

# There's a guy in the preschool classroom!

People who know me know that my preference for teaching is about 3rd-7th grades. Stretch a year in either direction, and those are pretty much the jobs I gravitate toward when I have a choice. Of course specials are an exception; I do take those no problem though they may include kindergarten or 1st grade. Since you are an observant reader, you will have noticed the words *when I have a choice*. Well, I was unable to procure an assignment yesterday leaving me at the mercy of what's available in the morning. First call came in at about 5:40 and was for kindergarten. I thought about it and foolishly chose not to do it. I figured I would take a chance and check the web since I was awake. I did find a couple of half-day jobs which I also skipped. Then came the full-day preschool assignment. I didn't think I would see anything younger than the one I rejected, but here it was. Being about 5:50 I decided to gamble again and keep hoping for a better assignment to show up. Nope. Oddly enough though, no one was picking up this full-day assignment for some reason. Finally, the system called me for the assignment so I gave in and took it. At least it was a lot closer to me than the kindergarten job. Then I went back to sleep for an hour.

As it turns out, this district as far as I know does not offer normal preschool. It does however offer special education preschool for the "developmentally delayed." The morning had eight of ten students there, and was actually kind of a breeze. This kind of classroom has teaching assistants (three!), and today the speech teacher actually came in to take over the class! I had absolutely no problem with this as this age is really out of my comfort zone anyway. I just acted as another T.A. The most I did teachingwise was running a center where they matched patterns and did a connect-the-dots

worksheet. Other than that it was keeping kids focused and helping as needed.

The afternoon was a little different. There were slightly fewer students (seven), but this was a more challenging group. One was very autistic and needed special attention, and as a whole the group was lower than the morning group and like the one autistic boy, required more attention. The title of this post refers to me, but in actuality one of the part-time T.A.s in the afternoon was a guy! I would guess he really likes kids to do this, because he is a retired principal from the school I was at and retirement packages for top school administrators tend to be very generous. Either that or some bad investments, but his actions during the afternoon clearly showed the former. He was very good with the kids- unlike a T.A. from another school I worked with recently. That T.A. really yelled at the kids, sometimes for very minor things. To be fair, that school was a middle school, but I really felt for those kids. Aside from that she did a pretty good job, doing things for the students she didn't have to. If not for this I would have thought she was in the wrong profession entirely.

I was somewhat relieved to go home a little early- preschool ends 15 minutes before the regular grades- partly due to the afternoon class and partly due to the relative inactivity of my job. This is one reason, aside from the very low pay, that I would not want to be a teaching assistant full time. The absolute worst times I have had subbing were as teaching assistants, particularly one-one-one assignments. Never again on those, though I would sub (at regular pay) for other types of teaching assistants, like those with multiple kids or general classroom helpers.