Disabilities FAQ Packet

WEEA Equity Resource Center at EDC • Education Development Center

Overview

In the United States 5.8 million children live with some type of disability,[1] nearly half of them female. Women and girls with disabilities in this country are a large, diverse group varying along many dimensions, including disability type, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, age, and sexual orientation. What binds them together is the double discrimination, based on both disability and gender, that they face—often compounded by other forms of prejudice such as racism and classism. Compared with their male peers with disabilities and nondisabled female peers, these women and girls fare less well on many indicators of educational, social, vocational, and financial success.

Prior to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975, approximately 1 million children with disabilities were shut out of schools, and hundreds of thousands more were denied appropriate services.[2] This legislation has changed the lives of children with disabilities in this country. Many are now learning and achieving at levels previously thought impossible. As a result, they are graduating from high school, going to college, and entering the workforce as productive citizens in unprecedented numbers. Now over 1 million students who would have been institutionalized are being educated in local schools; almost 50 percent of students with disabilities participate in college course work; twice as many youth with disabilities are likely to become employed; and better programs are being developed each year.[3]

While this is significant progress, we can and must do better. The status of children with disabilities still falls short of their potential. Twice as many children with disabilities drop out of school. Dropouts do not return to school and have difficulty finding jobs. Girls who drop out become single parents at a much higher rate than their nondisabled peers. Many children with disabilities are excluded from the curriculum and assessments used for their nondisabled classmates, which limits their opportunities of achieving higher standards of performance.

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[1] IDEA, 1997. (www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA/).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

This packet is designed to provide basic information on gender equity for students with disabilities. It offers some information and practical tools to help you ensure that gender equity is part of the curriculum for students with disabilities. This FAQ packet contains the following items:

- Disabilities and gender fact sheet (page 2)
- FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) on disability issues (page 5)
- WEEA resources and services (page 9)
- Additional relevant resources and organizations (page 11)
- Checklists for equity and disability issues (page 15)
- *WEEA Digest*: **Connecting Gender and Disability**

For additional information or assistance such as recommendations, resources, technical assistance, or training, call the WEEA Equity Resource Center's technical assistance hotline at 800-225-3088 or visit our website at **www.edc.org/WomensEquity.**

Disabilities and Gender Fact Sheet

The Laws

Persons with disabilities are covered by all civil rights laws and regulations such as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex equity in education) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (equity based on race, color, and national origin). In addition, five major regulations pertain to people with disabilities:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title V—Section 504 is considered to be the major U.S. civil rights law for persons with disabilities. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance and in all agencies of the executive branch of the federal government.

P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975—P.L. 94-142 guarantees a "free and appropriate public education" to all students with disabilities. It assures safeguards and involvement for parents and students in the process of evaluation, development of written IEPs, and placement.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Educational Act of 1984—This law requires that one-half of federal monies allocated to states for vocational education programs must be used to assist students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, or low income students. Ten percent of the money thus set aside must be used for costs related to mainstreaming students with disabilities.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990[1]—The ADA is seen as an omnibus civil rights act for persons with disabilities. The act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in crucial areas such as employment, housing, public accommodations, travel, communications, and activities of state and local governments.

The IDEA '97—The IDEA Amendments of 1997 represent a major milestone in the education of children with disabilities—the first major revision to P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, in more than 23 years. IDEA '97 retains and strengthens

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[1] S.M. Schaffer and J.M. Greenberg, *Gender and Disability: A Manual for Training* (Md.: Vocational Equity Technical Assistance Project, University of Maryland).

the basic rights and protections under IDEA, among them the right to a "free appropriate public education" for all children with disabilities, including children suspended or expelled from school; and the procedural safeguards rights for these children and their parents.

IDEA '97 also places a new and heightened emphasis on improving educational results for children with disabilities, such as provisions ensuring that they have meaningful access to the general curriculum through their individualized educational plan (IEP), including them in general education reform efforts related to accountability and high expectations, and focusing on improved teaching and learning.[2]

Facts from the U.S.

Most national statistics on people with disabilities are not broken down by gender. Although the number of students served, college participants, and workers among Americans with disabilities has increased, it is not clear how young women with disabilities are specifically affected by the newest laws. What we do know is that their wages are lower than those of their male counterparts, that they are less likely to work full time, and that they are continually deprived of adult role models because of inadequate media attention to women with disabilities.[3] However, researchers are beginning to recognize the need for analyses that are dissaggregated by gender, and consequently data regarding the issues of gender and disability are gradually becoming available.

School Enrollment

- According to the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and other studies, boys have a higher rate of disability than girls. Based on SIPP estimates, 8.5 million young people in the United States aged 21 and under have a disability. Boys and young men (12 percent) are more likely than girls and young women (8 percent) to have a disability.[4]
- Although girls and boys are equally represented in the school-age population, about two-thirds of students in special education are boys. The

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[2] IDEA, 1997.

[3] H. Rousso, "Women and Girls with Disabilities" EdEquity Discussion (Newton, Mass.: WEEA Equity Resource Center, November 1999) www.edc.org/WomensEquity.

[4] 20th Annual Report to Congress: Section II, II-25.

greatest disparities exist in the categories of learning disability and emotional disturbance, which have the most broadly defined eligibility criteria.[5]

Test Scores and Grades in Secondary School

- Overall, girls with and without disabilities do better in school than boys with and without disabilities. Girls receive better grades, are more likely to graduate from high school, and are less likely to be suspended or expelled.
- Boys do as well as girls on many standardized achievement tests and score slightly better than girls on 12th-grade math achievement.

Postsecondary Education and Training

- Despite their better academic performance, girls with disabilities do less well after high school than their male counterparts. Fewer women than men with disabilities participate in postsecondary education and training in the years after high school.[6]
- The federal-state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program provides services to assist people with disabilities in obtaining employment. The program served more than 1.2 million people in 1996. People with severe disabilities represented more than three-quarters of this group. Women represented 43.9 percent of the 589,472 cases closed in 1996. In that year, 213,790 people successfully found work as a result of these VR services. Of those whose cases were closed with employment as an outcome, 96,319 (45.1 percent) were women and 117,471 (54.9 percent) were men.[7]

Employment

- Among working-age people in 1998, only 2.5 million women, or 28.5 percent of those with a work disability, and 2.7 million men, or 32.3 percent of those with a work disability, participated in the labor force. In contrast, 75.8 percent of nondisabled women (59.7 million) and 89.1 percent of nondisabled men (68.2 million) participated in the labor force.
- According to SIPP data from 1994-1995, only 24.7 percent of women with severe disabilities had a job or business. Roughly 68 percent of women with

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[5] U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, 1998.

[6] 20th Annual Report to Congress.

[7] Chartbook on Women and Disability in the United States, 1999, InfoUse.

mild disabilities are employed. Most women with disabilities work in technical, sales, and administrative support positions.[8]

- Women with disabilities make up the smallest percentage of the labor force.
- In the 1990s there have been no significant gains in the percentage of women with disabilities participating in the labor force.
- When controlling for other factors, young men with disabilities earn on average $1,814 more per year than young women with disabilities.[9]

Community Living

- Women are more likely than men to be living in poverty, and people with a work disability are much more likely than those with no work disability to be living below the poverty level. Based on Annual Demographic Survey estimates from 1992, among those aged between 16 and 64, women with a work disability have higher poverty rates (33.8 percent) than men with a work disability (24.2 percent). Women with a severe work disability (a condition that prevents them from working) have the highest poverty rates of all. Over 40 percent of women with severe disabilities are living in poverty, compared with 31.2 percent of men with a severe work disability. [10]
- Three to five years after leaving high school, over 30 percent of young women with disabilities are married, compared with 15 percent of males.[11]
- Women with disabilities experience all types of abuse (emotional, physical, and sexual) for significantly longer periods of time than do women without disabilities.

