

## Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessments (AEPA™)

### FIELD 28: SPECIAL EDUCATION—MENTAL RETARDATION TEST OBJECTIVES

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Range of Objectives</b>	<b>Approximate Test Proportions</b>
I. Understanding Students with Mental Retardation	1–5	22%
II. Assessing Students and Developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)	6–9	17%
III. Promoting Student Development and Learning	10–18	39%
IV. Working in a Collaborative Learning Community	19–23	22%

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**Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessments (AEPA™)  
Subject Knowledge Test**

**Test Objectives**

**Field 28: Special Education—Mental Retardation**

**Subareas:**

Understanding Students with Mental Retardation  
Assessing Students and Developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)  
Promoting Student Development and Learning  
Working in a Collaborative Learning Community

**UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION**

**0001 Understand characteristics of students with disabilities, types of disabilities, and the developmental significance of various disabilities.**

For example: types and characteristics of various disabilities; similarities and differences among mental retardation, learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, and physical and health impairments; terms and definitions associated with categories of disabilities; and the influence of various disabilities on physical, sensory, motor, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development.

**0002 Understand learning processes and the significance of disabilities for learning.**

For example: processes by which learning occurs; applications of learning theories; factors that may affect learning, including socioeconomic, cultural, and language differences; effects of disabilities, especially mental retardation, on learning; factors that may impede learning (e.g., abuse/neglect, substance abuse, medications); factors that may facilitate learning in students with disabilities; and strategies for promoting learning that are responsive to students' needs and take advantage of their strengths.

**0003 Understand types and characteristics of mild, moderate, and severe mental retardation.**

For example: major cognitive, behavioral, and social characteristics of individuals with mental retardation; the concepts of intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior; known causes and contributing factors related to mental retardation; prevention of mental retardation; and definitions and criteria associated with types and levels of mental retardation.

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**0004 Understand the effects of mental retardation on human development, learning, and adult life roles.**

For example: the influence of mental retardation on physical, sensory, motor, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development; learning characteristics of students with mental retardation and ways to address these characteristics; and the implications of mental retardation on students' educational opportunities and adult life roles (i.e., domestic, recreation/leisure, community, and employment).

**0005 Understand educator resources relevant to the education of students with mental retardation.**

For example: types and characteristics of generic programs, services, networks, and organizations for students with mental retardation and their families; awareness of professional organizations and activities related to the ongoing professional development of educators in the field; and types of information available from families, school officials, and legal, governmental, consumer, community, and advocacy agencies.

**ASSESSING STUDENTS AND DEVELOPING INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPs)**

**0006 Understand types and characteristics of assessment instruments and methods.**

For example: basic terminology used in assessment; types, characteristics, and methods of formal and informal assessment (e.g., intelligence tests, behavior-rating scales, functional behavior assessments, adaptive behavior scales).

**0007 Understand procedures for evaluating and determining eligibility for students with mental retardation.**

For example: procedures, personnel, and functions associated with an evaluation used to determine eligibility for special education and related services; ethical practices and legal provisions regarding unbiased assessment; factors and procedures involved in diagnosing mental retardation; the impact of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity on evaluation procedures and decisions about services; strategies for documenting and maintaining ongoing classroom evaluation; appropriate application and interpretation of assessment data; ways in which assessment data can be used to modify a student's educational program; and the use of assessment data to evaluate students' needs and progress, determine learning styles and strengths, and adapt instruction.

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**0008 Understand procedures for developing, implementing, and revising Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with mental retardation.**

For example: rights, roles, functions, and invitation of team members; the rights of students, parents, and guardians in relation to an IEP; information that must be specified in an IEP, including present levels of performance, goals, objectives, benchmarks, types of assistive technology that students may need, and extent of participation in the general education curriculum; and purposes and components of transition planning, including the coordination of members of various disciplines and agencies to ensure the systematic transition of students with mental retardation from school to adult life.

**0009 Demonstrate knowledge of options for educational programs and service delivery for students with mental retardation.**

For example: the roles of related services personnel; characteristics of program options; and the application of the concept of least restrictive environment.

**PROMOTING STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING**

**0010 Understand how to establish a positive and productive learning environment.**

For example: ways in which mental retardation may affect students' progress in the general education curriculum; factors in the learning environment that affect students' self-esteem and attitudes toward learning; strategies for modifying learning environments to address diverse student needs, particularly needs related to mental retardation; strategies for crisis prevention/intervention; and individual and group management strategies and intervention techniques for achieving instructional management goals (e.g., maintaining standards of behavior, maximizing time spent in learning).

**0011 Understand strategies and techniques used to improve the communication skills of students with mental retardation.**

For example: strategies and techniques for improving students' oral and non-oral language and communication skills, including the use of alternative and augmentative means of communication (e.g., assistive technology), strategies and techniques for working with students who have limited English proficiency; and strategies and activities that promote students' ability to express their wants, needs, and feelings, follow and give directions, and organize and convey information.

