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ABSTRACT

Provided is the transcript of Part II of a two-part series on education for the handicapped, presented by Options in Education--a weekly radio broadcast devoted to coverage of news, features, policy, and people in the field of education on National Public Radio. Such issues in special education as mainstreaming; implementation of Public Law 94-142; rights of states, teachers, and parents; rights for the retarded; and identification and labeling of the handicapped are discussed. Among participants listed are disabled persons, educators, legislators A. Quie and J. Anderson, and such experts in the field of special education as J. Gallagher, C. Polivka, M. Sabo, F. Weintraub, D. Honetschlager, R. Wedl, M. Giffin, D. Hill, J. Ryor, J. Knutson, and H. Hodgkinson. (IM)

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THE WEEK OF JULY 12, 1976

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OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is an electronic weekly magazine devoted to coverage of news, features, policy & people in the field of education. The program is available for broadcast to the 185 member stations of National Public Radio.

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EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED

PART II

(OPENING MUSICAL THEME)

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair with NPR's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

(MUSIC)

OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is a news magazine about all the issues in education -- from the ABC's of preschool to the alphabet soup of government programs. If you've ever been to school, we have something that will interest you.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow. Not too many years ago, children with handicaps were hidden away. The idea of civil rights for the handicapped was unheard of, but things are changing.

YETTA GALIBER: It's really not easy to fight this system.

WOMAN: It's really amazing how much affection you can have between the non-handicapped and handicapped youngster.

JOHN BOBO: You see it in their faces. You know that they feel uncomfortable.

LAURA RAUSHER: Normal kids don't learn to accept the children, and the kids that are handicapped don't learn to live with the so-called "normal" children.

JOHN BOBO: They shove us aside in the corner, and they don't have to be reminded that these things exist.

WOMAN: We've lost a generation or two.

JOHN CALLAHAN: They're saying they're above the fray, and they're more important than anyone else. That just doesn't wash.

JOHN BOBO: They say, "Hey, oh, I'm sorry, you're an amputee." They don't say, "Hey, what are your views on this and that?"

(MUSIC)

THURSTON: You have to know where to go to obtain your rights as a handicapped person, to confront that school and say, "You have no right to deny me to be what I want to be." So, it's all in the handicapped person knowing and preparing theirself, along with being aggressive and just going forth in an aggressive way. Now, society might say you're too aggressive, but you have to be, and by making yourself be heard, you're representing other handicapped individuals who do not feel that they are ready to be that aggressive to really put themselves out here in society like that.

MERROW: That was Lewis Thurston, who has been blind since 1962. As Thurston indicated, you can't talk about the handicapped without talking about rights. But whose rights? Educating the handicapped raises questions of special interests -- states' rights, teachers' rights and civil rights. Dr. James Gallagher, Director of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, explains to Gary Shivers of station WUNC, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

DR. JAMES GALLAGHER

GALLAGHER: People forget about the handicapped. Other priorities take precedence. So, if you ask somebody, "Are you against education for a deaf child, or a child who is blind," they'll say, "Of course, I'm not."

SHIVERS: It's like beating your wife.

GALLAGHER: Yes, but, when you say, "Well, here are the funds that are necessary to carry that out," then they say, "Well, maybe we ought to delay that for a year or two, because there are so many other important things we also have to spend money on." And, so, starting about ten to twelve years ago, there started to be a series of federal laws to try and mandate and guarantee that resources would, in fact, get down to the child and their families. It started in Pennsylvania, in which a parents' group brought suit against the State of Pennsylvania to say that the State Constitution says that a free public education should be provided for all children. And, as the lawyer making the case pointed out, it doesn't say for all children, except those who are deaf or blind or mentally retarded. It says all children and that, therefore, the state has an obligation to follow through on the constitutional statement, and most state constitutions have a phrase very similar to that. And, so, these courts have almost invariably found in favor of the plaintiff. In that instant, they say "That's right, that's what the constitution says, and that's what the state has an obligation to provide." And when the state says, "We don't have enough money," they say, "That's no excuse -- that you either have to find the money or you have to reallocate the resources that are now being spent on education, but there's no reason why these youngsters should be the special ones to suffer for your not having enough money to provide education for all children."

And what these court decisions have done, they have changed the kind of climate, in that the parent no longer has to go hat-in-hand to the local school system and ask them to be magnanimous and generous and provide some special services for these kids. All they're asking for is what the law says they should have -- their legal rights.

BLAIR: As Dr. Gallagher pointed out, litigation often precedes legislation. The handicapped, their parents, and other supporters went to court for their rights and won. That persuaded other states to pass handicapped legislation before they could be sued. Florida, for example, developed the first Bill of Rights for the Retarded, passed in 1975.

MERROW: Florida's bill speaks to the most basic human rights, rights that most of us have assumed are already guaranteed for everyone, like, dignity, privacy, humane care, the right to worship, and so forth.

BLAIR: A booklet prepared for retarded citizens tells them, "You have the right to personal possessions. This means that you may keep and use things that you like. You may have things that are yours alone, which are shared with others only if you choose to share them."

Christian Polivka of the Florida State Division of Retardation tells John more about the Bill of Rights for the Retarded.

CHRISTIAN POLIVKA

POLIVKA: The bill doesn't grant retarded unusual or new rights. It just puts in law the rights that they already have.

