

Your guide to being a teaching assistant

“ I love being a TA because the people you work with are brilliant, just so committed. The job itself is really satisfying and you get to know so many different people in the community. ”

Chris, Islington teaching assistant

What is involved?

Teaching assistants are primarily responsible for helping teachers prepare classroom materials and supporting children's learning. Teaching assistants usually work with small groups or with individual children. Their specific duties vary depending on the particular job and the age of the children.

If you are a **teaching assistant in a primary school** your duties may include:

- helping to set up the classroom for lessons;
- helping children with reading, number work, and arts and craft activities;
- encouraging younger children to learn through play;
- playing educational games with children;
- providing extra support as needed to individual children;
- carrying out general administrative tasks and
- helping out with school trips and sporting events.

Teaching assistants in secondary schools usually work with individuals or small groups of students who have disabilities or learning difficulties.

Is working as a teaching assistant right for me?

You need to have:

- a genuine interest in working with children and helping them to learn;
- the ability to build good relationships with children, parents or carers, and teachers;
- good numeracy and literacy skills and
- patience and good team working skills.



What experience/qualifications do I need?

Entry requirements vary depending on the school to which you are applying. It is useful to look at local job adverts or even speak to the local education authority to get a better idea of what requirements in your area tend to be. Teaching assistant jobs are in great demand so it is valuable to have at least a level 2 qualification for Teaching Assistants.

All teaching assistants must undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check before they start working with children.

How can I become a teaching assistant?

A good starting point is to volunteer to help in a local school, perhaps for a few hours each week, as you are unlikely to find paid employment as a teaching assistant without relevant experience or qualifications. With voluntary experience you can work towards a qualification which will improve your chances of finding paid work. There may be some vacancies that you can apply for on the strength of your experience. Experience of working as a lunch-time supervisor, school caretaker, or school library assistant may also help you move into working as a teaching assistant.

CE@Islington runs a range of professional development courses for teaching assistants employed in both primary and secondary schools. These include an induction course if you are fairly new in post, as well as a range of courses and accredited courses in specific areas. To find out more information on these courses please ring CE@Islington on 020 7527 5713.

City and Islington College offers introductory courses and Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) Certificates for Teaching Assistants at level 2 and level 3. These courses require you to do a work placement (voluntary or paid) alongside your studies in order to gain practical experience. To apply for one of these courses you need to attend a briefing session at City and Islington College where you will be given more information

about the courses and undergo an assessment. To book onto a session or to further discuss any of these courses with a course advisor, contact City and Islington College on 020 7700 9200.

How much could I earn?

The full-time pay rate for teaching assistants ranges from approximately £11,000 to £15,000 a year depending on experience and qualifications. Higher Level Teaching Assistants can earn between £18,000 and £21,000 a year. See the Islington CIS jobs list for local rates of pay at www.islington.gov.uk/cis and follow the link for Working with Children.

What are the working hours?

Standard working hours are between 8:30 am and 4 pm, Monday to Friday during term-time. Most teaching assistant posts are for 20 hours per week or less, but some are full-time.

Further training and opportunities

You may be able to progress to a senior assistant in certain schools once you have experience. Another opportunity would be to apply for training and assessment for Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status. You will need the support of your head teacher or school manager before you can be considered for this training. You can get full details of the HLTA programme by contacting CE@Islington on 020 7527 5713. You can also visit the HLTA website for further information on www.hlta.gov.uk.

When you have experience as a teaching assistant you may be able to study towards a level 5 Foundation Degree in Education. This degree is offered in Islington at City and Islington College and runs once a year, starting in September. For information about other universities and colleges that offer foundation degrees please visit www.ucas.com.

You could also train as a teacher if you meet the entry requirements that apply to all teachers. For further information visit the Training and Development Agency for Schools website at www.tda.gov.uk.

