

Executive Summary

The *25th Annual Report to Congress* has been designed to showcase the data collected from states and the national studies that make up the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) National Assessment of the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. To this end, OSEP proposed questions about the characteristics of children and students receiving services under Parts B and C, the settings in which they receive services, their transition from Part C to Part B and from school to adult life, and their disabilities. Answers to the questions are shown through graphs, charts, and tables complemented by short explanatory text. The report is divided into three sections: a national picture of children and students with disabilities served under Parts C and B; individual profiles of states that summarize selected aspects of special education in each state; and data tables that show states' ranking regarding exiting and educational environments for Part B and early childhood intervention and settings for Part C. Some key findings from the report are presented below.

Infants and Toddlers Served Under IDEA, Part C

- Both the number and the percentage of infants and toddlers served under Part C have increased steadily from 1998 to 2001. In all years, 2-year-olds were the largest proportion (53 percent) of children served under Part C (page 4).
- The racial/ethnic composition of these children is quite similar to that of the general infant and toddler population—the majority are white, followed by Hispanic, and then black children (page 5).
- Most infants and toddlers served under Part C in 2000 received services at home; the percentage of this population served in programs for children with developmental delay or other disabilities decreased substantially between 1996-2000 (pages 7 and 8).
- The majority of Part C infants and toddlers (62.6 percent) are eligible to transition to Part B services when they turn age 3 (page 9).

Children Ages 3 Through 5 Served Under IDEA, Part B

- Since 1991, the number of children ages 3 through 5 who receive services under Part B of IDEA has increased steadily (page 14). As of December 1, 2001, 5.2 percent of the total population of 3- through 5-year-olds living in the 50 states and the District of Columbia were estimated to be receiving services (page 13).
- The majority of children ages 3 through 5 receiving special education services are white; white children also make up the majority of the general preschool population (page 16).
- In 2000, 51 percent of preschoolers received special education services in either early childhood settings or part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education settings (page 17).
- Special education teachers serving children ages 3 through 5 with disabilities are primarily white and female. Six and a half percent of these preschool special teachers also report having a disability themselves (page 19).

Students Ages 6 Through 21 Served Under IDEA, Part B

- On December 1, 2001, 8.9 percent of 6- through 21-year-olds were receiving special education services under IDEA. The number of students with disabilities receiving services has increased slowly since 1992 (pages 21 and 22).
- In contrast, the number of students receiving services for autism has increased markedly, from a little less than 10,000 in 1992 to approximately 65,000 in 2001 (page 24).
- According to findings from two of OSEP's National Assessment studies, the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study (SEELS) and National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), students with disabilities are more likely to be poor than students in the general population (pages 31 and 32).
- Parent reports as shown in SEELS and NLTS2 data indicate that more black students with disabilities are suspended or expelled from school than are white or Hispanic students. Overall, parents report that about one-third of students ages 13 through 17 with disabilities have been suspended or expelled (pages 40 and 41).
- Most students with disabilities (around 96 percent) are being educated in regular school buildings, and almost half are in regular classrooms for most of the day (page 43). However, 26 percent of students ages 6 through 12 with disabilities and 36 percent of students ages 13 through 17 with disabilities have been retained in grade at least once (pages 53 and 55). Even so, the proportion of high school students being educated at the typical grade level for their age has increased from 32 percent in 1987 to 53 percent in 2001 (page 55).
- In 2000-01, 47.6 percent of students ages 14 and older with disabilities exited school with a regular high school diploma. A total of 41.1 percent of students ages 14 and older with disabilities dropped out (pages 69 and 70).

State Profiles

State profiles include number of school districts, public school enrollment, per-pupil expenditures, and percentage of children living below the poverty level. For Part B, the profiles include number of children served under IDEA, percentage exiting with a diploma, percentage dropping out, number of special education teachers, and percentage of fully certified teachers. Race/ethnicity and education environments data are provided in charts.

For Part C, the profiles list the lead agency for early intervention services, number of infants and toddlers receiving early intervention services, percentage of infants and toddlers served in the home, and percentage of infants and toddlers served in programs for typically developing children. Race/ethnicity and reasons for exiting early intervention are provided in charts.