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[8] Ibid.

[9] 20th Annual Report to Congress.

[10] Chartbook on Women and Disability in the United States, 1999, InfoUse.

[11] U.S. Department of Education, OSERS, 1998.

Facts from Around the World

- Women with disabilities are the poorest of the poor around the world.
- There are few educational opportunities for girls with disabilities, and those that do exist are usually given to boys.
- The unemployment rate for women with disabilities in developing countries is virtually 100 percent.
- Women with disabilities have been forming their own self-help groups both nationally and globally.
- Women with disabilities experience a high incidence of abuse—physical, emotional, and sexual. Since most women with disabilities are hidden away at home, the abuse often happens within the family. [12]

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[12] The international statistics are from the Public Participation Program Canadian International Development Agency (www.pcs.mb.ca/-ccd/womefact.html).

Frequently Asked Questions on Disability Issues

Does the IDEA apply to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities?

The law allows federal funding for infant, toddler, and preschooler programs. It also clarifies that infants and toddlers should receive services in the home or in other natural settings where possible. The IDEA also improves the coordination and transition for children from infant and toddler programs to preschool programs.

How is the term "disability" defined by the IDEA?

As defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) the term "child with a disability" means a child

with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.[1]

Also covered under the legislation are children aged three to nine who experience developmental delays in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development.

How does the IDEA help children with disabilities reach higher levels of achievement?

The 1997 act aims to strengthen academic expectations and accountability for the nation's 5.4 million children with disabilities and to bridge the gap between what children with disabilities learn and what their non-disabled peers learn. From now on, the Individualized Education Program (IEP)—the plan that spells out the educational goals for each child and the services he or she will receive for his or her education—must relate more clearly to the general curriculum that

[1] IDEA, 1997.

children in regular classrooms receive. The law also requires making regular progress reports to parents, including children with disabilities in state and district assessments, and setting and reporting on performance goals just as is done for nondisabled children.

Under the IDEA, who is eligible to receive special education?

To receive special education, a child must meet two criteria: (1) He or she must have one or more of the following disabilities: autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment—including blindness,[2] and (2) he or she must require special education and related services. Not all children who have a disability require special education; many are able to and should attend school without any program modifications.

Can students with disabilities be placed in a "regular" classroom?

Yes, this is called inclusion. The IDEA mandates that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities . . . are educated with children who are not disabled." Data from the *National Longitudinal Transition Study,* a congressionally mandated project that tracks the outcomes of high school students with disabilities, indicate that the success of students with disabilities in regular classes is related to supports and services they receive. For example, students with disabilities who participate in vocational education courses have fewer absences, better grades, and higher graduation rates than those who do not. Children are better served by individualized investigation into the specific supports and services needed to ensure their success in the regular classroom than by segregated placement in an existing location that claims to have the services the child needs.[3]

What if I think my child may have a learning disability?

The first step is to ask the school to evaluate the child. Parents should call or write the Director of Special Education or the principal of their child's school to request an assessment of their child. In cases where the public school is first to notice that a child may need special help because he or she may have a disability, the school must evaluate that child at no cost to the parents.

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[2] Ibid.

[3] www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA/

The school does not have to evaluate a child just be-
cause the parents have asked. However, if the school
refuses to evaluate a child because it does not think
that the child has a disability or needs special edu-
cation, it must let the parents know of its decision,
and the reason for it, in writing. In that case, par-
ents can

- ask the school system for information about its
  special education policies.
- contact their state's Parent Training and Infor-
  mation (PTI) center. The PTI is an excellent re-
  source for parents to learn more about special
  education, the law, and parents' rights and re-
  sponsibilities.

How are parents of children with disabilities involved in decisions about their child's education?

Parental (or guardian) involvement is increased under
the recent IDEA legislation. In all states, parents
are now included in eligibility and placement deci-
sions about their child with disabilities. The par-
ents' role is critical because they will be the one
consistent factor across their child's educational ex-
perience. The most effective tool parents have in as-
suring an appropriate education for their child is the
IEP. The new law also aims to increase parental in-
volvement by requiring regular progress reports on
students' academic goals set forth in the IEP.

