

Getting Started

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THE BENEFITS OF STARTING A CLUB FOR CAREERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

A countless number of reasons exist for starting a Club for Careers in Special Education, and as you evaluate your desire to get a Club started, consider the benefits, too.

The purpose of most Clubs is to promote future leaders in the education of exceptional children and youth and programs designed to inform students of special education, and to encourage them to give service to exceptional children and youth with the possible result of becoming a part of the profession of special education in the future. Keeping this in mind, consider the benefits of starting a Club and check off the ones that apply to your individual situation:

- ❑ Special education is a growing field. Clubs serve as a recruitment avenue helping to ensure quality special educators for the future. Career decisions are often made based on experiences, and the activities and programs Clubs provide will help your students experience future career opportunities that may direct their future goals.
- ❑ Clubs provide students with an avenue to modify the perceptions they have of their peers. As Club members work together on projects and learning activities, they become more aware of their abilities and similarities. Students working together in inclusive environments build self-esteem, nurture socialization, and make friends.
- ❑ Working to inform the community of the Americans with Disabilities Act or to make restaurants, parks, entertainment facilities and city buildings more accessible to all citizens allows Club members to become community advocates.
- ❑ As more and more secondary schools require community service for graduation, Clubs provide opportunities and expand horizons. Statistics show that students involved with peer programs improve their own grades as they work with others while investigating future career opportunities.
- ❑ Serving as peer partners provides mutual benefits to Club members and their partners as they learn, work and play together. Students involved in peer partner programs usually develop positive attitudes towards themselves, others, and their school and home environments because students are successful and find a sense of belonging.
- ❑ As Club members plan and implement projects and activities, they create public awareness and enhance the image of special education. Holding a disability awareness day, reading about accomplishments of exceptional individuals, and making and supporting friends with disabilities help create advocates who value the abilities and diversity of all.

Starting a Club for Careers in Special Education and serving as an advisor takes a great deal of time and commitment. The energy you spend putting the Club together enhances the image and reputation of special education. Knowing your goals and expected outcomes will help determine the direction and focus of your Club.

10 STEPS TO STARTING A CLUB

Making the decision to start a Club for Careers in Special Education is the hard part. Once you've decided to begin, just follow this checklist to get things off the ground. If you have any questions, contact your state/provincial unit of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) for more information.

- o1. Contact your CEC state/provincial unit to find out their requirements for starting a Club.** The list of CEC state/provincial unit presidents is in this section and also on the CEC Web site at www.cec.sped.org.
- o2. Locate a sponsor for your Club.** Most CEC state/provincial units require Clubs to have the sponsorship of a CEC professional or student chapter or the state/provincial unit. If the Clubs in your state/province are sponsored by CEC chapters, ask the state/province president for contact information for your local chapter.
- o3. Seek approval of school administration.** Since the greatest impact of the program is aimed at the needs of exceptional children and youth, make sure you have the approval and support of the director of special education in your school district. Next, secure the permission of each building principal from which you plan to have students involved. (You may want to organize your Club within your district/county to ensure the recruitment of enough members and allow for more interaction.) When seeking approval, you may want to share your overall goals for the Club and the procedures for selecting Club members. These teen volunteers should have the desire to make a positive difference in the quality of education available to all students.
- o4. Identify a Club advisor and sponsoring team.** Every Club must have a Club advisor, but the sponsorship need not rest on the shoulders of one person. The ideal situation is one in which a school special education teacher, guidance counselor or special education supervisor, who is a member of CEC, teams up with the individual who wishes to serve as the advisor. This type of team can establish a sense of "ownership" that will create a solid foundation. Having a team to work with allows the advisor to be more resourceful and gives the students a sense of camaraderie. (See the section on Club Governance for a description of the Advisor's Role.)
- o5. Recruit the number of students required to form a Club.** Most CEC state/provincial units require their Clubs to have at least 10 members. If you wish to charge a fee or dues to cover beginning expenses, that is left to your discretion. List the names and addresses of the Club members on the roster of members and submit it to your CEC state/provincial unit.

Here are some recruitment suggestions to get you started:

- Ask your CEC sponsoring unit and the advisor to introduce the Club during an activities fair, freshman orientation, or morning homeroom time.

