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Ten years ago, Congress passed legislation intended to enhance the educational opportunities of handicapped children through the provision of a free appropriate public education. This meant providing an opportunity for, and improving the quality of, special education, as well as integrating handicapped children into regular schools whenever possible in accordance with the provision to place children in the "least restrictive environment." This chapter reviews the basic issues involved in educating handicapped children, including the problems of identification and access. With available national statistics, the chapter presents trends since the mid-1970's in special education participation, staffing, and Federal funding. Through information from other recent surveys, the chapter also profiles the academic performance of handicapped students.

### The National Perspective

#### Trends in Participation

Two Federal grant authorizations provide for a count of handicapped children being served by special education programs: Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (formerly known as Public Law 89-313) and the Education of the Handicapped Act, Public Law 98-199 (formerly Public Law 94-142). These programs require State agencies to report the number of handicapped who receive special education and related services.<sup>1</sup> In the 1983-84 school year, nearly 4.3 million persons in the 50 States and the District of Columbia were reported to be receiving special education under these two programs, a rise of 43,000, or 1 percent, over 1982-83 (entry 4.1). (This analysis excludes data from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Puerto Rico and the outlying areas.) Between the 1976-77 school year, when the State counts were initiated, and 1983-84, the national total of handicapped children served increased by about 606,000, or 16 percent. Over the same time span, the total number of all students enrolled in public schools, from preprimary to 12th grade, declined by about 10 percent. Thus, the special education participants, considered as a percentage of total public school enrollment, increased from about 8 percent in 1976-77 to about 11 percent in 1983-84. Although the increase in the number receiving special education continued through the early 1980's, the rate of increase from year to year has declined.

<sup>1</sup>These reports are made to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) in the U.S. Department of Education. Chapter 1 counts children from birth through 20 years old, while P. L. 94-142 counts children 3-21 years old.

While the total number served increased between 1976-77 and 1983-84, participant counts in six specific categories declined. This occurred for the speech impaired<sup>2</sup> (down 174,000 participants, or 13 percent), the hard of hearing or deaf (15,000, or 17 percent), the mentally retarded (232,000, or 24 percent), the orthopedically handicapped (31,000, or 36 percent), the visually handicapped (9,000, or 24 percent), and "other health impaired" (88,000, or 62 percent). These declines were more than offset by a dramatic rise in the number receiving special education in the category of specific learning disabilities (1 million, or 127 percent). The increase placed this category as the largest, with 42 percent of the students served in 1983-84. The number of children receiving instruction for the seriously emotionally disturbed added to the overall rise, increasing by 78,000 participants or 28 percent.

State and Federal officials have suggested several reasons why the handicapped population in certain categories has increased, particularly for the learning disabled. The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), after a query in 1983 of some of its members, cited the following reasons for growth in the learning disabled population being served:

- Greater public awareness of learning disabilities;
- Wider availability of assessment techniques;
- Liberal eligibility criteria for the learning disabled;
- Budget reductions in other remedial programs;
- Perception that the learning disabled classification is less stigmatizing than the mentally retarded classification;
- Court orders to reevaluate minority placement in the mentally retarded category.

Some of the reasons cited by NASDSE for the increase in the learning disabled counts also held for the increases in the number of the multihandicapped and seriously emotionally disturbed. In addition, heightened public awareness, improved reporting procedures, and Federal law have probably contributed. Reasons for a steady increase in the

<sup>2</sup>The numbers reported by the States reflect counts by categories and not by distributions of services. The number receiving speech therapy is significantly larger than the number included in the speech impaired count, since large numbers of mentally retarded, deaf and other handicapped receive speech therapy as a related service.



seriously emotionally disturbed population include efforts by State and local agencies to serve this previously underserved population. In addition, improved diagnostic techniques and an enhanced capacity to provide services in the public schools have had their effect, according to NASDSE.

The numerical declines registered by the other groups of handicapped are more difficult to explain. For some, the declines are partly due to reclassification or reporting changes. For example, in some States, handicapped students who once were classified as mentally retarded may now be classified as learning disabled. Another reason is the overall drop in the school-age population during the period. However, these explanations combined do not seem to account for the reductions that have occurred. An additional explanation may be that the numbers of children with certain handicaps are actually falling. Until more evidence can be gathered, however, the issue will remain in debate.

### Trends in Instruction

Like the number of children receiving special education services, the number of teachers providing those services has increased substantially in the last decade (entry 4.2). State education agencies reported employing nearly 239,000 special education teachers during the 1982-83 school year, up by almost 60,000, or 34 percent, over the number reported for 1976-77. However, the increase may be less than that, since data-gathering in the mid-1970's was probably less comprehensive and complete than under current practice. While State reporting on these personnel still shows data problems,<sup>3</sup> it is nonetheless clear that a significant expansion of this part of the teaching force has occurred.

In recent years, the rate of growth in the total number of special education teachers has slackened considerably. Between 1981-82 and 1982-83, the total increased by about 5,000 teachers, or about 2 percent. Indeed, for some types of handicaps, the number of instructors employed decreased between these 2 years. Within specific categories, the numbers have fluctuated, not necessarily in conjunction with the size of the respective student population. For example, the number teaching mentally retarded students peaked in the 1977-78 school year. By 1982-83, there were over

14,000 fewer. For the teachers of the hard of hearing or deaf, the orthopedically handicapped, and the visually impaired, the numbers peaked in the 1978-79 school year and have since dropped by between 1,000 to 1,300 teachers.

On the other hand, the number of teachers for the speech impaired continued to increase through 1980-81, even though the number of students in the category was declining. Between 1980-81 and 1982-83, however, the reported number of teachers dropped by nearly 5,000, resulting in an increase of only 1,000 teachers from 1976-77.

In categories where the number of students has been increasing—the learning disabled, seriously emotionally disturbed, and multihandicapped—so had the numbers of teachers until 1980-81. Between that year and 1981-82, the number of teachers of the multihandicapped remained essentially the same, while the numbers in the learning disabled and emotionally disturbed categories decreased by about 1,300 and 2,300 respectively. In 1982-83, the numbers of teachers of the learning disabled and the multihandicapped continued to decline from the previous year, while the count of teachers of the seriously emotionally disturbed increased.

These declines and fluctuations are at least partly explained by the fact that, in 1981-82, for the first time, nearly 16,000 special education teachers were not reported under a specific handicap category but were listed as "non-categorical." These teachers are employed to provide instruction to more than one type of handicapped student, often in the preschool age group. (In the past, such teachers were often either omitted from the individual category counts or counted in more than one category. However, they usually appeared in unduplicated form in total teacher counts.) The number of teachers who appeared under this classification in 1981-82 more than offset the declines from the previous year in the learning disabled, speech impaired, mentally retarded, and seriously emotionally disturbed categories combined. In 1982-83, the non-categorical group experienced the largest increase in numbers.

By comparing participant counts with teacher counts, pupil teacher ratios provide a crude measure of classroom interaction. The average pupils-per-teacher ratio both for the U.S. as a whole and for all types of handicapping condition combined has remained stable at approximately 18-to-1 over the last several years. This average figure may not represent the actual class sizes that handicapped children typically experience, however. From handicap to handicap, this ratio has varied widely, though remaining more stable within most categories over time.

<sup>3</sup>In its 1985 Report to Congress, The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services cautioned that personnel data are subject to varying State and local definitions of certain personnel categories and of full-time equivalence.



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The vast difference in the ratio from one group to the next generally reflects the needs of the particular group. For example, the highest ratio occurs in the speech-impaired category, where in 1982-83, 58 children were served per special education teacher. Since virtually all speech-impaired students spend the bulk of their instruction in regular classes and less than 10 hours a week with a special teacher, this means a given teacher can work with a number of different groups of speech-impaired pupils over the course of a week; hence the higher ratio. The learning disabled and the other health impaired group also had larger pupil-per-teacher ratios than the other categories. At the lowest extreme, however, the ratio in the deaf-blind category averaged three children to one teacher in 1982-83. Similarly, low ratios could be found for other groups needing more individualized attention, such as the hard of hearing and deaf (9:1 in 1982-83); the visually impaired (9:1); the mentally retarded (12:1); the orthopedically impaired (13:1); the multihandicapped (13:1); and the seriously emotionally disturbed (13:1).

It is important in this context to note the increasing number of teachers who are not reported by States in terms of addressing a handicapping condition but who are aggregated into the non-categorical group. Counts of these teachers are then proportionately distributed among the handicapped categories.

Public Law 94-142 mandates that handicapped children are to be educated with their non-handicapped peers to the maximum extent appropriate. In addition, the implementing regulations require school districts to offer a range of educational placement options for handicapped pupils.

The Department of Education annually collects data on the number of handicapped children served in various educational environments. The vast majority of pupils classified as handicapped—93 percent—attended regular public schools in 1982-83 (entry 4.3). More than two-thirds of all handicapped pupils also received the bulk of their instruction in regular classes along with their non-handicapped age-mates. Another quarter attended regular schools but received most of their instruction in separate classes. Children in this group are presumed to have some contact with non-handicapped children, at least during portions of the school day. Only about 6 percent of all handicapped children attended separate schools and about 1 percent received instruction at homes or in hospitals. These overall national proportions changed little over the 7 school years from 1976-77 through 1982-83.