MERROW: Why is that unique? Doesn't that happen around the country?

POLIVKA: No, as a matter of fact, it doesn't happen anywhere around the country. Other states have recognized their obligation and their right to provide services to retarded people and other developmentally disabled people. But the statutes themselves, the state statutes, have always stopped short of anything as comprehensive as this bill. Advocates of the retarded have strongly pushed for some kind of legal document proclaiming the rights of retarded people.

MERROW: But isn't there a danger to passing legislation like that? It must carry with it a heavy financial burden, and isn't there a danger that Florida won't be able to meet the costs and, therefore, will be in line for more suits?

POLIVKA: Well, I think that's always a possibility. The requirement is now placed, dually, I think, on the bureaucracy as well as the legislature. We, in the bureaucracy, or in the agencies responsible for providing services, now have a mandate to make sure that all of the provisions of the bill which can be implemented without costs, are implemented. So, that administrative changes which can mean a difference between granting someone rights and preventing them from enjoying them, are all done.

MERROW: What about the things that cost money -- will they be done?

POLIVKA: Well, the bill specifies that a plan is developed that will indicate all of the costs for implementing the entire bill, as well as a five year phase-in. This plan was submitted in January, and the legislature is reviewing it now.

MERROW: Why did Florida move -- why did Florida pass such legislation?

POLIVKA: I think it's an interesting combination of what has been happening historically throughout the country in the mental retardation movement and what's been happening outside of the movement, in terms of lawsuits and other activities and other legal actions that have been filed for retarded people. For example, the Willowbrook and Wyatt Stickny cases both specify the constitutional right to treatment and the right to be free from harm.

MERROW: Let's take those in order, now, Willowbrook -- what's the result of that case?

POLIVKA: Well, Willowbrook was a very large institution, and the case centered around whether or not people who were institutionalized had the right to be free from any kind of harmful procedures within the institution.

MERROW: And they do have that right, because of that case?

POLIVKA: Right.

MERROW: Okay, now you said Wyatt Stickny, also. What's that case?

POLIVKA: Okay, Wyatt Stickny refers to the Partlow Institution in Alabama, and Partlow is an institution for the mentally retarded. The case itself centered around whether or not individuals in that institution had the constitutional right to treatment, that is, programs that would help them increase their independence and teach them things.

MERROW: So, as a result of that case, then, retarded people around the country have a constitutional right to treatment.

POLIVKA: That's right -- that's exactly right.

MERROW: Centuries ago, retarded people would be stoned to death or something to that effect. I mean, there was a real stigma attached to that. Are we even more generous -- I know we don't stone people to death.

POLIVKA: Well, in the early twentieth century retarded people were seen as feeble-minded. As a matter of fact, the American Association on Mental Deficiency used to be the American Association on the Feeble Minded. Epileptics were also felt to be feeble minded, which was an incredible misnomer. Retarded people were felt to have criminal tendencies. There just was an incredibly poor notion of what it meant to be retarded. Now, I think, through public education and information, peoples' opinions are changing dramatically. And retarded people are becoming more aware of their own rights.

MERROW: Miss Christian Polivka, who is head of Planning and Evaluation Section in the Retardation Program Office in the State of Florida.

(MUSIC)

BLAIR: Filing and winning lawsuits in all fifty states would have taken immense effort and even more time and money. So, as other minority groups have done, the handicapped turned to Washington and the Congress. Their four-year lobbying effort proved successful in 1975, with the passage of Public Law 94-142, the "Education of All Handicapped Children Act." PL 94-142, as it is commonly known, requires individualized programs, parental participation, identification of all handicapped children, and "mainstreaming" -- that's placing handicapped children in regular schools whenever possible.

MERROW: These requirements have provoked an angry reaction in some state capitals. "Too much federal interference" is a common complaint. Later in the program we'll hear from state officials and educators in Minnesota where the resentment is running high.

BLAIR: Another common complaint is that the Congress isn't providing enough money to go along with the new restrictions and requirements. What's more, most of the money that Congress does provide will go directly to the local school district. That displeases the state departments of education which, under the old legislation, got 100 percent of the federal money for educating the handicapped.

Dr. James Gallagher, who used to direct the federal Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and now runs the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center in North Carolina, talks about the requirements of PL 94-142.

DR. JAMES GALLAGHER

The federal legislation asks the states to present a plan as to how they are going to, in fact, educate all their handicapped children. When they present a plan that's accepted, then the federal government will provide additional funds and resources that will help the states to carry out these plans. The parents are mandated to be in on the planning for their children, and the school has responsibility for reporting to the parents on a regular basis as to the progress which is being made and that the individual plan for each child would be available for study by the parents so that the parents know exactly what the school is trying to do, and how they're trying to do it. So, it's setting up a variety of administrative changes for the schools, who often have not been that active in bringing the parents into the program. So, there will be a lot of struggling about implementation of this legislation. There is also a strong requirement for the federal government to monitor these programs, to make sure that the programs are having an impact and that they are being carried out. And that puts the federal government in a much more active role in terms of looking over the shoulder of the states to make sure that they're carrying out these requirements.

