

## Practice, Teaching, and Research Ethics in Special Education

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### Abstract

Considering the lives of individuals with special needs, perhaps the most critical of the services provided is special education services. Having an extremely important place in the lives of these individuals and their relatives, special education services should be carried out within the framework of certain standards and ethical principles. Professional ethics, which pertain to the standards of conduct that individuals working in the realm of business should or should not exhibit, are of paramount importance in guiding employees on the principles that should be adhered to. Given that the field of special education is particularly sensitive in comparison to other disciplines, it is crucial for both teachers working in special education and researchers in this field to possess knowledge and skills pertaining to ethical principles. Despite its significance, there is a dearth of studies on the subject of special education ethics in Turkey. In light of the importance of this topic and the present situation in Turkey, this study aims to explore the concepts of ethics and professional ethics at a fundamental level. Specifically, the study delves into the specific realms of special education practice ethics, special education teaching ethics, and special education research ethics, and examines their place within the broader field of special education in the context of international literature. It is believed that the research conducted on this subject will be beneficial for both teachers, researchers, and service recipients in the interdisciplinary field of special education.

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## INTRODUCTION

The word ethics, which derives from the Greek word root "ethos" meaning character and behavior (Köprü, 2007; Özdemir, 2008; Özmen & Güngör, 2008), is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the foundations of morality (Çevikbaş, 2006). The study area of ethics consists of values, principles, and standards that decide what is good and bad. The field of ethics explores the systematic assessment and interpretation of individuals' decisions and behaviors in the present, past, and future (Ülman, 2010). At this point, it is appropriate to underline that there are quite extensive discussions in the literature on ethics on what is good and bad and their limits.

The focal point of ethics is to examine the moral problems in individuals' personal and social life (Akarsu, 1998, as cited in Altinkurt & Yılmaz, 2011), and ethical debates are fed by situations that make individuals' behaviors morally valuable or worthless (Aydın, 2016). For this reason, ethics does not aim to moralize or reach a worldview, but it explains the ways of making good judgments rather than just explaining what is good to people (Pieper, 2009).

Furthermore, the concept of ethics is considered as individuals' beliefs about how their behavior should be rather than how their behavior should be (Barker, 2002). All behaviors exhibited in society are subjected to an ethical assessment by people (Pass & Willingham, 2008). Considering that the behaviors of individuals, who are social beings and generally live in a social structure, will also affect their environment, ethics also emerges as a discipline drawing attention to taking into account the rights of other people (Haynes, 2002). Accordingly, Clarkburn (2002) stated that the underlying behaviors that are considered ethical are tendencies such as being tolerant and understanding, accepting cultural developments, being respectful of other individuals' beliefs, and acceptance of these beliefs.

Ethics as a discipline is divided into three different types as normative, descriptive, and meta. Each of these three types is subdivided into private and general ethics (De George, 2013). While normative ethics addresses the basic moral system values, descriptive ethics address recognizing the morality of society and carrying out studies related to it. Meta-ethics, on the other hand, is concerned with the nature of ethics and analyzes moral justifications or causality. On the other hand, private ethics concentrates on specific issues while general ethics discusses broader issues.

### **Ethics of the Teaching Profession**

The word profession in the literature is defined as all of the activities that are based on the knowledge and skills acquired as a result of a certain education, and that have rules determined by the society, including ethical values (Kuzgun, 2000). In order for any occupation to be called a profession, it must have some rules. These rules are listed by Sokolwski (1991) as responding to a need of the society, needing knowledge and skills, providing financial gain, and complying with professional ethical principles (as cited by Aydın, 2016). In short, in order for an occupation to be considered a profession, it is necessary for the occupation to have some standards and ethical principles.

The concept of professional ethics emerged as a result of ethical problems that sprang in some occupational groups or that were noticed later (Gündüz & Coşkun, 2012). In the literature, the concept of professional ethics refers to the principles, standards, values, concepts, and principles guiding and directing the behaviors in professional life (Duke, 1990; İşgüden & Çabuk, 2006; Özgener, 2004).

Professional ethics principles not only determine the principles to be followed while performing the profession but also determine the unethical behaviors that should not be done (Aydın, 2021). In short, the field of ethics covers both what should be followed and what should not be done while performing professions. For example, giving gifts to each other is a desirable and "good" behavior in social life, whereas public officials accepting gifts can be seen as unethical behavior.