The extent of instruction that handicapped children receive in regular classrooms varies considerably, depending on their handicap. In 1982-83, for example, 78 percent of learning disabled and 93 percent of speech-impaired children—the two largest groups—received most of their instruction in regular classes. At the same time, only 29 percent of mentally retarded children—the third largest group—received most of their instruction in regular classrooms. More than half (58 percent) were taught in segregated classes and over 13 percent in special schools or other environments. Similar conditions held for almost every other handicapped group, except for visually handicapped children, a majority of whom were mostly taught in regular classrooms.

Although the nationwide child counts reveal no major movement toward increasing the proportion of handicapped pupils taught in regular classes, there is considerable State variability in the types of environments in which handicapped children are served. For example, in recent years, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, and West Virginia have reported that a majority of their mentally retarded pupils were receiving most of their instruction in regular classes. On the other hand, in populous States such as California, Florida, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, the proportion of mentally retarded students receiving instruction in regular classes has been about 10 percent or less.

One clear national goal has been to make school buildings and their interior facilities accessible to students with orthopedic and other handicaps that restrict mobility. While this has entailed a cost in altering existing buildings to accommodate wheelchairs, general accessibility seems closer at hand than it was in the mid-1970's. Surveys conducted by the Office for Civil Rights show that in the short span between 1978 and 1980, the proportion of U.S. public schools with accessible school entrances increased substantially from 60 percent to 73 percent (entry 4.4). The proportion of accessible classrooms also rose from 59 to 65 percent. No data are available for more recent years.

### **Trends in Federal Funding**

The funding that the Federal government provides each year to State and local education agencies to help educate handicapped children has grown considerably since the passage of P.L. 94-142 in 1975. The annual total of Federal grants to States and territories under that act grew from \$252 million



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in 1977 to just over \$1 billion in 1984 (entry 4.5). Other Federal programs provided smaller amounts. The \$1 billion came to some \$261 per handicapped child in 1984. The U.S. Department of Education has estimated that the average total expenditure per handicapped pupil came to approximately \$6,200 in the 1983-84 school year. Of that amount, \$3,347 represented "excess costs," that is, costs over and above those of a regular education for the pupil. Thus, the Federal contribution came to roughly 8 percent of the total excess cost of providing special education to the Nation's handicapped children.

The rate of growth in Federal expenditures for handicapped education was greater in the late 1970's than in the early 1980's. In terms of constant 1983 dollars, the annual total of Federal grants under P.L. 94-142 reached a peak in 1979, declined by \$146 million over the next 2 years, then increased again, but only by about \$57 million, between 1981 and 1983. The amount spent per handicapped child reflected this pattern, peaking in 1979 at the equivalent of \$299 per child (in 1983 dollars), declining to \$241 per child in 1982, then recovering slightly to \$261 per child in 1984.

### **The Composition of Special Education Participant Counts**

In addition to data on accessibility, the surveys conducted by the Office for Civil Rights provide some information about rates of placement in handicapped programs among racial/ethnic groups and between the sexes. As a contrast, the 1978 and 1980 surveys also offer data on placements in programs for the gifted and talented. Together these data tell a mixed story. The surveys found that black students were disproportionately represented in some types of handicapped programs in relation to their share of the total enrollment (entry 4.6). For example, in 1980 3.4 percent of black pupils were in programs for the mentally retarded compared to 1.1 percent of white pupils. The proportion of blacks in classes for seriously emotionally disturbed students was 0.7 percent compared to 0.4 percent of whites. By contrast, the proportion of blacks in programs for the gifted-and-talented was 1.5 percent in contrast to 2.9 percent of whites.

The proportions of Hispanics in programs for the learning disabled, the retarded, the speech impaired, or the seriously emotionally disturbed were not significantly higher than the equivalent proportions for non-Hispanic whites. However, the proportion of Hispanic pupils in gifted-and-talented programs was significantly lower. The latter difference was

also apparent for pupils of American Indian background, only more so. American Indian students also were reportedly placed in classes for the learning disabled in greater proportion than white students. For pupils of Asian or Pacific Islander backgrounds, however, the proportions in classes for the learning disabled, the retarded, and the seriously emotionally disturbed were all notably lower than the equivalent proportions of white pupils. Conversely, the proportion of Asian or Pacific Islander pupils in programs for the gifted-and-talented was notably higher than the proportion for white pupils and for the other minority groups.

The Office for Civil Rights surveys also found significant differences in the placement of males and females in special programs. The proportions of males were consistently higher than those of females across all handicap categories. On the other hand, a somewhat smaller percent of males than females was found in public school programs for gifted and talented students. These relative proportions remained essentially the same between the two surveys, although the overall proportion of children in some programs did change in the interval.

### **Family Background and Provision of Special Education**

Data indicating that there are differences in proportions receiving special education among racial/ethnic groups and between the sexes raises the question of why these differences occur. A number of explanations have been offered. One suggestion is bias. Since the provision of special education typically entails additional costs, this reason seems inadequate. Particular acts of discrimination with respect to the provision of special education could have occurred—in some cases resulting in erroneous placement in special education programs, in other cases by lack of placement—but national survey data do not speak to them. Another suggested explanation of differences in participation in special education programs involves socioeconomic background differences. The link between students' family backgrounds and their need for and use of special education resources is shown in the National Survey of Children which was initiated by the Foundation for Child Development. This survey sampled households with 7- to 11-year-olds in 1976-77 and again in a 1981 follow-up when they were 12- to 16-year-olds. In the initial survey, children and parents in about 1,750 households were interviewed, while in the follow-up, about 1,050 were. Complementing these interviews, the teachers involved were asked about their perceptions of the child's need for or use of special educational



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resources due to specific handicapping conditions. The survey showed students from families with low parental education or income levels were more likely to be perceived by their teachers as emotionally disturbed than were students from families with high parental education or income levels (entry 4.7). A similar difference held for students perceived by teachers as being slow learners or having learning disabilities.

Just the opposite pattern emerged in the perceived need for advanced instruction or resources for the gifted. Among students from families where the parents had less than a high school education, not quite 1.5 percent were perceived by teachers as needing resources for the gifted. By contrast, among the children of college graduates, more than 12 percent were perceived as gifted. Family income was similarly, although less strongly, related to the need for and use of advanced resources. Other background factors, such as single-parent family status, may also be related to special education needs.

### **Self-Identified Handicapped Status and School Performance**

Data from the National Center for Education Statistics study, High School and Beyond (HS&B), also show that (self-identified) handicapped status among high school sophomores is associated with certain background characteristics as well as with selected school performance factors. HS&B data from both the base-year survey of 1980 and the follow-up survey in 1982 were analyzed and results indicate that except for the orthopedically impaired, handicapped students differed significantly from the non-handicapped on both background and school performance

variables. For example, respondents who identified themselves as handicapped in both the 1980 and 1982 surveys were disproportionately male and more likely to be minorities (or non-white/non-Hispanic) than their classmates (entry 4.8). One in three handicapped fell in the lowest socioeconomic quartile, compared with only 1 in 5 of the non-handicapped.

Similarly, almost half (45 percent) of the respondents who identified themselves as being handicapped in both 1980 and 1982 fell in the lowest test quartile (entry 4.9). This compared with only 1 in 5 students who were not identified as handicapped in either year. Moreover, roughly one-third of this self-identified handicapped group averaged C's and D's in their school work, while only one-fifth of the non-handicapped group did so. Dropout rates were also higher for the self-identified handicapped than the non-handicapped, 19 percent versus 13 percent, respectively. Significant differences were observed, in addition, for students who repeated a grade in elementary school. One-fourth of the students reportedly handicapped in both years had repeated a grade, as compared with only about one-tenth of students not handicapped either year.

### **Conclusion**

All in all, the outcome data from the National Survey of Children and High School and Beyond indicate that handicapped adolescents are significantly worse off than non-limited adolescents in terms of their academic progress and their overall adjustment to the school and classroom situation. Thus, although progress has been made in providing special educational resources to such pupils, more remains to be learned to make the school experience more productive and positive for all handicapped students.



