

## Special Needs Philosophy at Holden Christian Academy

At HCA we believe that we are all created in the image of God and therefore reflect God in many ways. As humans we are creative, inquisitive, social, emotional, and can possess a myriad of attributes of our heavenly Father. We also realize that we live in a fallen world and that everything in it is imperfect in some way, including us. The ramifications of this are many in an educational setting. Therefore at HCA we believe the following:

1. No one is a perfect learner.
2. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses.
3. We all need to share our strengths and ask for help with our weaknesses.
4. We all need each other.
5. When one's weakness causes learning issues, we
  - a. investigate it with parents.
  - b. help it with modifications.
  - c. strategize to compensate for it for life.

As a small private school we have our own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to meeting the needs of those who learn differently and/or have special needs.

### Weaknesses

1. We do not have a Special Needs Department
  - a. We do not have the ability for 1 on 1 instruction.
  - b. We do not have the staffing for instructional aides in the classrooms.
  - c. We do not have "pull out" instruction other than reading and counseling.
2. We do not have a formal ELL (English Language Learner) program.

### Strengths

1. We can and do pray with, for, and about our students.
2. We can partner with parents systematically as needed (weekly, monthly or quarterly).
3. We are free to name issues and deal with them head on by educating all parties involved.
4. We can create a classroom environment of love, understanding, and compassion.
5. We can enlist the help of other students who understand the issues if requested.
6. We can strategize with parents and the students and all work closely together to meet the needs of the student.
7. Most of our staff have Special Needs training and are able to employ a variety of strategies in the classroom.
8. Many of our staff have successfully dealt with special needs in their own families and are willing to personally share their stories and encourage parents and students.
9. The average number of students is 10-12 per classroom, so automatically students receive more attention.
10. We have a reading specialist who is a certified Wilson Instructor. (Wilson is a premier multisensory program for struggling readers.) She is able to take small groups for reading as well as provide one on one tutoring for an additional fee.
11. The Charis Counseling Center is on our campus and their therapists have provided personal therapy, family therapy, (fee), electives and teacher support.
12. Teacher may be able to provide afterschool supplemental tutoring (fee) or provide an extra help class for any student in need.
13. Teachers use differentiated instruction, integrated instruction and project based learning on a regular basis in the classrooms (all of which are proven to be helpful to struggling learners).

Strategies:

When issues become apparent we,

1. Meet with the parents to determine if a formal evaluation or a team contract is necessary.
2. If an evaluation is deemed necessary, the parent will request an evaluation from the public school the child would attend in their district.
3. Have the parents, teacher and principal attend the TEAM meeting at the public school where the test results are discussed with the testers and a determination is made of the issue.
4. The group decides if there is a specific learning disability, if so an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) is created.
5. Another meeting is called at HCA with the parents, teachers and principal to discuss the IEP. HCA honestly relates what we are and are not able to provide at HCA. Parents and staff then make decision as to the best placement.
6. If HCA is determined to be the best fit, we then draw up a Three Way Contract that clearly delineates the responsibilities of the teachers, parents and students.
7. A schedule is created to review progress and tweak the contract as necessary.