According to Kayıkçı and Uygur (2012), there are three approaches to determine professional ethical principles. According to the first approach, the pragmatic approach, the benefits, and results the ethical rules will provide should be taken as a basis while forming these ethical rules. According to the second approach, the rights approach, human rights, and freedoms should be taken as the basis when determining ethical rules. Finally, according to the third approach, the justice approach, while determining the ethical rules, the equal rights granted by the laws to all individuals and all the individuals benefiting from these laws should be taken as the basis.

Aydın (2021) listed the functions of professional ethics rules as identifying incompetent and unprincipled members, regulating professional competition, and protecting ideals related to service. While performing the professions, the level of commitment of the professionals to their profession positively affects the society's respect and trust in these professions (Kınacı-İnce, 2014). Although there are differences between professions, general rules regarding professional ethical principles were determined by Akdoğan (2003). According to Akdoğan, these rules are as follows.

1. Persons in the profession are required to act at or above the level set by the law and maintain the current level.
2. The ethical rules to be formed should encourage members of the profession to act honestly and leave a positive impression.
3. Members of the profession who act outside the determined ethical rules should be penalized by professional groups.

Ethical rules are of great importance in the teaching profession, whose focus is on people. Since the quality of the teaching profession directly affects the generations that are brought up, ensuring the professional quality imposes the responsibility of behaving in accordance with ethical rules on the teachers (Pelit & Güçlü, 2006). Teachers' behaving in the light of the stated ethical principles will improve their learning processes and contribute to students' learning their responsibilities (Gündüz & Coşkun, 2012). Accordingly, professional ethical principles were determined in the teaching profession by some institutions, as in many other professions. However, it is important to emphasize that the discussions and works on this subject still continue and that the ethical principles of the teaching profession are changing and developing in line with the spirit of the time. Despite being a vital and frequently examined topic in the international literature, there is a scarcity of research on the subject within the Turkish context. Given this, it is imperative to increase the number of studies conducted on this topic in Turkey. In order to address this need, this study endeavors to provide a fundamental examination of the concepts of ethics and professional ethics. Specifically, the study delves into the specific realms of special education practice ethics, special education teaching ethics, and special education research ethics, and examines their place within the broader field of special education in the context of international literature. Furthermore, this research aims to raise the awareness of special education teachers in Turkey regarding professional ethics.

According to Aydın (2021), ethical principles regarding the teaching profession are “professionalism, responsibility in service, justice, equality, providing a healthy and safe environment, not committing corruption, honesty, righteousness and trust, objectivity, professional commitment, and continuous improvement, respect, and effective use of resources”. The National Education Association in the U.S. lists the ethical principles that educators are obliged to follow as follows (NEA, 1975):

1. Commitment to the student
  - 1.1. The educator shall not unreasonably prevent the student from taking independent action in the pursuit of learning,

- 1.2. The educator shall not unreasonably deny a student's access to different points of view,
  - 1.3. The educator shall not deliberately suppress subject matter that is relevant to the student's progress,
  - 1.4. The educator shall make a reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions that are damaging to his or her learning or health and safety,
  - 1.5. The educator shall not deliberately cause shame,
  - 1.6. The educator shall not bar any student from participating in any program because of their race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation,
  - 1.7. The educator shall not deny any student benefits,
  - 1.8. The educator shall not use Professional relationships for personal gains,
  - 1.9. The educator shall keep information on students gained during professional service unless disclosure is required by law,
2. Commitment to the Profession
- 2.1. The educator shall not deliberately make a false statement in an application for a professional position,
  - 2.2. The educator shall not misrepresent his or her professional credentials,
  - 2.3. The educator shall not aid any individual who is known to be unqualified in terms of character, education, or any other relevant attribute in entering the profession,
  - 2.4. The educator shall not make a false statement about a candidate's qualifications for a professional position,
  - 2.5. The educator shall not assist an unauthorized educator,
  - 2.6. The educator shall protect the information about colleagues unless disclosure is compelled by law,
  - 2.7. The educator shall not deliberately make untrue or malicious statements about a colleague,
  - 2.8. The educator shall not accept any tip, gift, or favor that could sway or appear to sway professional decisions or actions.