Table 4.1

**Trends in Number of Persons 3 to 21 Years Old Served Annually in Educational Programs for the Handicapped, Percentage Distribution, and Percent of Total Public School Enrollment, by Type of Handicap: United States, School Years 1976-77 to 1983-84**

Type of Handicap	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84
Number Served, in Thousands								
All conditions.....	3,692	3,751	3,889	4,005	4,142	4,198	4,255	4,298
Learning disabled.....	796	964	1,130	1,276	1,462	1,622	1,741	1,806
Speech impaired.....	1,302	1,223	1,214	1,186	1,168	1,135	1,131	1,128
Mentally retarded.....	959	933	901	869	829	786	757	727
Seriously emotionally disturbed.....	283	288	300	329	346	339	352	361
Hard of hearing and deaf.....	87	85	85	80	79	75	73	72
Orthopedically handicapped.....	87	87	70	66	58	58	57	56
Other health impaired.....	141	135	105	106	98	79	50	53
Visually handicapped.....	38	35	32	31	31	29	28	29
Multihandicapped.....	(*)	(*)	50	60	68	71	63	65
Deaf-blind.....	(*)	(*)	2	2	3	2	2	2
Percentage Distribution of Persons Served								
All conditions.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Learning disabled.....	21.5	25.7	29.1	31.9	35.3	38.6	40.9	42.0
Speech impaired.....	35.3	32.6	31.2	29.6	28.2	27.0	26.6	26.2
Mentally retarded.....	26.0	24.9	23.2	21.7	20.0	18.7	17.8	16.9
Seriously emotionally disturbed.....	7.6	7.7	7.7	8.2	8.4	8.1	8.3	8.4
Hard of hearing and deaf.....	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7
Orthopedically handicapped.....	2.3	2.3	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3
Other health impaired.....	3.8	3.6	2.7	2.6	2.4	1.9	1.2	1.2
Visually handicapped.....	1.0	.9	.8	.8	.8	.7	.7	.7
Multihandicapped.....	—	—	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.5
Deaf-blind.....	—	—	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1
As Percent of Total Enrollment								
All conditions.....	8.33	8.61	9.14	9.62	10.11	10.47	10.73	10.98
Learning disabled.....	1.80	2.21	2.66	3.06	3.57	4.05	4.39	4.62
Speech impaired.....	2.94	2.81	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.83	2.85	2.88
Mentally retarded.....	2.16	2.14	2.12	2.09	2.02	1.96	1.91	1.86
Seriously emotionally disturbed.....	.64	.66	.71	.79	.85	.85	.89	.92
Hard of hearing and deaf.....	.20	.20	.20	.19	.19	.19	.18	.18
Orthopedically handicapped.....	.20	.20	.16	.16	.14	.14	.14	.14
Other health impaired.....	.32	.31	.25	.25	.24	.20	.13	.13
Visually handicapped.....	.09	.08	.08	.08	.08	.07	.07	.07
Multihandicapped.....	—	—	.12	.14	.17	.18	.16	.17
Deaf-blind.....	—	—	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01

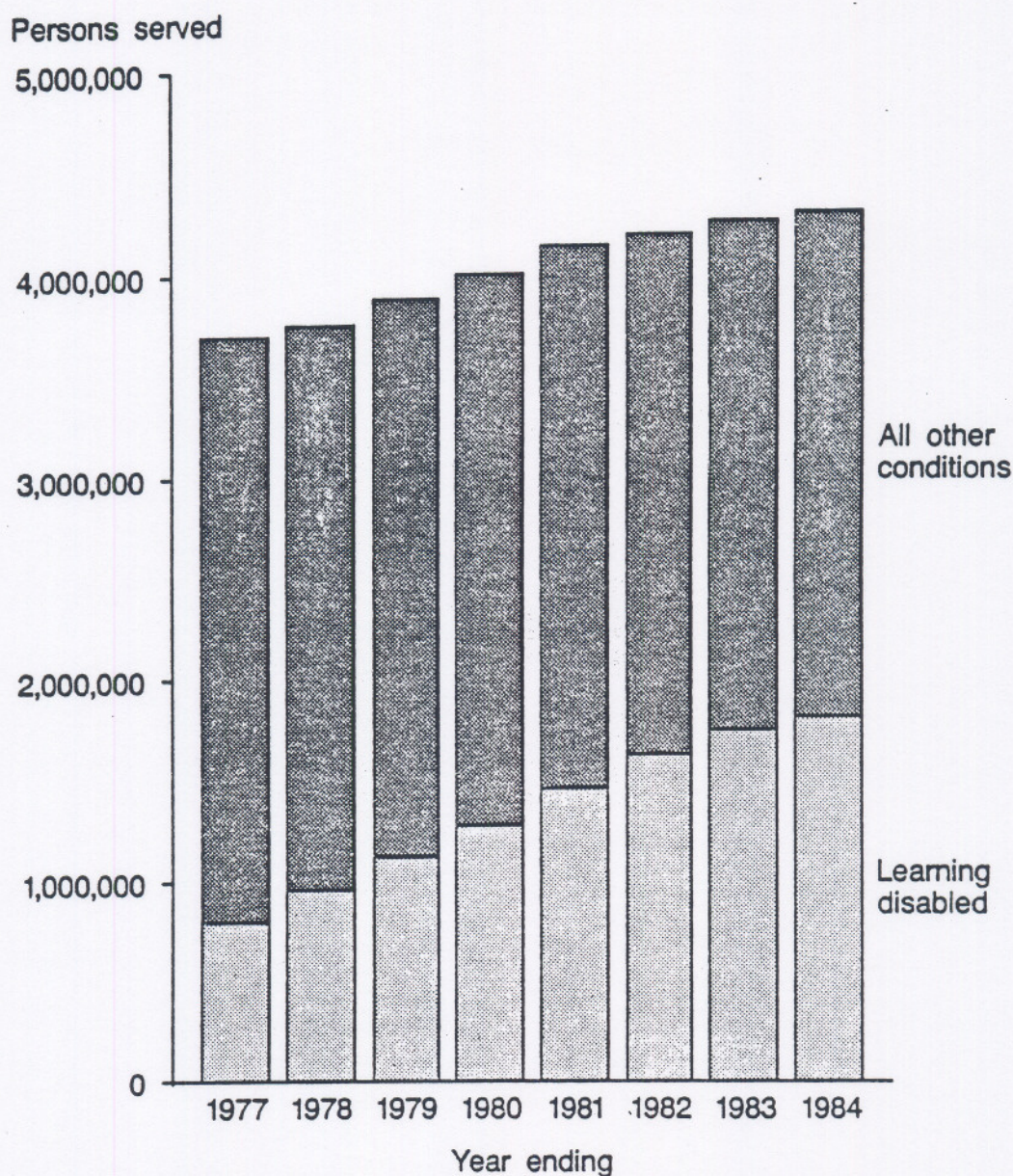
\*Not available.

—Not applicable.

NOTE: Counts are based on reports from the 50 States and District of Columbia only (i.e., figures from U.S. territories are not included). Percentages of total enrollment are based on the total annual enrollment of U.S. public schools, preprimary through 12th grade. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: Calculated from U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, *Sixth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of Public Law 94-142*, 1984, and unpublished tabulations (September 1984).



**Persons 3 to 21 Years Old Served in Special Education Programs for the Handicapped**

The number of students served in educational programs for the handicapped has increased steadily since 1976-77. The major increase has been for students with specific learning disabilities, while the number served in most other categories of handicap have actually declined over the same period.



Table 4.2

**Trends in Number of Special Education Teachers Employed Annually in Public Elementary/Secondary Schools, and Pupil-Teacher Ratios, by Type of Handicapped Persons Taught: United States, School Years 1976-77 to 1982-83**

Type of Handicapped Persons Taught	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	Percent Change 1976-77 to 1982-83
All conditions:								
Number of teachers employed.....	178,768	193,571	202,000	219,835	231,403	233,516	238,567	33.5
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	21:1	19:1	19:1	18:1	18:1	18:1	18:1	
Learning disabled:								
Number of teachers employed.....	43,906	53,743	62,379	74,812	84,756	83,468	82,357	87.6
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	18:1	18:1	18:1	17:1	17:1	19:1	22:1	
Speech impaired:								
Number of teachers employed.....	18,355	19,736	19,038	24,073	24,379	20,443	19,553	6.5
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	71:1	62:1	64:1	49:1	48:1	56:1	58:1	
Mentally retarded:								
Number of teachers employed.....	71,008	75,061	70,389	68,138	67,238	63,267	60,504	-14.8
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	14:1	12:1	13:1	13:1	12:1	12:1	12:1	
Seriously emotionally disturbed:								
Number of teachers employed.....	21,666	20,660	23,185	26,610	27,338	25,015	26,870	24.0
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	13:1	14:1	13:1	12:1	13:1	14:1	13:1	
Hard of hearing and deaf:								
Number of teachers employed.....	8,665	8,587	9,131	8,237	8,234	7,953	8,126	-6.2
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	10:1	10:1	9:1	10:1	10:1	9:1	9:1	
Orthopedically handicapped:								
Number of teachers employed.....	5,331	4,707	5,673	4,710	4,419	4,642	4,356	-18.3
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	16:1	19:1	12:1	14:1	13:1	12:1	13:1	
Other health impaired:								
Number of teachers employed.....	4,948	5,108	4,904	5,121	3,168	3,514	3,074	-37.9
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	29:1	27:1	21:1	21:1	31:1	23:1	17:1	
Visually handicapped:								
Number of teachers employed.....	3,451	3,506	4,210	3,353	3,470	3,027	3,255	-5.7
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	11:1	10:1	8:1	9:1	9:1	10:1	9:1	
Multihandicapped:								
Number of teachers employed.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,962	5,428	5,400	5,185	—
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	—	—	—	15:1	13:1	13:1	13:1	—
Deaf-blind:								
Number of teachers employed.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	671	369	392	883	—
Ratio of pupils per teacher.....	—	—	—	4:1	8:1	6:1	3:1	—
Non-categorical:								
Number of teachers employed.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,838	24,403	—

\*Not available.