What is an IEP?

The IEP is an Individualized Education Program—a legal
document that establishes the services necessary for a
student's education. Parents and professionals are
equal partners in the IEP process. This may not mean
equal knowledge of educational terms or procedures,
but it does mean equal status in decision making. Par-
ents have valuable information concerning their son,
daughter, or family member. The focus upon functional,
life-centered education for learners with disabilities
requires information pertaining to the student's home,
community experiences, and skills. Parents and family
members have a wealth of information in this regard
and should actively participate in IEP decisions.

What are some good resources for career/STW planning for students with disabilities?

A variety of employment programs are offered in many
states. The school's transition team (as required by

IDEA) should be able to describe the options to families. Offerings may include variations on competitive employment and supported employment opportunities.

Competitive employment consists of regular jobs in the community performed by people with and without disabilities. Supported employment refers to paid work for people with disabilities who need special assistance in learning the job requirements and performing the associated tasks. Support can be provided through a job coach (a trainer) for an individual worker in the regular employment setting. Support can also be provided by having a supervisor oversee a crew or enclave of people with disabilities working together at a job site. Although states also fund segregated work and vocational skills development programs, such as sheltered workshops and work activity centers, many states are deemphasizing these programs and converting them to programs that help people obtain jobs in integrated settings.[4]

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[4]The ARC website (www.thearc.org/faqs/transit.html).

Resources

WEEA Services

The WEEA Equity Resource Center at EDC can help you find the tools you need to create gender-fair multicultural learning environments. Call the Center's hotline at 800-225-3088 or TTY 800-354-6798 for resources and referrals.

The Center's website is full of exciting information and tools, from fun facts about the history of equity to a list of practical curricula designed to help make any subject gender-fair. The Center's website was designed to be accessible to users with disabilities. **www.edc.org/WomensEquity**

EDEQUITY (the Educational Equity Discussion List) is designed to encourage discussion about international theory and practice. To subscribe, send e-mail to <Majordomo@mail.edc.org>. Leave the subject line blank and write the following in the body of the message: subscribe edequity

The WEEA Digest

The *WEEA Digest* is a brief journal offering cutting-edge discussions of educational theory and research, field-based perspectives, and resource listings from the WEEA Equity Resource Center.

The digests make an ideal addition to conference and workshop registration packets, course reading lists, and research collections. To order digests in packs of 50, contact the distribution center at 800-793-5076, send an e-mail to <edcorders@abdintl.com> or order using the attached form. Packs of 50 are $8.95 plus shipping.

You may request single copies of any *WEEA Digest* free of charge, subject to availability. Contact us for a full listing of titles: call toll-free at 800-225-3088 (TTY 800-354-6798) or e-mail at <WEEACtr@edc.org>, or download them from our website at **www.edc.org/WomensEquity.**

The recent issue ***Connecting Gender and Disability*** is included in this packet (after page 16).

A Positive Sense of Self for Girls with Disabilities
This article by Harilyn Rousso, contained in the March 1995 *WEEA Digest* "Middle School Voices on Gender Identity," offers a summary of views of 60 ethnically di-

verse adolescent girls with physical, sensory, and
cognitive disabilities living in the New York City
area. It discusses the difficulties they face as young
women, especially social acceptance, exclusion, and
oppression.

WEEA Publications

To order any of the following publications, call our toll-free order line at **800-793-5076**.

Barrier Free: Serving Young Women with Disabilities (1991)

For middle and high school teachers, counselors, and administrators, and anyone who works with adolescents with disabilities. *Barrier Free* is intended for anyone who works with teenage girls with disabilities. It is designed to increase the educational, vocational, and social options of adolescent girls with physical or sensory disabilities. It outlines practical steps for training groups who provide services to this often overlooked population. In addition to offering guidance, visualizations, brainstorming sessions, and discussions, the book includes down-to-earth information on language, accessibility, recruitment, transportation, sexuality, and program adoption. (53 pp.) By Linda Marks and Harilyn Rousso • #2732 • $12.00

Gender Matters: An Inservice Training Program for Educators Working with Students with Disabilities (2001)

For special education coordinators and directors, gender equity coordinators, consultants, educators, and administrators. *Gender Matters* was written to enable one or more facilitators to conduct inservice training on gender equity for professionals and paraprofessionals who work with students with disabilities. The information is particularly relevant to educators working with middle, junior high, and high school students. The program will

- assist educators in understanding issues related to gender and disability;
- provide a comprehensive overview of gender inequitable practices in education, and
- give educators the tools they need to provide gender equitable educational practices to students receiving special education services. (155 pp.)

By Harilyn Rousso and Michael Wehmeyer. • #2814 • Call 800-225-3088 to receive the publication announcement for this essential resource.

Raising the Grade: A Title IX Curriculum (1998)

For K-12. Building an effective classroom for all boys and girls is the first step toward increasing student achievement. This curriculum is a collection of fun and interesting activities designed to strengthen students' abilities to work together across gender, race, ethnicity, and disability. (174 pp.) By Susan J. Smith and Paula M. Fleming. • #2810 • $17.00

Strategies for Maintaining a Support Group (1989)
For support group facilitators and people with dis-
abilities. Women with disabilities face special trials
that only other women with disabilities can fully un-
derstand. Designed to help support groups establish
healthy, supportive ways to work through difficulties
and keep going. (64 pp.) By Pearl R. Paulson • #2706 •
$12.00

Additional Resources

Are Special Educators Prepared to Meet the Sex Education Needs of Their Students? A Progress Report (1996)
Journal of Special Education (29): 433-41. By D. May and D. Kundert. This resource discusses the inadequacy of training that special educators and all educators receive on this topic.

Building Community: A Manual Exploring Issues of Women and Disability (2000)
This manual examines the connections between discrimination based on gender and discrimination based on disability. It contains background information on disability rights and on women and girls with disabilities, workshop formats, an annotated bibliography and selected readings. This expanded edition also contains supplementary workshop and related materials on the needs of teenagers. Developed by the Women and Disability Awareness Project. Available in print, Braille, and on cassette. • Educational Equity Concepts, Inc., 100 Fifth Avenue, Second Floor, New York, NY 10011; 212-243-1110, **www.edequity.org**

The Chartbook on Women and Disability in the United States (1999)
Created by InfoUse, this resource brings together comprehensive data on women and girls with disabilities from various sources. By Lita Jans and Susan Stoddard. Available to view online or download. • InfoUse, Berkeley, CA, 510-549-6520,
www.infouse.com/disabilitydata/ womendisability.html
Also available in alternative formats from U. S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Washington, D.C, 202-205-5633, TDD 800-877-8339,
www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/NIDRR

Feminism and Disability (1997)
By Barbara Hillyer. Written from the perspective of a feminist who is also the mother of a daughter with multiple disabilities. Chapter topics include language, productivity and pace, grief, mother blaming, nature and technology, passing, caregivers and difference, codependence and independence, and recovery programs (320 pp.). • University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman, OK 73019, **www.ou.edu/oupress** or
www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/98/oklahoma/1441.ctl

Gender and Disability Policy (1997)
This special issue of *The Journal of Disability Policy* includes nine empirical and theoretical articles by scholars in disability studies, personal statements by

five prominent women with disabilities who identify current issues, and book reviews. Articles cover aspects of gender and disability differences in education and occupation of adults with hearing loss; social security disability decisions; predictors of wages; social patterning of work disability among women in Canada; access to acute medical care; abuse of women with disabilities; mental health and women with disabilities; a feminist perspective on the social causes of impairment, disability, and abuse; and an overview of arenas for policy change concerning women with disabilities in developing countries (262 pp.). Available on tape or diskette. • Department of Rehabilitation Education and Research, University of Arkansas, 346 N. West Avenue, Fayetteville, AR 72701, 501-575-3253

