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ABSTRACT The last of a seven volume report on a national survey of individualized education programs (IEPs) for handicapped children, reviews findings from a followup study designed to identify those school district factors that contribute to the informativeness and internal consistency of IEPs. Five districts in five states selected for the followup represented small rural, medium sized suburban, small urban, and large urban areas. Onsite observations and interviews were conducted to assess 10 topics: IEP format, IEP related documents, staff training, IEP development procedure, IEP quality control process, available resources, within district variations, district philosophy regarding IEPs, effect of P.L. 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act), and other influencing factors. Three factors (IEP format, staff training, and supervision by the district level personnel) appeared to have a significant impact on the informativeness and internal consistency of IEPs. The attitude of the district director of special education and the ability to communicate this attitude also were significant.
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Center for Educational Research and Evaluation

RTI Project No. RTI/1544-30 F

October 1980

FINAL REPORT

A NATIONAL SURVEY OF INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION
PROGRAMS (IEPs) FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN:
FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF THE IEP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

by

J. Lamarr Cox, Associate Project Director

Project Director
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Office of Special Education
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The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now the Office of Special Education within the Department of Education), U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view and opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official U.S. Department of Education position or policy.

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The following persons made contributions to the data collection and report preparation activities of the follow-up study:

Dr. Anne Hocutt (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill): Site visits

Dr. John Pelosi (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill): Site visits

Dr. John M. Pyecha: Site visits and report review

Ms. Linda Shaver: Report typing

Dr. Ronald Wiegierink (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill): Site visits

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A National Survey of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for Handicapped Children: Follow-Up Study of the IEP Development Process

I. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The National Survey of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for Handicapped Children was conducted in the spring of 1979 by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI), under contract to the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now the Office of Special Education within the Department of Education), USOE. This national survey consisted of a Basic Survey and two related substudies: A Retrospective Longitudinal Substudy and a State/Special Facility Substudy. The results of this national survey were reported in five volumes:

Volume I, Executive Summary of Methodology and Major Findings.

Volume II, Introduction, Methodology, and Instrumentation.

Volume III, Findings for the Basic Survey.

Volume IV, Findings for the Retrospective Longitudinal Substudy.

Volume V, Findings for the State/Special Facility Substudy.

The follow-up study that is the subject of this present report was related primarily to the Basic Survey.

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Follow-Up Study of the IEP Development Process was to visit five school districts from the Basic Survey sample to identify district factors (e.g., policies, philosophies, attitudes, resources) that might influence the IEP development process. More specifically, the follow-up study was intended to identify those district factors that contribute to the informativeness and internal consistency (or lack of informativeness and internal consistency) of the district's IEPs.

B. Background

The major objective of the Basic Survey was to describe the properties and content of IEPs prepared for a national sample of handicapped students in the 48 contiguous United States. As secondary purposes, the Basic Survey was designed to: (1) identify those factors that are associated with variations in the properties and content of IEPs; and (2) provide descriptive information

about the target population, the nature and setting in which special education services are provided to this population, and the process whereby IEPs are developed.

In the Basic Survey, IEPs and related student, school, and school district information were collected and analyzed for a national sample of students, ages 3-21, who were enrolled in LEA-administered public schools on 1 December 1978. All data were collected by trained survey specialists who visited each of the 507 sample schools and: (1) selected a sample of five to eight students from each school; (2) photocopied the IEP of each selected student, and deleted any personally identifiable information; and (3) distributed, collected, and field-edited the three questionnaires designed to obtain related information about each of the 1,657 students, 507 schools, and 208 school districts in the sample. (Sample students were enrolled in schools located in a total of 42 states.)

All collected IEPs and questionnaires were returned to RTI where they were entered into a data receipt and control system for further processing. The properties and contents of each IEP were described at RTI through the application of an IEP Evaluation Checklist, thus generating a set of coded responses for each IEP. The coded checklist forms and questionnaire items were edited manually, keyed into machine-readable files, machine-edited, properly weighted, and formatted for subsequent analyses.

Analyses of these data focused on ten general questions that were developed jointly by Office of Special Education (OSE) staff and the RTI project team. Included in these general questions was a specific question regarding the proportion of IEPs that met the requirements of each of four informativeness/internal consistency classification levels of IEPs.