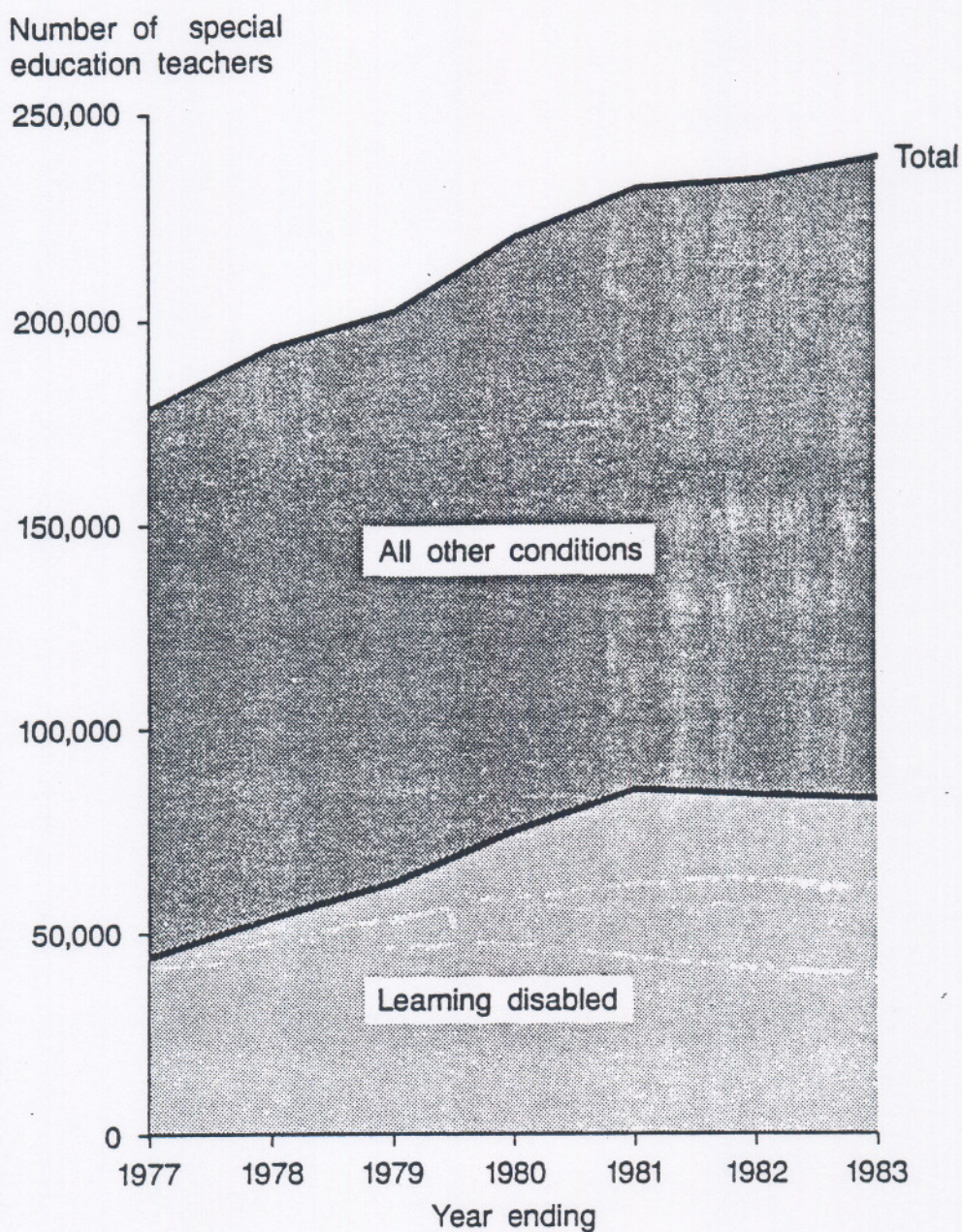
—Not applicable.

NOTE: Teacher counts are based on reports from 49 States and the District of Columbia only (New Mexico does not report on special education personnel and figures from U.S. territories and the Bureau of Indian Affairs are not included). Totals for all conditions exceed sums for individual conditions because some special education teachers have not been categorized in some State reports. Teacher counts include those serving the 0- to 21-year-old population, while participant counts refer only to the 3- to 21-year-old population. Pupil-teacher ratios are based on the counts shown in table 4.1.

SOURCE: Calculated from U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, *Sixth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of Public Law 94-142*, appendix 3, table 3B1, 1984, and unpublished tabulations (January 1985).



## Number of Special Education Teachers in Public Elementary/Secondary Schools



The number of special education teachers employed by public schools has risen since the mid-1970's, reflecting the rise in the number of children served. The biggest increase has been in the number of teachers for the specific learning disabled.



**Table 4.3**

**Trends in Percentage Distribution of Handicapped Persons 3 to 21 Years Old Receiving Special Educational Services in Regular Classes, in Special Classes, in Special Schools, and in Other Environments: United States, School Years 1976-77 to 1982-83**

Item	All Environments	Regular Class	Special Class in Regular School	Separate School Facility	Other Educational Environment
Percentage Distribution					
All conditions in:					
1976-77.....	100	67	25	5	3
1977-78.....	100	68	25	5	2
1978-79.....	100	68	26	4	2
1979-80.....	100	68	25	5	2
1980-81.....	100	68	25	6	1
1981-82.....	100	68	25	6	1
1982-83.....	100	68	25	6	1
Type of handicap in 1982-83.					
Learning disabled.....	100	78	20	1	(*)
Speech impaired.....	100	93	5	1	1
Mentally retarded.....	100	29	58	13	1
Seriously emotionally disturbed.....	100	43	38	16	3
Hard of hearing and deaf.....	100	38	38	24	1
Orthopedically handicapped.....	100	35	39	17	9
Other health impaired.....	100	49	21	7	23
Visually handicapped.....	100	62	19	18	1
Multihandicapped.....	100	16	47	33	4
Deaf-blind.....	100	9	34	55	2

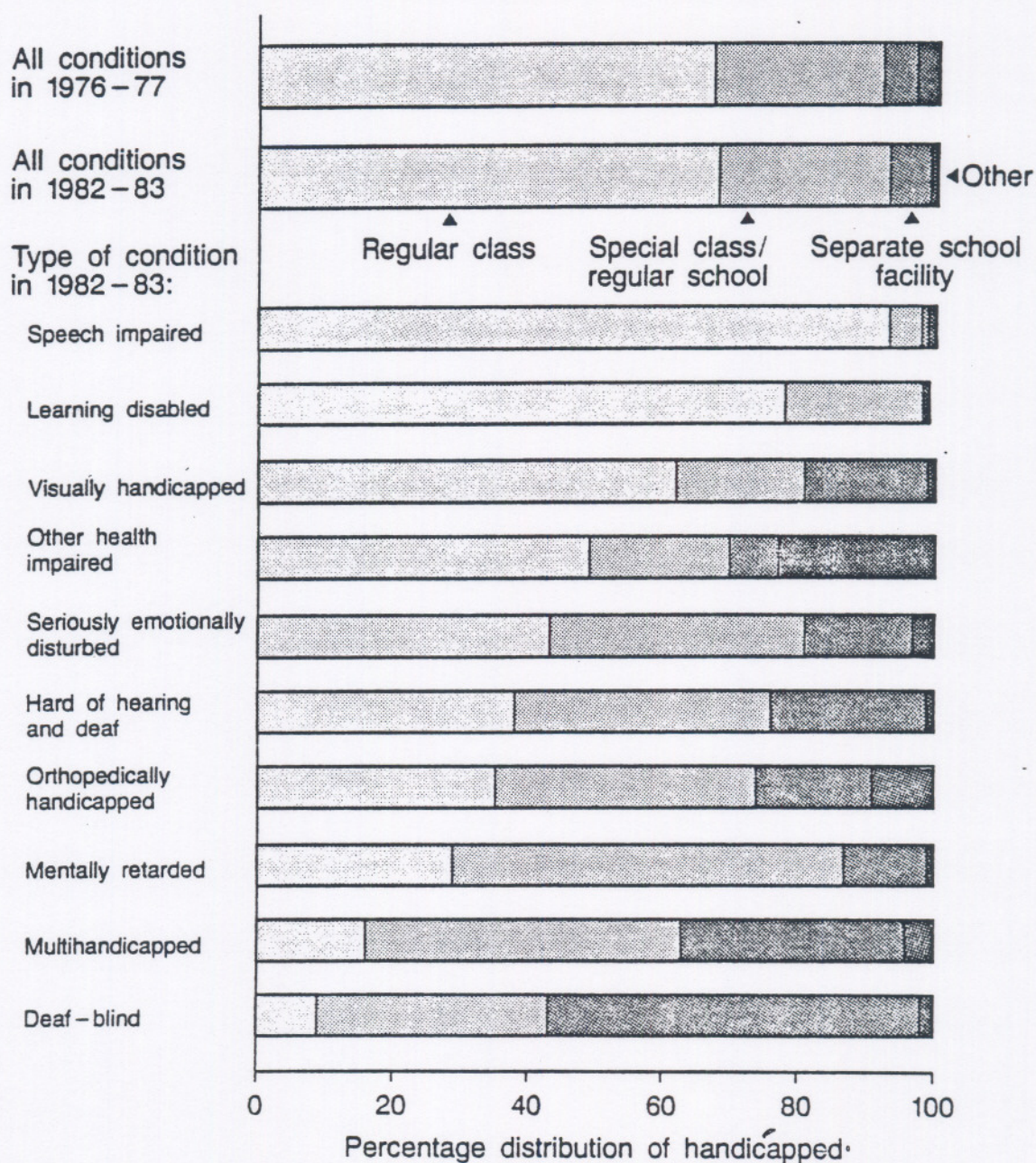
\*Less than 0.5 percent.

NOTE: Data exclude U.S. Territories and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, unpublished tabulations (January 1985).



Distribution of the Handicapped, by Type of Facility



More than two-thirds of handicapped children received their instruction in regular classes, and one-fourth did so in special classes within regular schools, proportions little changed from the mid-1970's.



**Table 4.4****Number and Percent of Public Elementary/Secondary Schools and Classrooms Accessible to Physically Handicapped Students: United States, Fall 1978 to Fall 1980**

Item	1978	1980
Total number of schools in survey universe.....	80,134	77,544
Schools with:		
Accessible building entrances		
Number .....	48,101	56,511
Percent of total schools.....	60.0	72.9
Accessible toilet stalls		
Number .....	21,327	42,124
Percent of total schools.....	26.6	54.3
Accessible science labs		
Number .....	10,611	18,266
Percent of total schools.....	13.2	23.6
Percent of all schools with science labs.....	51.0	(*)
Total number of classrooms in survey universe.....	1,304,201	1,935,391
Accessible classrooms		
Number .....	767,334	1,255,839
Percent of total classrooms.....	58.8	64.9

\*Not available for 1980.

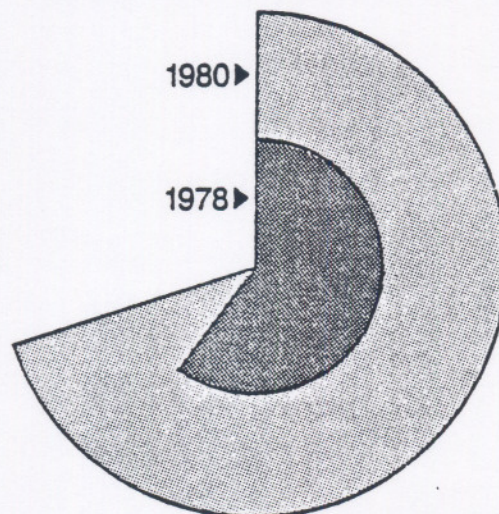
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *State, regional and national summaries of data from the 1978 Civil Rights Survey of Elementary and Secondary Schools*, 1980, and *1980 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey: National summaries*, 1982.



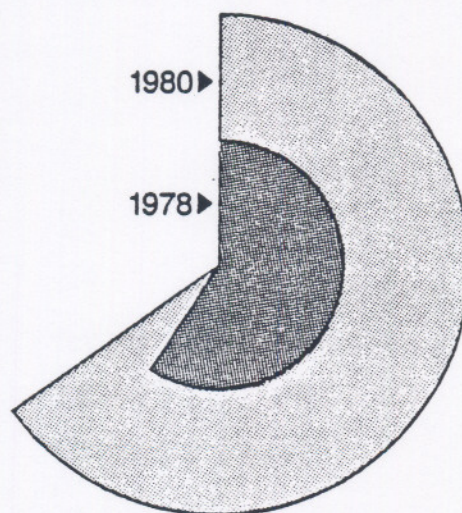
**Percent of Public Elementary/Secondary Schools and Classrooms Accessible to Handicapped Students**

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**Percent of Schools With Accessible Building Entrances**



**Percent of Total Classrooms Accessible to the Handicapped**



By 1980, nearly three-quarters of all school building entrances and nearly two-thirds of all classrooms were accessible to pupils in wheelchairs.



**Table 4.5**

**Trends in Annual Total of Federal Grants to States and Territories Under Public Law 94-142 and Amount Granted per Handicapped Student, in Current and Constant Dollars: United States and Territories, 1977 to 1984**

Item	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984*
Current dollars, in millions.....	\$251.8	\$566.0	\$804.0	\$874.5	\$874.5	\$931.0	\$1,017.9	\$1,068.9
Constant (1983) dollars, in millions.....	415.2	867.0	1,106.9	1,060.5	960.9	964.8	1,017.9	—
Amount per handicapped child:								
Current dollars.....	72	159	217	230	222	233	251	261
Constant (1983) dollars.....	119	244	299	279	244	241	251	—

\*Estimated.

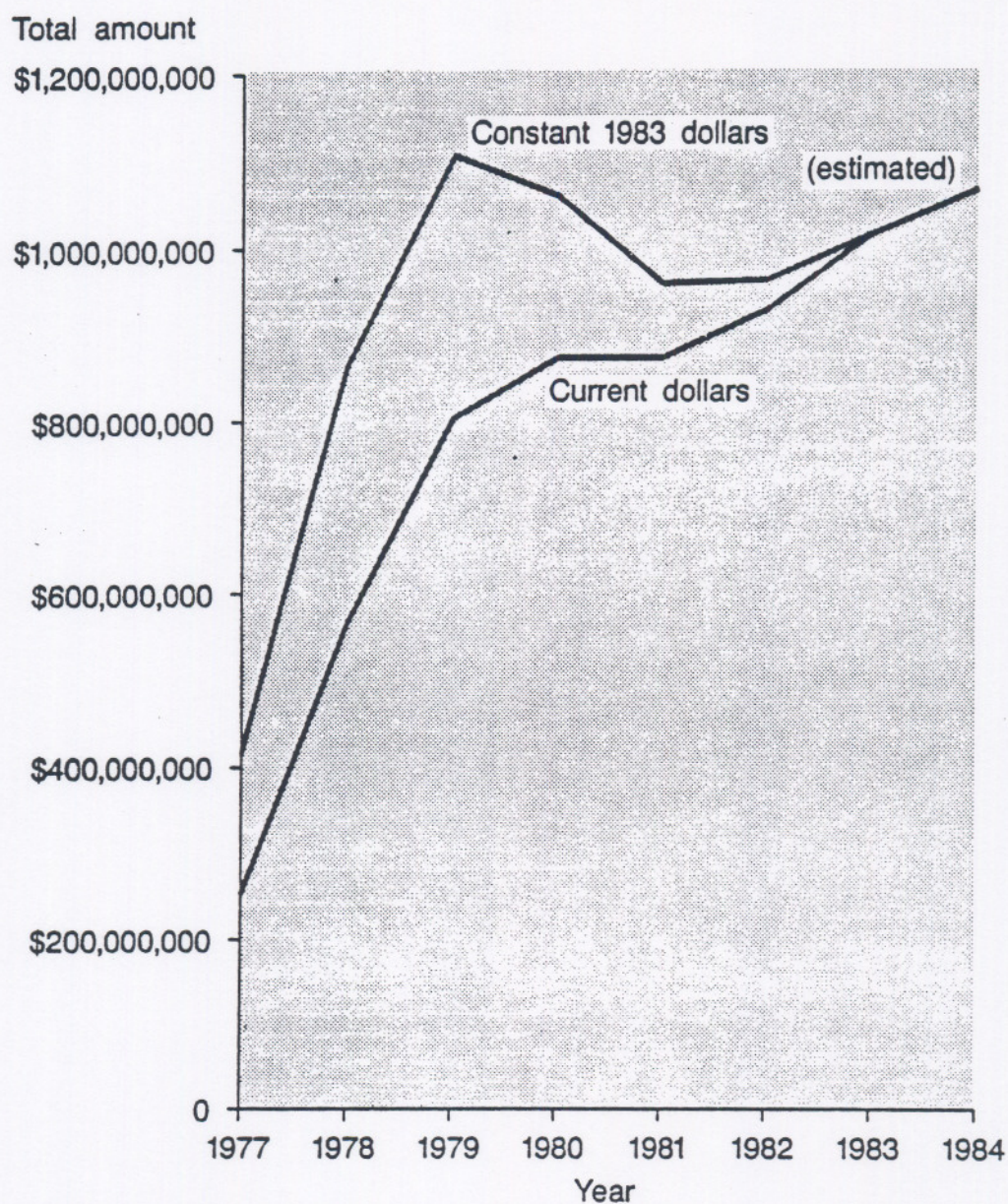
—Not available.