- Ask your CEC sponsoring unit to sponsor a picnic, fair, sporting event, or some interactive event with families and students with disabilities. Invite interested students to attend, and ask for volunteers to help with the event. This one-time volunteer activity may be a great recruitment opportunity for your Club.
 - Invite local special education teachers to speak about their rewarding jobs in special education and how volunteering can enhance a special education program. Also invite parents to share their thoughts on what they hope the educational outcomes and experiences will be for their children.
 - Discuss the advantages of students working together to build friendships and influence positive changes within their schools, the community and their own lives.
 - Explain that Club activities enhance future career opportunities. Encourage Club members to consider the special education profession and become heroes to students they will eventually teach.
- o6. Elect officers.** Every Club needs leadership, and we have provided you with a list of positions and responsibilities in the section entitled Club Governance. The process of election or appointment is up to each Club, but be sure to see the enclosed sample constitution and bylaws for a suggested method of balloting. You need to submit your list of officers to your CEC state/provincial unit.
- o7. Become a recognized Club.** The application is self-explanatory. Four student officers should be listed along with the signature of the advisor and sponsoring CEC unit. Submit your application to the CEC state/provincial unit. Some CEC state/provincial units provide a Club certificate.
- o8. Develop a constitution and establish your goals for the year.** A constitution provides structure to your Club. Students should adopt the constitution and submit it to your sponsoring unit. When adopting the constitution, your Club should also choose its name. Submit your constitution to the CEC state/provincial unit. Club members should also be involved in establishing the goals for the year. The section entitled “Goals, Activities & Accomplishments: Planning for the Year” provides structure to the goal-setting process.
- o9. Know your local resources and special education contacts.** Do you know all of the various special education classes in your community? Do you know of specific needs such as promoting a greater awareness of the abilities of persons with disabilities, equipment needs in the classrooms, help in tutoring, or respite care services? Are there places that would allow site visits or field trips?
- o10. Involve parents and families.** Be sure to include parents as much as possible. Make them aware of your activities and invite them to attend. Family involvement is important in any child's education, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities.

CLUB FORMS: WHAT'S WHAT

To become an official Club, complete the following forms and return them to your sponsoring CEC state/provincial unit:

- o **Application** – Making a formal application of membership is easy—just fill in the blanks. Don't forget to provide an address where correspondence can be sent to the advisor.
- o **Roster of Members** – Include the names and addresses of all Club members.
- o **List of Officers** – Identify your officers. From time to time, important information will be sent to Club presidents. This information may be sent to the advisor as well so it's important that we have the advisor's address, too.
- o **Club Constitution** – Formalize the structure of your Club by developing a constitution. The constitution included in this organizational kit is written so you can fill in the blanks. Clubs can create their own constitutions, but this sample lists many of the requirements followed by CEC state/provincial units.

Annually, you'll be asked to submit these forms to your CEC state/provincial unit:

- o **Annual Report** – The president of your Club may be required to complete an annual report. The annual report provides information about the successes and experiences of your Club. This is usually submitted at the end of the school year to the CEC state/provincial unit.
- o **List of Officers** – This is usually submitted at the start of the school year (fall) to the CEC state/provincial unit.
- o **Roster of Members** – This is usually submitted at the start of the school year (fall) to the CEC state/provincial unit.

Complete and mail this form to the CEC state/provincial unit.

**CLUB FOR CAREERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
APPLICATION**

This is to apply for the acceptance of our organization; namely,

_____ (Present or proposed name of organization)

as an official Club for Careers in Special Education, to cover a geographical area of

_____ (School district of, city of, etc.)

and to be composed primarily of the following interest groups: _____

Date this Club was established: _____

Date this Club officially voted to apply for acceptance as a Club: _____

Officers of this Club are as follows:

PRESIDENT _____ VICE PRESIDENT _____

SECRETARY _____ TREASURER _____

Name and number of sponsoring CEC unit: _____

CLUB ADVISOR:

Name _____

Address (Number and Street) _____

City, State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Copies of our officially adopted constitution and bylaws have been submitted, approved, and are on file with the CEC state/provincial unit.

