

*Introduction
to
Special Education*

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Definition of Special Education

- What is Special Education?
- IDEIA 2004 (also referred to as IDEA) defines **special education** as:
- *“Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.”*

IDEIA 2004

- IDEIA 2004 is the abbreviation for the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004*.
- IDEIA 2004 is the United States federal law that governs how states must provide special education to children with disabilities.

The Purposes of IDEIA 2004

IDEIA has many purposes. However, the two main purposes are:

- To ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education
- To ensure that the rights of students with disabilities and their parents or guardians are protected

Definition of Special Education

- (1) *“Specially designed instruction”*—It’s a customized instructional program—It means *“adapting content, methodology and delivery of instruction”*
- (2) *“at no cost to parents”*—It’s free, regardless of the disability
- (3) *“to meet the unique needs of a child”*—Each individual receiving special education is different and has different needs.

Definition of Special Education

- (4) *“with a disability”*—All children in special education have “disabilities”
- **Disability**— An inability or a reduced capacity to perform as other children do because of some impairment in sensory, physical, cognitive or other areas of functioning.
- In special education, a student with a disability is a student who may have one or more of the 13 disabling conditions as set forth under IDEIA
- Note: **All children in special education have disabilities...but not all children with disabilities need special education.

Exceptional

- In special education we often refer to a student as an “exceptional” child.
- **Exceptional**-- A term describing any individual whose physical, mental, or behavioral performance deviates so substantially from the average (higher or lower) that additional support is required to meet the individual’s needs.

Disability Under IDEIA

- In special education, we categorize children with exceptionalities.
- **Classifications**--A label assigned to individuals who share common characteristics and features
- Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) there are 13 categories of disability:

Disability Classifications Under IDEIA

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ■ Autism | ■ Orthopedic Impairments |
| ■ Deaf-Blindness | ■ Other Health Impairments |
| ■ Developmental Delay | ■ Specific Learning Disabilities |
| ■ Emotional Disturbance | ■ Speech and Language Impairments |
| ■ Hearing Impairments (including deafness) | ■ Traumatic Brain Injury |
| ■ Intellectual Disabilities | ■ Visual Impairments |
| ■ Multiple Disabilities | |

“Intellectual Disability” Instead of Mental Retardation

- **Note: “Intellectual Disability” is a new term in IDEIA. Until October 2010, the law used the term “mental retardation.”**
- **In October 2010, Rosa’s Law was signed into law by President Obama. Rosa’s Law changed the term to be used in future to “intellectual disability.” The definition of the term itself did not change.**

Categories Under IDEIA

- T: Traumatic Brain Injury
- H: Hearing Impairment
- E: Emotional Disturbance

- M: Mental Retardation (Intellectual Disability)
- O: Orthopedic Impairment
- M: Multiple Disabilities

- L: Learning Disabilities
- O: Other Health Impairment
- V: Visual Impairment
- S: Speech and Language Impairment

- D: Developmental Delay
- A: Autism
- D: Deaf-Blindness

Categories Under IDEIA

- **Notably absent from IDEIA 2004 is a classification Gifted and Talented.**
- **Gifted and Talented children are viewed as exceptional children.**
- **However, Gifted and Talented students are not eligible for special education under IDEIA 2004.**
- **Why not?**

Categories Under IDEIA

- Under the federal definition, in order for a child to receive special education services he or she must be a child “with a disability”
- The gifted child does not have a “disability”. He or she is “exceptional” but does not have a disability.
- However, suppose the gifted child has a learning disability (LD),.... then he or she can receive special education services but not for the “giftedness” but for the LD

Prevalence

- **Prevalence**-In special education, prevalence refers to the **total** number of individuals with a particular disability currently existing in the population at a given time.
- Prevalence is often expressed not just in total numbers but also in percentages.
- According to the U.S. Dept of Education’s latest data on prevalence of students in special education, approximately six million (6,021,462) U.S. students between 6 and 21 years of age receive special education services.

Prevalence-The Big Five (83%)

**Note: The percentages below are the latest ones from the U.S. Dept. of Education for children 3-21 years of age and may differ from those in your text. These are the most up-to-date percentages for you to know

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
■ Learning Disabilities	36%
■ Speech & Language Impairments	21%
■ Other Health Impairments	12%
■ Autism	7%
■ Intellectual Disabilities	7%

Prevalence-The Other 17%

****Note:** The percentages below are the latest ones from the U.S. Dept. of Education for children 3-21 years of age and may differ from those in your text. These are the most up-to-date percentages for you to know

CLASSIFICATION	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Emotional Disturbance	6%
■ Developmental Delay	6%
■ Multiple Disabilities	2%
■ Hearing Impairments	1%
■ Orthopedic Impairments	1%
■ VI, DB & TBI	Each < 1.0%

Prevalence

■ Today, the number of children served under IDEIA represent approximately 13.0% of all children in school.

■ ****Note:** The percentage above is the latest ones from the U.S. Dept. of Education for children 3-21 years of age and may differ from that in your text. This is the most up-to-date percentage for you to know

Prevalence-Gender Issues

- In the general education population, males and females are enrolled in equal proportion.
- However, there are about twice as many males as females receiving special education. Why?
- Most prominent theory is that boys are more likely to exhibit externalizing behaviors; girls are more likely to exhibit internalizing behaviors

Prevalence-Gender Issues

- Externalizing behaviors are directed outward, typically toward other people.
- Externalizing behaviors are disturbing to others and generally result in considerable disruption in the classroom.
- Examples of externalizing behaviors include aggressive behavior (e.g., punching, swinging at or hitting another person), temper tantrums, swearing, destructive acts, and other types of noncompliant behaviors.

Prevalence-Gender Issues

- Internalizing behaviors are directed “inward” or “within the self”. Children and youth with internalizing behaviors are far less likely to be identified by teachers and families because they do not create “chaos” that characterizes children & youth with externalizing behaviors.
- Internalizing behaviors include: worrying, shyness, depression, apathy, anxiety, social withdrawal & low self-esteem
- ****Internalizing behaviors can be just as serious as externalizing behaviors because of the long-term potential impact (e.g., depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal thoughts)**

Prevalence-Gender Issues

- **Bottom Line: Since research suggests that girls are more likely to exhibit internalizing behaviors, they are not disruptive to the class or the learning process, and therefore educators may not see the behaviors of these students as a serious concern, and hence not refer them for special education.**

Prevalence-Birth Through 5 Year Old Population

- What about children birth through 5 years of age? IDEA addresses their needs in a separate section of the law.
- In the general population, about 300,000 or about 2%, of U. S. infants and toddlers (birth to 36 months) receive early intervention services
- And almost 700,000 preschool children (ages 3 through 5 years), or approximately 5% of the U.S. preschool population, received early childhood services.
- Bottom Line: Approximately 1,000,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers from birth through 5 years of age receive special education services

10 Basic Steps in the Special Education Process

- The special education process can be broken down into 10 basic steps. Once you have the big picture of the process, it's easier to understand the many details under each step.
- **Step 1.** Child is identified as possibly needing special education and related services.
- **Step 2.** Child is evaluated.
- **Step 3.** Eligibility is decided.
- **Step 4.** Child is found eligible for services and classified as a student with a disability to receive special education services.
- **Step 5.** IEP meeting is scheduled.

10 Basic Steps in the Special Education Process

- **Step 6.** IEP meeting is held and the IEP is written.
- **Step 7.** After the IEP is written, services are provided.
- **Step 8.** Progress is measured and reported to parents.
- **Step 9.** IEP is reviewed—Annual Review
- **Step 10.** Child is reevaluated—Triennial Review

Final Key Point-Using Correct Language

Key Point Regarding Communicating about Individuals with Disabilities

- 1. **Put people first** (USE “PEOPLE FIRST” LANGUAGE): Say “The child with a learning disability” NOT “The Learning Disabled Child.” We need to put the focus on the individual, not the particular functional limitation
- 2. **Avoid “ic”**: “He’s Autistic” is completely inappropriate in terms of the language used—Say, “The child with autism”
- 3. **There are not “Regular” or “Normal” children**. They are “Typical” or “Typically Functioning” children