So, it's a landmark piece of legislation, because it's the first piece of legislation that says, "We expect that every handicapped child will get some kind of appropriate service, and that no child, wherever he's born in the United States, should be without some kind of recourse, and his family should be without some kind of recourse, in terms of providing for his needs." And we just haven't done that before.

MERROW: Dr. James Gallagher of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center in North Carolina, talking with Reporter Gary Shivers of station WUNC, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

> MARTIN SABO: I found it very objectionable. It's an attempt by federal government to put a few dollars in special education and, then, to attempt to dictate how the program should be run.

BLAIR: Dr. Gallagher talked about the federal government peering over the states' shoulders, and Martin Sabo feels the feds breathing down his neck. Sabo is Speaker of the House in the Minnesota State legislature. Sabo is also President of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Just before testifying before a Congressional committee in Washington recently, Sabo spoke with John.

MARTIN SABO

SABO: I think that in the State of Minnesota we get about $2 million. We have to spend well in excess of $100 million a year in state and local funds in special education, and I'm inclined to think we know a little bit more about how to run that program than the federal Congress does.

MERROW: What I hear is that Minnesota and other states are upset because under the old legislation 100 percent of the federal funds went to the states. Now, under the new legislation, after one year, 75 percent of the money will simply pass through the state mechanisms and go to the local communities. And, therefore, the states are angry because they're losing control of the money, not the amount of money.

SABO: Well, the passroad provisions aren't really what upset me. It's more the attempt of the federal government to detail down to the local school district how a local school district communicates with a parent. And all the way through, incredible reporting requirements and incredible studies are required, and hardly any dollars. It just makes no sense.

BLAIR: Martin Sabo, Minnesota Speaker of the House and President of the National Conference of State Legislatures, and an opponent of the federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act. One of the main authors of the act is Dr. Frederick Weintraub, Chief Lobbyist for the Council of Exceptional Children. He defends the legislation to John.

DR. FREDERICK WEINTRAUB

WEINTRAUB: I have difficulty -- I've spent a lot of time talking to the people in Minnesota. Interestingly, I hear that coming out of the state education agency, but I've talked to hundreds of local school administrators in Minnesota, and I don't hear that. Children are located in local school districts, and while the act uses the state as a mechanism. . .

MERROW: As a passthrough.

WEINTRAUB: In the passthrough sense, the locals have to meet state criteria, etc. It still puts the primary focus on the local. It puts the money there and, in fact, in many ways, they act as a revenue sharing act that says, "Here's the money - spend it like you want." The act says, "You must serve all your handicapped children, and if you don't there's a grievance procedure, whereby the child's parent, or an advocate for the child, can come in and challenge you. And there's a fair hearing to protect both the schools and the parents." It then says, "If you do all of those things and if we're not hearing any complaints, and you meet those requirements of the law, then here's money based upon the number of kids that you're serving, and you can do whatever you want with that money. You can use it to pay your teacher salaries. You can use it to build your buildings. You can use it to buy new materials. We're not going to tell you how to spend your money."

MERROW: But you're going to come check.

WEINTRAUB: But you just have to make sure you do what this law requires for children and the procedures to handle complaints, and to me, that's exciting. That gives local authority and also creates realistic requirements on people. Is this federal law so radical? Does it require things that are not already required? In Minnesota, which you used as an example before, I can't find anything in this law that's not already mandated by Minnesota law. Therefore, does this create additional burdens, when they turn around and say, "Here's the federal government mandating, but not funding?" The federal government is really not requiring anything that the State of Minnesota doesn't already require. All it does is provide an additional compliance procedure.

Now, the notion here is that the federal government wants to help, but the federal government believes, at the same time, that there is a constitutional responsibility. The equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment says that you are not permitted -- It would have been very legal for the federal government to have required everything in this act and to have provided no money, because it is a civil rights act to protect the rights of these children which is guaranteed by the federal Constitition. And I really don't think that anyone expects the federal government to put up 100 percent of the money. In fact, if it were to put up 100 percent of the money, you would hear a whole other force screaming and yelling about the federal government usurping the local responsibilities of doing things.

MERROW: I'm glad you brought that up, because that is, of course, one of the other arguments about the bill -- a kind of states' rights question. Even now -- and I see you smile as I say that -- I hope you'll explain why.

WEINTRAUB: People say it's the state's right to determine education, and, in fact, it is. And I believe that and support that strongly. However, once the state has decided to provide an education for its citizens, as most state constitutions require, then the state cannot say that some can go to school or some can't go to school. The equal protection clause of the Constitution exceeds its controls. I think that there are some substantial issues as to relationship between the federal government and state government, just as there are substantial issues between state government and local government. Those of us in Washington usually hear the flap between state and federal. If you go into a state capitol, you hear a greater screaming and yelling between local school districts upset because the state is making them do things that they don't want to.

If we want to debate those, fine. But let's get on with the task of educating our handicapped children.

BLAIR: Dr. Frederick Weintraub of the Council for Exceptional Children in Washington. Weintraub's plea notwithstanding, politics won't go away. In fact, Weintraub and others who wrote the bill deliberately gave control of 75 percent of the funds to local school districts, and Weintraub and others expect that thousands of local school districts will make their voices heard every year in Washington at budget time.