NOTE: The bulk of the P.L. 94-142 funds are paid to the States and Outlying Areas in July of each year, for use in the following school year.

SOURCE: Calculated from U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, unpublished tabulations.



## Total Federal Grants to States and Territories Under P.L. 94-142



In constant dollars, Federal funding for the major special education programs rose rapidly to 1979, fell for the next 2 years, and has since partially recovered. A similar pattern held for the ratio of Federal expenditures per handicapped child, which stood at about \$251 per child in 1983.



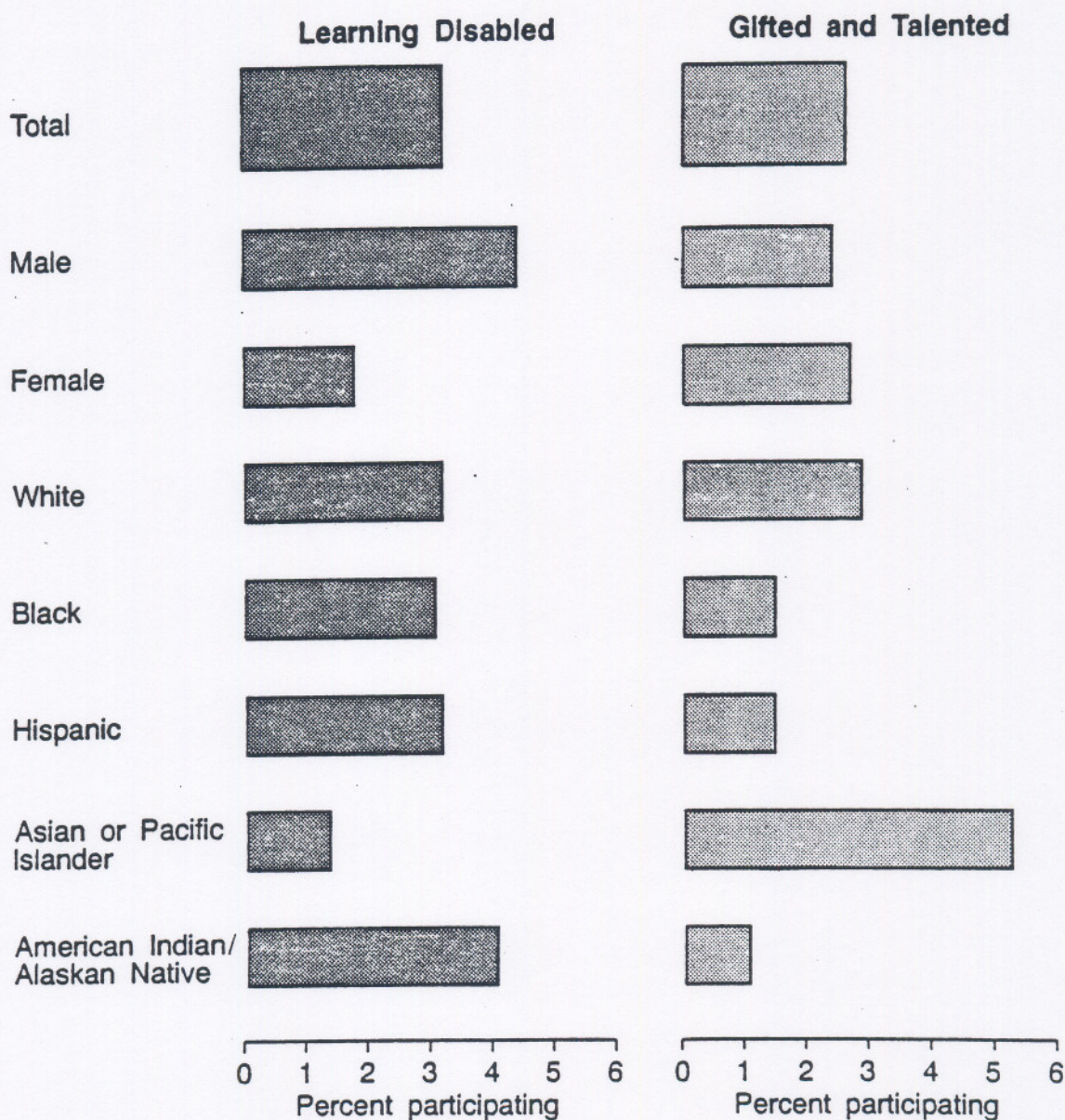
**Table 4.6**

**Percent of Public Elementary/Secondary School Students Participating in Selected Special Education Programs, by Sex and Race/Ethnicity of Student: United States, Fall 1978 and Fall 1980**

Year and Type of Program	All Students	Male	Female	White (Non-Hispanic)	Black (Non-Hispanic)	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaskan Native
Percent Participating								
1978:								
Specific learning disabled.....	2.3	3.2	1.3	2.3	2.2	2.6	1.3	3.5
Speech impaired.....	2.0	2.4	1.5	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8
Educable mentally retarded.....	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.1	3.4	1.0	.4	1.7
Trainable mentally retarded.....	.2	.3	.2	.2	.4	.2	.2	.2
Seriously emotionally disturbed.....	.3	.5	.2	.3	.5	.3	.1	.3
Gifted/talented.....	1.9	1.8	2.1	2.1	1.3	1.5	4.6	.8
1980:								
Specific learning disabled.....	3.2	4.4	1.8	3.2	3.1	3.2	1.4	4.1
Speech impaired.....	2.3	2.8	1.7	2.4	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.9
Educable mentally retarded.....	1.4	1.6	1.1	1.1	3.4	.8	.3	1.7
Trainable mentally retarded.....	.2	.3	.2	.2	.4	.2	.2	.3
Seriously emotionally disturbed.....	.5	.7	.2	.4	.7	.4	.1	.5
Gifted/talented.....	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.9	1.5	1.5	5.3	1.1

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *State, regional and national summaries of data from the 1978 Civil Rights Survey of Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1980, and 1980 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey: National summaries, 1982.*



**Participation in 1980 Public Elementary/Secondary Learning Disabled Programs and Gifted and Talented Programs**

Black students were disproportionately represented in handicapped programs, while Asians were the least likely to participate. Males were more likely than females to participate in special education programs of a remedial or compensatory nature, but were less likely to be in programs for the gifted and talented.



Table 4.7

**Teacher Identification of Students 12 to 16 Years Old Needing and Using Special Educational Resources, by Type of Resource, Race/Ethnicity of Student, Parental Education Level, and Family Income: United States, 1981**