Useful contacts:

CE@Islington
020 7527 5713
<http://islington.camb-ed.com>

City and Islington College
020 7700 9200
www.candi.ac.uk

Groundwork North London
020 7239 1395
www.groundwork-nl.org.uk

London Metropolitan University
020 7133 4200
www.londonmet.ac.uk

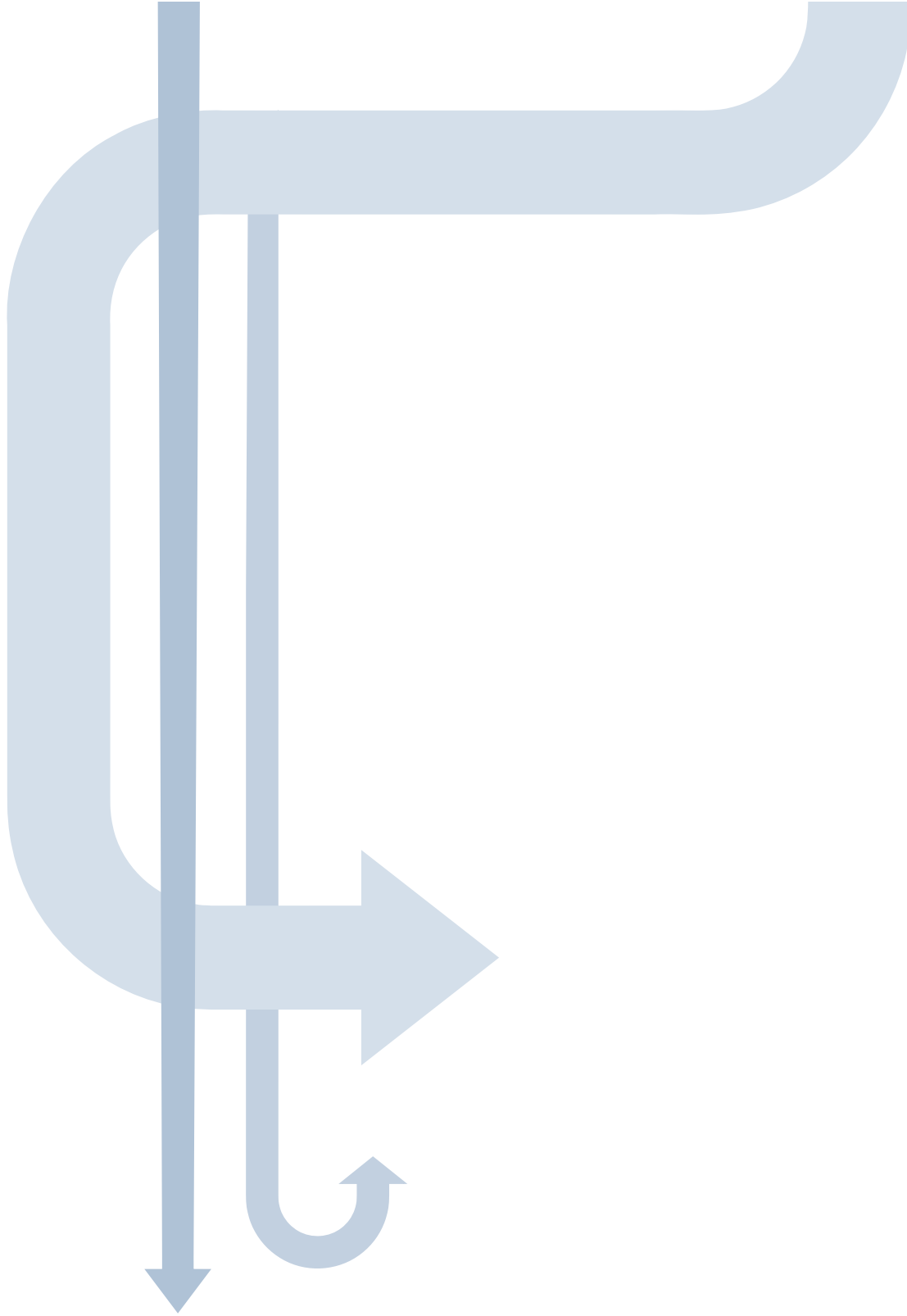
Training and Development Agency for Schools
0845 6000 991
www.tda.gov.uk

Teachernet
www.teachernet.gov.uk

Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA)
www.hlta.gov.uk

**Council for Awards in Children's Care and
Education (CACHE)**
0845 347 2123
www.cache.org.uk

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
0871 468 0468
www.ucas.com



Family Information Service

Children's Services
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