MERROW: Many people in state government are angry about PL 94-142 and about this loss of power. From their perspective, the federal government is usurping power that rightfully belongs to the states. That's particularly galling in Minnesota, where state officials are proud of what they are doing for the handicapped. Dean Honetschlager is Director of Human Resources for the State Planning Agency..

<u>DEAN HONETSCHLAGER</u>

HONETSCHLAGER: I think the old game of expanding federal money has played itself out since the Great Society days. It has made the advocates see, and the special interest groups that have been established with federal monies in the state departments of education and local school districts, that more money does not solve all those problems. We made those mistakes several years before the feds tried to make us make them again. And we corrected them. Now, they want us to go back and make some mistakes that we had corrected. Where we are already expending and doing a good job for our citizens, we're being told we have to do it better.

BLAIR: Dean Honetschlager of the State Planning Agency in Minnesota. Minnesota Congressman Albert Quie, a Republican, is right in the middle of the controversy. Ranking member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, Quie is a strong supporter of most education legislation, yet he prefers the view that less government is better. He talked with John in Washington recently.

CONGRESSMAN ALBERT QUIE

MERROW: Some of the opponents of the bill are saying that this is going to be the straw that breaks the camel's back, and that this time the federal government has gone too far.

QUIE: I think it's the language that we put in, requiring hearings, and, so the final decision has to be made by the commissioner. I think that's what the real objection is in it. And I think we did go too far, but I don't feel too badly about it, because I think that once you do overstep, then, we could get a dialog going and try and find that ground that is acceptable. Prior to that, it was sort of like the salami method -- you just cut off a little bit at a time, and nobody was really objecting. So, I'm glad they are objecting, because we need to hear that voice.

MERROW: One place that the camel's back is bending mightily, if it hasn't, in fact, broken is your own State of Minnesota. There the objection seems to be that Minnesota already has a pretty good bill on handicapped, and we didn't need this federal bill, or so I hear.

QUIE: Or didn't need the federal direction -- I think that's true, but also looking at what Minnesota has done, I don't believe that this federal bill is inconsistent with it. And, so, I don't expect Minnesota to turn down the money next year.

MERROW: Would the interests of the handicapped be better served if we didn't have specific legislation like PL 94-142 and, instead, had something like block grants, or revenue sharing, where blocks of money would go to the states with provision that they be used for educating handicapped children?

QUIE: I think so -- in fact, I'd go even further and say a block of money made available for all handicapped and disadvantaged children, so that if any child is not progressing at the rate they should, then, whatever is needed be provided in special or compensatory education when they needed it, rather than wait until they become a statistic.

MERROW: Republican Congressman Al Quie of Minnesota.

BLAIR: As James Gallagher said earlier, nobody is really opposed to educating the handicapped. It's just that other priorities come first. The opposition to PL 94-142 ranges across the political spectrum, from those who feel that states' rights are being violated to those who feel that the federal government isn't providing enough help -- that is, money. Still others object to what they see as more red tape. Minnesota State Senator Jerry Anderson is somewhere in the middle.

SENATOR JERRY ANDERSON

ANDERSON: In Minnesota no state dollars will be expended to administer federal programs in special education.

MERROW: That's the hostility that everybody talks about. You passed a law saying you can't use any state money to administer

PL 94-142, and you do that, I guess, because you think that will keep the bureaucrats out, because it's going to cost more than the two million they're promising?

ANDERSON: This is essentially true. One of the problems is that we have a great number of small school districts in our state with very independent boards. For example, if you're talking about two or three children in a school district and they're confronted with 37 forms that they have to fill out for each individual child, my gut reaction is that they're not going to fill those forms out. The next question, then, is at the state level, if they're not filling them out at the local level, who at the state level is going to do this, what expertise are they going to have on that individual child when they send the form back to Washington to say "what a good job they're doing?"

MERROW: You folks in Minnesota feel that you're ahead of most states in the union, then, on the way that you educate handicapped kids?

ANDERSON: Yes, I can say unequivocally that I believe we are. I don't believe that at this time there are too many children in the State of Minnesota that aren't receiving some special education if the need is there.

MERROW: And all your problems, really, would go away if the federal government would send enough money.

ANDERSON: It would satisfy our objections -- let me put it that way.

MERROW: State Senator Jerry Anderson, Vice Chairman of the Senate Education Committee in Minnesota.

BLAIR: Robert Wadl works for the Minnesota State Department of Education, which is being bypassed by PL 94-142.

ROBERT WEDL

MERROW: What I hear is that the reason the state departments are upset is that they're going to lose that power and some money.

WEDL: I don't think they're going to lose the power. They're going to lose the direct authority to actually expend the finances via whatever system.

MERROW: Isn't that power?

WEDL: Yes, but the school districts will still have to adhere to the state rules, regulations and statutes as they expend the federal funds. So, the state still does have the ultimate control in assuring that the funds are appropriately utilized.

MERROW: If you'll forgive me, that seems to be either begging the question or naive to say that you still have the power when all you're doing is passing through the money. Sure, they have to obey the law, but you have to pass through 75 percent of the money now. And you're saying that doesn't bother you at all, so it seems.

WEDL: Well, if that's true, it doesn't bother the department agency in terms of policy, because they will still have to comply with the state rules and regulations.

MERROW: So, the hostility, such as it is, is because of complexity of reporting requirements, by and large?

WEDL: That has a great deal to do with the problems, right.

MERROW: Some people I talk to say there's a backlash coming -- there's so much federal legislation, so much regulation, that there's a backlash coming, and it's coming now, with this legislation involving the handicapped.

WEDL: We have certainly seen, perhaps, the start of some concerns relating to the fact that the dollar is not unlimited, and where are priorities going to lie. I think the cry of backlash sometimes is utilized as a way to frighten people not to do something that should be done for kids.

MERROW: We saw tangible evidence of that backlash this morning -- school superintendents, administrators, and parents standing up and saying to you, "Hey, what about my children, what about the normal children -- what kind of attention are they going to get?"

WEDL: I think we have to look at what type of attention the normal child currently is getting.

MERROW: What about the backlash -- that's what I'm talking about. Those were school people saying, "Hey, come on, stop paying all this attention to handicapped children."

WEDL: Were they really saying that, or were they saying, "Don't make us go through certain procedures to pay attention to handicapped children?"

MERROW: Which do you think it was?

WEDL: I think it was the latter. They were saying that they wanted to deliver appropriate services to kids, that they want to serve those kids with other kids when they can do so appropriately. I think what we have to look at is that all children have rights, and simply because one group says that we have some concerns about what you're doing for the whole group or one segment of the group, we cannot isolate and say, "Okay, we will allow discrimination to occur, rather than deal with the group as a whole," which is what we are indeed attempting to do.

MERROW: So, the cost of ending discrimination is going to be some discomfort for those school people, and some more papers to fill out?

WEDL: There will be some discomfort, certainly. Change is, perhaps, never comfortable.

MERROW: Bob Wadl, Assistant Director of Special Education in the Minnesota Department of Education.

BLAIR: Under present Minnesota law, local school districts have to report to the State Department of Education. Under PL 94-142, local districts and the State Education Department as well, will have to report to the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped in Washington.

MERROW: Federal-state-local relationships become more complex if you look at their funding. Ninety-three percent of the money to run the schools comes from state and local sources, but about half of the funds to run state education departments actually come from the federal government. It must get hard sometimes to keep your loyalties straight if you are working for Minnesota, or Michigan, but your paycheck depends on money from Washington. The net effect, some say, is to weaken state departments of education across the country. And that's why the federal government keeps stepping in.

BLAIR: The backlash against PL 94-142 and education for the handicapped generally is caused by several factors. One is a lack of money. School administrators are bothered by reporting requirements and other red tape, and state education departments resent the provision that gives most of the money to the local school districts. Governance -- the states' rights issue of who is in charge of education -- is the burning question for some of the opponents.

(MUSIC)

MERROW: Yet to be heard from are the parents of non-handicapped children who may resent extra funds being spent on the handicapped when money is already in such short supply. But with all of the hullaballoo, it's easy to lose sight of the handicapped themselves. NPR's Tim Cox talked with John Bobo, who drove a truck for a living before he had one leg amputated.

JOHN BOBO

BOBO: Society feels that these people need to be isolated because they hate to think of themselves in this position. And they shove us aside in the corner, and they don't have to be reminded that these things exist. They look at your disability first, opposed to looking at you. They say, "Hey, oh, I'm sorry -- you're an amputee." They don't say, "Hey, what are your views on this and that?" You see it in their face. You know that they feel uncomfortable, so, you do all you can to make them feel comfortable and make them feel that you're just the same as they are.

COX: What are the main concerns you have in your life right now?

BOBO: Completion of my education -- and seeing that disabled people get the same breaks that all other minority groups are getting.

BLAIR: John Bobo, talking with NPR's Tim Cox.

(MUSIC -- "Human Feeling")

BLAIR: Mary Giffen, a psychiatrist who is herself handicapped, believes that education for the handicapped is more a matter of human feeling than politics.

MARY GIFFEN

GIFFEN: They have the potential, and, so, the challenge is to the teacher to discover how to help them realize it. And it requires a creative approach -- usually children who have been diagnosed as special in any way are feeling a little bit wounded psychologically. They feel hurt, because most of the learning disability children realize that they do have potential, but they are frustrated in not being able to express it, or to communicate to anyone else. First of all, they are disappointed in themselves, because they want to learn. All children want to learn, and this is another aspect that the teacher should attempt to recognize that, if he is not learning, then, the question is - why is he not learning? They also realize they've disappointed their parents, that their parents have great expectations for them. This hurts them, also. They are less likely to be comfortable with their peers, because the pressure of their peer groups is another aspect of how they feel about themselves. So, their self-concept is greatly damaged by having been diagnosed and placed in a special program.

GARE: Let's talk about tolerance in relation to children with special needs -- how much tolerance is there now, generally, let's say, first of all, among the general public?

GIFFEN: Well, I hope you will forgive me for being very sensitive about words. The word "tolerance" implies condescension. I would prefer to use the word "acceptance," and, again, in order to accept the child, or the adult with special needs, then, the person who is in a helping profession has to accept themselves.

I have very strong feelings about the need to upgrade the teacher preparation program. If a person is dealing with someone, there has to be open communication. The flexibility is an important part, the self acceptance, and the genuiness is important. Now, empathy is another aspect that, perhaps, we should have put before all those others mentioned. I have serious qualms about the possibility of training a person to be empathic. I think that empathy has to be an inate part of a person, and if you do not have empathy, then, you would not be an effective helping professional.