Having a Daughter with a Disability: Is It Different for Girls? (1990)

This issue of the *NICHCY News Digest* focuses on some of the realities parents must face in helping their daughters with disabilities to become more self-reliant and ultimately independent. The issue concludes with a bibliography of readings, organizations, and other sources of information. • National Information Center for Children and Youth with Handicaps, P. O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013-1492, voice/TTY 800-695-0285, **www.nichcy.org**

The More We Get Together: Women and Disability (1992)

Edited by Houston Stewart, Beth Percival, and Elizabeth R. Epperly. This resource is the result of a 1990 meeting of 300 women held on Prince Edward Island as the 14th conference of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. The 22 papers are divided into the following topics: difference and dis/ability; herstory; caregiving and mothering; and language and writing. • Gynergy Books, PO. Box 2023, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island C1A 7N7 Canada

NICHCY Sexuality Education for Children and Youth with Disabilities (#ND17) (1992)

NICHCY is the National Information Clearinghouse on Handicapped Children and Youth. This issue of the *NICHCY News Digest* provides an overview of the compelling need for sex education for students with disabilities. • NICHCY, P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013-1492; voice/TTY 800-695-0285, **<NICHCY@aed.org>** **www.nichcy.org**

Special Education Resources on the Internet (SERI)

Special Education Resources on the Internet (SERI) is a collection of Internet accessible information resources of interest to those involved in the fields

related to special education.
www.hood.edu/seri/serihome. htm

Turning on Learning: Five Approaches for Multicultural Teaching Plans for Race, Class, Gender, and Disability, 2nd Edition (1998)
By Carl A. Grant and Christine E. Sleeter. *Turning on Learning* is grounded in theories and philosophies supporting multicultural education. Special attention is given to concerns related to race, class, gender relations, and disability. In addition to providing lesson plans, this book teaches processes for modifying and developing existing curriculum and instruction. (336 pp.) • John Wiley & Sons, ISBN 0471364452

A Woman's Guide to Coping with Disability (1994)
This book addresses the special needs of women with disabilities and chronic conditions, such as social relationships, sexual functioning, pregnancy, child rearing, care giving, and employment. Special attention is paid to ways in which women can advocate for their rights with the U.S. health care and rehabilitation systems. Written for women of all ages, the book has chapters on the disabilities that are most prevalent in women or likely to affect the roles and physical functions unique to women. (224 pp.) • Resources for Rehabilitation, Lexington, MA; 781-862-6455

Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives (1998)

Among the diverse articles in this volume are several representing the viewpoints of women with disabilities, including one on reproductive rights by Marsha Saxton and one on parents with disabilities by Carol Gill. Edited by Gwyn Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey. • Mayfield Publishing Company,1280 Villa Street, Mountain View, CA 94041; 800-433-1279, **www.mayfieldpub.com**

Women with Disabilities: Essays in Psychology, Culture, and Politics (1990)

This invaluable resource, while somewhat outdated, raises themes in the introduction that are relevant today. Edited by Michelle Fine and Adrienne Asch. • Temple University Press, **www.temple.edu/tempress** ISBN 0877226695

Women and Girls with Disabilities: Defining the Issues—An Overview (1999)

Published jointly by the Center for Women Policy Studies and Women & Philanthropy. By Barbara Waxman Fiduccia and Leslie R. Wolfe. • Center for Women Policy Studies 202-872-1770, or Women & Philanthropy at 202-887-9660

Additional Resource Organizations

There are six Regional Resource Centers for Special Education in the U.S. Their contact information and region designations are listed on page 12 of the enclosed *WEEA Digest.*

The ARC

500 E. Border Street, Suite 300, Arlington, TX 76101, 817-261-6003, **TheArc.org/welcome.html**

Berkeley Planning Associates

440 Grand Avenue, Suite 500, Oakland, CA 94610; 510-465-7884, **www.bpacal.com**

The Center on Human Policy at Syracuse University

805 South Crouse Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13244-2280; 315-443-3851

Disabilities Unlimited

114 East 32nd Street, Suite 701, New York, NY 10016; 212-673-4284

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund Inc.

