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ABSTRACT

The research effort focused on the communication needs of school professionals and parents of handicapped children. The research sample, drawn from a 20 county area of North Central Texas, was comprised of 447 parents/advocates of the handicapped and 606 school professionals (special teachers and mainstream teachers) serving the handicapped in classroom settings. Participants were asked to respond to separate questionnaires containing rating scales which were designed to assess: (1) respondents' perceptions of the services being delivered to special learners; (2) their degree of involvement and attitudes pertaining to parent-teacher coordination of educational services; and (3) their perceptions of what they need to know in order to communicate more effectively in the course of planning for the child's program. For additional comparisons, a sample of 143 parents of handicapped children were asked to complete a separate questionnaire which contained items similar to those on the parents/advocates questionnaires. Data relative to the responses made by each group of survey participants are presented, along with a comparison of all responses and a summary of the major findings. (Author)

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PERCEIVED COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING NEEDS
OF PARENTS AND SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS.

by

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Introduction

Parental involvement in the education of children identified as having special needs is rapidly becoming a new area of interest in the field of education. This interest is demonstrated by (a) the numerous recent publications that are addressing parent involvement (i.e., Anselma, 1977; Chinn, Winn, & Walters, 1978; Cooper & Edge, 1978; Crawford, 1978; Edge, Strenecky & Mour, 1979; Kroth & Simpson, 1977, Kroth & Scholl, 1978, Marion, 1979; McAfee & Vergason, 1979; Morrison, 1978; Rutherford & Edgar, 1979; Stewart, 1978); and (b) the topic of parental involvement being included on conference programs. The new emphasis on parental involvement is almost like a massive rediscovery of something extremely valuable that had been lost.

In the early days of public education in this country, parents were integrally involved with every aspect of decision-making relative to the schools. The parents employed the teachers, they selected and directly influenced the curricular offerings and usually monitored what went on. Over the years, however, parents have been increasingly shut-out of the schools and left uninformed about issues that affect their children. This trend began to be felt rather strongly in the mid-60's when school officials started to believe that educational decisions had become too complicated for the layman to understand and came across to parents, if not in words, through actions, that "The schools know best, all you have to do is support us."

There have also been numerous social changes that are recognized deterrents to parental involvement: (a) urbanization and suburbanization has required greater traveling distances and time for work which reduces the opportunities for participation in school affairs; (b) increasing numbers of working mothers; and (c) transfer of students from neighborhood schools, to mention only a few.

Just because schools have once again begun to realize the importance of parental input in the educational planning for pupils with special needs, regardless of whether this recognition came as a result of the school districts desire for greater participation or as a result of federal legislation, school personnel must realize that they will not immediately regain parental participation. There will need to be a process to re-establish trust between parents and school.

It is due largely to the schools' insensitivity to parents of children with special needs that has brought about an organized effort among parents to effect change.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze significant variables which affect parent-teacher interactions in the planning and coordination of educational interventions for the handicapped. In addition, the study was designed to identify those attitudes and opinions (perceptions) which prevail among individuals obliged to participate in the planning and delivery of services to the handicapped. The goals delineated for the present investigation are as follows:

1. To assess the perceptions that parents/advocates of the handicapped had of the educational environments in which their children participated.
2. To assess the perceptions that school professionals who serve the handicapped have regarding the active involvement of parents/advocates of the handicapped in the total educational intervention for their children.
3. To assess the perceptions of parents/advocates of the handicapped and school professionals who serve the handicapped regarding a range of personal attributes that each group possesses, as seen by the other group.
4. To obtain a self-evaluation from parents/advocates of the handicapped and school professionals who serve the handicapped regarding how effectively they are able to participate in the total educational intervention processes for the handicapped.

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5. To assess the degree of familiarity that parents/advocates of the handicapped and school professionals who serve the handicapped have with a major legislative mandate (P.L. 94-142) which has implications for the education of all handicapped.
 6. To compare the perceptions of parents/advocates of the handicapped and parents of nonhandicapped regarding (a) the educational environments in which their children participate, (b) the personal attributes ascribed to school professionals who serve their children, and (c) how effectively they are able to participate in the educational process of their children.

Population Sampled

A representative cross-sampling of school districts within North Central Texas was utilized in the study. Specifically, urban, suburban, and rural independent school districts within a 20-county region were included in the sampling procedures. Also represented were Special Education cooperatives, private schools for the handicapped and specialized-agency special education programs all located within the region.

Six-hundred and six School Professionals (SP) who served the handicapped either in special or regular educational programs at either the elementary or secondary level, 447 Parents/Advocates (PA) of the handicapped and

143 Parents (P) of the nonhandicapped completed the appropriate survey instrument sufficiently to be included in the study.

Based on the demographic information provided by the survey participants, individuals from all ethnic groups, all income levels, all educational levels, and all types of family constellations were represented in the study.

In addition, the referent group of handicapped children and youth represented all types of major handicapping conditions.

Analysis of Survey Responses

Three instruments were utilized in obtaining the data:

(a) The Parents/Advocates Survey, (b) The School Professionals Survey, and (c) The Parents Survey. Each instrument contained 33 statements which were divided into three separate sections to which the participants responded: (a) Section A assessed the parents' perceptions of their child's school setting and assessed the school professionals' perceptions relative to parental involvement in the educational program; (b) Section B assessed the parents' perceptions of certain attributes possessed by school professionals who serve their children and the school professionals' perceptions of certain attributes of the parents whose children they serve; (c) Section C assessed the participants' perceptions regarding their own capabilities in facilitating and contributing to parent-school professional interaction. On each of these

instruments, participants were asked to respond to each item on a Likert-type scale.

In addition to the 33 items, two of the instruments, The Parents/Advocates Survey and The School Professionals Survey, contained a separate question pertaining to a recent legislative mandate which has implications for the education of the handicapped. On this item, participants were asked to indicate their degree of familiarity with this legislation.

In the analyses of the data, any comparisons that are made will focus upon either the parents/advocates of the handicapped and the parents of the non-handicapped OR the parents/advocates of the handicapped and the school professionals. Consistent with the goals originally delineated for the study, no comparisons will be made between parents of the non-handicapped and the school professionals since the purpose of The Parents Survey was to have an independent sample of participants whose children were not receiving special educational services. In order to conserve space, selected items on The School Professionals Survey and the parents' surveys have been combined for presentation here. The first part of each item listed in the results which follow, refers to The School Professionals Survey/second part of the items refer to the parents' surveys.

Section A

The purpose of the items in Section A was to determine the perceptions of the parents regarding their children's school settings, and the perceptions held by school professionals as to the degree of parental involvement in the educational program designed for their children. The statements presented on The School Professionals Survey were prefaced by "Parents of the handicapped children I serve" The statements presented on each of the parents' surveys were prefaced by "My child's school" The survey participants were to indicate their level of agreement with each complete statement by circling one of four responses: 4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree. Statistical analysis of the responses to items in Section A are delineated below.

PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED AND PARENTS OF THE NON-HANDICAPPED AGREE THAT--

Their child's school . . .

Tries hard to provide appropriate educational services for their child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.38$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.33$).

Is a place that they enjoy visiting ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.25$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.25$).

Invites them to participate regularly in school activities ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.17$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.08$).

Encourages them to work with their child at home ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.27$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.99$). Although PA & P agreed with the statement, the PA indicated a higher level of agreement ($t = 4.18$, $p < .001$).

Encourages frequent parent-teacher conferences,
($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.00$, $\bar{X}_P = 2.64$).

Provides specific suggestions to help them manage their
child's behaviors at home, ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.65$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.24$)..

This item may not be as relevant for the parents of
the non-handicapped.

Tries to implement their suggestions as to ways of
helping their child at school, ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.87$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.59$).
PA tended to agree, more than did P, that the school
tries to implement suggestions they make in an effort
to be of assistance to their children ($t = 3.69$;
 $p < .001$).

Deals with them as if they have something to offer in
ways of working with their child, ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.97$;
 $\bar{X}_P = 2.82$).

Provides accurate reports to them about their child's
academic growth, ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.10$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.03$).

Provides accurate reports to them concerning how their
child behaves at school ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.09$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.92$).

Although PA & P agreed, P did not feel that they
received as much information from the school as did
the PA ($t = 2.59$, $p < .01$).

Communicates with them in language that they can
readily understand ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.27$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.28$).

Consulted with them prior to providing special services
for their child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.25$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.85$). Both PA & P
agreed with the statement, the P were in lesser
agreement than the PA ($t = 5.77$, $p < .001$).

Makes adequate provisions to assist children with
language differences ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.07$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.94$).

PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED AND PARENTS OF THE NON-
HANDICAPPED DO NOT CONCUR IN THEIR AGREEMENT THAT---

Their child's school . . . :

Involves them in the planning of their child's
individualized educational program ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.14$;
 $\bar{X}_P = 2.29$). Differences exist in the responses made
by PA and P ($t = 11.09$, $p < .001$), as might be
expected since it is mandated that the PA be involved
in the design of a unique individualized educational
program for the handicapped individual.

Provides specific ways that they might work with their child at home ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.89$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.49$).

Seeks their suggestions as to ways of helping their child at school ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.82$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.46$). As compared to PA, the P did not feel as strongly that their suggestions were sought ($t = 4.82$, $p < .001$).

Has offered recommendations to them regarding the future needs of their child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.88$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.50$).

Has developed a written individualized educational program which has included them along with others in establishing the goals for their child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.90$; $\bar{X}_P = 2.05$). Differences between PA and P did exist because of the recently mandated requirement that all handicapped children be provided an individualized written educational plan in which the PA is involved ($t = 10.16$, $p < .001$).

PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED AND SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS AGREE THAT---

PA are invited to participate regularly in school activities ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.17$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.02$).

PA are involved in the planning of their child's individualized educational program ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.14$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.26$).

PA are encouraged by SP to work with their child at home ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.27$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.36$).

Frequent parent-teacher conferences are encouraged ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.00$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.45$). Although both PA & SP agreed on the statement, SP definitely felt, more so than PA acknowledged, that PA were encouraged to have frequent conferences ($t = 9.64$, $p < .001$).

PA are provided specific suggestions to help manage their child's behaviors at home ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.65$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.98$).

PA are asked for/the child's school seeks suggestions as to ways of helping their child at school ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.82$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.01$).

PA are dealt with/the child's school deals with PA as if they have something to offer in ways of working with their child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.97$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.14$).

PA are provided with accurate reports about their child's academic growth ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.10$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.34$).

PA are provided with accurate reports concerning how their child behaves ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.09$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.25$).

PA are communicated with in language that can be readily understood ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.27$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.26$).

PA are offered recommendations regarding the future needs of their child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.88$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.22$). While PA only approached agreement with the statement, SP were confident that they offer recommendations to PA regarding the future needs of their handicapped children ($t = 7.38$, $p < .001$).

PA are consulted with prior to the providing of any special services for their child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.25$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.47$).

PA are assured that the child's school makes adequate provisions to assist children with language differences ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.07$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.88$, $t = 3.57$; $p < .001$). The differences might be accounted for by the fact that the SP may be more aware of language differences than PA.

PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED AND SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS

DO NOT AGREE THAT---

PA seek/the child's school tries hard to provide appropriate educational services for the PA's child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.38$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.89$). Although the PA felt that the school tries hard to provide appropriate services, the SP did not feel that the PA necessarily sought the best services for their children ($t = 11.19$, $p < .001$).

The school is a place the PA enjoy visiting ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.25$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.54$). Although the PA said they enjoyed visiting the school, SP did not perceive that they do ($t = 15.18$, $p < .001$).

PA are provided with specific ways that they might work with their child at home ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.89$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.17$). A discrepancy exists in the degree to which it is believed that suggestions as provided by the SP as compared to what is perceived by the PA as being provided ($t = 5.74$, $p < .001$).

PA offer/the child's school tries to implement PA's suggestions as to ways of helping their children at school ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 2.87$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.66$). The SP did not feel strongly that the PA offered them suggestions ($t = 4.24$, $p < .001$).

Factors Affecting Patterns of Responding to Section A by Survey Participants

All demographic factors were analyzed to ascertain the degree of influence that each had on the patterns of responses made by survey participants in each group. Three demographic variables were found to have statistically significantly influenced participants' responses in Section A.

1. Does the number of dependent children in the family affect the responses of PA in matters relating to the child's school?

It was found that in families which had 4 or more children ($N = 89$) where a handicapped child resides, there was a tendency on the part of the PA to respond more favorably to items in Section A ($\bar{X} = 54.27$) as compared to responses made by PA whose family had 3 or less children ($N = 358$, $\bar{X} = 50.42$).

Additional statistical analyses established that the patterns of responding were significantly different between the groups based on family size ($F = 4.25$, $df = 1$, $p < .04$).

2. Does the grade level taught by SP affect their patterns of responding to Section A of the survey?

Statistical analyses reveal that SP who taught elementary-aged (grades K-6) children

responded more favorably to items in Section A ($\bar{X} = 54.71$) than did SP who taught secondary school-aged (grades 7-12) youth. It was determined that the differences in their patterns of responding were significant ($F = 3.16$, $df = 1$, $p < .07$).

3. Does the type of school program that the handicapped child attends affect the PA's responses to items in Section A?

Statistical analyses reveal that the type of school program in which the child anticipates was an influential variable in the way that PA responded to items in Section A. It is noteworthy that PA whose children are being served in the more restrictive educational environments tended to respond to the items in Section A more positively. A statistical test of significance revealed that differences existed ($F = 5.08$, $df = 6$, $p < .001$) among the participants' responses.

Section B

The purpose of the items in Section B was to determine the parents' perceptions of the school professionals who serve their children and the school professionals' perceptions of the parents of the children they serve. The statements presented on The School Professionals Survey were prefaced by "Parents of the handicapped children I serve . . ." The statements presented on each of the parents' surveys were prefaced by "School professionals who serve my child . . ."

In Section B, the participants were to respond by indicating their level of agreement on a four-point scale: 4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree. In this section items were worded with more of a negative connotation and thus the scale choices should be interpreted as such, i.e., that the respondents are agreeing or disagreeing to a negatively-worded statement. Statistical analysis of the responses to items in Section B are delineated below.

PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED BELIEVE THAT SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS WHO SERVE THE HANDICAPPED CHILD. . .

Are not generally overanxious about having a handicapped child in the classroom setting.

Do not appear to be hostile toward parents/advocates of the handicapped.

Do not appear frustrated as to how to help parents/advocates in dealing with their child.

Are not generally ill-informed about the nature of handicapping conditions in children.

Do not oftentimes inhibit, rather than enhance, the educational progress of the child.

SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS BELIEVE THAT PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED CHILDREN THAT THEY SERVE . . .

Are generally overanxious about having a handicapped child.

Appear frustrated as to how to help school professionals in dealing with their child.

Oftentimes inhibit, rather than enhance, the educational progress of the child.

Do not, however, appear to be hostile toward school professionals who serve their handicapped child.

Factors Affecting Patterns of Responding to Section B by Survey Participants

All demographic factors were analyzed to ascertain the degree of influence that each had on the pattern of responses made by survey participants in each group. There were no demographic variables found which significantly influenced participants' patterns of responding to items in Section B.

Section C

The purpose of the items in Section C was to assess the perceptions of the parents regarding their own feelings about their roles as parents, and the perceptions of the school professionals about their own roles as professionals who serve the handicapped. Each of the statements, on all survey forms, were prefaced by "I feel that . . ." to which respondents were to circle one of the following: 4= Always, 3= Frequently, 2= Occasionally, 1= Never. Statistical analysis of the responses to items in Section C are delineated below.

PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED AND PARENTS OF THE NON-HANDICAPPED FEEL THAT THEY FREQUENTLY--

Are able to communicate their ideas and feelings effectively to professionals ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.07$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.11$).

Have an adequate understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.39$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.29$).

Can express themselves clearly to the professionals regarding their child's needs ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.16$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.30$).

Have adequate knowledge of the special provisions that are needed in order to appropriately educate their child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.03$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.03$).

Can be of assistance to the professionals in dealing with their child ($X_{PA} = 3.16$; $X_P = 3.22$).

Can effectively facilitate the professional's understanding of the difficulties and problems encountered by their child on a daily basis ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.04$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.12$).

Can provide significant information/insight to the professional which would be valuable in planning their child's educational program ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.01$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.12$).

Have the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively manage the behavior presented by their child at home ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.23$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.33$).

Have the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively assist their child in his/her academic work at home ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.10$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.24$).

Are able to positively influence others who have contact with their child outside of the school setting ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.04$; $\bar{X}_P = 3.06$).

PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED AND SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS

CONCUR IN THEIR FEELINGS THAT THEY FREQUENTLY---

Are able to communicate their ideas and feelings effectively to one another ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.07$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.00$)

Have an adequate understanding of handicapping conditions among children ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.39$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.06$). Although both the PA and the SP indicated that they frequently view themselves as having an adequate understanding of handicapping conditions in children, there was a significant difference in the expressed levels of understanding between PA and SP ($t = 7.45$, $p < .001$).

Can express themselves clearly to one another regarding the needs of the PA's handicapped child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.16$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.12$).

Have adequate knowledge of the special provisions that are needed in order to appropriately educate the handicapped child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.03$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.92$).

Have the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively manage the behaviors presented by the handicapped child in either the home/school setting ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.23$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 3.02$). As a group the SP did not rate themselves as highly as did the PA ($t = 4.42$, $p < .001$).

Can provide significant information and insight to each other which would be valuable in planning the handicapped child's educational program ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.01$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.93$).

Have the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively assist the handicapped child in his/her academic work at home ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.10$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.85$).. Because of the nature of this item a significant difference exists in the way the PA & SP responded ($t = 4.92$, $p < .001$).

PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED AND SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS

DO NOT CONCUR IN THEIR FEELINGS THAT THEY FREQUENTLY---

Can be of assistance to one another in dealing with the handicapped child ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.16$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.99$). The SP did not express the degree of confidence that PA acknowledged.

Can effectively facilitate the understanding of the other as to the difficulties and problems encountered by the handicapped child on a daily basis ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.04$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.87$). The SP indicated that frequently they were unable to facilitate the PA's understanding of their children's difficulties, differing significantly from the ratings given this item by PA ($t = 3.63$, $p < .001$).

Are able to positively influence others who have contact with handicapped children outside of the school setting (i.e., Sunday School, Scouts) ($\bar{X}_{PA} = 3.04$; $\bar{X}_{SP} = 2.77$; $t = 4.92$, $p < .001$). This discrepancy may exist because the PA have a greater opportunity to interact with community persons relative to their children's needs for extra-curricular activities.

Factors Affecting Patterns of Responding to Section C by

Survey Participants

All demographic factors were analyzed to ascertain the degree of influence that each had on the patterns of responses made by survey participants in each group. Three demographic variables were found to have statistically significantly influenced participants' responses in Section C.

1. Does the age of the respondents affect their responses to items in Section C of the survey?

- It was found that there were significant differences in the way that parents of the non-handicapped of different age groups responded to Section C; however, because of the dramatic differences in the number in the two age groupings (parents under 25=N5, parents 26 or older= N 138) these differences are questionable.
2. Does the level of educational attainment of the survey participants affect their responses to items in Section C of the survey?

For both parent groups, PA and P, it was found that the higher the level of education, the more positively they rated the items in Section. An additional test of statistical significance verified that respondents' ratings of items in Section C differed significantly when grouped according to level of educational attainment ($F_{PA} = 2.74$, $df = 3$, $p < .04$; $F_P = 12.29$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$).