These classifications were: (1) Level 1, an Incomplete Information Document; (2) Level 2, a Minimally Informative Document; (3) Level 3, an Informative and Internally Consistent Document; and (4) Level 4, an Exceptionally Informative and Internally Consistent Document. A summary description of these four levels is provided as Appendix A. The distribution of the Basic Survey IEPs over the four levels was as portrayed in Figure 1.

Also, as part of the Basic Survey data analysis, several types of multiple-regression analyses were performed to investigate the relationships between the IEP descriptive classification levels and selected student, school, and school district variables. These variables were:

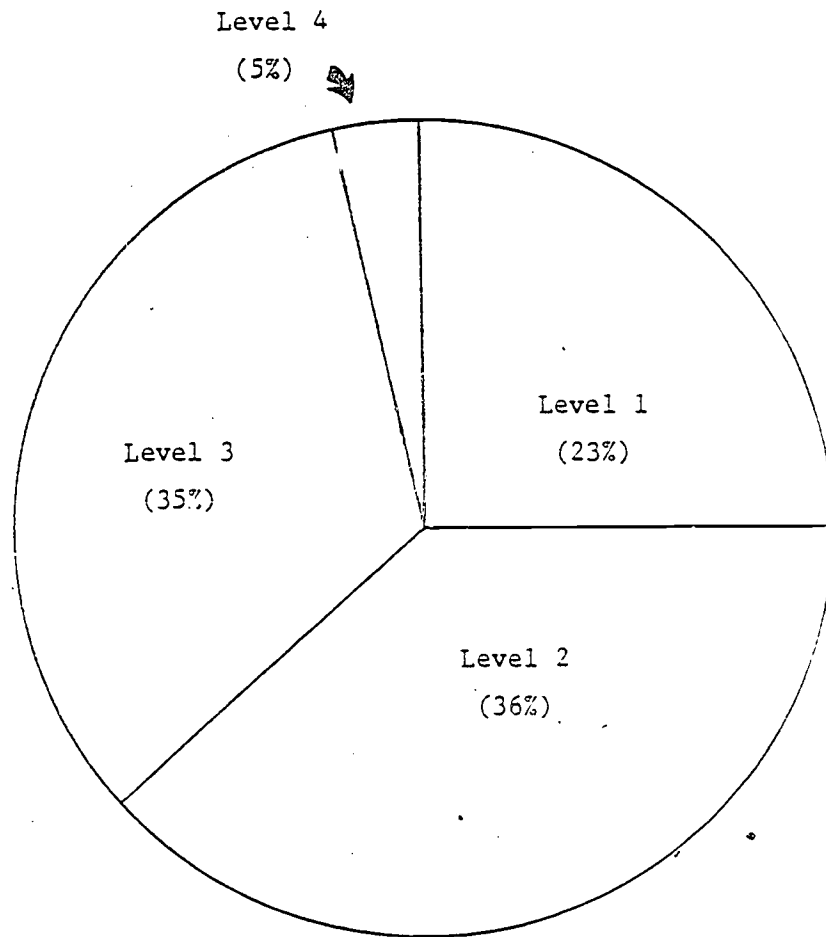


Figure 1. Distribution of IEPs Over the Four Levels.

^{1/} Percent do not total 100 because of rounding.

1) Student Variables

- a) Nature of student's handicap (mentally retarded, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, speech impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, orthopedically impaired, visually handicapped, other health impaired).
- b) Severity of student's handicapping condition (mild, moderate, severe).
- c) Student's age.
- d) Student's race.

2) School Variables

- a) Type of school (regular, special).
- b) School grade/age level organization (elementary, secondary, elementary/secondary).
- c) School community location (rural, small city, urban, suburban).
- d) School enrollment (small, medium, large).
- e) School handicapped/total enrollment ratio (low, medium, high).

3) School District Variables

- a) School district size (small, medium, large).
- b) Level of school district per-pupil expenditure (low, medium, high).

Various combinations of these variables were used to "model" or represent the classification levels. These models were selected by a regression program that selected the best model with one variable, the best with two variables, etc., until all the variables were included simultaneously. Using the usual measures of model fit (e.g., weighted multiple correlation coefficients), none of the attempted models provided evidence of strong explanatory power. That is, there was no significant correlation with the descriptive classification levels and any of these variables, singly or in all possible combinations. These findings were unexpected and indicated that the completeness and internal consistency of IEPs, as reflected in their assignments to the descriptive classification levels, was a function of other unknown factors. It was anticipated that this follow-up study could provide some insights into the nature of these unknown factors.

