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Guide to Assist Districts in Organizing a Program for Mentally Retarded Children

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GUIDE TO ASSIST DISTRICTS IN ORGANIZING A PROGRAM FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

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PREFACE

Creed for Exceptional Children

We believe that research designed to increase present knowledge of personality and the learning process, and studies aimed at the improvement of programs of special education are essential to further progress (6:xxvi).

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSES AND METHODS OF THIS STUDY

The philosophy of special education. The public schools of today have accepted the responsibility of seeing that every child is given the opportunity for the best possible development. Educators recognize that no two children are alike and that education must be adapted to individual differences. Studies show that many children, because of some deviation, are not able to profit from a program offered to normal children; but they can profit from a program with special opportunities. This program is called "special education." It is regular education plus additional organization and procedures not usually followed with the average child. A careful planning of this program prevents the presentation of a watered down version of the regular curriculum.

At the Conference on the Education of Exceptional Children and Youth in 1950, the combined committees made the following statement:

> "Special education" is a very practical application of good education to meet the needs of every child. In mental retardation it involves something different from the regular curriculum as in the adaption of a program. The child--with all of his abilities--is the determining factor (3:8).

Mase, in an article, "What is Special about Special Education," reports that these adaptions spring primarily from the special problems associated with serving children, who vary markedly in mental capacities, in sensory capacities, and in motor abilities (14:95). Most of these problems of adaption are found to some degree with so called normal children. They are, however, intensified and more universally associated with exceptional children.

Statement of the problem. The rapid growth of interest in all aspects of education for the mentally retarded children has created a demand for services for them. At the present time only one child in five needing special education has the opportunity to attend a special class. The majority of mentally retarded children are still in the regular classrooms. Communities have been slow in accepting their responsibility, and there is a serious lag in the development of special education programs. Dr. Lloyd Dunn points out that not a single state in the union has a well-planned program for its retarded citizens (17:27).

This guide is presented with the hope that it will help districts organize a well-coordinated program in the light of present perceptions of the needs of the mentally retarded. Three methods were used to gather pertinent information: (1) a search of current literature; (2) interviews

with personnel in special education; and (3) visits to key programs in the State of Washington.

CHAPTER II

EXPLORATION OF THE LITERATURE

I. MEETING SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Definition of a mentally retarded child. Before the needs of a district can be determined, the term "mentally retarded" has to be defined. The World Health Organization urges a distinction by classifying the organically damaged as mentally deficient, and the individual whose mental subnormality is the result of a learning disability as mentally retarded (15:5). Johnson makes the following classification for educational purposes:

1. Feeble-minded
2. Mentally handicapped
3. Slow learner (13:17)

From an educational point of view a child who is diagnosed as feeble-minded must be cared for by his parents or by society, because he is unable to manage his own affairs. From a public school point of view the feeble-minded child would be excluded unless there was a class for "trainables." Mentally handicapped is the term used for the child that can be educated in public schools.

The educable mentally retarded child is generally defined by Erickson as one who is potentially, economically,

and personally competent (5:297-309). Dr. Wesley stated that the mentally retarded are not a simple group. Some of them may also have (1) physical handicaps; (2) emotional problems; (3) social maladjustments or (4) compulsive disorders (21). Some may have all of these problems. Pollock says that, "All mentally retarded children should not be grouped together; that it should be recognized they have as many facets to their mentalities and personalities as do normal children" (16:1).

Origin of special classes for the mentally retarded. The first school for the training of the feeble-minded was started by Sequin in 1837. In America, the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb in Hartford, Connecticut, admitted a limited number of mental defectives in 1818. It was not until the middle of the last century that a school especially for the education of the mentally defective was organized in Massachusetts in 1848. The day school movement for special education is a product of the present century. Table I is a historical summary of the children enrolled in classes for the mentally retarded.