### **Special Education and Ethics in Special Education**

In our country, special education is defined as education carried out in appropriate environments with specially trained personnel and education programs developed to meet the educational and social needs of individuals who differ significantly from their peers in terms of their individual and developmental characteristics and educational qualifications (Ministry of National Education, 2018). With the statement of “The state takes measures to make those who need special education due to their situation to be a productive member of the society.” in the 1982 Constitution, the State of the Republic of Turkey was held responsible for providing special education services to its citizens. Moreover, standards regarding the education services to be provided to individuals with

special needs were established in line with the national and international conventions signed on the rights of individuals with special needs. For example, according to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), rights such as respecting the dignity and individual differences of individuals with special needs, ensuring their full participation in social life, not discriminating against individuals with special needs, and respecting their right to protect their own identities are guaranteed. Students' individual differences, developmental characteristics, wishes, competencies, and educational needs are also taken into account in the provision of special education services according to the Special Education Services Regulation published in 2018. In addition, special education services are planned and carried out without separating the individuals with special needs from their social and physical environments as much as possible.

There are some challenges in putting forth ethical principles in the field of special education. Paul, French, and Cranston-Gingras (2001) focused on four challenges in ethical standards in special education. These challenges are: i) dependence on moral and political situations, ii) ethical dilemmas in special education, iii) the need to be studied in the context of democracy, and iii) the need for ethical foundations on the representation and nature of knowledge.

### **Ethics of Practice in Special Education**

The aforementioned convention, laws, and regulations not only draw the framework of special education practices but also provide clues about the ethical principles for these practices. Treating the individual with respect, taking into account the needs, interests, and wishes of these individuals, and taking measures to ensure their full participation in social life can be considered as the main principles of these principles in the education services offered to individuals with special needs.

The field of special education is a field that can contain complex dilemmas. It seems that these dilemmas will exist in the future as well as today (Fiedler & Van Haren, 2009). For this reason, some standards and principles related to ethics in special education need to be determined and put into practice. As it is known, it is aimed to carry out evidence-based practices in accordance with some principles, theories, laws, and policies for the education of individuals with special needs in the field of special education in cooperation with other stakeholders. In this direction, first of all, special education teachers are expected to organize all instruction processes in an open, transparent, and careful way and to find and create the most suitable conditions for education (Goodlad, 1990). In addition to these expectations, special education teachers should respect their students and see them as individuals first and foremost (Council for Exceptional Children-CEC, 2010). Furthermore, special education teachers should take into account individual differences in the learning process, appropriate teaching strategies and environments, and social interactions in these environments, as well as professional practices such as planning and evaluation of the teaching (CEC, 2008). These practices are briefly discussed below.

Ethical principles related to the *individual learning differences* are mostly about special educators knowing the effects of the school and the learning environments on the lifelong development of individuals with special needs. Moreover, teachers should be aware that beliefs, traditions, and values within the culture can affect relationships between students, their families, and school-based stakeholders. However, ethical concerns about individual differences in learning are not limited to cultural variables. Teachers should provide education services with the awareness that the mother tongue and family background can affect the academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, and interests of the individual (Taylor, 2003).

The ethical principles related to the *teaching strategies* are mostly about choosing the most appropriate strategy, method, environment, and techniques for the learner. Special educators should have knowledge of evidence-based teaching methods and strategies based on applied behavior analysis in order to individualize the education of individuals with special needs. Teachers should be able to make changes or adaptations in the learning environments and processes developed for individuals with special needs to realize the targeted learning outcomes (Strickland & Turnbull, 1990).

Within the scope of *learning environments and social interactions*, special education teachers are expected to provide active learning environments that are positive, that increase social interaction, and encourage the participation of individuals with special needs in social life. In this context, environments that will enable individuals with special needs to defend their independence, self-efficacy, and rights should be created (Tindal & Marston, 1990).

Ethical principles related to the *planning of teaching* are about taking into account the individual characteristics and stakeholders in the planning process of teaching. Special education teachers should have a good grasp of the content of standards-based education programs and should be able to prepare and implement developmentally *individualized education plans* (IEP) at a good level. When preparing and implementing the IEPs, routine and effective collaboration should be made with the families, other educators, relevant service providers, and staff from community agencies impartially and unprejudiced in culturally sensitive ways (CEC, 2002). In addition, special educators should be able to set short-term goals based on these individualized plans based on the individual's abilities and needs, the characteristics of the learning environment, and the cultural and language factors (Kirk, Gallagher, Anastasiow, & Coleman, 2006).

Ethical principles related to *assessment* have critical importance in terms of taking the right steps in the whole teaching process. Assessment is an integral part of special educators in making decisions about the content of education and restructuring their teaching. Special educators use various assessment techniques and tools for individuals with special needs in the application, eligibility, planning, orientation, and placement processes. Special education teachers should know the functions of assessment and related ethical principles so that the right decisions can be made and the individuals with special needs benefit from the interventions/teachings at the highest level (Heward, 2006).