C. Organization of Remainder of Report

Section II of this report outlines the methodology used in the follow-up study, Section III presents the findings of the study, and Section IV provides the conclusions and implications of the study.

II. METHODOLOGY

Five school districts in five states were selected for data collection for the follow-up study. While geographical distribution was one factor in the selection, the major factor was the assignment of the Basic Survey IEPs from the districts to the four descriptive classification levels. The IEPs from two of the selected districts rated low in that all were either Level 1 or Level 2 IEPs (see Districts 1 and 2 in Table 1). IEPs from two districts rated high in that a large proportion were Level 4 IEPs while none were rated Level 1 (see Districts 3 and 4 in Table 1). In one district (District 5 in Table 1), part of the IEPs were rated high and part were rated low. Districts 1 and 3 were small rural districts, District 2 was a medium-sized suburban district, District 4 was a small urban district, and District 5 was a large urban district. It was expected that this selection of school districts would permit insights into factors that contributed to incomplete or minimally informative IEPs, factors that contributed to informative and exceptionally informative and internally consistent IEPs, and factors that contributed to wide variations within a district.

The director of special education for each of the selected districts was contacted regarding the district's participation in the follow-up study. All five districts agreed to participate.

A site-visit protocol was prepared for the unstructured interviews to be conducted in the selected districts. This protocol is attached as Appendix B. The site visits were conducted by RTI staff and consultants from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who were knowledgeable in special education and the requirements of P.L. 94-142.

III. STUDY FINDINGS

This section presents the major findings of the Follow-Up Study of the IEP Development Process. The approach taken in this section is to address

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF IEPs FROM SELECTED DISTRICTS ACROSS LEVELS

	Number of Level 1 IEPs	Number of Level 2 IEPs	Number of Level 3 IEPs	Number of Level 4 IEPs
School District 1				
School "a" ^{1/}	5	0	0	0
School "b" ^{1/}	5	0	0	0
School District 2				
School "a" ^{1/}	4	1	0	0
School "b" ^{1/}	4	1	0	0
School "c" ^{1/}	4	1	0	0
School District 3				
School "a" ^{1/}	0	1	0	4
School "b" ^{1/}	0	0	0	4
School District 4				
School "a" ^{1/}	0	1	2	2
School "b" ^{1/}	0	1	4	0
School "c" ^{2/}	0	0	3	5
School District 5				
School "a" ^{1/}	2	3	0	0
School "b" ^{1/}	2	0	1	2
School "c" ^{2/}	0	2	3	3

^{1/} Regular school.

^{2/} Special education school.

each of the ten IEP-related topics included in the site-visit protocol, and to indicate the relationships between (a) how these topics were addressed in the five school districts and (b) the informativeness/internal consistency of IEPs from the five school districts. The ten topics, included in Appendix B, also are listed here for the convenience of the reader.

- a) IEP format.
- b) IEP-related documents.
- c) Staff training.
- d) The IEP development procedure.
- e) The IEP quality control process.
- f) Available resources.
- g) Within-district variations.
- h) District philosophy regarding IEPs.
- i) Effect of P.L. 94-142.
- j) Any other district, school, or community factors that influence the IEPs and the IEP process.

In the following discussions it should be noted, the school districts are referred to as District 1, District 2, etc. As was shown in Table 1, IEPs from Districts 1 and 2 rated low on the informativeness/internal consistency scale, IEPs from Districts 3 and 4 rated high, and those from District 5 were characterized by a range from low to high.

A. IEP Format

All five school districts had IEP formats that were used by all schools in the district. Districts 2 and 5 used two formats, one for speech and another for all other handicapping conditions.

In Districts 2 and 3, the IEP format was developed by the SEA. In Districts 1 and 4, the format was an SEA model that was revised by the district director of special education. The District 5 IEP format was developed by the director of special education and a committee made up of district special education personnel.

In general, no particular district needs or policies influenced the selection/development of the IEP format. One exception was that the District 1 format was made very brief because of the district director's belief that a brief IEP format would minimize the amount of time teachers were away from their classes preparing IEPs.

Those who developed/adopted the District 1 IEP format were reasonably familiar with the requirements of the Act regarding IEPs; those in District 2 were somewhat familiar with the requirements; and personnel responsible for developing the formats in the remaining districts were thoroughly familiar with the requirements of the Act.