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**0012 Understand strategies and techniques used to improve the social competence of students with mental retardation.**

For example: strategies and techniques to develop students' skills in sharing, developing peer relationships, initiating and responding appropriately in social interactions, working cooperatively, understanding expectations in various social situations, accepting responsibility for one's own behavior, and interacting constructively in a variety of group activities and social and workplace settings.

**0013 Understand strategies and techniques used to promote students' acquisition of academic skills.**

For example: a variety of approaches for teaching academic skills; strategies for integrating reading, writing, and mathematics instruction into daily routines; strategies for adapting instruction (e.g., using manipulatives, modifying assessment); and strategies for developing students' academic study skills (e.g., breaking down assignments into discrete tasks, skimming and scanning texts, recognizing sources of information and help, learning cooperatively in groups, choosing and using technology, completing assignments).

**0014 Understand strategies and techniques used to promote students' acquisition of functional skills.**

For example: components of a functional curriculum; techniques for designing and implementing functional skills instruction (e.g., observation, task analysis, establishing behavioral outcomes, teaching in context); strategies for teaching functional skills in the major domains (e.g., self-help skills, daily living skills); and techniques for promoting skill transfer and generalization.

**0015 Understand strategies and techniques used to improve students' independent learning skills.**

For example: strategies and techniques for increasing an individual's self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-control; techniques for responding to the motivational characteristics of individual students; and strategies and activities for helping students to organize and manage time, develop productive routines, seek help when needed, follow instructions, work independently, choose and use technology, persevere at tasks, manage frustration and change, manage leisure time, and participate in problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict resolution processes.

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**0016 Understand the development and implementation of behavioral interventions.**

For example: types, characteristics, strengths, and limitations of various behavioral intervention approaches; characteristics of a functional behavioral assessment; analysis of maladaptive behaviors (e.g., their purposes, what triggers them); strategies and techniques for developing and implementing supports and systematic behavioral intervention plans for students with mental retardation (e.g., using behavioral contracts, teaching new behaviors to replace problem behaviors); appropriate ways of involving family members in behavior intervention plans; strategies for recognizing when plans are not working and making changes; and the importance of coordinating behavioral intervention approaches among persons involved in the implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

**0017 Understand strategies and techniques used to improve students' transition to adult life roles.**

For example: strategies and techniques that promote care for self and others, positive health and fitness habits, and travel and mobility routines; strategies for increasing students' understanding of the responsibilities associated with friendship, human sexuality, family life, and parenting; and techniques for promoting independent and community living skills, citizenship skills, multicultural awareness, and participation in civic, leisure, and recreational activities.

**0018 Apply principles of and procedures for supporting students' transition from school to employment and/or post-secondary education and training.**

For example: procedures for developing and implementing individualized personal adjustment plans and prevocational and vocational education plans for students with mental retardation; components of vocational training programs, including community-based programs; techniques for enhancing students' work-related skills; strategies for providing work experience and career- planning services to students; strategies for promoting students' ability to be effective self-advocates; and appropriate goals, objectives, activities, programs, and support to promote transition into employment and/or post-secondary education and training.

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**WORKING IN A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY**

**0019 Understand how to establish partnerships with other members of the school community to enhance learning opportunities for students with mental retardation.**

For example: consultation, collaboration, and communication skills and strategies for working with other school staff and support service providers (e.g., general education teachers) to solve problems and promote student achievement; strategies for integrating therapy services (e.g., speech, occupational, physical) into the daily routines of students; and procedures for coordinating materials, equipment, and services for students in various educational contexts.

**0020 Understand how to promote strong school-home relationships.**

For example: strategies for establishing and maintaining communication with families; how to recognize and overcome barriers to communication with families; how to work collaboratively with families to promote their participation in planning and implementing their children's education; and how to provide information, training, support, counseling, and referrals to families whose children have mental retardation.

**0021 Understand school-community interactions that enhance learning opportunities for students with mental retardation.**

For example: strategies for accessing and working effectively with agencies and services that can help meet the needs of students with disabilities; sensitivity to various cultural perspectives within the community; securing advocacy, educational, transitional, and residential services through legal, governmental, consumer, community, and advocacy agencies; and how to engage community support for the special education program.

**0022 Understand procedures for promoting self-advocacy in students with mental retardation.**

For example: strategies that promote self-advocacy, self-determination, responsibility, flexibility, tolerance, and increased independence in students; skills and behaviors that enhance self-advocacy; ways to encourage students to seek assistance and resources, including advocacy agencies, in different situations; and strategies for promoting students' understanding of their legal rights and their willingness to advocate for those rights.

**TEST OBJECTIVES**  
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**0023 Understand the history and philosophy of special education, key issues and trends, roles and responsibilities, and legal and ethical issues relevant to special education.**

For example: the historical and philosophical foundations of special education; ways in which approaches to special education have changed over time; legal and ethical issues in special education (e.g., confidentiality, personal involvement with students and families, student discipline); roles and responsibilities of teachers (including professional development) of students with special needs; mediation techniques; and application of special education related laws (e.g., Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]), regulations, and guidelines (e.g., regarding referral, evaluation, eligibility, equity, program development, due process).