

# Chapter 1

## Providing Services to Students with Special Needs across Various Settings

### ABSTRACT

*This chapter focuses on the past and present of educating students with special education needs. Historically, these children were shunned, were the victims of credulity, and were sometimes even killed simply because they learned differently than the rest of the human race. The chapter includes an overview of the various laws and court cases that helped to shape special education as we know it today, as well as a discussion of a variety of educational models in which special education students can be educated depending on their needs. These models include a range of environments, from home-based programs to inclusion with peers for either the entire school day or part of it to a specialized school. The chapter also includes a discussion on ethics and thoughts about what the future may hold for the field of special education. Finally, the chapter presents a way to evaluate any service delivery model using the program evaluation theory.*

### INTRODUCTION

Since the 1975 inception of Public Law 94-142, known as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), how to educate students with exceptionalities has been a controversy. This escalated with the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2004, which stated that all students with identified special needs had to be educated within the least restrictive environment (LRE). However, the law provided no guidelines on LRE, and to this day, LRE is the subject of many court cases.

Despite the lack of guidance on how students with exceptionalities should be educated, several service delivery models have emerged and have been found to be successful with this population. These service delivery models should serve only as a guideline for educational placement, as each child's specific needs should always be in the forefront when determining services. The type of disability should never be considered in the placement or service delivery decision.

This chapter will:

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- Analyze the history behind the education of students with special needs.
- Contrast the various types of service delivery models that are currently available when educating students with exceptionalities from birth to age 2.
- Contrast the various types of service delivery models that are currently available when educating students with exceptionalities from age 3 to 5 (preschool).
- Contrast the various types of service delivery models that are currently available when educating students with exceptionalities from elementary through high school.
- Synthesize the program evaluation theory.
- Discuss how to evaluate the various service delivery models.
- Hypothesize about the future trends in special education service delivery models.

## **HISTORY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Formal education of students with special needs has a dark past. Historically, adults and children who did not fit the norm of learning were dehumanized and ostracized; they were viewed by some as demons and were often feared. Frequently, children were taken away from their parents, placed into institutions, and forgotten about or even killed. Fortunately, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, attitudes toward this population started to change, thanks to the work of the French physician Jean Marc Gaspard Itard and Eduardo Sequin (Friend, 2011). Both of these men worked with students who had special needs to prove that they were capable of learning when given clear instruction, rewards, and structure. The premise of their work is still used in special education classrooms to this day.

Progress continued on this positive trend when, in the latter part of the 1800s, schools for special needs children started to emerge. Although

compulsory education existed during this time period, many moderate to severe students with exceptionalities were denied their civil rights to an education.

During the 20th century, improvements in the education of special needs children increased drastically. Famous court cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which allowed civil rights for not only one's skin color but for students with exceptionalities, as well as both the *Pennsylvania Association of Retarded Citizens (PARC) v. Pennsylvania* and *Mills v. Board of Education* in 1972, which saw parents advocating for their children's right to attend public school just like their grade- and age-level peers, assisted in bringing the education of special needs children to the forefront (Yell, 2012). As a result of these efforts, children with special needs were, for the first time, required to attend school like any other student. Also during this time, colleges started providing teacher training programs for people who wanted to teach students with exceptionalities (Bartlett, Etscheidt, & Weisenstein, 2007).

Despite these advances, children with exceptionalities were still being educated among their own kind and isolated from the general education population. They were being educated in a public school environment, but not with students of their own age or grade level. Finally, in 1975, with the passage of EAHCA, students with disabilities were slowly included into the general education population, but only in special classes such as art, physical education, music, and lunch (Yell, 2012).

With the EAHCA also came the inception of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which ensured that every student with a disability, whether a learning disability or physical disability, would have an equal opportunity to get the same education as other students through the implementation of modifications to fit the child's disability and learning style. Modifications outlined in an IEP could involve such things as allowing the student more time to work on specific assignments in

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