

*know how you can handle all those children plus make provisions for a special needs student?*

### ***Personal Qualities***

What qualities should an M&R teacher have? The overriding opinion is that a person developing educational programs for students with special needs in regular classrooms must be optimistic and have a positive approach, particularly to their expectations of the student with a disability.

It is also necessary to have confidence that teachers inexperienced in teaching students with special needs will respond to the challenge. Many classroom teachers have been told for years that students with disabilities require special instruction from special educators. That thinking is not easily changed and calls for the M&R teacher to be naturally optimist and positive in difficult situations.

Persistence is essential. "You have to be willing to go the extra mile, willing to spend a little bit of extra time, a little bit of extra energy or effort to get ahead and do what has to be done. Longer hours, meetings whenever the parent is available ... you have to be willing to dig for ideas, keep looking and reading."

M&R teachers have to work with a large number of people: teachers, administrators, consultants, and parents. The ability to work well with others and to handle interpersonal relationships effectively is another important part of the job. One teacher described this as "accepting people as they are and not trying to change them entirely over to your way of doing things." One teacher observed that she had to learn to act calm and easy-going and to be open to different styles of operating. Her work as a regular class teacher had not prepared her for this and it required considerable adjustment. There are many different personalities in a school, each reacting in their own way to the suggestions made by the M&R teacher. The need to balance these considerations against the need to push for changes and new approaches for the student makes the position difficult: