Teachers play an important role in fostering the intellectual and social development of children during their formative years. The education that students acquire is key to determining the future of those students. Whether in elementary or high schools or in private or public schools, teachers provide the tools and the environment for their students to develop into responsible adults.

In order to become a teacher, students need to complete an approved bachelor’s degree education program and be certified. For students who are interested in entering the classroom in a capacity other than as a certified teacher, Teacher Assistants (or paraprofessionals/paraeducators) might be of interest.

For students interested in pursuing teaching, the following fields require an approved education program and certification:

- Preschool teachers
- Special education teachers
- Kindergarten and elementary school teachers
- Middle school teachers and secondary school teachers

All states now also offer alternative licensure programs for teachers who have a bachelor’s degree in the subject they will teach, but who lack the necessary education courses required for a regular license. Alternative licensure programs are intended to attract people into teaching who do not fulfill traditional licensing standards, including recent college graduates who did not complete education programs and those changing from another career to teaching. The coursework for alternative certification programs may lead to a master’s degree. ¹

For an example of these types of programs, visit Pitt’s School of Education website: http://www.education.pitt.edu/programs/graduate.aspx.
http://app.education.pitt.edu/respond/form.aspx?id=1

Other teaching and teaching-related careers:

- Adult literacy and remedial education teachers
- Postsecondary teachers
- Education Administrators (Principal, Assistant Principal, Director)

Professional school counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master’s degree in school counseling making them uniquely qualified to address all students’ academic, personal/social and career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a
comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success. Professional school counselors are employed in elementary, middle/junior high and high schools, in district supervisory positions, and counselor education positions.  

**Elementary school counselors** provide individual, small-group, and classroom guidance services to students. Counselors observe children during classroom and play activities and confer with their teachers and parents to evaluate the children's strengths, problems, or special needs. In conjunction with teachers and administrators, they make sure that the curriculum addresses both the academic and the developmental needs of students. Elementary school counselors do less vocational and academic counseling than high school counselors, utilizing, instead, such tools as play therapy or thematic small groups.

**Secondary school counselors** advise students regarding college majors, admission requirements, entrance exams, financial aid, trade or technical schools, and apprenticeship programs. They help students develop job search skills, such as resume writing and interviewing techniques. College career planning and placement counselors assist alumni or students with career development and job-hunting techniques.

**School psychologists** work with students in early childhood and elementary and secondary schools. They collaborate with teachers, parents, and school personnel to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students. School psychologists address students' learning and behavioral problems, suggest improvements to classroom management strategies or parenting techniques, and evaluate students with disabilities as well as gifted and talented students to help determine the best way to educate them.

They improve teaching, learning, and socialization strategies based on their understanding of the psychology of learning environments. They also may evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs, prevention programs, behavior management procedures, and other services provided in the school setting.

School psychologists are highly trained in both psychology and education, completing a minimum of a specialist-level degree program (at least 60 graduate semester hours) that includes a year-long supervised internship. This training emphasizes preparation in mental health and educational interventions, child development, learning, behavior, motivation, curriculum and instruction, assessment, consultation, collaboration, school law, and systems. School psychologists must be certified and/or licensed by the state in which they work. They also may be nationally certified by the National School Psychology Certification Board (NSPCB). The National Association of School Psychologists sets ethical and training standards for practice and service delivery.

### Helpful Links:

- Certification requirements by state: [http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=242](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=242)
- Graduate programs in School Counseling: [http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=513](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=513)

### References: