

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Who Are Identified As Exceptional?

- 6.5 million children in the U.S.
- Categories include:
 - ◆ Learning disabled
 - ◆ Communication disorders
 - ◆ Mental retardation
 - ◆ Behavior disorders
 - ◆ Physically impaired
 - ◆ Gifted and talented
- Numbers have increased 30% in the last decade

Learning Disabilities

- Approximately 10% of total population in U.S. is identified as learning disabled
- Represents 46% of children receiving special services
- Children have difficulty learning despite having average or above average intelligence
- Must be a discrepancy between intelligence and achievement

Learning Disabilities

- Difficulties may be with:
 - ◆ Processing
 - ◆ Language
 - ◆ Reading and writing
 - ◆ Mathematical understanding
- Causes may be genetic or environmental
 - ◆ Family history
 - ◆ Exposure to teratogens
 - ◆ Birthing difficulties
 - ◆ Prematurity

Communication Disorders

- 18% of children receiving services
- Difficulties with
 - ◆ Expressive language
 - ◆ Language comprehension
 - ◆ Speech
 - ◆ Social interactions

Mental Retardation

- 10% of children receiving services
- Causes may be genetic or environmental
- Four levels of severity, based on IQ scores
 - ◆ Mild - 85% of identified population; IQ of 50-70, academic skills up to 6th grade - concrete operational
 - ◆ Moderate - 10% of identified population; IQ of 35-55, academic skills up to 2nd grade - preoperational

Mental Retardation

- ◆ Severe - 3-4% of identified population; IQ of 20-40, can perform simple tasks - sensori-motor
- ◆ Profound - 1-2% of identified population; IQ below 20, requires a highly structured environment - sensori-motor

ADD & ADHD

- 3-5% of total population
- Diagnosed 6x more in boys than girls
- Contributing factors
 - ◆ Family history
 - ◆ Teratogens
 - ◆ Single parenthood
 - ◆ Parenting style
 - ◆ Level of social support

Diagnosing ADHD

- Children under 7 years old have these observable behaviors in several settings, for longer than 6 months:
 - ◆ Inattention: easily distracted, makes careless mistakes, forgetful
 - ◆ Hyperactivity: fidgety, talks excessively, difficulty sitting still
 - ◆ Impulsivity: difficulty awaiting turn, interrupts, doesn't consider consequences of actions

Emotional & Behavioral Disorders

- 1-2% of total population
- External behaviors: conduct and defiance
- Internal behaviors: anxiety and depression
- Contributing factors:
 - ◆ Biological - temperament, neurological abnormalities, family history
 - ◆ Environmental - parenting strategies, peer and school influences

Autism Spectrum

- Range of symptoms:
 - ◆ Communication: delays, impaired conversation, lack of symbolic play
 - ◆ Social interaction: poor eye contact, lack of social give and take
 - ◆ Behavior: repetitive motor movements, adherence to routines
- Incidence: 1 in 175 children. Boys 4x more likely than girls. Increase in last 2 decades.

Gifted and Talented

- Exceptional intellectual strengths
- IQ over 130
- Divergent thinking
- Related to both genetic and environmental influences
- Not federally mandated, but many states fund GATE programs

Ethnic Disparities: Who's Receiving Special Services

Ethnic Group	% of Total Population	% of Total Gifted Pop	% Identified Special Ed
Caucasians	60.3 %	81.4%	8.8%
African-Americans	17.2%	8.4%	12.6%
Hispanics	17.1%	4.7%	8.4%
Asian-Americans	4.2%	5.0%	4.6%
American-Indian	1.2%		14.1%

Legal Statutes

- **1975 - Education of All Handicapped Children Act protected the rights and met the needs of children with disabilities and their families.**
- **Before 1975, there was a disproportionate number of minority children in special education, labeled and forgotten.**
- **In 1970, only 20% of children with disabilities were being educated in public schools.**

Education of All Handicapped Children Act

- Mandated that all students with identified disabilities (ages 5 - 21) were entitled to a
 - ◆ free
 - ◆ appropriate
 - ◆ public education
 - ◆ in the least restricted environment
- 1992 - Reauthorization of the law - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, added services for preschoolers
- 2004 - Updated IDEA to include alignment with No Child Left Behind

IDEA

- Free and appropriate public education
- Due process rights for parents
- Individual evaluation
- Identification and services to all children
- Provision for related services
- Individualized education plan
- Least restrictive environment

Least Restrictive Environment

- Mandated that student be placed with non-disabled peers as much as possible, mainstreamed into the school culture:
 - ◆ RSP - less than 50% of the day
 - ◆ SDC - more than 50% of the day
- Student can receive their education exclusively in the general education classroom, fully included.
- 3/4 of special needs children spend some part of the day in a general ed classroom

Due Process Rights for Parents

- Informed consent when child is referred for testing
- Parents included in Individual Educational Plan (IEP)
- Advocate and translator offered to parents
- IEP is updated annually
- Schools must offer services recommended in IEP

Federal Support for IDEA

- Government is mandated to pay 40% of services, but pays only 20%
- Results in shortfall of \$10.6 billion
- Average cost to educate exceptional child is \$17,000, more than 2x the cost of regular education student

Teacher's Process for Identification of Students

- Assess and observe student
- Modify the instruction and environment
 - ◆ E.g. tape the readings, use study carrels, partner with a classmate, implement behavior plan, use computer
- Consult with parents and resources on faculty
- Request student study team
- Recommend testing by psychologist

Working with Parents

Be aware of parents'

- **feelings of concern, guilt
embarrassment,**
- **child-rearing practices and family
roles**
- **views on disability, medicine,
sickness**
- **family structure and home culture**
- **perceptions of schools and teachers**