

Resources For Families and Teachers of Children With Disabilities

According to the 24th Annual Report to Congress (2002) there were an estimated six million children with disabilities who received services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act during the 2000-2001 school year. 5,775,722 children and adolescents ages 6-21 in the United States received services during the 2000-2001 school year under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). 599,678 children ages 3-5 also received services under IDEA during 2000-2001. These youth have been diagnosed with a variety of disabilities. The disabilities as cited in IDEA, 1997 include, specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, autism, traumatic brain injury, communication disorders, visual impairments including blindness, hearing impairments including deafness, orthopedic impairments, multiple disabilities, and other health impaired which includes attention deficit disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. With such a divergent listing of exceptionalities there is a great deal of information individuals need to know to work effectively and efficiently with these youth.

For each of these 6 million children there are families, educators or support network who may need or want more information about the exceptionalities or how to work with the individual child or adolescent. The intent of this paper is to highlight some of the resources which may be of assistance to the families, teachers, and support personnel, who know or work with children and adolescents with disabilities.

Books for Teachers and Support Personnel

Many excellent resources have been written to help educators understand the children, work with families and support the comprehensive role that our teachers face today.

1. In the beginning of this paper I referred to the Annual Report to Congress.

This is an excellent resource to assist teachers, parents, as well as educational leaders and support personnel to better understand the scope of the exceptionalities found in our schools across the country. This resource is free of charge and can be found at the following address or downloaded from this website. From this site an individual can download or request most government publications free of charge.

Educational Publications Center
U.S. Department of Education
P.O. Box 1398
Jessup, MD 20794-1398
1-877-433-7827
Fax 1-301-470-1244
edpubs@inet.ed.gov <http://www.edpubs.org>

2. This book is a foundational resource for educators who want to gain more knowledge about learning disabilities. It includes information from an historical perspective, as well as definitions, and techniques that will assist a teacher or support personnel work effectively with an individual child or youth with learning disabilities.

Lerner, J. (2003). Learning disabilities: Theories, diagnosis, and teaching strategies. (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

2. The information provided by this book will assist a teacher and parents in understanding dyslexia and brain development. The book also outlines a program to help parents or teachers teach reading to children who are experiencing reading difficulties. An excellent resource.

Shaywitz, S. (2003). Overcoming dyslexia. NY,NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

3. A resource and reference tool for teachers who want to know more about the legal aspects of special education. This yearly edition features an overview of specific court cases and their impact. Each chapter which includes topics such as placement, IDEA procedural safeguards, related services, and discrimination begins with a brief synopsis of how each topic is defined by IDEA. The appendices in this resource include the IDEA Amendments of 1997, Federal Regulations for IDEA, and a table of special education cases along with the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Students with disabilities and special education. (18th ed.). Birmingham, AL: Oakstone Legal & Business Publishing, Inc.

4. These three resources have been written especially for paraprofessionals to assist them in working with children with disabilities. Each is a handy guide that can aid a paraprofessional in their work.

Doyle, M.B. (1997). The paraprofessional's guide to the inclusive classroom: Working as a team. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Dyck, N. & Thurston, L.P. (1998). Getting the message across: A para's guide to communication. Lawrence, KS: Curriculum Solutions, Inc.

Dyck, N., Zabel, M.K. & Zabel, R.H. (1998). Behavior management guide for paras. Lawrence, KS: Curriculum Solutions, Inc.

5. This is an excellent resource for educators who want to know more about definitions, characteristics, traits, causes, and inclusion tips for each of the exceptionalities. It is a thorough overview of the exceptionalities with each chapter featuring the story of a child with an exceptionality.

Turnbull, R., Turnbull, A., Shank, M., & Smith, S.J. (2004). Exceptional lives: Special education in today's schools. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

6. This book is a must have for teachers who want to better understand the developmental patterns of a child. The book focuses primarily on children ages birth through about early middle school.

Davies, D. (2004). Child development: A practitioner's guide. NY, NY: The Guilford Press .

7. This book is an excellent resource for teachers who want to learn more about teaching reading to students who are experiencing difficulties. It also provides some excellent background information about brain-based developments and their implications in the learning and teaching process.

Lyons, C.A. (2003). Teaching struggling readers: How to use brain-based research to maximize learning. Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann.

8. Here are two additional excellent resources to help a teacher better understand the brain and its impact on the learning process. They each provide a great deal of information that will help educators realize the importance of brain-based learning.