The IEP formats for Districts 3, 4, and 5 included headings for all information mandated by the Act. The IEP formats from Districts 1 and 2 did not. District 2 used an SEA-developed format that did not require inclusion of certain mandated information (e.g., beginning date and duration of service; amount of time in regular classroom; evaluation schedules, criteria, and procedures). The District 1 IEPs consisted of a total service plan and an implementation plan. The total service plan did not contain objectives; it contained only goals and instructional strategies, without a linking between the two. The implementation plan was designed to include specific objectives which were to be linked to goal statements and instructional strategies. A separate implementation plan was adopted because it was felt that each teacher had his/her own way of implementing an IEP and should therefore develop his/her own implementation plan. If teachers had completely filled out both the IEP and the implementation plan, they would have covered the mandated requirements. However, most teachers did not write an implementation plan because, according to the director of special education, they felt that this task was too time consuming.

No changes have been made or are contemplated in the IEP formats for Districts 3 and 4. The District 1 and District 2 formats have been revised to include headings for all information mandated by the Act. The new District 1 IEP is a one-page document; the District 2 IEP is a six-page document. District 5 is in the process of drastically reducing the information presently included in IEPs. The stated reason was that a OSE audit found their IEPs too lengthy (too many short-term objectives). The format will be changed to make the IEP more of a legal document and less of an educational plan.

B. IEP-Related Documents

None of the districts used related documents not considered a part of the IEP to document mandated information not included in the IEP. However, all of the districts used related documents for other purposes; e.g., a placement statement, a parent statement that the child will participate, information

letters to parents, and referral information. These documents were not considered a part of the IEP since they did not define or describe the special education and related services to be provided.

C. Staff Training

Districts 1 and 2 provided rather minimal staff training to special education personnel. District 1, for example, provided an annual four-hour session to which all special education teachers are invited. Teachers also may request individual assistance from the district director of special education. The other three districts had more thorough training programs that included printed guidelines and in-service sessions. New teachers, in particular, received rather intensive training in these three districts.

In general, the district-level personnel in all five districts considered the staff training to be adequate, and no changes were contemplated. However, district-level personnel in District 2, while considering staff training to be adequate, were planning to update the training program. Details were not yet available.

D. The IEP Development Procedure

While there were no particular differences among the five districts regarding personnel types who typically served on IEP committees (all districts indicated inclusion of such personnel as director of special education, school principal, school psychologist, current teacher, receiving teacher, parent), the committee member responsibilities and the developmental procedures varied somewhat. In District 1, the initial IEP was developed by the director of special education and reviewed by the other committee members; the follow-up IEPs were developed by the special education teacher and reviewed by the committee. In District 4, the IEPs apparently were developed jointly by the director of special education and the special education teacher. The developed IEP then was reviewed by the committee and revised as required. All other districts indicated that the IEPs were developed by the full committee.

All districts reported a reasonably high rate of attendance by parents at the committee meetings (e.g., District 1 reported 90 percent attendance; District 5 reported 80 percent, the other districts reported "high" attendance). However, all districts also reported a very low level of actual parental participation in the development/review process. The parental attitude

appeared to be that the school personnel knew best what was good for the child. Parental involvement generally was viewed positively by school personnel. Two major benefits were stated as being that the parent had a better understanding of the child and the child's program, and that the child felt good about the parental involvement. The primary indicated negative aspect was the amount of time required to schedule and hold the meetings.

District 3 reported a high rate of involvement in the IEP process by the regular classroom teachers. Districts 4 and 5 reported very little involvement, District 2 reported "reluctant" involvement, and District 1 reported that regular teacher involvement varied greatly depending on the teacher.

E. The IEP Quality Control Process

Only one of the districts put forth any appreciable effort to review IEPs to ensure that they had been properly prepared. District 3 maintained a fairly comprehensive quality control process in which the school principals reviewed all IEPs, a regional reviewer spot-checked IEPs, and SEA personnel used sampling techniques to check IEPs.

F. Available Resources

No unique or unanticipated resources were reported for serving handicapped students. Districts 1, 4, and 5 indicated that present resources were adequate. District 2 indicated that special education teachers were overworked and that more of them were needed. District 3 stated that increased services to the handicapped students came at the expense of reduced services to nonhandicapped students.