2212 Sixth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710, voice/TTY: 510-644-2555, <**dredf@dredf.org**> **www.dredf.org**

Disabled Women's Alliance: Disabled Women on the Web

www.disabilityhistory.org/women/

Educational Equity Concepts
100 Fifth Avenue, Second Floor, New York, NY 10011;
voice/TTY 212-243-1110, **www.edequity.org**

IDEA Practices
Education Development Center, Inc., 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02458-1060, 877-CEC-IDEA, TDD: 703-264-9480, **www.ideapractices.org**

MIUSA (Mobility International USA)
P. O. Box 10767, Eugene, OR 97440, USA; voice/TTY 541-343-1284, **www.miusa.org**

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
P. O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013-1492; voice/TTY 800-695-0285, **www.nichcy.org**

National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC)
8455 Colesville Road, Suite 935, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3319; voice 800-346-2742, TTY (301) 495-5626, **www.naric.com/naric**

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)
U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-0498; 1-800-872-5327 or TTY 800-437-0833, **www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS**

Special Education Resources on the Internet (SERI)
www.hood.edu/seri/serihome.htm

For more information about additional resources, to consult with some-one about your interests and concerns, to network with other organiza-tions and educators both nationally and in your local area, or for any other educational equity questions you may have, call the WEEA Equity Resource Center's technical assistance hotline at 800-225-3088.

Checklists

Including Women and Girls with Disabilities

- **Make adaptations** using low-cost materials. Consider the needs of women with disabilities. To find creative solutions to accessibility issues seek the expertise of other creative thinkers and problem-solvers in the community, such as mechanics, tailors, bicycle repair persons, teachers, and artists.
- **Assess** the location of publicly accessed areas: are there accessible ramps and restrooms in the buildings? Use meeting places that are accessible to people with disabilities. Consider building ramps over curbs and steps to make meeting places accessible.
- **Provide alternatives** for individuals who cannot read print materials. Arrange for sign language interpreters for people who use sign language, or provide for other creative methods like writing, drawing, or gestures to communicate. Caption all videotapes. Use Telephone Devices for the Deaf (TDDs). Offer a system of individual assistance for persons with intellectual disabilities or learning disabilities.
- **Offer** arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities get to meetings and activities.
- **Include** individuals with disabilities at all levels of the organization: planning, funding, implementation, and evaluation.
- **Reach out** to encourage their active participation. Incorporate individuals with disabilities in public campaigns. Build relationships with organizations that are run by or provide services to individuals with disabilities.
- **Work** directly with organizations of and for women with disabilities. Contribute services or materials.
- **Support** efforts of women with disabilities.

Excerpted from *Loud, Proud & Passionate: Including Women with Disabilities in International Development Projects.* Used by permission of Mobility International USA (**www.miusa.org).**

Transition from School to Community

All students need to acquire the skills necessary to live in their communities. They need to know how to shop, use the post office, and go to the doctor or clinic. Students need to learn such skills as how to participate in social and religious activities and how to drive or use public transportation. Schools can provide these opportunities to students with mental retardation, at least in part, by ensuring that the students

- receive an individualized educational program based on their unique characteristics and preferences
- receive instruction based on curricular material that is functional (based on community-oriented needs) and chronologically age-appropriate
- follow the same daily schedule as that followed by all students in their neighborhood school
- participate in recreational and extracurricular programs with sufficient support if necessary
- develop meaningful social interactions with other students
- receive related services such as speech, physical, or occupational therapy in accordance with individual needs receive transportation services allowing participation in school activities on the same basis as other students

Adapted from The ARC website. (**www.thearc.org/faqs/transit.html**).

Disabilities FAQ Packet
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