Sousa, D.A. (2001). How the special needs brain learns. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sprenger, M. (1999). Learning & memory: The brain in action. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Books for Parents

Several of the resources specifically listed for the teachers in the section above may also benefit the parent. Likewise, some of these resources could benefit the knowledge and understanding of a teacher. Again, this is not an inclusive list, but it features a few resources which can assist parents or families.

1. This book is a good resource for parents who want to better understand learning disabilities and how it impacts the learning processes of an individual. It also features a few related disabilities such as attention deficit disorders and tic disorders. It provides a good overview with some historical perspectives.

Silver, L.B. (1998). The misunderstood child: Understanding and coping with your child's learning disabilities. (3rd ed.). NY,NY: Times Books/Random House.

2. This is a superb resource to help families better understand the policies and procedures involving the special education process. It also includes a listing of state and national organizations to assist parents and teachers learn more about specific aspects of disabilities.

Anderson, W., Chitwood, S.& Hayden, D. (1997). Negotiating the special education maze: A guide for parents and teachers. (3rd ed.). Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

3. This is a quick and handy resource for parents as well as teachers to help them understand the developmental stages a child experiences. It begins with children in the early childhood years and continues through early adolescence. It provides listings of traits that children may experience within certain developmental stages.

Wood, C. (1997). Yardsticks: Children in the classroom ages 4-14, A resource for parents and teachers. Greenfield, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.

Journals for Teachers and Parents

Many journals have been written to help teachers and parents understand the needs of the child or adolescent with special education needs. An excellent resource is "Teaching Exceptional Children" which is a journal distributed by the Council for Exceptional Children. This publication specifically features articles written for teachers by teachers,

researchers, and other support personnel. These writers typically detail their experiences and share specific techniques, strategies, or research. The articles feature information that can benefit a classroom teacher and a parent who is in need of information on a particular aspect of special education.

Another excellent journal is “Educational Leadership” published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Although it is not a specific journal for working with children with disabilities, it provides articles from which classroom teachers, parents, principals and other educators can gain a great deal of insight. Some of the “themed-journal titles” have included, “The Science of Learning, Educating Language Learners, Redefining Literacy, and Healthy Bodies, Minds, & Buildings.” Each journal topic has several articles that assist a parent or educator better understand some of the issues and concepts which impact the field of education.

“Exceptional Parent” is a journal which features articles parents can use to help them understand the special education system as well as give them insights in activities they can use to help them work with and support their child.

Support Systems

Professional organizations can be excellent sources of support for families of children with disabilities. The organizations can also provide a glimpse of the issues that some families face when interacting with their children on a daily basis. The Learning Disability Association of America is an excellent organization whose primary mission “is dedicated to identifying causes and promoting prevention of learning disabilities and to enhancing the quality of life for all individuals with learning disabilities and their

families by encouraging effective identification and intervention, fostering research, and protecting their rights under the law” (<http://www.ldanatl.org/about/mission.asp>).

The Council for Exceptional Children is an organization whose primary mission is to “improve educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities” (<http://www.cec.sped.org/ab/purpose.html>).

Families Together, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide support and training to families who have children with disabilities. They are “dedicated to a society that includes and values all people, encourages, educates, and empowers families that include a child/youth with disabilities”

(<http://www.familiestogetherinc.org/whoarewe.htm>). This support network provides resources for families as well as workshops and conferences at locations across the state of Kansas. These informational sessions provide families with support and assistance as well as a place to turn when they are experiencing difficulties understanding the scope of the exceptionalities their child or children are encountering.

Websites

There are a plethora of websites to aid the teacher, parent, or support personnel to learn more about children and adolescents with disabilities. A few superb websites with additional links to other resources include:

Learning Disabilities Information

<http://www.ldonline.org>

Council for Exceptional Children

<http://www.cec.sped.org>

National Center for Learning Disabilities

<http://www.nclld.org>

Learning Disabilities Association of America

<http://www.ldanatl.org>

National Information Center for Children & Youth w/Disabilities

<http://nichcy.org>

National ADD Association

<http://www.add.org>

Children and Adults w/ Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)

<http://www.chadd.org/>

These listings of resources are not inclusive but an attempt to provide some necessary sources to assist the families, teachers, and support services personnel who work each day with children and adolescents with disabilities.

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