G. Within-District Variations

While some idea of within-district variations in the informativeness and internal consistency of IEPs already was known based on the sample of IEPs collected in the districts as a part of the Basic Survey (see Table 1), the extent of and reasons for variations were not known. The Follow-Up Study findings were that Districts 1, 2, and 3 reported minimal within-district variations; Districts 4 and 5 reported that what variations existed were primarily a result of teacher motivation. There were no apparent policies or procedures that directly contributed to within-district variations in the informativeness and internal consistency of IEPs.

H. District Philosophy Regarding IEPs

Districts 1, 2, and 3 considered the IEPs to be developed primarily to meet legal requirements. District 1 indicated that about half of the IEPs were actually used in the classroom. District 2 indicated that they seldom were used. The remaining districts indicated that IEPs definitely were used in the classroom; however, District 3 noted that the same quality of program existed without the IEPs and that the IEPs were primarily a written description of what had been in existence all the time.

Districts 2 and 5 noted that teachers were never held accountable for students meeting IEP objectives. District 4 indicated that while teachers were not held accountable for student performance in meeting objectives, they were held accountable for providing related services. District 3 indicated that teachers usually were held accountable for student performance. District 1 reported that some principals held teachers accountable and some did not.

School personnel in Districts 4 and 5 had a generally positive attitude toward the IEPs and the IEP process. District 2 personnel noted general support but resentment at the extra work load. District 1 indicated that about half of the personnel supported the program while the other half resented the extra time requirements and the "bureaucratic intrusion." District 3 personnel were represented as having a negative attitude toward the program because it "placed a burden on people who already were doing a good job."

I. Effect of P.L. 94-142

Districts 1, 4, and 5 indicated that one result of P.L. 94-142 was that additional special education staff were now available. Also, more needed materials and supplies were provided. Districts 2 and 3 stated that while more resources were available for the handicapped, this resulted in fewer resources for the nonhandicapped.

All school districts noted that a major positive effect of P.L. 94-142 was the considerably increased involvement of the parents of handicapped students. Another positive factor was the increased training provided to special education personnel. The primary negative effect was stated as being the increased paperwork and extra hours of work required of special education personnel.

J. Any Other District, School or Community Factors that Influence the IEPs and the IEP Process

Only one factor not already discussed above appeared to have a considerable influence on the IEPs and the IEP process: the part played by the district director of special education. In Districts 3 and 4, it would be reasonably safe to say that the basic philosophy of the district director was a major influence in the high levels of informativeness and internal consistency of the IEPs. Also, in District 1, the district director's insistence on a bare minimum of information in the IEP appeared to be a major contributor to the lack of completeness of the IEPs.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A. Conclusions

The ten topics discussed in Section III provided insight into three factors that appeared to have a significant impact on the informativeness and internal consistency of IEPs. These were: the IEP format; staff training; and supervision by the district-level personnel.

The lack of informativeness of the District 1 and District 2 IEPs resulted primarily from IEP formats that did not provide space for information mandated by the Act. Since the IEP format in both of these districts has since been revised to include the mandated information, considerable improvement in the IEPs from those districts likely will occur.

Districts 1 and 2, the two districts with the lowest level of informativeness and internal consistency of IEPs, maintained only minimal in-service training to special education personnel. The other three districts provided more intensive training programs. These relationships indicated that the level of training may be a major factor in the informativeness and internal consistency of the IEPs.

The attitude of the district director of special education and the ability to communicate this attitude would appear to be a significant factor. The excellent IEPs from Districts 3 and 4 apparently were largely a result of the efforts of the district director. District size would appear to be a factor in the ability of the district director to influence the IEP process. Both District 3 and District 4 were of such size that the district director could closely supervise the entire special education program. District 5 was a

large district, and this may have been a significant factor in the wide variation in IEP informativeness and internal consistency within the district. The influence of the district director in District 1 appeared to have an adverse affect on the IEP process. The director was, as noted earlier, instrumental in the selection of a format that failed to provide space for mandated information. However, other means, an implementation plan, was available for providing additional information. The teachers did not use this implementation plan. The director's attitude and/or the teachers' attitude toward the IEP process apparently resulted in the teachers' not preparing complete IEPs.

B. Implications

One implication of the follow-up study is that, as was noted in the Basic Survey, the IEP format is a powerful determinant of the provided information. Careful attention should, therefore, be given to the format design. Another implication is that reasonably close supervision is required to ensure that teachers have the necessary training and the necessary motivation to prepare high-quality IEPs.