### **Special Education Professional Ethical Principles**

There are various ethical principles that special education teachers, who are concerned with the education of individuals with differences, should consider and comply with while performing their duties. Compliance with these principles is necessary to obtain the maximum benefit from the education services provided, to protect the rights of individuals with special needs and their relatives, and to establish practice standards. The special education professional ethical principles also help the teacher to act coordinated (Harrison & Killion, 2007; CEC, 2002). However, unfortunately, special education professional ethical principles have not yet been established in our country. The field of special education being a relatively new field and the absence of a professional definition in the current laws can be given as the main reason behind this.

The study conducted by Akçamete et al. (2016) put forth that the majority of the participating special education teachers considered special education professional ethical principles of important or very important. Some ethical principles for special education teachers have been determined by the Council for Exceptional Children in the U.S., which is widely accepted internationally. Accordingly, the ethical principles that special education professionals (CEC, 2010) should abide by can be listed as follows:

1. Special education specialists should provide individuals with special needs with the highest possible education in line with their potential and try to improve their quality of life.
2. Special education specialists should have a high level of competence and a holistic perspective in the practice of their profession.
3. Special education specialists should participate in professional activities (congress, seminars, etc.) that benefit individuals with special needs and their families, other colleagues, and students.

4. Special education specialists should have an objective professional perspective and objective assessment while practicing their profession.

5. Special education specialists should strive to improve their knowledge and skills regarding the education of individuals with special needs.

6. Special education specialists should work in accordance with the standard procedures (principle, rule) of their profession.

7. Special education specialists are responsible for maintaining and developing, where necessary, the laws, regulations, and policies governing the provision of special education and related services and the practice of their profession.

8. Special education specialists should not engage in unethical or illegal actions, participate in activities that do not comply with professional ethics and violate professional standards.

It is believed that ethical standards that will help teachers, especially teachers who are new to the profession, to make decisions in professional processes are positive. However, although such standards are useful for teachers to learn ethical codes, they may be insufficient in solving ethical problems in the school environment (Luckowski, 1997). Therefore, the necessity and importance of teachers to have competencies related to the use of ethical standards in solving ethical problems come to the fore (Ungaretti et al., 1997). Yet, although special education teacher training programs seem to agree to comply with ethical standards, very few programs establish a deep relationship with ethical principles (Sileo, Sileo, & Pierce, 2008). In this context, Berkeley and Ludlow (2008) talk about discussion scenarios about ethical dilemmas in the field of special education. In one of these example scenarios, a mentally and physically disabled boy named Jonathan starts a school that is often attended by disadvantaged children. However, the opportunities of the family and the school are limited and they cannot find a physiotherapist to take care of Jonathan. So, with the permission of the family, the school teacher takes Jonathan to a nearby physiotherapist and applies the techniques he learned from the physiotherapist on Jonathan. One day, Jonathan's family notices bruises on Jonathan's body and notifies the school administration, suspecting that physiotherapy may be harming their child. After this scenario, the authors led the relevant people to a discussion on the subject by asking "What is happening in the scenario?", "What are the ethical dilemmas in the scenario?", "Is it right for the teacher to practice physiotherapy?", "Should the child's family sue the school administration?". It is believed that with such scenario-based and discussion-based activities, special education teachers can internalize the principles of professional ethics and transfer them to real situations.

In short, special education teachers should work towards introducing people with special needs into social life as "individuals" in line with their potential (Overton, 2006). Considering this main principle and the aforementioned ethical principles, the importance of special education teachers' competencies regarding ethical principles, as well as the importance of these teachers conducting their works in a transparent, objective, and evidence-based process, and the importance of the ongoing discussions on the subject comes to the surface.

### **Research Ethics in Special Education**

The third main category of ethical principles related to the field of special education is scientific research. Although ethical principles to be followed in all kinds of scientific studies and guidelines for their implementation have been published by governments, higher education institutions, scientific publication journals, and professional organizations on scientific research, the application of these rules is ultimately closely related to the ethical values of the researcher (Merriam, 2009). Today, ethical principles, in general, require three criteria to be fulfilled in a study. These are: i) Protecting the participants from psychological or physical harm ii) ensuring the confidentiality of research data, and iii) informing the participants accurately about the relevant study (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2014). Providing and declaring these three criteria in studies conducted today will show the

stakeholders in question that ethical principles are followed at a minimum level. On the other hand, another ethical issue that should be taken into account by those conducting research in the field of special education is research designs. While designing the study, the researchers should pay regard so that each of the individuals with special needs benefits from the research at the maximum level. The basic principles of research ethics in the field of special education are discussed below.

