EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
Who Are Identified As Exceptional?

- 6.5 million children in the U.S.

- Categories include:
  - Learning disabled
  - Communication disorders
  - Mental retardation
  - Behavior disorders
  - Physically impaired
  - Gifted and talented
Learning Disabilities

- Approximately 10% of total population in U.S. is identified as learning disabled
- Represents 46% of children receiving special services
- Children have difficulty learning despite having average or above average intelligence
- Must be a discrepancy between intelligence and achievement
Learning Disabilities

- Difficulties may be with:
  - Processing
  - Language
  - Reading and writing
  - Mathematical understanding

- Causes may be genetic or environmental
  - Family history
  - Exposure to teratogens
  - Birthing difficulties
  - Prematurity
Communication Disorders

- 18% of children receiving services

- Difficulties with
  - Expressive language
  - Language comprehension
  - Speech
  - Social interactions
Mental Retardation

- 10% of children receiving services
- Causes may be genetic or environmental

- Four levels of severity, based on IQ scores
  - **Mild**
    - 85% of identified population
    - IQ of 50-70
  - **Moderate**
    - 10% of identified population
    - IQ of 35-55
Mental Retardation

- **Severe**
  - 3-4% of identified population
  - IQ of 20-40

- **Profound**
  - 1-2% of identified population
  - IQ below 20
ADHD
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- 3-5% of total population
- Diagnosed 6x more in boys than girls
- Contributing factors
  - Family history
  - Teratogens
  - Single parenthood
  - Parenting style
  - Level of social support
Diagnosing ADHD

Children under 7 years old have these observable behaviors in several settings, for longer than 6 months:

- **Inattention**: easily distracted, makes careless mistakes, forgetful
- **Hyperactivity**: fidgety, talks excessively, difficulty sitting still
- **Impulsivity**: difficulty awaiting turn, interrupts, doesn’t consider consequences of actions
Emotional & Behavioral Disorders

- 1-2% of total population
- **External behaviors**: conduct and defiance
- **Internal behaviors**: anxiety and depression

**Contributing factors:**
- Biological - temperament, neurological abnormalities, family history
- Environmental - parenting strategies, peer and school influences
Autism Spectrum

- Range of symptoms:
  - Communication: delays, impaired conversation, lack of symbolic play
  - Social interaction: poor eye contact, lack of social give and take
  - Behavior: repetitive motor movements, adherence to routines

- Incidence: 1 in 155 children.
Gifted and Talented

- Exceptional intellectual strengths
- IQ over 130
- Divergent thinking
- Related to both genetic and environmental influences
- Not federally mandated, but many states fund GATE programs
## Ethnic Disparities: Who’s Receiving Special Services
(in California, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>% of Total Population</th>
<th>% of Total Gifted Pop</th>
<th>% Identified Special Ed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasians</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-Americans</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian-Americans</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American-Indian</td>
<td>.8%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
<td>.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legal Statutes

- **1975 - Education of All Handicapped Children Act**
  - protected the rights and met the needs of children with disabilities and their families.

- **Before 1975**
  - a disproportionate number of minority children in special education, labeled and forgotten.
Education of All
Handicapped Children Act

- Mandated that all students with identified disabilities (ages 5 - 21) were entitled to a
  - free
  - appropriate
  - public education
  - in the least restricted environment

- 1992 - Reauthorization of the law - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- 2004 - Updated IDEA
IDEA STATUTES

- Free and appropriate public education

- Least restrictive environment
  - Students placed with non-disabled peers as much as possible
    - **Mainstream**
      - RSP - less than 50% of the day
      - SDC - more than 50% of the day
    - **Full inclusion**
      - Student receive education exclusively in the general education classroom
IDEA STATUTES
continued

- Individual evaluation
- Individualized education plan
- Identification and services to all children
- Provision for related services
IDEA STATUTES
continued

- Due Process Rights for Parents
  - Informed consent when child is referred for testing
  - Parents included in IEP
  - Advocate and translator offered
  - IEP is updated annually
  - Schools must offer services recommended in IEP
Federal Support for IDEA

- Government is mandated to pay 40% of services, but pays only 20%.

- Results in shortfall of $10.6 billion.

- Average cost to educate exceptional child is $17,000.
Teacher’s Process for Identification of Students

- Assess and observe student
- Modify the instruction and environment
- Consult with parents and resources on faculty
- Request student study team
- Recommend testing by psychologist
Working with Parents

Be aware of parents’
- feelings of concern, guilt, embarrassment,
- child-rearing practices and family roles
- views on disability, medicine, sickness
- family structure and home culture
- perceptions of schools and teachers