapped. The change was embodied in the 1970 General Act on Education and Financing of Educational Reform (LGE), which for the first time organised and formulated special education in Spain and stated its goal as the training through appropriate educational treatment of all social maladjusted and handicapped for their inclusion into as full a social life as possible. Special education was to be provided in special centres, while at the same time the establishment of special educational units in mainstream schools was fostered whenever possible for those who were only slightly handicapped. The creation of the National Institute for Special Education (INEE) in 1975 should be emphasized within the development of the LGE as regards special education.

The 1978 Spanish Constitution guarantees all citizens' right to education and urges public authorities to implement a policy of planning, treatment, rehabilitation and integration of people with physical, sensorial, and psychical disabilities in all social areas and, therefore, in education. The same year, the INEE drew up the National Plan on Special Education where the standardization of services, educational integration and individual attention principles are formulated for the first time.

The principles set down are embraced and legally embodied with the enactment in 1982 of the Law for the Social Integration of the Handicapped (LISMI). The Law sets down a series of measures concerning personal, social and labour attention to handicapped people. Among these measures are basic guidelines for the educational framework, with the aim of guaranteeing that these pupils may reach as far as possible the established general objectives of education.

According to the 1990 Organic Act on the General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE), special education is no longer conceived as education for a different kind of pupil and begins to be conceived as the set of material and personal resources available in the education system in order to be able to meet the needs, either transitory or permanent, that part of the pupils may have. In this sense, the education system must have the necessary resources so that pupils with special educational needs may achieve the general goals set for all pupils. This Act lays down the inclusion of special education within the mainstream system and introduces the concept of 'special educational needs'. The latter term covers anything from the most common and interim of needs to those of a more severe and permanent nature. All educational necessities should be attended to within the framework of a comprehensive education system that is open to diversity. The principle of normalisation, with the aim of promoting school integration, underlies this Act.

At present, the Organic Law of Education LOE 2006 changes the scope and the objectives on special education which is not longer the concept, but **SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS**. It must take into account that education focuses

on achieving the respect for basic rights and liberties, equal rights and opportunities between men and women and equal treatment and non-discrimination for the disabled.

## Quality indicators for SNE

The evaluation will cover all education areas governed by LOE and will apply to the learning processes and results of students, teacher performance, education processes, management, the performance of schools, inspection and the education administrations themselves.

The evaluation of the education system will be carried out by the National Institute for Evaluation and Quality of the Education System – renamed Institute of Evaluation (IE) – and by the equivalent bodies designated by the education administrations, who will assess the education system in their area of competence.

The duties of this body are to: assess the degree to which the core curricula are mastered at the various levels, cycles and grades of the education system; carry out research, studies and evaluations regarding the system; assess the general reforms of the system, as well as the structure, effectiveness and efficiency of the system; draw up a state system of indicators which will allow for evaluating the degree of effectiveness and efficiency of the system; draw up assessment systems for the different types of education and their corresponding establishments; provide and interchange information with the education authorities to facilitate decision-making; inform the various sectors of society as to the functioning and outcomes of the education system; and publish and disseminate the results of assessments carried out, as well as of innovations occurring in the field of assessment. The IE is likewise responsible for proposing initiatives and suggestions that may contribute to quality and improvement in education and state co-ordination in international studies.

The assessment units of the various autonomous communities collaborate with the IE in the different assessment activities of the education system, and are responsible for carrying out an assessment of the education system within their territory. Assessment of educational establishments is of a dual nature: internal assessment carried out by the education community itself; and external assessment which is carried out by specialists in assessment, normally by the Education Technical Inspection. In any case, the autonomous communities are responsible for drawing up and implementing assessment plans in territories under their management. All of these plans are found to have the same objective and basic characteristics.

## Quality principles

The quality principles within the education system are:

- Equity, which guarantees the quality of equal opportunities for a learner's complete personality development throughout education, with respect to democratic principles and fundamental rights and liberties.
- The capacity of transmitting values that foster personal freedom, the social responsibility, cohesion and the improvement of society and equal rights between sexes, which help to overcome any type of discrimination, and also the practice of solidarity, to support the civic participation of pupils in voluntary activities.
- The capacity of acting as a personal and social compensative element.
- The participation of the various actors of the education community, in the field of its corresponding competences and responsibilities, in the development of school activities within the schools, stimulation and especially, the necessary environment for living together and study.

- The conception of education as a permanent process, which is important throughout life (life long learning).
- The consideration of responsibility and effort as essential elements of the educational process.
- Flexibility in order to adapt its structure and organisation to the changes, needs and society demands, and to the different abilities, interests, expectations and personality in the pupils.
- The recognition of the teaching function as an essential factor regarding the quality of the education, the attention given to the teachers' training, actualisation, and to their professional promotion.
- The pupils' capacity to trust in their own abilities and knowledge, developing creativity, personal initiative, enterprising spirit, and basic principles and values.
- The stimulation and promotion of the investigation, the experimentation and the educational innovation.
- The assessment and the educational system inspection as a whole, both in its design and organisation, and in the teaching and learning processes.
- The schools efficiency, through their autonomous reinforcement and promotion of the school management.



## SNE data - Spain

The Agency SNE data collection is a biennial exercise with data provided by the Representatives of the Agency. In all cases this data is from official Ministerial sources. All data refers to pupils officially identified as having special educational needs as defined in the country. In this file, you can find the [SNE data for Spain](#)

### SPAIN

Question	Data					Notes and sources used
1. Number of compulsory school aged pupils (including those with SEN)	Public Sector		Private Sector		Total	Source: Ministry of Education. Subdirección General de Estadística. Statistics Service.
	2,961,624		1,475,634			
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary		
	1,751,267	1,210,357	856,117	619,517	4,437,258	
2. Number of compulsory school aged pupils who have SEN (in all educational settings)	Public Sector		Private Sector		Total	Source: Ministry of Education. Subdirección General de Estadística. Statistics Service.
	77,015		27,328			
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary		
	47,289	29,726	14,221	13,107	104,343	
3. Pupils with SEN in segregated special schools *	Public Sector		Private Sector		Total	Source: Ministry of Education. Subdirección General de Estadística. Statistics Service.
	9,686		7,714			
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary		
	4,839	4,847	3,527	4,187	17,400	
4. Pupils with SEN in segregated special classes in mainstream schools	Public Sector		Private Sector		Total	* The Statistical office does not provide this data. These pupils are considered pupils with SEN in segregated special schools so they are included in the data given for question 3 above.  There are pupils with SEN in segregated special classes in mainstream schools for two reasons: there is no segregated special school near the rural area; the segregated special school has not got vacancies and pupils have to be educated in a mainstream school.
	-		-			
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary		
	-	-	-	-	-	
5. Pupils with SEN in fully inclusive settings	Public Sector		Private Sector		Total	Source: Ministry of Education. Subdirección General de Estadística. Statistics Service.
	67,329		19,614			
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary		
	42,450	24,879	10,694	8,920	86,943	

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6. Compulsory age phase	6–15 years. Compulsory primary education: from 6 to 12 years. Compulsory secondary education: from 12 to 15 years.
7. Clarification of Public - Private sector education	Public education: the educational settings belong to the State. All the funding – including teachers' salary (teachers are civil servants) – is provided by the State, totally free of charge. The majority of Spanish pupils / students are schooled in this sector. Private education: private educational establishments are owned by private natural or legal persons. These private establishments may reach agreements with the Administration, in which case they are known as subsidised private schools. Parents pay for the schooling.
8. Legal Definition of SEN	Students with special educational needs refer to those who require certain support and specific educational attention due to disability or serious behavioural disorder, either for a period or throughout the whole of their schooling. It is the responsibility of the Education Administrations to guarantee and regulate the schooling of these children and ensure the participation of parents or guardians in the decisions which affect the schooling and educational procedures of these students. It is also their responsibility to adopt the appropriate measures to provide parents of these children with adequate individual assessment and the necessary information to help them in the education of their children. The schooling of students with special educational need will be governed by principles of normalisation and inclusion and will ensure non-discrimination and real equality in the access to the education system and continued attendance, allowing flexibility in the different stages of their education when necessary. The schooling of these students in special education centres or units, which may be extended until the age of twenty-one, will only take place when their needs cannot be met by the special needs provisions available in mainstream schools. The identification and assessment of the educational needs of these students will be carried out as early as possible by qualified professionals under the conditions determined by the Education Administrations. At the end of each school year the results obtained from each student will be assessed, according to the objectives set out in the initial assessment. This will allow the staff to provide appropriate guidance and adapt the learning programme in order to encourage, as far as possible, better integration of these students. It is the responsibility of the Education Administrations to provide infant school provision for children with special educational needs and to develop appropriate schooling programmes for them in primary and secondary schools. It is also the responsibility of the Education Administrations to encourage students with special educational needs to continue with the post-compulsory education as appropriate and to modify as necessary the testing procedures established in this Law for those students with disabilities. Pupils with special educational needs can attend both special education and mainstream establishments. Schooling should preferably be provided in mainstream establishments, adapting such programmes to each pupil's capacities. Reference: LOE: Título II, Capítulo I, Sección primera: Alumnado que presenta necesidades educativas especiales.