Appendix A

Description of IEP Levels

Appendix A

Description of IEP Levels

1. Level 1 IEP: Incomplete Information Document

The distinguishing feature of a Level 1 IEP was that, even when the most generous assumptions were made, it did not include the information required by Section 602 of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142).¹

More specifically, a Level 1, or Incomplete Information, IEP did not include one or more of the following:

- a) Some statement that indicates at least the general nature of an educational need.
- b) An annual goal (or a statement that could be interpreted as representing an annual goal).
- c) A short-term objective (or a statement that could be interpreted as representing a short-term objective).
- d) Some indication of (1) the beginning date of service; (2) the anticipated duration of service; or, (3) in lieu of either "1" or "2," the extent to which the student would participate in the regular education program. (Any date, even the date the IEP was prepared, date of committee meeting, or a date with no indication of its intent satisfied the requirements for part "1." An end-of-service date, a proposed IEP review date, or simply a notation on the form that the goals are "annual" goals satisfied the requirements of part "2." A statement that the IEP was, for example, for the 1977-78 school year satisfied the requirements of both "1" and "2." Either the proportion of time or amount of time that the student was

¹ The Act states that a handicapped child's IEP shall include "(A) a statement of the present levels of educational performance of such child, (B) a statement of annual goals, including short-term instructional objectives, (C) a statement of the specific educational services to be provided to such child, and the extent to which such child will be able to participate in regular educational programs, (D) the projected date for initiation and anticipated-duration of such services, and (E) appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether instructional objectives are being achieved."

expected to spend in the regular education program [or in the special education setting] met the requirements of part "3.")

2. Level 2 IEP: Minimally Informative Document

The distinguishing feature of a Level 2, or Minimally Informative, IEP was that it did, when generous assumptions were made, contain most² of the data mandated by Section 602 of the Act. However, a Level 2 IEP (a) contained little if any pertinent data that were not specifically mandated, (b) only marginally presented the mandated data, and (c) may or may not have been internally consistent.

3. Level 3 IEP: Informative and Internally Consistent Document

A Level 3, or Informative and Internally Consistent, IEP exceeded a Level 2 document in that it (a) required fewer assumptions to be made regarding the inclusion of the data mandated by Section 602 of the Act, (b) contained a limited amount of critical but not mandated information, and (c) maintained some degree of internal consistency.

More specifically, a Level 3 IEP contained:

- a) A more precise statement of beginning date and duration of service.
- b) More than one short-term objective for more than half of the academic/functional areas for which annual goals were included.
- c) A space for parental approval of the IEP and a listing of the participants in the IEP process; or, in lieu of one of these requirements, a listing of the personnel responsible for providing the special education services.
- d) At least one instance of a short-term objective that related to an annual goal that related to an area of indicated need.

4. Level 4 IEP: Exceptionally Informative and Internally Consistent Document

A Level 4, or Exceptionally Informative and Internally Consistent, IEP exceeded a Level 3 IEP in that it (a) contained additional important but not

² While the Act requires the inclusion of the beginning date of service, the anticipated duration of service, and the extent to which the student would participate in the regular education program, a Level 2 IEP might fail to include one of these three items of information. Also, the Act requires criteria, procedures, and schedules for evaluating the short-term objectives. These items of information were required for a Level 2 IEP only to the extent that they were implied in the short-term objectives.

mandated information, (b) maintained a higher level of internal consistency, (c) contained more complete evaluation criteria for evaluating the short-term objectives, and (d) contained a certain minimum number of short-term objectives.

More specifically, a Level 4 IEP contained:

- a) The student's age and grade level; or, in lieu of one of these, the rationale for the student's placement.
- b) At least one annual goal and one short-term objective for more than 50 percent of the academic/functional areas where a need was indicated.
- c) More than one short-term objective for more than 90 percent of the academic/functional areas for which annual goals were included.
- d) Evaluation criteria for at least 25 percent of the short-term objectives.
- e) At least two short-term objectives per month of full-time equivalency of special education.³

³ One short-term objective per month of full-time equivalency of special education was defined as being one short-term objective intended to be worked on for one month by a student placed in a full-time (30 hours per week) special education program. The formula for calculating the number of short-term objectives per month of full-time equivalency is: (number of "annual" objectives + [2 x number of first-half-of-year-only objectives]) ÷ 9 ÷ % of time that special education services are received.

