

**Developmental  
Disabilities Nursing  
Internship at Rock  
Hill High School**

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# What are Developmental Disabilities?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), developmental disabilities are a group of conditions that develop during a child's developmental period, having the ability to impact everyday functioning and will most likely last their entire life. Developmental disabilities are classified into four different types of impairments; physical, learning, language, or behavior.

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# Rock Hill High School's Multi-Categorical Level II Special Education Class

Multi-categorical special education is a concept that school systems use in education of children with special needs. At Rock Hill High School, there is a Multi-Cat II class and a Transitional class. This past semester I have had the opportunity to be an intern for the developmental disabilities nurse, Margaret Manders, LPN, in the Multi-Cat II class. This method involves teaching special-needs children together in the classroom with social, motor, and work skills. These classes generally only have about 15 students or less, with an end goal of possibly getting the student to be as independent as possible.

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# Student Disabilities

In the special needs classroom at Rock Hill High, there are many different types of developmental disabilities. There are students who are autistic and their autism causes them to have learning and behavioral disabilities. There are a few students that have Down's Syndrome. There are quite a few students with epileptic disorders. Some of the other disorders include seizure activity like Absence Seizures, which are very minor. While other students can have very serious seizures, caused by things such as Pachygyria, Norman-Roberts Syndrome, and Lennox Gastaut Syndrome.

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# Interactions

It takes a certain type of heart and patience for someone to work with special needs children. I have had the opportunity to get to know most of these students over the last two years, and have loved working with them. I try my best not to look at them with the labels of their disability, half the time I don't even want to know what their disability is because to me that is not what defines them.

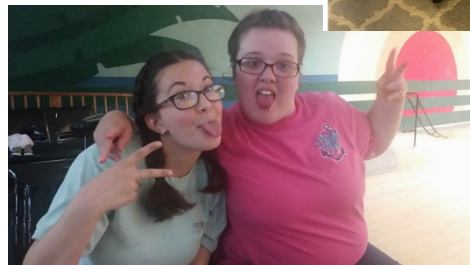


# How I Help

In the classroom, I have seen these students have unpredictable mood changes; watch them flirt and develop crushes and interact with the people they see in the halls; make friends with almost anyone and everyone on campus. However, I have also seen the not-so-pretty side of things with my peers. I have witnessed and assisted with multiple seizures, from minor ones to severe ones. Through helping with the seizures, I have learned how to be extremely quick on my feet, identify the beginning signs of a seizure, know how to keep a seizing student as safe as possible, and also how to make sure that the student is completely out of the seizure. I have also learned how to communicate with students who struggle with speech, and have been able to be an interpreter for class visitors. This year I had the opportunity to learn how and gain the confidence in handling a student when they have behavioral issues due to certain stimulations. That student has taught me, in particular, that it is important to slow down in life and wait for the stressful situation to pass; that it is good to talk out the things that are causing you stress with a trusted friend; and that redirection is key. Since the classroom continues to have a steady flow of visitors, as their peer, I try to my best to teach and show the students the appropriate ways to make a friend “so that they’ll come back and hang out with you again,” (i.e. not being clingy, hanging around all the time, or running up to them every time they see them).

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# Pictures



# Sources

Developmental Disabilities -

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/facts.html>

Multi-Cat Special Education -

<http://www.topteachingcolleges.net/faq/multicategorical-special-education/>