Signed: _____
(Club President) (Club Secretary)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Club Advisor) (President of Sponsoring CEC Unit)

Date: _____ Date: _____

-- FOR USE BY CEC STATE/PROVINCIAL UNIT --

Date recognized: _____ Membership year for Club: _____.

Total Club membership: _____ Comments:

Complete and mail this form to the CEC state/provincial unit.

CLUB FOR CAREERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
ROSTER OF MEMBERS

The following named individuals (minimum of 10) are to be enrolled as members of the

_____ Club for Careers in Special

Education for the membership year _____.

Name (Please Print Clearly)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____

- 18. _____
- 19. _____
- 20. _____
- 21. _____
- 22. _____
- 23. _____
- 24. _____
- 25. _____

Attach additional roster if necessary.

TOTAL MEMBERS: _____

Signed: _____
(Club President) (Club Secretary)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Club Advisor) (President of Sponsoring CEC Unit)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Complete and mail this form to the CEC state/provincial unit.

CLUB FOR CAREERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
LIST OF OFFICERS

CLUB NAME: _____

TERM OF OFFICE: _____

PRESIDENT

Name _____

Address _____

SECRETARY

Name _____

Address _____

ADVISOR

Name _____

Address _____

VICE PRESIDENT

Name _____

Address _____

TREASURER

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (_____) _____

Fax (_____) _____

E-mail _____

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
OF THE _____ CLUB
FOR CAREERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

CONSTITUTION
ARTICLE I
NAME

The name of this organization shall be the _____ Club for Careers in Special Education, hereinafter referred to as _____.

ARTICLE II
PURPOSE

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Club shall be to promote future leaders in the education of exceptional children and youth. It shall further be the purpose of this organization to promote programs designed to inform students of special education, and to encourage them to give service to exceptional children and youth with the possible result of becoming a part of the profession of special education in the future.

ARTICLE III
MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Composition of Membership

Membership shall consist of students interested in enhancing their knowledge about special education and serving individuals with exceptionalities.

Section 2. Definition of Student

A student shall be a person who is in attendance at an accredited secondary school during the academic year.

Section 3. Membership Year

The membership year shall coincide with the school’s academic year.

Section 4. Rights of Club Members

Club members shall have the right to vote, to hold Club office, to petition, and to benefit from such other privileges as may from time to time be authorized.

Section 5. Minimum Membership Requirement

The Club shall maintain a minimum of ten (10) members.

**ARTICLE IV
ORGANIZATION**

Section 1. Relation to CEC State/Provincial Unit

_____ is under the sponsorship of CEC Chapter # _____
in the state/province of _____.

Section 2. Advisor

The sponsoring CEC unit shall designate an advisor from its membership.

Section 3. Fiscal Year and Administrative Term of Office

The fiscal year and administrative term of office shall coincide with the school's academic year.

**ARTICLE V
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Section 1. Composition

- A. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of this organization, namely, President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, all of whom shall be elected annually.
- B. The advisor shall serve as a member of the executive committee in an advisory, nonvoting capacity.
- C. A majority of all board members holding office shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. Powers and Duties of the Executive Committee

- A. To implement the administrative policy within the budget limitations;
- B. To give direction in solving Club problems;
- C. To act upon all official petitions and recommendations received;
- D. To establish such standing and ad hoc committees as are needed;
- E. To appoint a nominating committee and hold elections for Club officers;
- F. To assume such other responsibilities as have been or shall be assigned through the Constitution and Bylaws.

**ARTICLE VI
OFFICERS**

Section 1. Duties of Officers

- A. The powers and duties of the President shall be:
 - 1. To serve as the chief elected official;
 - 2. To give leadership to planning and programs;
 - 3. To recommend the types of committees and other appointive bodies needed;
 - 4. To serve as a member of the Executive Committee and preside at its meetings, and to serve as an ex-officio member of all other committees, with the exception of the Nominating Committee.
 - 5. To maintain close contact with the sponsoring CEC unit and CEC state/provincial unit.
 - 6. To submit an annual report to the CEC state/provincial unit.