### **Protection of Participants from Harm**

The protection of individuals participating in scientific research from physical and psychological harm or danger that may arise due to research procedures should be ensured. This is the main responsibility of every researcher and should be minimized (Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Considering that the participants in special education research are usually children with special needs, this becomes even more important. Children with special needs may often be unable to express themselves or not be able to predict the harm that may be inflicted on them. This may cause children with special needs to experience physical or psychological distress. Participants should be informed of all possible dangers before being included in the study and that their participation in the study is not mandatory. It is extremely important to obtain the informed consent of the participants in case any risk arises (Neuman, 2013). In the case of children with special needs, informed consent should be taken from their parents or their primary caregivers. Researchers should carefully take into account whether there is any possibility of risk and, if so, provide all data after getting formal consent from the participants (or their guardians). Three important ethical questions to ask about harm in any study are as follows (Frankel et al., 2012):

1. Can people be harmed during the study (physically or psychologically)?
2. If so, can the researcher carry out the study in another way?
3. Is the information that can be obtained from this study important than potentially harming the participants?

The aforementioned questions are questions that can be difficult to answer. However, these are questions that need to be thoughtfully answered by all researchers working in the field of special education.

### **Confidentiality of Research Data**

The second ethical issue to be considered in research is to ensure that after the study data is collected, no one except the researchers accesses the data and that the data are confidential. In this context, the names and identities of individual participants should not be used in publications describing the study (Frankel et al., 2012). Although this is valid for all studies in general, it is of particular significance for studies involving students with special needs. It is known that some families do not want to share their children's diagnoses even with their relatives and close circles, and they want to keep this situation a secret from other people. Kellet and Nind (2001) faced the following ethical questions in their study on the storage of collected research data:

1. Who will own the collected data (video recordings)?
2. Will all the stakeholders have the data?
3. Will the data be destroyed after the analysis is finished?

It can be believed that the data collected in the studies carried out in the field of special education should be protected as it may also benefit future studies. In addition, it can also be believed that researchers have the right to access research data, assuming that they have the responsibility of "unofficial archivists".



Kellet and Nind (2001) argued that the data obtained from a scientific study is valuable and will contribute to future studies. However, in order to prevent the participants from being recognized by third parties, some techniques (such as face blurring) that will relieve the concerns of all stakeholders can prevent the participants from being recognized. Thus, video recordings become available to every stakeholder and can contribute to various studies.

#### Failure to Provide Sufficient or Accurate Information about the Study

In research, it is accepted as a general principle to provide informed consent forms to the participants and all the details about the research and to get consent from the participants. Furthermore, it is an increasingly common practice to require ethics committee approval for the studies to be carried out. In addition to the university graduate schools or project departments requiring ethics committee approval from the researchers to start a thesis or project study, some peer-reviewed journals have also begun to ask for ethics committee approval of the study to be published.

#### Ethical Principles in terms of Research Designs

It is important to know the ethical violations that may occur when the research designs used in scientific studies are used in special education studies and to be able to apply alternatives to these ethical violations.

Experimental studies are carried out to test the effect of researcher-developed differences (usually intervention) and to test the cause-effect relationship. In order to talk about a complete cause-effect effect, it is necessary to randomly assign the experimental and control groups, manipulate the independent variable, and control the external variables (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2018). Although the procedures in experimental studies are carried out meticulously, the failure of individuals in the control group to receive intervention can be considered as an ethical violation (Creswell, 2012). Neuman (2013) maintained that there is an inequality for individuals who do not receive intervention and that this can be eliminated in three ways:

1. The group that did not receive the intervention continues to receive the previously best acceptable intervention.
2. Crossover designs can be employed in such a way that in the first stage of the experiment, the experimental group receives the intervention and in the second stage, the control group receives the intervention or vice versa.
3. Results are monitored continuously and carefully. If the intervention is found to be highly effective at an early stage of the experiment, the intervention should also be offered to the control group.