BLAIR: Dr. Mary Giffen, talking with Sondra Gare of member station WBEZ, Chicago.

(MUSIC)

BLAIR: A way will have to be found to train those now teaching in regular schools, because handicapped children are now going to be "mainstreamed" into their classes. John asked Don Hill, President of the Minnesota Education Association, the teachers' union, whether Minnesota teachers were prepared for "mainstreaming."

<u>DON HILL</u>

HILL: No, I don't think, per se, they are. They are trying to deal, for the most part, with a broad, general student population. We are in favor of "mainstreaming," of course, as I think most people are, to keep kids as close to a normal situation as possible. We see some problems with the present situation, in that the state is, I suppose, in the same financial condition most of the nation thinks it's in, and that's one of needing to cut back in education. And when we have new charges like this, it really does compound the class size problems we see that we might have.

They fail, I think, to address the whole question of additional funds to retrain teachers to help teachers be more in tune with things they should be in tune with, if there is going to be a considerable change in the numbers of "mainstreamed" kids.

MERROW: You mentioned class size. Are you worried that there will be some kind of wholesale "mainstreaming," which will simply increase the size of the typical class, and that's all?

HILL: No, I think the problem of class size is one not of numbers, but of the situations. We get into this ridiculous numbers game of how many students ought to be in a class. And politicians and taxpayers just go up in arms, because they always say, we ought to be able to take just one more. Well, the problem, as I see it anyway, is as you add your "mainstream" students, you compound the problem of the teacher that's there, even if there are the same number of students. If you have handicapped children - if you have other people who take special kinds of help, it will take away from the general teaching situation that they were in before.

MERROW: So, you're arguing not against increasing the class size. You're arguing against leaving the class size the same. You're saying class sizes will have to be smaller with "mainstreaming."

HILL: Yes, definitely so. The classes right now are bulging. My position is I think the one that most teachers have, and that is that it doesn't make any difference as to the number specifically, but if the practitioner, if the teacher in the room, says there are too many students in this room, then, there are too many students in that room, because that teacher believes that there is. And there is, because they're going to teach and react to the students in a manner that they feel they have to act. And, so, every time we fool with the kinds of people or the numbers that we have in our class, we compound that dilemma that that teacher faces.

MERROW: Is there any provision now for the retraining of teachers so that they can deal properly with handicapped children?

HILL: Not specifically for the teachers. There are no monies available to specifically retrain the classroom teacher in this area.

MERROW: Don Hill, President of the Minnesota Education Association.

BLAIR: Minnesota isn't unique in their concern for teacher preparation for "mainstreaming" handicapped children into regular classrooms. John Ryor, President of the National Education Association, says that the NEA has reservations, too.

JOHN RYOR

RYOR: Too often good ideas and good philosophy and good intention, in practice, has come down to something that's been destructive, both to the handicapped child and to the classroom situation as a whole.

MERROW: Who benefits when handicapped kids are "mainstreamed"?

RYOR: I think all children benefit, frankly, when it's done correctly, when there's the correct kind of supportive help. I think it's a situation in which handicapped children will live in a world that's made up of all sorts of people on a day-to-day basis. Likewise, all children dealing with handicapped children, with blind to deaf -- the variety of handicaps that do exist -- become to understand that they have every human emotion and aspire to the same kinds of lifestyles and the same kinds of material ends as all other children. And I think it helps them to know that that's the world as a whole.

MERROW: Do you have any reading on whether America's teachers are in favor of "mainstreaming"?

RYOR: Well, I think America's teachers are apprehensive. I think there is great support for the concept of "mainstreaming." Most teachers today, particularly in our urban areas, know with class sizes of thirty to forty that they've got about all the problems they can deal with day-to-day right now. I think it can be a horrendous experience, and I think that's the thing that frustrates the teacher. I think teachers, by and large, want to do a good job with it, but also want to have the kind of help they need in order to do a good job.

MERROW: Do you think, by and large, Mr. Ryor, that America's teachers are prepared for working with handicapped children in a "mainstream" situation?

RYOR: The answer is no -- absolutely not. I think most of us are prepared in our particular subject matter areas over the last two years of our college careers, and that's even further specialized when we work on our Master's degree, but, by and large, the kind of training that we receive in our education schools deals with the "mainstream" of American education, the normal classroom setting, whatever that's defined to be, but certainly exclusive of handicapped children. And I'd say that it would not be unfair to say that 95 percent of our classroom teachers have no idea of how to go about dealing with the problems that we've identified -- whether it's epilepsy or hearing or sight or hyper-activity. Our teachers just are not geared to train or to deal with those specific kinds of learning problems and disabilities.

MERROW: Your predecessor, as NEA President, James Harris, when testifying before Congress on PL 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, called for a teacher corps which would prepare teachers for working with the handicapped. Are you endorsing that same concept?

RYOR: Yes, absolutely. I think if the program, "mainstreaming," as it has become to be known, is going to be successful, it is critical that we have teacher centers and retraining centers and in-service programs available for teachers at all levels, in order to help them adjust, as well as students.

MERROW: John Ryor, President of the National Education Association.