- B. The powers and duties of the Vice President shall be:
 - 1. To serve in the President's place and with President's authority in case of that officer's absence or disability;
 - 2. To serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

- C. The powers and duties of the Secretary shall be:
 - 1. To serve as a member of the Executive Committee;
 - 2. To keep records of all meetings of the Club;
 - 3. To send thank you letters, invitations, etc. and keep records of all correspondence;

- D. The powers and duties of the Treasurer shall be:
 - 1. To serve as a member of the Executive Committee;
 - 2. To keep proper itemized accounts of receipts and expenditures;
 - 3. To present a financial report at each official Club meeting;
 - 4. To be responsible for preparing a budget with the officers and advisor for presentation to Club membership when necessary;
 - 5. To collect and deposit Club dues and other Club monies for Club use under the direction and supervision of the advisor.

Section 2. Election Process

The officers of the Club shall be elected by the membership from those members in good standing who are nominated by the nominating committee. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

Section 3. Method of Balloting

- A. Each member shall be allowed one vote for each position to be filled.
- B. The membership shall vote by secret ballot for each position for which there is more than one nominee.
- C. If for any reason a majority of votes cannot be obtained, that position will be left vacant and filled by appointment of the Executive Committee.

Section 4. Term of Office

Each term of office shall coincide with the school's academic year.

Section 5. Removal from Office

- A. A petition for removal of an officer shall be signed by at least five members of the Club and submitted in writing to the President. If the President is the subject of the petition, it shall be presented to the Vice President.
- B. The President (Vice President) shall solicit relevant evidence from all parties concerned, and call a meeting of the Executive Committee to consider the matter within fifteen (15) days following receipt of the petition.
- C. The Executive Committee shall forward the petition, with or without recommendations, to a meeting of the general membership that is to be held within thirty (30) days following the Executive Committee's consideration of the petition.
- D. At the meeting of the general membership, an opportunity shall be made available to all interested parties to present any relevant evidence. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present, provided there is a quorum, is necessary for the removal of the officer.

**ARTICLE VII
APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Chairs of all committees shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.

**ARTICLE VIII
MEETINGS**

Section 1. Frequency

Meetings shall be held as often as necessary, but not less than four times per year.

Section 2. Advisor

The Club advisor or alternate must be present at all official meetings of the Club.

**ARTICLE IX
DISSOLUTION**

In the event of dissolution of this Club, the Executive Committee shall, after payment of all liabilities, dispose their assets by:

1. Contributing them to the CEC state/provincial unit for its use in advancing the education of exceptional children, or
2. Contributing them to another local nonprofit organization whose purpose is to serve the needs of exceptional children.

**ARTICLE X
AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. Effective Date of the Constitution and Bylaws

This constitution shall become effective immediately upon adoption by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership and the approval of the CEC state/provincial unit.

Section 2. Petition for an Amendment

- A. Any proposed amendment to this Constitution or its Bylaws shall be initiated by petition to the President, signed by five Club members in good standing, and approved by the CEC state/provincial unit.
- B. The President shall cause such petition to be published, distributed, and presented to the membership within 30 days after its publication.

Section 3. Adoption of a Constitutional or Bylaw Amendment

The Constitution may be amended at any legally constituted meeting of the Club by a two-thirds majority of the membership.

**ARTICLE XI
PARLIAMENTARY RULES**

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, latest edition, shall govern all official proceedings, except those cases where they are in conflict with these Bylaws and/or the Constitution.

4. How many of your student members are:

freshmen_____ sophomores_____ juniors_____ seniors_____

How many of them plan to major in Special Education in college?

freshmen_____ sophomores_____ juniors_____ seniors_____

5. Sum up, in one or two sentences, your overall experience with your Club. (What are the benefits of belonging to and participating in a Club?)

6. Do you know if the school counselors or career advisors have information on careers in the field of special education? _____yes _____no

If not, please provide a name and address for us to send some information.

CEC STATE/PROVINCIAL UNIT PRESIDENTS

Please check the CEC Web site at www.cec.sped.org for the most up-to-date list.

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No Active State Unit

NEW HAMPSHIRE

No Active State Unit

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No Active Provincial Unit

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NEWFOUNDLAND

No Active Provincial Unit

NOVA SCOTIA

No Active Provincial Unit

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