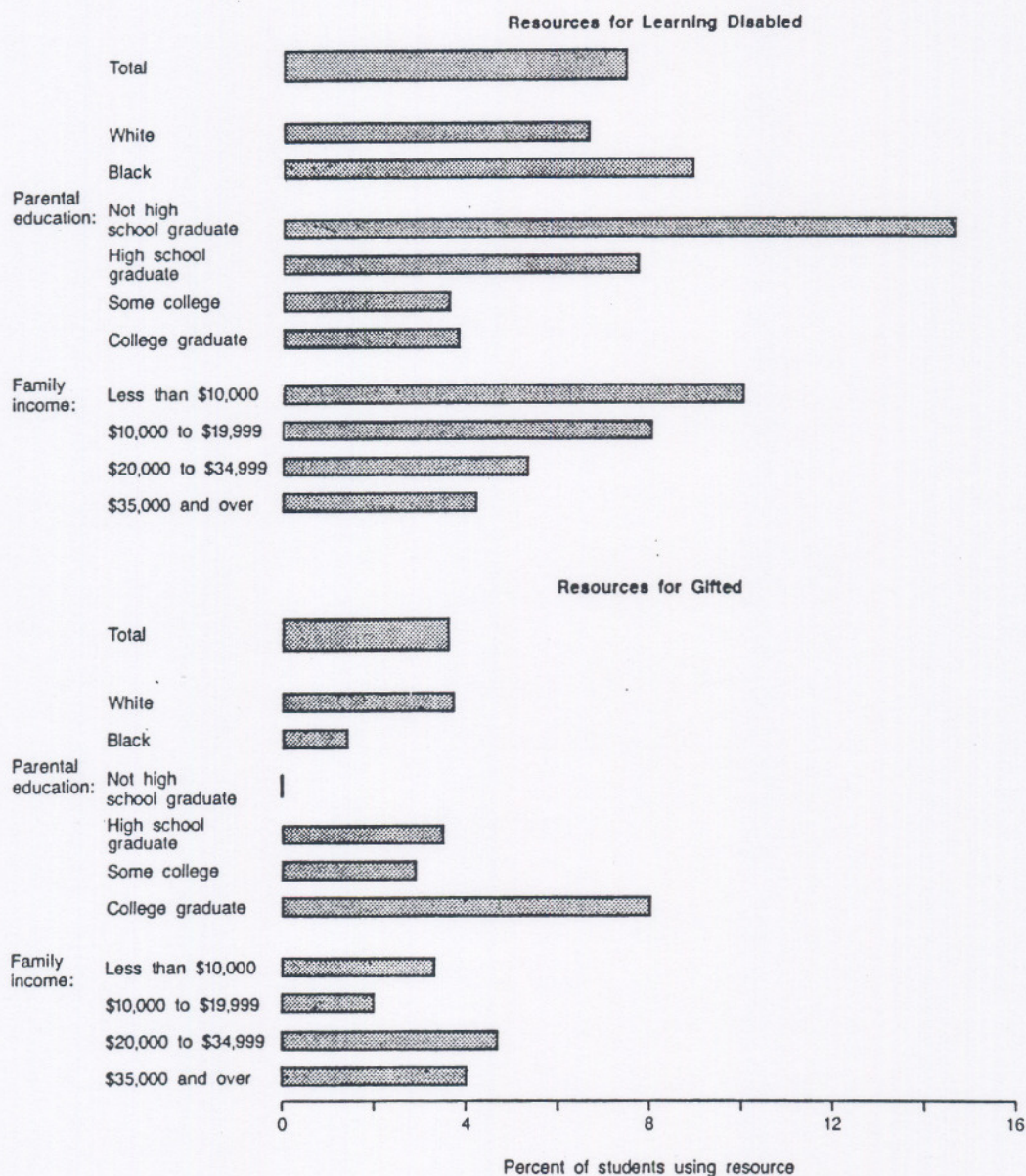
Characteristic	Slow Learners or Learning Disabilities	Speech Therapy	Emotionally Disturbed	Gifted	Advanced Instruction
Percent of Students Identified by Teacher as Needing Resource					
All students.....	10.4	1.4	2.7	7.2	10.6
Race/ethnicity of student:					
White (non-Hispanic).....	9.3	1.1	2.3	7.4	11.0
Black.....	13.8	4.1	3.3	3.5	7.2
Parental education:					
Not high school graduate.....	20.9	3.0	6.7	1.5	4.0
High school graduate.....	11.4	1.8	2.5	6.3	8.1
Some college.....	5.6	1.1	1.2	8.7	13.4
College graduate.....	4.0	.1	1.2	12.3	17.9
Family income:					
Less than \$10,000.....	16.7	2.0	7.8	7.8	10.6
\$10,000 to \$19,999.....	9.4	1.8	2.5	5.1	7.0
\$20,000 to \$34,999.....	7.4	1.0	1.0	7.1	12.2
\$35,000 or more.....	5.7	1.8	1.0	12.6	14.0
Percent of Students Identified by Teacher as Using Resource					
All students.....	7.4	1.1	1.0	3.6	6.7
Race/ethnicity of student:					
White (non-Hispanic).....	6.6	1.0	.5	3.7	7.2
Black.....	8.9	2.2	1.7	1.4	3.3
Parental education:					
Not high school graduate.....	14.6	1.7	2.8	(*)	1.9
High school graduate.....	7.7	1.8	.6	3.5	4.7
Some college.....	3.6	.7	.9	2.9	6.6
College graduate.....	3.8	.1	(*)	8.0	14.8
Family income:					
Less than \$10,000.....	10.0	1.0	3.6	3.3	6.4
\$10,000 to \$19,999.....	8.0	1.4	.6	2.0	3.4
\$20,000 to \$34,999.....	5.3	.9	.3	4.7	9.2
\$35,000 or more.....	4.2	1.8	*	4.0	7.5

\*Less than 0.05 percent.

SOURCE: Child Trends, Inc., 1981 National Survey of Children, unpublished tabulations (June 1984).



## Percent of Students Using Special Educational Resources



Students from families with low education or income levels were three-to-five times more likely to be identified as needing remedial resources than were students from families with high education or income levels. The reverse was true for advanced instruction or resources for the gifted.



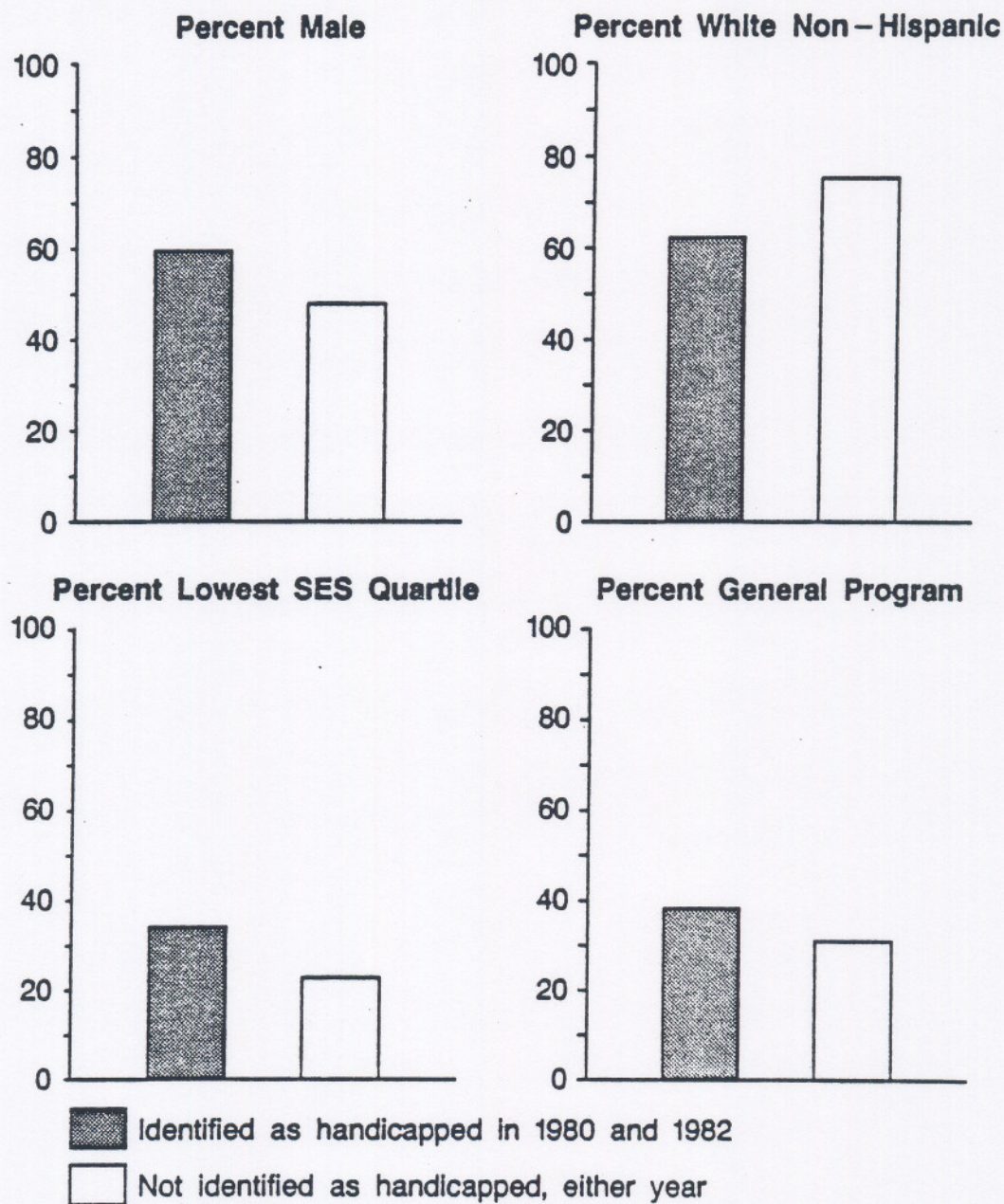
**Characteristics of Self-Identified Handicapped Students from the Sophomore Class of 1980, Using Various Definitions: United States, 1980 and 1982**