TABLE I

HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF STATISTICS REPORTED TO THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION ON SPECIAL DAY SCHOOLS AND CLASSES FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN (18:22)

Year	Number of pupils*	Number of cities	Number of states
1895	NIL	-	-
1922	23,000	133	23
1927	52,000	218	32
1932	75,000	483	39
1936	99,000	643	43
1940	98,000	565	42
1948	87,000	739	47
1953	114,000	-	-

*These figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Present provisions for special education. Of the 4,200,000 children born annually in the United States three per cent (126,000) will never achieve the intellect of a 12 year old; 0.3 per cent (12,600) will remain below the 7 year intellectual level; and 0.1 per cent (4,200) will be unable to care for their own needs (15:3). At the present time 25,000 teachers are now working in special schools and classes for exceptional children and they are serving 450,000 students. The actual need is 100,000 teachers to serve 4,000,000 children (1:x).

The following is an excerpt from a resolution passed at the final meeting at the Conference of Exceptional Children:

> Adequate programs for educating handicapped children are not uniformly available. They tend to be centered in cities and primarily in those states having high economic resources. Only about one handicapped in eight has the opportunity for the specialized education he needs. Facilities vary widely from state to state, also from community to community within states. Least provision is made for the child in the rural area (3:2).

Forty-two states (including Hawaii) and the District of Columbia now have varying amounts of special program provision for the mentally handicapped. Some states have mandatory laws and regulations, and some various types of permissive programs. The majority of the children still attend regular grades rather than special classes. Table II

gives the number of states having legislation requiring or permitting classes for retarded children.

TABLE II

INCIDENCE OF STATES HAVING LEGISLATION PERMITTING OR REQUIRING CLASSES FOR RETARDED CHILDREN (4:241)

Number of states reporting	47
Number of states with legislation	25
Number having new legislation	17
Number using existing legislation	4
Number with insufficient information	4
Number of states with no legislation	22

The case for the special class. The most frequent argument against a special class is that the child will be stigmatized because of segregated placement. The evidence does not support this. To the contrary, the placement of a mentally retarded child in a regular classroom does not insure his acceptance. In recent studies it was noted that the mentally handicapped were rejected and isolated by their classmates significantly more times than normal children were. The rejection scores decreased steadily as intelligence increased (8:122), (4:98).

The child can be left in the regular class if some adaption of the regular instruction is made. This can be done effectively if the teacher is highly trained and the regular class is reduced in number. For every mentally retarded child removed from the classroom, two to four children may be substituted without increasing the load (20:88).

By the time a mentally retarded child is ten or eleven years old, he has had so many frustrations and failures his behavior becomes deviate. Teachers are aware of their limited abilities before this age, but usually handle the situation themselves. Placing a mentally handicapped child in a special class at an early age protects the disposition of the child and also the disposition of the teacher. It

relieves her of her greatest source of worry, discouragement, and nervous tension (20:80). It is not that the special child is harder to teach, but he does need individual instruction (16:8).

Time is precious to the slow learner. If he is placed in a regular classroom the mentally retarded child wastes time. The difference between the development of the normal child and that of the retarded one is almost entirely one of rate of growth. The retarded child is like a slow motion picture of a normal child (7:406). Goodenough says that we are trying to educate the mentally retarded much too late. The rate of mental growth is extremely rapid during infancy and early childhood; but by the time the child is given special education his pattern is fixed for good or ill (7:220-221).

II. SOME PROBLEMS COMMON TO ALL SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Justification for additional cost of special education. Every city of from five to ten thousand population with one thousand school children should have statistically enough mentally retarded children for a class of from fifteen to twenty (2:262). An adequate program for these children is the responsibility of the school administrator, under advice and authority of the board of education. The

success of the program is dependent mainly upon his enthusiasm, interest, and sponsorship. From an administrator's point of view the cost of special education is a very important factor. However, it should be computed not on the total cost but upon the difference between regular and special education. Dr. William Fraenkel, in analyzing Washington State's needs for treating retarded children, said, "Federal figures show that for every dollar a community spends on treatment and rehabilitation of a retarded child or young adult, the improved individual returns ten dollars" (17).

Identifying children for special classes. Before education comes observation. It is important to find out what the child is and where (10:17). It is necessary to survey the total school population. The child is usually identified by (1) failure to make normal progress in school, (2) low scores on achievement tests, (3) teacher's judgment, (4) parental observation. To properly know the whole child there should be information about the characteristics of:

1. Intelligence
2. Educational achievement
3. Emotional, personality, and social adjustment
4. Physical and psychological aptitudes and abilities

Finding the educable mentally retarded child through classification. Three distinct classifications are recognized (6:435):

1. The totally dependent mentally handicapped child (severely mentally retarded)
2. The trainable mentally handicapped child (moderately mentally retarded)
3. The educable mentally handicapped child (mildly retarded)

The educable mentally retarded child is capable of reaching second, third or fourth grade achievement by the age of sixteen. In most cases he can be self-supporting at the adult level. He develops mentally from one-half to three-fourths as fast as the average child. His progress will be from one-half to three-quarters the rate of the average child. Table III classifies the retarded into three groups. The American and British terms for various intelligence levels are found in Table IV.

TABLE III

CLASSIFICATION OF LOW, MIDDLE, AND HIGH GROUPS (4:237)

Lowest	Middle	High
Idiot	Imbecile	Moron
Dependent	Semi-dependent	Marginal independence
Untrainable	Trainable	Educable
Custodial	Severely retarded	Educable
Low grade	Middle grade	High grade
Very severe	Severe	Moderate
I.Q. 0-25	I.Q. 25-50	I.Q. 50-75

TABLE IV

APPROXIMATE INTELLIGENCE LEVEL (6:436)
TERMS: AMERICAN AND BRITISH

I.Q.	Mental Level (adult)	American (current)	American (ed.)	American (old)	British
50-75	6-12 years	mild	educable	moron/low	feeble-minded
25-50	3- 8 years	moderate	trainable	imbecile middle	imbecile
0-25	0- 4 years	severe	totally dependent	idiot high	idiot
All groups 0-75		mentally deficient	mentally retarded or mentally handicapped	feeble-minded	mentally deficient or amentia

Choosing specific objectives for special education. The program for the mentally retarded should stress occupational adequacy, social competency, and personal adequacy (20:256). The aim of special education is not equal goals for all children but equal opportunity to reach comparable goals. The test of any set of aims or objectives is not how well they are formulated but how well they are put into effect.

The following objectives are the ones the specialists agree upon for the more specific aims for mentally retarded:

1. Should be educated to get along with fellow men.
2. Should develop occupational competence.
3. Should develop emotional security and independence in school.
4. Should develop good habits of health and sanitation.
5. Should learn the minimum essentials of the tool subjects.
6. Should learn to occupy themselves in wholesome leisure time activities.
7. Should learn to become adequate members of a family and home.
8. Should learn to become adequate members of a community (13:118).

The importance of education for the parents of mentally retarded children. Dr. White states that parents will accept the idea of a child having a physical handicap, but will reject the idea of his being mentally retarded (21). Many parents have to be educated to the importance of a special education program for their child. They need to recognize that it is an opportunity. The child is so important to the parent that in spite of the most careful evaluation the parent will still try to prove the invalidity of the diagnosis (18:106). The needs of the child may be lost in the feeling of guilt and anxiety of a parent.

A special program cannot successfully be organized without considering the needs and interests of the parents as well as the children. Unwholesome family relationships often arise because of the presence of a handicapped child in the family home. The problem can be made less critical if the parents understand the child's condition and become actively interested in the advancement of the special program.

Organizing appropriate classes. It is very difficult to organize adequate classes for mentally retarded children except in large communities. Various kinds of modifications may have to be made. The following organizations are now being used in Washington State.

1. In some cases the special classes are placed in one building away from the regular schools. This takes the children away from the opportunity to be with normal children. The majority of the specialists say that the pupils and teachers should have the sense of belonging to the school organization and should have the privileges and responsibilities in keeping with that relationship. The program should remain flexible as that the child may transfer to the regular classroom or vice-versa as the child's condition warrants.

2. The homogeneous class is the one most frequently used. If there are two special classes the children are divided into primary and intermediate groups according to their general chronological age.

3. If there are not enough children for more than one room the class is called "ungraded." The children may vary in age from 6 to 16. An experienced and well-trained teacher is required to successfully handle this program.

4. The modified special class is more practical for the small community that does not have enough children for one class. These children may have special education for part of the day and be placed in the regular classroom for the remainder of the time.

5. If the child has to remain in the regular classroom the entire day, the load of the teacher should be

reduced to give her time for individual teaching. In all types of organization, assimilation with normal children should be encouraged where it is beneficial to the mentally retarded child without the frustration of competition. Table V shows the maximum ranges and Table VI the average ranges of chronological age, intelligence age and I.Q.'s of children assigned to special classes.

TABLE V

MAXIMUM RANGES OF CHRONOLOGICAL AGE, INTELLIGENCE AGE, AND I.Q.'S OF CHILDREN ASSIGNED TO SPECIAL CLASSES (20:115)

Level	C.A. Range	I.A. Range	I.Q. Range
Primary Elementary	5-16	3-12	30-92
Upper Elementary	7-18	3-14	40-94
Combined Primary and Upper Elementary	5-16	3-14	30-100
Junior High School	8-21	5-16	40-90
Senior High School	13-19	7-15	40-85

TABLE VI

AVERAGE RANGES OF CHRONOLOGICAL AGE, INTELLIGENCE, AND I.Q.'S OF CHILDREN ASSIGNED TO SPECIAL CLASSES (20:115)

Level	C.A. Range	I.A. Range	I.Q. Range
Primary Elementary	8-12	4.6-9	51-77
Upper Elementary	10.6-14.6	6.6-10	51-77
Primary and Upper Elementary	8-13.6	5-10.6	51-77
Junior High School	12.6-16	8.6-12	54-79
Senior High School	12.6-16	13-19	56-78

Curriculum adjustments needed for mentally retarded. Retarded children mature mentally and socially at a much slower rate of development than normal children. Regular books and materials are not adequate. In 1941, Cincinnati developed a very complete official Course of Study for Special Classes of Slow-Learning Children. This program was not so much a modification of the program for normal children as it was an attempt to define a complete program specifically for special classes (19:ii).

Because the child learns slowly and inefficiently, and his capacity is limited, a sound program requires the intensive use of learning principles. These children need more help in every area as they do not "pick up" information as a normal child does. The mentally retarded child lacks imagination, originality, and initiative. All his life he will be following the examples of others so he should have the opportunity to observe and imitate good examples (20:91).

The mental ages generally typical of retarded children in special classes are given in Table VII.

TABLE VII

MENTAL AGES GENERALLY TYPICAL OF MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN OF VARIOUS CHRONOLOGICAL AGES AND I.Q. LEVELS (12:17)

Chronological Age in Years	Mental Age in Years and Months		
	I.Q. 50	I.Q. 60	I.Q. 70
8	4-0	4-10	5-7
9	4-6	5-5	6-4
10	5-0	6-0	7-0
11	5-6	6-7	7-8
12	6-0	7-2	8-5
13	6-6	7-9	9-1
14	7-2	8-4	9-9
15	7-6	8-11	10-5

Selecting qualified teachers for special education. One of the serious problems in the development of special education is the lack of qualified personnel. Teachers of regular classes should have at least one introductory course in the education of exceptional children, for the important purposes of (1) learning to recognize and detect possible candidates among their pupils, and (2) to be fully informed and sympathetic with the program of special education (2:457), (19:386). At the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection in 1931 it was reported, "It is recommended that certain basic courses dealing with mentally and physically handicapped children be included in the curriculum for all teachers, supervisors, and principals preparing for service in the elementary schools" (20:387).

Because of the peculiar stresses and problems inherent in exceptional children, teachers in special education should be characterized by (a) sense of emotional security, (b) intellectual competency, (c) a social awareness of the major problems of human welfare, (d) a real interest in the problem of handicapped children (e) broad interests and evidence of participation in a variety of activities other than those of a strictly educational nature, and (f) ability to work as a member of a team (3:20).

The teacher plays a more important role in the life

of the retarded child than she does in that of the average child. The special teacher must be aware of the part she plays in the emotional development of the child (9:276-277). She must learn how to use the relationship between the child and herself to promote growth. The special teacher should be proud of her class and impart the feeling of its importance to the regular teachers (2:470).

The qualities that a teacher of mentally retarded children must possess are summed up by Fields:

1. Be in sympathy with the philosophy of education for the retarded child.

2. Have certain specific traits such as humor, tact, vitality, patience, sympathy, good personal appearance, originality, creativity, good physical health, and have skills in planning and organizing.

3. Be an emotionally well-balanced person.

4. Be accepting and understanding of the child.

5. Have good personal relationship with others.

6. Be willing to look for and accept help.

7. Have adequate training.

8. Know the following special things, the nature of mental retardation, the nature of the world in which the retarded live, the things necessary to live in such a world, the ways to teach these effectively (11:270).

CHAPTER III

DATA GATHERING AND DATA ANALYSIS

I. REPORTS OF VISITS AND INTERVIEWS

Six school districts with special education programs were visited: Yakima, Everett, Moses Lake, Olympia, Ellensburg, and Kirkland.

The following special education personnel were interviewed:

The State Director of Special Education
3 School superintendents
4 Special education directors
2 School psychologists
3 Speech therapists
1 Physio-therapist
1 School principal
16 Special education teachers

II. INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

How are the special needs in your school district determined?

Did parent groups or the school administration initiate the program?

Are you meeting the present needs?

Are you planning on expanding the present program if all of the needs are not being met?

What are the factors considered in the preliminary planning?

How do you identify the children that need special education?

Who recommends the children for special classes?

What are your admission standards?

Do you encourage parents to participate in the special education program? If so, how?

How is your special program organized?

What type of classes do you have?

Do you limit the number of children in your classes?

Do your special education teachers receive help in curriculum planning?

What proportion of time is spent on academic subjects?

What special services are available (physio-therapist, speech therapist, etc.)?

III. SUMMARIES FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

How are the special education needs in your district determined? In the majority of school districts visited, the parents of the exceptional children contacted the school administration to ask for special education. In one program

a parent group made the original survey of the community to determine the needs. The school administration originated the planning in all of the recently organized special education programs.

TABLE VIII

PROGRAMS INITIATED BY PARENTS OR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIONS

Districts	A	B	C	D	E	F
Parents initiated program	x		x	x		x
School administration initiated program		x			x	

Only one district reports all children needing special education are in special classes. The other five all have waiting lists. One district has a list of twenty-five children diagnosed and waiting for admission. The special education personnel find the superintendents and members of the boards of education sympathetic to the increasing needs. All districts plan on increasing facilities as soon as "practical." Two factors prevent the programs from expanding more rapidly; (1) lack of classroom space, and (2) lack of trained personnel.

What are some of the factors considered in the preliminary planning? All of the districts stress the importance of careful screening of candidates for special educa-

tion classes. Only through the most comprehensive evaluation can a child be placed in the situation of most value to him. A child is usually referred by his teacher because of (1) failure to make normal progress in school, or (2) low scores on intelligence or achievement tests. But the child may be having trouble because of emotional distrubance or physical difficulties. Therefore, the child should not be considered mentally retarded until an adequate evaluation has been made.

The diagnosis may include a physiological test, a medical examination, a parental interview, and a home visit. Recommendations for admission to special education is made by the school psychologist, the special education director, or by an admissions committee. All programs visited, except one, have a very comprehensive screening program.

TABLE IX

ADMISSION STANDARDS

Districts	A	B	C	D	E	F
Psychological report	x	x	x	x	x	x
Medical examination	x	x		x	x	
Parent conference	x	x	x	x	x	x
Home visit						x
Admission committee	x	x			x	

Four of the districts emphasize the importance of establishing and maintaining good relations with the parents of the children needing special education. One psychologist always asks the parent to be present during the psychological examination. He feels this gives the parent a better understanding of the limitations of the child.

All districts stress the importance of explaining the objectives of special education to the parents. Some programs by encouraging the parents to help in the planning. In one district parents and the special education classes planned a fun night. Over two-hundred people attended.

TABLE X

PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Districts

A. Parents organized into a group.
Meets monthly.
Programs are directed to better understanding of children and special education.

B. Wide community interest shown by contributions of equipment.
No organized parent group.

C. Parents belong to organization for handicapped children.
Meets monthly.

D. Group organized for parents of special education only.
Meets monthly.

E. Some community interest.
No parent group.

F. Parents of special education have formed own P.T.A.
Meets monthly.

How is your special education program organized? There is considerable disagreement among the special education personnel regarding the organization of the classes. The Special Education Services of the Department of Public Instruction is encouraging the placing of special classes in the regular school building. The "experts" say that having special schools for the purpose of handling all retarded children is becoming obsolete (5:299). The State Department is concerned with the undesirable effects on social and academic development when the children are segregated.

Two of the districts visited discounted the effects of isolation. They claim that their children would be segregated in regular schools. They feel they could offer a warmer and more understanding atmosphere, and a more complete program when the services were in one place. Because of parental pressure one district has a class of "trainables."

TABLE XI

ORGANIZATION OF CLASSES

Districts	A	B	C	D	E	F
Type of class						
1. Segregated	x					x
2. Special class in regular school		x	x	x	x	
3. Modified class part time in special class part time in regular class	x	x		x		
4. Trainable						x

The State Office feels that very small classes in special education are not justifiable. They are too expensive and the educational returns are too small. Classes of from 12 to 15 are suggested.

TABLE XII

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CLASSES OF DISTRICTS VISITED

Districts	A	B	C	D	E	F
Primary	10	15	10	13	10	13
Intermediate	10	16	10	13	12	14

All programs attempt to adapt the regular curriculum to the individual needs of the children. The general philosophy is (1) the children should feel they belong, and (2) they should have an opportunity for success. The individual teacher is expected to develop her own methods and materials.

There is little agreement on the amount of time that should be spent on academic subjects. Teachers without special education training tend to emphasize academic work. All special education personnel agree that each child should be offered as much reading and number work as he can master. They all stress the importance of developing desirable attitudes and work habits.

TABLE XIII

ESTIMATED TIME GIVEN TO ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC SUBJECTS

Districts	A	B	C	D	E	F
Academic subjects	50	70	85	60	60	55
Arts and crafts	30	20	5	20	30	30
Music	10	5	5	10	5	5
Other activities	10	5	5	10	5	10

Note: These figures are in per cent.

The State Special Education Department feels that too much time is being given to academic subjects. A recent study found that between 60 and 80 per cent of mentally retarded persons lost their jobs because of reasons other than vocational skills. The authors conclude that more emphasis should be put on aspects common to all jobs (13:104). The programs would be more realistic if these common aspects were stressed, such as, good appearance, personal and health habits, adequate personal adjustment, and the importance of being on time.

Until more trained personnel are available it is impossible to set standards for the training of special education teachers. The State Office is encouraging administrators to suggest further training to teachers. One district prefers to do their own "in-service" training. All recommend several years experience in the regular classroom before teaching in special education.

TABLE XIV

SPECIAL SERVICES AVAILABLE

Districts	A	B	C	D	E	F
Psychologist	x	x	x	x	x	x
School nurse	x	x	x	x	x	x
Physio-therapist	x	x				x
Speech-therapist	x	x		x	x	x
Arts and craft director	x	x		x		x
Home economics director	x	x				x
Special education director	x	x		x		x

CHAPTER IV

OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING A SOUND PROGRAM

Determining needs. Education for mentally retarded children is a highly specialized business. In every community about three per cent of the school children will be mentally handicapped--the percentage remains almost constant. Whether the problem is recognized or not, it is there.

To determine the number of children needing special education it will be necessary to survey either the entire community or the total school population. Recent studies show that special children are not being identified soon enough to make the best use of their early years. Too often the child is not brought to the attention of the school administration until his repeated failures have caused his behavior to get out of hand.

How well the needs of exceptional children will be met will be determined by the amount of funds available for the program and the amount of classroom space that can be utilized. Special education is expensive and administrators should be concerned with getting the most for their money. Repetition in the grades is more costly and accomplishes

little for the mentally retarded. Special education would cost less if the classes were larger. Larger classes are practical if the range of intelligence of children admitted to classes is narrower. A child that is just "trainable" has no place in a special education class. He requires more attention and is unable to participate in many of the group activities. His presence very definitely limits the number of children in a special education class.

Preliminary planning. A sound program will not be developed unless the administration very clearly defines admission standards. To determine eligibility for special education, every child should have a psychological examination and a physical examination by a doctor. (Only one state now requires a medical examination). The screening should also include an interview with the parents, a home visit, and evaluation of the child's previous school records, and a consideration of observation reports by the parents and teachers.

The program must be fully flexible to permit the return of the child to the regular classroom if his condition warrants. At least once a year the program should include a re-evaluation or review of the child.

No one quarrels with the philosophy and general objectives of special education, but there is wide disparity

on how districts attempt to attain these goals. Specific goals need to be defined in order that progress can be measured. Without specific goals the education of the mentally retarded will be aimless and incidental. Although progress will be slow as compared to regular education, it still should be evaluated.

The objectives of special education will not be achieved without the support of the parents. Everyone in the field of special education must develop a sympathetic understanding of the problems faced by parents of handicapped children. The school should initiate programs of parent education that will help parents understand the child's condition and the purposes of the school program.

Organization of classes. Frequently, organization of classes is founded on belief rather than demonstrated fact. The general "climate" of segregated schools is warm and friendly. The children are happy and seem to have a real feeling of belonging. The teachers, because they are with others in the same field, do not feel isolated. However, the object of special education is to help children find a place in our society and to become contributing members. Many feel the purpose of special education is defeated when children are placed in the artificial situation of segregation. It is not realistic to protect them from the environment they will

find themselves as adults. The chief advantage of the single class to the administration is that the child can be provided for in his own school, so there will not be the problem of transportation.

Adaption of instruction. The adaption of instruction to meet the child's needs is the basic principle underlying the education of the mentally retarded. It has been demonstrated many times that the usual methods are futile; nor does a slowing down of regular methods provide the answer. Each child should be given as much work in academic subjects as he can master, but presented in ways that meet his needs.

There are certain specific teaching devices that can be used to advantage:

1. Use concrete materials, avoid the abstract.
2. Aid concept formation.
3. Assist transfer, instead of generalization.
4. Use existing interests.
5. Emphasize oral expression.

The child's powers of association, generalization, comparison, and abstraction are not as great as those of a normal child. He is better fitted to deal with concrete materials rather than symbols. Adaption of methods and materials for special education is so new every class should keep careful records of procedures and results. Every classroom should be a

laboratory for assisting in the improving of instruction for the mentally retarded.

Selection of qualified personnel. One very important pre-requisite for a successful special education class is the selection of a competent teacher. His (her) success will depend upon a desirable combination of personality traits and teaching skill. The qualified teacher should have several years of successful teaching in the regular classroom as well as training for special education. He (she) should be in sympathy with the philosophy of education for the mentally retarded and be accepting and understanding of the child.

Because of the special nature of the teaching he (she) should know the nature of mental retardation, the nature of the world in which the retarded must live, the information and skills necessary to live in such a world, and the way to teach these effectively. The teacher of special education should be a very special person.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

It is now generally accepted that all mentally retarded children have a right to the kind of education that will give them an opportunity to develop to their maximum capacity. The question most often asked is, "Is it worthwhile to train these children when the gifted are being neglected"? (20). There may be many answers. The overemphasis society has placed on the producing value of individuals have led to the neglect of the importance of human qualities inherent in all persons (11:309). Providing an education that will enable a mentally retarded person to become partially or totally independent is a better investment for society than life-long care in an institution. As Pollock reminds us "The vote of the feeble-minded carries as much weight as the one of the college professor" (16:vi-vii).

With the increased provision for the education of these children comes the responsibility of offering the best possible program for them. The positive value offered by special classes is the fact that they afford children abundant opportunities to win success on their own level of achievement at their own pace. This frees them from disheartening competition, futile repetition in the grades,

possible neglect, and the feeling of inadequacy that springs from the habit of failure (19:98).

There is much evidence to show that methods and materials designed for the regular classes will not suffice for the mentally retarded. Studies indicate that when a special effort is made to adapt the materials and methods to the ability and needs of the retarded child, beneficial results are obtained (18:118). Because the programs are new, there is considerable difference of opinion among the experts concerning the organization of special classes. There is an amazing lack of uniformity in what educators believe constitute good special education (19:175). Two barriers to needed service are: (1) need for an adequate supply of trained personnel, and (2) need for increased evidence, based on research, upon which to develop services (18:26). Sub-standard educational practices can affect the child's intellectual progress (18:82).

The White House Conference on Child Health and Protection (1931) recommended that every administrator, supervisor, and teacher in the elementary school should have at least one course on the education of exceptional children. Twenty-eight years have passed but not one state has made this a requirement for certification.

The advances in the education of the mentally retarded are due in part to increased knowledge and inpart to

improved attitudes. Dr. Lloyd Dunn defined the problem when he said, "The cause of the intellectually subnormal must be championed by individuals not of their group" (18:17).

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APPENDIX

GUIDE

FOR

DETERMINING SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

FOR

MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

WHY ARE WE PLAMMIMG A PROGRAM?

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE PLANNING?

WHO DOES THE PLANNING?

WHERE CARRY ON THE PROGRAM?

WHAT PRINCIPLES GUIDE IN THE PLANNING?

It is generally recognized that the needs of all children cannot be met in a regular classroom. Some children deviate physically, mentally, or emotionally, to the extent that they need special education.

In every community of from five to ten thousand general population, with one thousand school children, there will be between fifteen and twenty children needing special education.

WHY ARE WE PLAMMIMG A PROGRAM?

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE PLANNING?

WHO DOES THE PLANNING?

WHERE CARRY ON THE PROGRAM?

WHAT PRINCIPLES GUIDE IN THE PLANNING?

The program is planned for those children who are identified as needing special education by a systematic, objective screening procedure. It is estimated that two per cent of school age mentally retarded children will have a high enough intelligence to profit from special education.

A comprehensive diagnosis includes the following information:

1. psychological test score
2. achievement test score
3. school progress record
4. teacher observation
5. parent observation

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE PLANNING?

WHO DOES THE PLANNING?

WHERE CARRY ON THE PROGRAM?

WHAT PRINCIPLES GUIDE IN THE PLANNING?

Many communities have not fully accepted the responsibility of meeting the educational needs of all of their children and have been slow in developing an adequate program. Organization of special education is usually initiated by the school administration. It needs the support of the school board and the community.

In some communities the parent group has instigated a community survey to show the needs. To be successful, any special education program should be a joint adventure. Society as a whole should be interested in developing and maintaining an appropriate program.

WHO DOES THE PLANNING?

WHERE CARRY ON THE PROGRAM?

WHAT PRINCIPLES GUIDE IN THE PLANNING?

The special education program should be an integral part of the school system. The special education classes should be in the regular school buildings to give the pupils and teachers the sense of belonging to the school organization. The mentally retarded children should have the opportunity to be with normal children without the frustration of competition.

The modified special class is for the small community that does not have enough children for one class. These children may have special education for part of the day and be in the regular classroom the rest of the time. If the child has to remain in the regular classroom the entire day, the load of the teacher should be reduced to give her time for individual teaching.

The positive value offered by the special class is the fact that it affords children abundant opportunity to win success on their own level of achievement at their own pace.

WHERE CARRY ON THE PROGRAM?

WHAT PRINCIPLES GUIDE IN THE PLANNING?

1. Every child should be given the opportunity for the best possible development.

2. A program for the mentally retarded should stress occupational adequacy, social competency, and personal adequacy.

3. Methods and materials must be adapted to individual needs for special education.

4. The difference between a normal child and a mentally retarded one is almost entirely one of rate of growth.

5. A mentally retarded child is not harder to teach but does need individual instruction.

6. Parents should understand the child's needs and the value of special education.

7. All teachers should be able to recognize possible candidates for special education and be fully informed and sympathetic with the program of special education.

8. An education to help a mentally retarded person become partially or totally independent individual is a good investment.

WHAT PRINCIPLES GUIDE IN THE PLANNING?