BLAIR: Another problem is identifying handicapped children, because that means placing a label on the child. Minnesota teacher Judy Knutson talks with Rachel Kranz of station KSJN in St. Paul.

JUDY KNUTSON

KNUTSON: I become very uncomfortable when I have to label a child to be in a certain category, and when that category means what kind of educational program he is going to get. And I guess I would like to see where we just say, "That child needs this kind of reading or this kind of language", and dispense with the labels, because we're not always correct. And there are many youngsters who have been diagnosed as retarded and, indeed, they were not. They were very bright youngsters, but because they couldn't read normally, they were placed inappropriately. And that's scary.

MERROW: Dr. James Gallagher points out that labels, even if applied correctly, tend to be pejorative and permanent.

DR. JAMES GALLAGHER

GALLAGHER: The standard definition of a handicapped child is any youngster who is sufficiently different from the normal or average youngster as to require some degree of special attention or special programming to reach their potential. Most people when they think of handicapped think of severely handicapped youngsters who have physical handicaps as well as other kinds of handicaps. But there are mild instances of retardation, for example, developmental retardation, or what is now called "learning disabilities," which means a special learning problem that the youngster has that he is unable to overcome without special help. And there are emotional problems and behavioral problems of various sorts. So, that in addition to the thing that people usually think about children who are deaf, children who are blind, or children with Cerebral Palsy, we have a variety of other youngsters who also fall into the general area of handicapping conditions for the purpose of state and federal definition of handicapped.

And one of the serious problems that the field is struggling with is labeling handicapped children, and does this help or does it hurt? Well, it helps in part, because it gets special resources applied to their problem, but just calling a child handicapped or calling a child mentally retarded, often has some negative effects in itself. And, so, what we're really struggling for is a way to provide the resources and services that the youngster needs without necessarily tagging him with a label that is going to be counter productive. In order to prove that they are meritorious and worthy of federal funding, they've got to identify the youngsters as handicapped. So, you've got the paradox of, in order to get the treatment, you have to label.

BLAIR: Labeling school children as mentally handicapped can be particularly difficult and dangerous. Dr. Harold Hodgkinson of the National Institute of Education explains to John.

DR. HAROLD HODGKINSON

HODGKINSON: I have the feeling that the numbers are probably correct and that there are at least 8 million children for whom there is a physiological base that establishes that they will have a greater degree in learning than a normal child. In addition to that, there are probably large numbers of additional children who, in a non-physiological way - that is, you can't get at it by measuring some direct kind of physical consequence - are having a lot of learning difficulties. Many of these are some of the most interesting kinds of cases. For example, the increase in anorexia nervosa, which is a disease in which kids systematically starve themselves to death. It's a middle-class disease, 80 percent female. Almost every private school is reporting that they have three or four of these in their entering classes. Why should middle-class kids who come from good families where the parents care about them, decide that they want to kill themselves by starving to death? One out of ten anorexics dies. Now, that's a new kind of disease. We haven't really known about it much before. Is that a handicap?

So, the issue of when you get off the biological and when you get into the psychological side of it is really where it gets tough. Hyper-activity and hyper-tension is another area in which you find a lot of people diagnosing kids as being handicapped because of what is now called "hyper-activity." When is hyper-activity simply kids who cut up in class because they're bored to death? Almost no teacher in the country has been trained in a sophisticated way to recognize neurological difficulties when they occur. So, I think it would be quite unlikely for a teacher to make a really good diagnosis. On the other hand, a teacher may not need to make the diagnosis as long as some unusual behavior is reported, which can then be reported to a competent person.

What is rumored to be happening, and I have no data on this at all, is that many of the disciplinary problems in school are kids who are then reported to be hyper-active. They are sent to the school psychiatrist who recommends a tranquilizer, or whatever. The kid comes back in a slightly dopey condition, and the parents aren't always informed that this has taken place. I don't know the degree to which this is common practice, and I don't think anybody else in the country does, either, but it certainly is one example of how a teacher with a very difficult kid in class can simply shunt the blame off on some other professional like the school psychiatrist who may then prescribe a drug which may or not be useful as far as the child's education is concerned. So, the pressures on teachers, I think, are enormous.

MERROW: Is there data that indicates that more handicapped children are being born today, that the incidence of handicapped birth is increasing?

HODGKINSON: At the moment, I don't think the evidence is in. I don't think that it's clear that there is a definite increase in the number of handicapped children being born. Like crime statistics, when they first became significant and effective, we discovered that there was an enormous increase in crime in the United States. That had very little to do with actual crime. It had to do with the efficiency of reporting crime. Similarly, we're getting better ways of diagnosing handicapped kids, so that at an earlier age, we're discovering more and more kids who have handicaps. So, a lot of it really, I think, is better detection, not larger numbers in the pool.

MERROW: But isn't there evidence having to do with malnutrition and its impact in uteri?

HODGKINSON: Some of the most fascinating stuff in this whole field, at least for me, is, I think, a consistent body of evidence that supports the notion that poor nutrition during pregnancy produces, first of all, a high degree of still-births, a high degree of premature infants, and these relate significantly to learning difficulties in later life. This means that one of the best educational policies we could provide in the United States would be to make sure that every pregnant mother in the United States has an adequate diet during pregnancy.

