

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

The field of special education is constantly changing and more is expected and demanded from the education of this exceptional population. Today's special educators must be familiar with the academic, legal, medical, psychological, social, environmental, and perceptual aspects of an exceptional child's life. Without this knowledge or quick access to resources that hold it, professionals are at a disadvantage. Having the right “tool” at the right time can only enhance teaching and result in success.

The Special Educator's Book of Lists is such a tool. This unique information source and timesaver for preK–12 special educators contains ready-to-use lists to help you make important decisions and to assist you in every phase of the special education process.

Included are a broad range of lists conveniently organized into ten sections that contain the most current research on all types of disabilities, including identification, assessment, and remediation. . . simplified explanations of special education practices and procedures, laws, regulations, and rights . . . and numerous definitions, organizations, journal publications, parent resources, and practical tools for parents. This is an all-inclusive reference guide for special and regular educators, administrators, physicians, professors, tutors, parents, and anyone else interested in or involved with the field of special education.

HELPFUL AND UNIQUE FEATURES

This book, which contains the most up-to-date information possible, is a unique guide because it provides:

- a variety of practical lists, charts, tables, references, and forms that can be used on a daily basis in all areas involving children with disabilities.
- legal, medical, and psychological facts, references, and lists that can enhance your understanding of the many factors that affect children with disabilities.
- useful and reproducible forms that can save time, enhance instruction, and reinforce concepts.
- practical and step-by-step lists for identification, assessment, and practical remediation of all disabilities.
- vast references, forms, lists, charts, and tables that can be reproduced and handed out to assist parents in their everyday activities with their children who have disabilities.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Special Educator's Book of Lists assists you through every phase of child development and can be referred to by anyone seeking assistance with children from birth to adulthood. Each section enables you to feel more secure and aware about the sometimes overwhelming process of special education.

Part 1, *Legal Issues in Special Education*, presents an overview of the laws and landmark court cases that govern the special education process. In a time when understanding the laws and proper procedures is crucial, you will find these lists indispensable in making professional decisions.

Part 2, *Foundations of the Special Education Process*, provides a summary of preventive and diagnostic measures to help identify students with disabilities. It contains descriptions of signs and characteristics to look for and offers tips on what to do when presented with children with high-risk symptoms. This section also provides extensive information on understanding the steps in the overall special education process.

Part 3, *Specific Exceptionalities*, contains numerous descriptive lists, information, facts, and suggestions for dealing with more than 20 exceptionalities. From developmental concerns to causality, this section provides a good base of information on each category.

Part 4, *Special Education Assessment*, takes you through the various tools and procedures used in diagnosing and identifying special education students. It provides a wealth of resources covering hundreds of specific evaluation measures used to measure strengths and weaknesses in all areas.

Part 5, *IEP Information*, provides up-to-date information on how to develop an Individualized Education Plan, explanations of the various sections of the IEP, and considerations for making test-modification recommendations.

Part 6, *Eligibility Committee*, presents an overview of the responsibilities and requirements necessary for a successful referral to this committee.

Part 7, *Classroom Instruction Techniques for Children with Disabilities and Special Needs* contains numerous practical tips and materials. These alternate learning activities will facilitate instruction of children with developmental, emotional, and learning disabilities.

Part 8, *Transition Services*, contains more than 45 lists providing you with a complete overview of this very important period in the child's life when he or she moves from school to the adult world. The lists cover everything from the role of the family in the transition process to residential models and employment.

Part 9, *Parent Education*, contains practical parenting suggestions for helping children with homework, improving self-esteem, communicating better, using discipline effectively, and spotting possible signs of learning disabilities. When both teachers and parents have this knowledge, they can discuss diagnosis, behavior-management techniques, and remediation, and help children at school and at home.

Part 10, *Appendices*, features special education, psychological, and medical terminology and definitions as well as a list of key abbreviations in the field of special education. It also provides you with lists of organizations and publishers of resources on topics related to special education as well as a comprehensive list of references and suggested readings.

1.1 Landmark Court Cases in Special Education

Listed below in order of occurrence are some of the most significant court decisions affecting special education in the United States.

Brown v. Board of Education (1954): In *Brown*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that, under the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, it was illegal practice to arbitrarily discriminate against any group of people. The Court then applied this principle to the schooling of children, holding that a separate education for African American students is not an equal education. Because of its famous ruling, "separate but equal" is no longer accepted.

Brown set the precedent for future discrimination cases in education. People with disabilities were recognized as another group whose rights had been violated because of arbitrary discrimination. For children, the discrimination occurred when they were denied access to schools because of their disabilities. Using *Brown* as their legal precedent, students with disabilities claimed that their segregation and exclusion from school violated their opportunity for an equal education under the 14th amendment — the equal protection clause. Since *Brown* established that school districts should not segregate by race, then it was argued that schools should also not be able to segregate or otherwise discriminate by ability and disability.

Hobson v. Hansen (1967): A U.S. district court declared that the District of Columbia school system's tracking system was invalid. However, special classes were allowed, provided that testing procedures are rigorous and that retesting is frequent (Sattler, 1992).

Diana v. State Board of Education (1970): In this case, California was mandated by the court to correct bias in assessment procedures used for Chinese American and Mexican American students. Diana had three very important holdings that would later influence the enactment of federal special education laws:

1. If a student's primary language is not English, he or she must be tested in both English and the primary language;
2. Culturally unfair items must be eliminated from all tests used in the assessment process; and
3. If intelligence tests are used in the assessment process, they must reflect Mexican American culture (*Diana v. State Board of Education*, C-70: 37RFT N.D. Cal., 1970).

PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972): In this case, a U.S. federal court in Pennsylvania ratified a consent agreement assuring that schools may not exclude students who have been classified as mentally retarded. Also, the court mandated that all students must be provided with a free public education. Both of these rulings would play a fundamental role in the enactment of future federal special education laws (*PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 343 F. Supp. 279, E.D. PA, 1972).

Wyatt v. Stickney (1972): In Alabama, a federal court ruled that mentally retarded children in state institutions have a constitutional right to treatment as institutionalized patients (*Wyatt v. Stickney*, 344 F. Supp. 387 M.D. Ala 1972).

1.2 Federal Legislation for Individuals with Disabilities

SECTION 504 OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT

Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act is a civil rights law enacted in 1973. It was created to prevent discrimination against all individuals with disabilities in programs that receive federal funds. For children of school age, Section 504 ensures equal opportunity to all school activities for all students.

Section 504 plays a very important role in assessment, especially for those students who do not meet the criteria to be classified for special education. It provides that some students not eligible for services in special education may be entitled to receive accommodations to help them in school. For example, a child with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) may meet the criteria for special accommodations under Section 504 even though Attention Deficit Disorder is not a classification covered under federal law. Other students who might be helped under Section 504 are those with asthma, allergies, arthritis, or diabetes, to name just a few.

P.L. 93-380: THE FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), often called the Buckley Amendment, gives parents of students under the age of 18, and students age 18 and over, the right to examine records kept in the student's personal file. The FERPA was passed in 1974 to cover all students, including those in postsecondary school. According to the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY, 1997):

Parents and eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's educational records.

Schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's records.

Parents and eligible students have the right to have the records explained and interpreted by school officials.

- School officials may not destroy any education records if an outstanding request to inspect and review them exists.

Parents and eligible students who believe that information in the education records is inaccurate or misleading may request that the records be amended. The parent or eligible student must be advised if the school decides not to amend the records, and they have a right to a hearing.