Appendix B

Follow-Up Study of the IEP Development Process, Site Visit Protocol

Appendix B

Follow-Up Study of the IEP Development Process, Site Visit Protocol

Following is the sequence of actions to be taken for each LEA site visit by personnel responsible for collecting data for the Follow-Up Study of the IEP Development Process.

- 1) Make telephone contact prior to the visit to verify visit schedule with school district director of special education or other designated contact person.
- 2) Prior to making the site-visit, review IEPs and all other available data (e.g., School District Characteristics Questionnaire, School Characteristics Questionnaire) from the district to be visited.
- 3) In an unstructured interview with school district contact, obtain information regarding the following:

NOTE: Prior to conducting the interview, read the following to the interviewee:

This study is authorized by law. Although you are not required to respond, your cooperation is needed to make this study comprehensive, accurate, and timely. (20 U.S.C. 1401)

a. IEP Format

- (1) To what extent a standard format was used (during the 1978-79 school year) by all schools in the district.
- (2) Who (what agency or personnel types) developed the IEP format(s).
- (3) What particular reasoning, or district needs or policies, influenced the IEP format.
- (4) The extent to which those who developed (or adopted) the format were familiar with the requirements of the Act.¹

¹ Section 602 of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142) states that an IEP shall include "(A) a statement of the present levels of educational performance of such child, (B) a statement of annual goals, including short-term instructional objectives, (C) a statement of the specific educational services to be provided to such child, and the extent to which such child will be able to participate, in regular educational programs, (D) the projected date for initiation and anticipated duration of such services, and (E) appropriate objective criteria and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether instructional objectives are being achieved."

- (5) To the extent that the format did not accommodate entry of the mandated information, the reason(s) for the omissions.
 - (6) What changes in IEP format have been made or are contemplated. The nature of and reasons for these changes.
- b. IEP-related documents
- (1) To what extent any mandated information not included in the IEPs is contained in other documents.
 - (2) The nature of these documents.
 - (3) How and by whom these IEP-related documents are used.
 - (4) Why these documents are not considered a part of the IEP.
- c. Staff training
- (1) The nature and extent of training provided to those involved in the IEP process.
 - (2) To what extent this training is considered (by district personnel) to be adequate.
 - (3) What changes, if any, are contemplated in the training program.
- d. The IEP development procedure
- (1) What personnel types typically serve on the IEP committees.
 - (2) The responsibilities of various committee members.
 - (3) What developmental procedures typically are followed.
 - (4) How parents are involved.
 - (5) The perceived strengths and weaknesses of the parental involvement program.
 - (6) How regular classroom teachers are involved.
- e. The IEP quality control process
- (1) Nature of the quality control process.
 - (2) Why information is missing in IEPs (where applicable) even though it is requested by the format.
- f. Available resources
- (1) The general nature of and extent of resources applied annually to the development and review of the typical IEP.
 - (2) Extent to which these resources are considered by district personnel to be adequate for meeting the requirements of P.L. 94-142.

- g. Within-district variations
 - (1) Extent of and nature of differences within the district in the completeness and internal consistency of IEPs.
 - (2) The major reasons for these differences.
 - h. District philosophy regarding IEPs
 - (1) Extent to which IEP is developed primarily to meet legal requirements.
 - (2) Extent to which IEP is actually used in the classroom.
 - (3) To what extent, if any, teachers are held accountable for students meeting IEP objectives.
 - (4) General attitude of school personnel regarding the IEP and the IEP process.
 - (5) Factors that contribute to this general attitude.
 - i. Effect of P.L. 94-142
 - (1) The effect of P.L. 94-142 on provision of services to handicapped students in the school district.
 - (2) Effect on parental involvement.
 - (3) Effect on staff training.
 - (4) Effect on teacher work load.
 - (5) Effect on number of personnel.
 - (6) Effect on district and school budgets.
 - j. Any other district, school, or community factors that influence the IEPs and the IEP Process
- 3) As appropriate, and with the agreement of the contact person, interview other (e.g., district and school special education staff, classroom teachers, principals) contacts regarding the above factors that may affect the IEP and IEP process.
 - 4) Document findings and indicate appropriate contacts for any additional (via telephone) information needs.