MERROW: Dr. Harold Hodgkinson, Director of the National Institute of Education in Washington.

BLAIR: Christian Polivka of Florida's Division of Retardation echoes Hodgkinson's concern about labeling.

CHRISTIAN POLIVKA

MERROW: How many retarded people are there in Florida, for example?

POLIVKA: Approximately, and this is a rough estimate, a quarter of a million retarded people. But what you have to remember is that the vast majority of retarded people don't need services at all. As a matter of fact, they're your neighbors. They're the people who operate businesses in your community. They're individuals who would never need your services.

MERROW: Wait a minute - now, you're confusing me - how does one determine retardation? There are, of course, degrees of it.

POLIVKA: An IQ test isn't all you use to determine retardation.

MERROW: I'm asking you how you determine it, and the first thing you mention is an IQ test.

POLIVKA: According to the statute, to receive services you have to have at least borderline or lower intelligence, and be in need of services. Now, being in need of services means that there is something you require that the state can provide. You may have a lower IQ — You may be 70 or lower and still be perfectly capable of functioning in the community.

MERROW: Is 70 the borderline you refer to?

POLIVKA: No, 83 or 84 -- it depends on the test you use.

MERROW: But you're saying people can be below that and still be able to function normally?

POLIVKA: People are below that and function very normally. They have children, they vote, they are active citizens, and they participate in the community.

MERROW: That's the phenomenum of normalization?

POLIVKA: That's part of it. That's what normalization is really all about. For the citizen in the community who doesn't need our services there is no need to identify or label him, and he gets along just fine. The services that are delivered to people who are retarded should be delivered in such a way that they aren't further labeled — so, that the normalization process can be continued, so that you can maximize their independence.

MERROW: Does normalization apply to the schools, too?

POLIVKA: Of course.

MERROW: How?

POLIVKA: It applies in special ways in public schools. We talked about "mainstreaming" a little bit before. But when you apply the term normalization to the public schools, it would mean that individuals who were in special education classes, for example, for academic subjects, probably received enriched courses so that they could learn at their level, which may be slower than the level that you and I would learn at. But when it came to an elective course, for example, like home economics or a course that was simply not academic, they would be heterogeneously grouped. There's no reason to distinguish or differentiate the retarded from other people in the public schools, except where their learning means they need more time.

MERROW: I can see that normalization would be of great benefit to a retarded person. It would allow that person to live much more of a life of dignity.

POLIVKA: Right.

MERROW: But is there any social benefit -- do you and I and other people who are not retarded, in any way gain from this whole process of normalization, of having retarded people in our midst?

POLIVKA: Of course, you do.

MERROW: How?

POLIVKA: By the same way that you gain from having anyone in your midst. Retarded people are no different, really, than you or I, and by allowing them to be involved in the environment that they have every right to be involved in, you probably dignify your life while dignifying theirs.

MERROW: How would it dignify my life?

POLIVKA: Because if you were to restrict someone solely on the basis of retardation, if you were to preclude their opportunities for participation, you're demeaning yourself. You're defining yourself as a rather mean and narrow person.

MERROW: Thank you.

BLAIR: Christian Polivka, Head of Planning and Evaluation at the Florida State Division of Retardation.

> BLIND MAN: Society has been conditioned to accept and worship money, youth, beauty, power, and materialism. If you do not have these things, you are out of it. You are a misfit. Those norms are wrong, even though they will be around for a long time to come.
>
> REPORTER: You're feeling that on your fingertips when you do that?
>
> BLIND MAN: Oh, sure. Braille is the form of communication for blind folks. Braille is like print to you.

(MUSIC)

BLAIR: In the end, education for the handicapped may require re-education for those of us who are not handicapped.

> YETTA GALIBER: It's really not easy to fight this system because I feel the system programs people to fail.
>
> CHILD: The kids I know are the same way as me. I get along good with them.
>
> JOHN BOBO: You see it in their face. You know that they feel uncomfortable.
>
> LAURA RAUSHER: Normal kids don't learn to accept the children, and the kids that are handicapped don't learn to live with the so-called "normal" children.
>
> WOMAN: We've lost a generation or two.
>
> JOHN CALLAHAN: They're saying they're above the fray, and they're more important than anyone else. That just doesn't wash.
>
> JOHN BOBO: They say, "Hey, oh, I'm sorry, you're an amputee." They don't say, "Hey, what are your views on this and that?"

(MUSIC)

MERROW: Reports for this program came from Gary Shivers, WUNC, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Sondra Gare, WBEZ, Chicago; and Rachel Kranz, KSJN, St. Paul, Minnesota. Material for this program was prepared by Maxine Burns.

BLAIR: If you would like a transcript of this two-part series, send 50 cents to National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D.C. 20036. Ask for Programs No. 36 and 37. The two cassettes are available for $8.00. Before we give that address again, we'd like to ask you to help us improve OPTIONS IN EDUCATION. We'll send a questionnaire to everyone who writes us, so that we can hear your views about education and this series. The questionnaires are now being what they call "pilot tested," so please allow some time for delivery. Write us. Our address again: National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D.C. 20036.

(MUSIC)

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BLAIR: This program is produced by Jo Ellyn Rackleff. The Executive producer is John Merrow. For OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, I'm Wendy Blair.

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