

It might not be for everyone, but if you consider becoming a [teaching assistant](#), we can promise you that it is a great career path to follow. It is a job that is really what you make of it, which means that you must try your best to develop your career as much as possible.

To help you work out what you need to do, we have put together our top tips on developing a career as a teaching assistant.

Roles and responsibilities of a teaching assistant

It can be hard to summarise the daily roles and responsibilities of a teaching assistant. After all, no two days are the same in this job. However, there are some key tasks that a teaching assistant is likely to have to do regularly.

These include:

- Ensuring the classroom is ready for lessons
- Listening to children read one to one or in a group
- Reading to children during storytime
- Supporting children during learning to complete tasks
- Completing admin and records as required by your class teacher
- Managing classroom behaviour
- Assisting children who have been injured or who have an accident
- Clearing away materials and resources
- Keeping the classroom tidy and organised

Why should you become a Teaching Assistant?

There are various reasons you may want to become a teaching assistant, which can vary from person to person. One of the main reasons to become a [teaching assistant](#) is to make a difference to the children you work with.

You want to ensure that children have the best start in their education and that they can receive the support that they need to maximise their own learning.

What qualifications do I need to become a teaching assistant?

The good news if you plan on becoming a [teaching assistant](#) is that you don't have the formal qualifications to be accepted for the role. That said, you should have a good level of both English and Maths to be able to offer support to the children that you work with.

There are lots of on-job learning and training that you can take on when you work as a TA, and whilst it may seem like it is going to take time from you in the classroom, we can assure you that every bit of additional learning that you do in your role is going to benefit you in your career.

Who can become a teaching assistant?

Anyone can [become a teaching assistant](#). It is not a job limited to certain ages, genders or experience levels. That said, it is essential to know that you should like children and feel that you can work with children.

You should also be calm and patient, as well as be able to work under pressure. You should be friendly and approachable and want to help in whatever way that they can—having this as your nature is essential and can really help you become a highly valued teaching assistant in your school.

Work experience of a teaching assistant

If you are thinking about becoming a teaching assistant and have no prior experience, then one thing you can do is try and gain some work experience in the role. The best way to do this is to approach a local school and offer to work as a volunteer within the school.

Not only does this help you to work on the skills you need to be a teaching assistant, but it can also help you to be recognised within the school, which may help you when the time comes to get a job.

Required skills of a teaching assistant

Many of the skills that you need to become a teaching assistant can be learnt and developed whilst you are in the position. However, there are some things that you will be better placed within the role if you can do.

The main skills that are required with a teaching assistant are:

- Great working relationships with both children and adults in the school
- The ability to organise yourself, your teacher and your space
- Creativity
- Imagination
- Flexibility
- Good level of numeracy and literacy skills
- The ability to manage challenging behaviour in pupils
- Patience
- A sense of humour
- IT skills
- The desire to work with children and enjoyment of working with children

How to get qualified?

There are a variety of ways that you can [get qualified as a teaching assistant](#). Some people will decide to do learning on the job qualification. Others may choose to study at a college. You can even decide to obtain your qualifications online.

Where can I earn qualifications?

There are lots of places where you can earn your qualification. You may find that your local college offers the qualifications you want to study. You can also perform a Google search which will show you the online providers of the courses that you are trying to study.

It may also be a good idea to speak to your teacher, or senior leadership staff within the school, as they may have access to the courses you are looking for.

How long does it take to become a teaching assistant?

Once you are accepted as a teaching assistant, then you are a teaching assistant. However, if you want to obtain your [qualification](#), then you can expect it to take any from a year to finish your studies.

If you study online, you can learn at your own pace, which means that you can ensure that you study around all the other commitments you have, such as work and family.

How does a teaching assistant support teachers?

There are a variety of ways that a [teaching assistant](#) is going to offer support to the teachers that they work with.

The main one is that they are there to ensure that the learning that needs to be delivered to the children in the class is delivered effectively. They are there to work with children who need extra support that the teachers might not be able to offer whilst working with the rest of the class.

Teaching assistants usually are given set interventions that they need to complete with the children that need them.

Another key aspect of a TA's support is that they will tackle some of the organisational activities that the teacher may need them to do. This could be preparing the classroom or perhaps preparing for any activities they need to do in the future.

Where can you work?

When you become a teaching assistant, you can work in any school that accepts your job application. Teaching assistants work in Early Years, primary schools and secondary schools too.

Teaching assistants will also help in specialist schools that work with children with special requirements and needs that they do not receive in mainstream schools.

Career development path

It has to be said that the career path of a teaching assistant is quite limited, and there is not as much movement as perhaps you may want. That said, many people who become teaching assistants are more than happy with this particular role and can stay in that job for some time.

The main career path is that a teaching assistant will become a higher-level teaching assistant, which means they can offer a higher level of support to the teachers they work with. They can cover classes and plan to learn.

Of course, teaching assistants can also move on to become teachers. They can study their teacher training whilst they work and may even be able to complete their final year before they qualify within the school that they work in.

Career prospect

As we have mentioned above, the main career prospect of a teaching assistant is to become a higher-level teaching assistant or perhaps a teacher. You may also find that you can move into becoming a more specialist teaching assistant. Working with children with additional needs that are either met in the mainstream school setting or have to attend a specialist school.

Working hours

The working hours of a teaching assistant will usually be within school hours. However, you should know that many teaching assistants work before and after the school shuts.