

**Master's Training Program for Special Educators and Transition Specialists of
Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities
CFDA# 84.325A**

The purpose of this project is to increase the quality and quantity of qualified specialists to serve students with low-incidence disabilities, specifically students with autism, severe mental retardation, and multiple disabilities. This will be achieved through implementation of an interdisciplinary graduate program that addresses the instructional needs of this population, as outlined in P.L. 101-476. All students in the program will receive their Master's degree through the Special Education and Bilingual Education Program in Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University. Students enrolled in this program will receive their Master's degree in Educational Psychology and an endorsement in low-incidence disabilities. Coursework and fieldwork will focus on the educational needs of students in grades K-12. Students enrolled in this program will also receive an emphasis in transition of students with low-incidence disabilities.

A cohort of eight part-time students will be accepted each year and receive over the five semesters of the program. The program will be interdisciplinary and include coursework in special education, school psychology, kinesiology, and educational psychology. All coursework and practica experiences will be direct toward preparing teachers for including students with LID into regular classroom and workplace settings.

The shortage of personnel in the field of special education in Texas has resulted in a critical shortage of teachers: Of the 13,953 teachers teaching in special education assignments during the 1997-1998 school year, only 82% were certified in special education. An increasing number of Texas special education teachers are being prepared through emergency or alternative certification programs that do not address the needs of students with significant instructional needs in their minimal preparation. To address this critical need of the state 32 special educators over a four year period. The project thus will supply qualified personnel to meet the estimated need for over **300 special educators** for students with these disabilities in Texas. Each of these 32 educators may teach as many as 20 students per year, totaling 640 students with low incidence disabilities who will receive services as a direct result of this project.