In addition, the use of the multiple time series design is also suggested as a solution to the control group not receiving the intervention. For example, in a quasi-experimental study, instead of working directly on the experimental and control groups, Kellet and Nind (2001) employed multiple time series design not to do wrong to the individuals in the control group after assessing the study ethically. In the study in question, the students received the intervention after the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> weeks.

On the other hand, withdrawing an effective intervention in studies employing the ABA single-subject experimental design, which is one of the quasi-experimental research designs, can create an ethical problem (Byiers, Reichle, & Symons, 2012), in other words, it can lead to ethical problems (Frankel & Wallen, 2014). In ABAB single-subject experimental design, another quasi-experimental research design, although the problem of reversing the improvement of the subject, which was the case in the ABA design, was eliminated by re-application of the intervention, the

researcher also faces an ethical problem in this design since the intervention was withdrawn even for a short time (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

In experimental studies, the subject not showing a negative development, that is, not returning to the base level for ethical reasons may be desired. In such cases, the multiple baseline design, in which the effect of the same intervention on at least three different subjects is examined, can be used (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018; Tawney & Gast, 1984). In this design, while baseline data is collected from three subjects, the intervention phase begins after stable data are collected at the baseline level in the first subject. While the intervention is applied to the first subject, baseline data from the second and third subjects continue to be collected. As soon as the intervention is seen to be effective in the first subject, the intervention phase begins in the second subject while the baseline data continues to be collected from the third subject. Whenever the intervention applied to the second subject is found to be effective, then the intervention phase starts for the third subject. In this design, continuing to obtain baseline data from the other subjects while the intervention was applied to the first subject, and still obtaining baseline data from the third subject while the intervention was administered to the second subject leads to some ethical problems (Byiers, Reichle, & Symons, 2012). In this design, constantly obtaining baseline data from the subjects may cause learning or weariness in the subjects.

In addition to experimental studies, survey-type studies can also cause ethical problems. Creswell (2012) generally associated ethics in survey studies with good application. To put it more clearly, during data collection in survey studies, guidelines are written to enable individuals to answer the survey items sincerely, thus emphasizing the maximum benefit from the answers given. This can be considered an ethical problem.

As in experimental studies, the confidentiality and confidentiality of the collected data are also considered as a situation that should be paid attention to in survey-type studies. For example, Creswell (2012) stated that survey questionnaires must be destroyed after the study is completed. Creswell (2012) also argued that not measuring variables such as age, sex, and race in correlational studies is an ethical violation since this may lead to the neglect of some variables and emphasizing others. For the solution of this problem, using a model that will guide the selection of variables, considering all possible predictors, meeting the assumptions of the statistical analyzes to be used in the study, and reaching the required sample size in order to obtain sufficient statistical power is recommended.

## **Results and Recommendations**

Considering that special education services are for individuals with special needs, it is a necessity that the educational activities to be carried out in this field are based on certain ethical standards. Moreover, special education is not only a practice field consisting of special education teachers and students but also an interdisciplinary practice field that includes other disciplines (psychology, social work, health, etc.). In addition, special education practices are affected by various factors such as family, language, social and cultural structure. This increases the importance of determining ethical standards in the field of special education and providing services in accordance with these standards.

Ethical principles and standards in special education are mainly about the fields of i) practice, ii) profession, and iii) research. The most important stakeholder in the formation of ethical standards in special education practices is undoubtedly special education teachers. Accordingly, professional ethical principles for special education teachers have been established in the international literature. These principles are generally about putting the interest of the students with special needs to the highest level, working to help these individuals to reach their highest potential, improving themselves professionally, collaborating, and complying with the relevant standards, procedures, and laws.

Although these ethical principles are mainly aimed at student learning objectives, they are also believed to be important in terms of ensuring teachers' satisfaction with their work and behaving more professionally. However, the mere determination of these principles may not be sufficient for

educational practitioners to transfer these principles to their professional lives. There is a need for discussions and practices on this subject.

A set of ethical principles or standards for special education teachers has not yet been formed in Turkey. In order to establish ethical principles in this regard, first of all, the definition of the profession of special education should be made and then ethical principles and standards should be established urgently with the participation of stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations or communities working in the field of special education.

Furthermore, ethical principles and standards for special education research are about not harming the participants, data confidentiality, and sharing of the research results. In addition, applications such as informed consent forms to be obtained from participants (or their guardians) and ethics committee reports will minimize ethical concerns in scientific research. In this context, it is believed that the ethical principles that are expected to be complied with will protect the interests of the participants and the stakeholders and reduce possible concerns.

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