

Teaching Assistant

Learning support/teaching assistants (classroom assistants in Scotland) support teachers in schools. They help the teacher by:

- getting things ready for lessons
- helping children complete their work
- displaying art and craft work
- organising and playing games with younger children.



In secondary schools, teaching assistants are more likely to work with individual or small groups of children who have special educational needs.

Teaching assistants are employed to work school hours, term-time only, although they may sometimes have to attend at other times for training. Many work part time. They work on the school premises, in classrooms, dining areas and playgrounds. They sometimes accompany children on school trips.

New teaching assistants start on £10,000 a year, and can earn up to £14,000.

Teaching assistants should:

- enjoy working with children
- be interested in their development and learning
- be able to build good relationships with children, their parents and carers, with teachers and other professionals.

Teaching assistants work throughout the UK in early years and primary education, in mainstream secondary schools and in special schools. They can also work in independent schools. The number of teaching assistants is growing very quickly and there are currently around 150,000 in the UK.

Teaching assistants need to be 18 to start training. There is no upper age limit, and many schools prefer older entrants with previous child-care experience. Many teaching assistants are employed directly by the school or local education authority (LEA) and train on the job.

There are a number of training opportunities and qualifications available including NVQs/SVQs Levels 2 and 3 for teaching assistants and classroom assistants and vocationally-related qualifications such as CACHE or BTEC Levels 2 and 3 certificates.

Teaching assistants in England can achieve Higher Level Teaching Assistant Status and eventually go on to teacher training courses.