Definition	Percent Male	Percent White Non-Hispanic	Percent in Lowest SES Quartile (1980)	Percent in General Program (1982)	Unweighted Sample Size
All students.....	49.9	72.6	24.7	35.2	29,737
In 1980:					
A. Specific learning disability.....	61.6	52.4	43.0	42.7	716
B. Visual handicap.....	52.5	75.4	26.1	33.2	389
C. Hard of hearing.....	60.3	66.3	33.0	43.4	520
D. Deafness.....	64.3	53.1	38.0	39.2	123
E. Speech disability.....	66.4	47.5	44.4	37.7	454
F. Orthopedic handicap.....	55.8	74.8	17.8	28.7	354
G. Other health impairment.....	51.0	62.6	37.8	37.9	511
Handicapped—					
one or more A-G.....	57.8	62.1	34.5	38.2	2,690
Physical condition that limits.....	56.2	60.1	34.0	39.6	2,069
Program for educationally handicapped*.....	54.5	61.7	31.1	37.0	898
Program for physically handicapped.....	53.3	60.5	27.0	36.7	840
Total handicapped—combined definition.....	56.3	61.3	32.4	38.3	4,192
In 1982:					
A. Specific learning disability.....	66.1	63.8	27.9	43.2	483
B. Visual handicap (not corrected by glasses).....	56.4	67.1	30.3	39.3	418
C. Hard of hearing.....	59.8	71.3	30.7	35.5	460
D. Deafness.....	67.3	41.7	39.8	33.6	123
E. Speech disability.....	68.4	55.1	40.0	43.5	310
F. Orthopedic handicap.....	57.7	72.2	25.7	35.4	228
G. Other physical disability or handicap.....	55.1	75.1	24.3	38.5	651
Handicapped—one or more A-G.....	59.4	68.5	29.5	38.6	2,211
Physical condition that limits.....	55.7	67.1	29.6	39.5	2,156
Program for educationally handicapped.....	48.2	69.4	25.0	37.9	550
Program for physically handicapped.....	48.0	67.8	26.0	35.9	513
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Educational Benefits recipient.....	62.6	44.2	35.4	37.9	474
Total handicapped—combined definition.....	55.3	68.7	28.3	38.1	4,762
Handicapped both years.....	59.6	62.3	34.1	38.4	1,396
Handicapped 1980 only.....	54.4	60.8	31.2	38.0	2,729
Handicapped 1982 only.....	53.2	72.0	25.4	38.0	3,357
Not handicapped, either year.....	48.0	75.2	22.9	34.1	21,877

\*Not included in combined definition.

SOURCE: National Opinion Research Center, *Characteristics of High School Students Who Identify Themselves as Handicapped*, 1985, prepared for the National Center for Education Statistics using High School and Beyond, base-year and first-followup studies.



**Characteristics of Self-Identified Handicapped Students (Sophomore Class of 1980) Compared With Non-Handicapped Students**

The handicapped differed from others in the 1980 sophomore class in that they were more likely to be male, minority, or from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.



Table 4.9

**Performance of Self-Identified Handicapped Students from the Sophomore Class of 1980, Using Various Definitions: United States, 1980 and 1982**

Definition	Percent in Lowest Test Quartile (1980)	Percent with C's and D's (1980)	Percent Dropouts (1982)	Percent Repeated a Grade (1982)	Unweighted Sample Size
All students.....	24.2	20.8	13.7	13.5	29,737
In 1980:					
A. Specific learning disability.....	66.4	42.5	21.8	32.8	716
B. Visual handicap.....	17.4	20.3	17.7	16.1	389
C. Hard of hearing.....	41.9	30.8	23.5	17.9	520
D. Deafness.....	62.0	43.0	29.9	25.1	123
E. Speech disability.....	59.4	32.1	18.5	25.0	454
F. Orthopedic handicap.....	18.5	18.2	12.4	10.3	354
G. Other health impairment.....	38.2	30.3	23.5	21.4	511
Handicapped—one or more A-G.....	42.4	30.3	19.7	21.4	2,690
Physical condition that limits.....	41.9	29.7	20.0	20.0	2,069
Program for educationally handicapped*.....	42.7	30.2	21.7	23.1	898
Program for physically handicapped.....	38.9	28.4	18.1	20.7	840
Total handicapped—combined definition.....	41.2	29.2	18.6	20.2	4,192
In 1982:					
A. Specific learning disability.....	63.2	37.7	26.5	39.6	483
B. Visual handicap (not corrected by glasses).....	31.3	28.2	25.8	22.5	418
C. Hard of hearing.....	33.6	32.4	22.0	25.6	460
D. Deafness.....	60.8	29.1	16.5	32.8	123
E. Speech disability.....	57.4	30.3	21.9	26.9	310
F. Orthopedic handicap.....	25.2	21.2	22.8	17.5	228
G. Other physical disability or handicap.....	23.3	25.6	21.9	17.7	651
Handicapped—one or more A-G.....	37.1	30.2	22.2	22.8	2,211
Physical condition that limits.....	33.6	25.6	16.3	18.3	2,156
Program for educationally handicapped.....	35.4	24.5	—	17.7	550
Program for physically handicapped.....	32.8	23.4	—	16.6	513
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Educational Benefits recipient.....	55.6	33.9	—	23.4	474
Total handicapped—combined definition.....	33.8	26.8	15.3	19.0	4,762
Handicapped both years.....	45.4	31.2	19.1	25.7	1,396
Handicapped 1980 only.....	38.9	27.9	18.3	16.9	2,729
Handicapped 1982 only.....	27.9	24.8	13.2	16.0	3,357
Not handicapped, either year.....	19.9	18.4	12.6	11.7	21,877

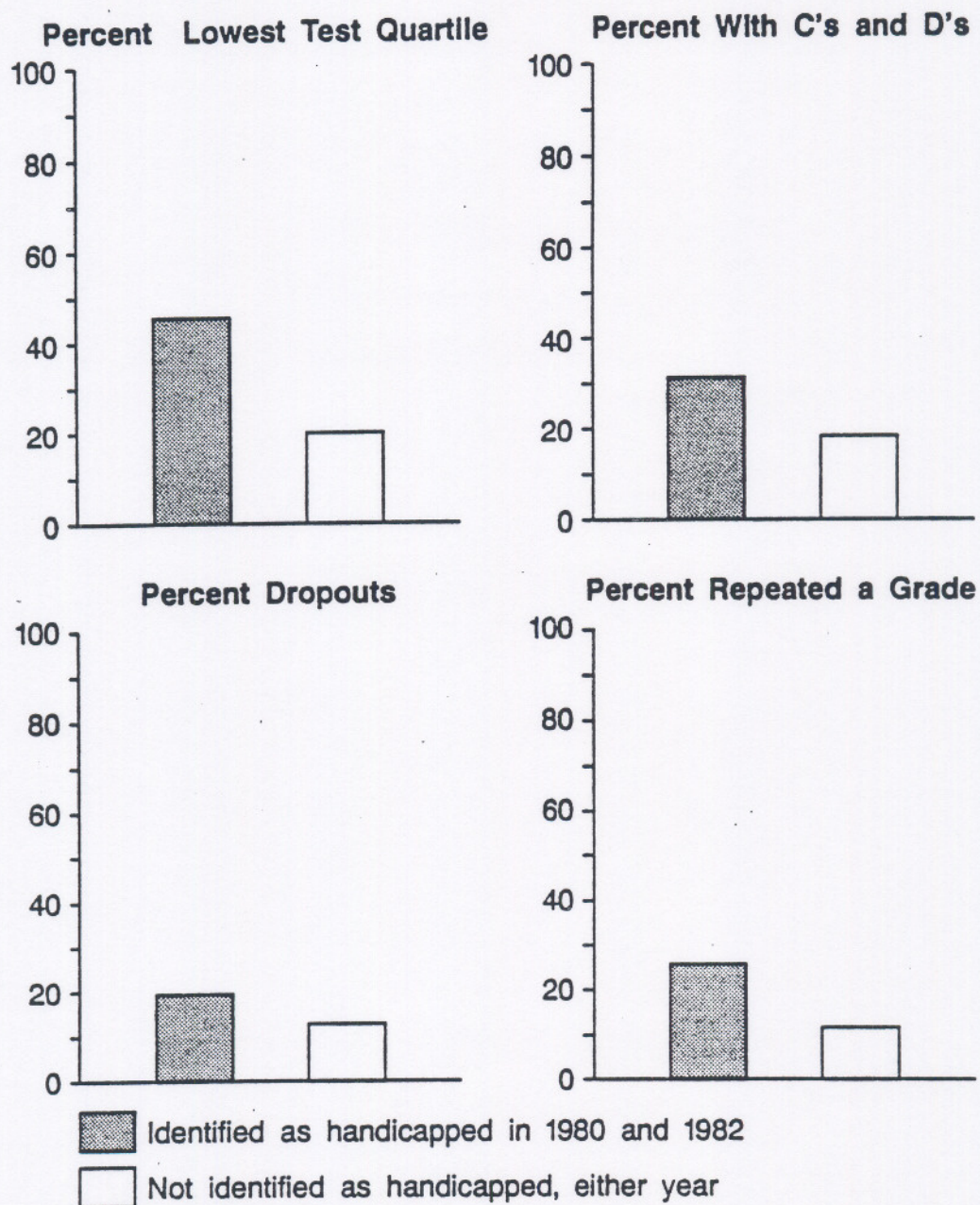
\*Not included in combined definition.

—Not applicable.

SOURCE: National Opinion Research Center, *Characteristics of High School Students Who Identify Themselves as Handicapped*, 1985, prepared for the National Center for Education Statistics using High School and Beyond, base-year and first-followup studies.



**Performance of Self-Identified Handicapped Students (Sophomore Class of 1980) Compared With Non-Handicapped Students**



The handicapped from the 1980 sophomore class were more likely than others to score in the lowest performance quartile, average C's and D's, drop out of school, or have repeated a grade.