3. Does the type of school program that the handicapped child attends affect the PAs' patterns of responding to items in Section C?

Statistical analyses reveal that the type of school program in which the handicapped child participates was an influential variable in the way that PA responded to the items in Section C. It is noteworthy that again PA whose children are being served in the more restrictive educational environments tended to respond to the items in Section C more positively, with the exception of PA of children who

are served in a special program located in an institutional setting. The researchers speculate that these individuals may not have as much opportunity for communication with the school professionals as do parents whose children are served in other types of facilities and did, therefore, rate the items lower. A statistical test of significance revealed that differences existed ($F = 2.81$, $df = 6$, $p < .01$) among the participants' responses when compared according to the type of school program in which their children were being served.

SPECIAL SECTION: KNOWLEDGE OF
PUBLIC LAW 94-142

The survey forms completed by Parents/Advocates of the Handicapped and School Professionals contained an additional question which was designed to assess the degree of their familiarity with P.L. 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Act of 1975.

Respondents were asked to indicate the item option which most accurately reflected their familiarity with the law. The options presented were as follows:

Very familiar. I have read much information pertaining to this law.

Somewhat familiar. I am aware that the law exists and have some knowledge about the implications of the law.

Vaguely familiar. I am aware that the law exists but know little about the implication of the law.

Unfamiliar. I was not aware that the law existed.

The responses are presented in Table 1 with the percentage responding to each response selection of the item indicated

for Parents/Advocates of the Handicapped and for School Professionals.

Insert Table 1 about here.

It is noteworthy that although parents/advocates of the handicapped are expected to be integrally involved in the design of the educational programs for their children, approximately 57% of those responding to the question indicated that they were only Vaguely Familiar or Unfamiliar with the law and its implications. By contrast, only 9% indicated that they were Very Familiar with the law. School Professionals report having a greater familiarity with the law and its implications as compared to parents/advocates of the handicapped.

Factors Affecting Patterns of Responding to the Special Section by Survey Participants

All demographic factors were analyzed to ascertain the degree of influence that each had on the patterns of responses made by survey participants in each group. There were no demographic variables which statistically significantly influenced the patterns of responses by the participants to this section of the survey.

There are several features of the responses made by the School Professionals that are noteworthy.

- 1, There are approximately 43% of those who indicated that they had a major emphasis of training in either Administration or School Counseling who rated their knowledge of the law as either Vaguely Familiar or Unfamiliar.

2. Approximately 96% of those with an emphasis in Special Education indicated that they were either Very Familiar or Somewhat Familiar with the law.
3. Approximately 71% of those with an emphasis in Elementary Education indicated that they were either Very Familiar or Somewhat Familiar with the law.
4. Approximately 86% of all regular classroom teachers indicated that they were only Somewhat Familiar or Vaguely Familiar with the law.
5. Teachers who work in more restrictive environments, i.e., special classes in regular and segregated settings and institutions, tend to be more informed regarding the law with greater numbers of these respondents rating in the Very Familiar category.

Conclusions

Research findings have been presented which illustrate the similarities and discrepancies in the way that three groups of survey participants responded to a series of inquiries relative to the delivery of educational services to children and youth. The data has implications for designing strategies to facilitate a greater understanding of the interactional processes between home and school.

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Table 1

KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATION FOR ALL HANDICAPPED ACT OF 1975 AS
 REPORTED BY PARENTS/ADVOCATES OF THE HANDICAPPED AND SCHOOL
 PROFESSIONALS

Knowledge of Education for All Handicapped Act of 1975 (PL 94-142)	Participants			
	Parents/Advocates of Handicapped		School Professionals	
	N	%	N	%
Very Familiar	40	8.9	148	24.4
Somewhat Familiar	129	28.9	337	55.6
Vaguely Familiar	148	33.1	96	15.9
Unfamiliar	106	23.7	19	3.1
Not Reported	24	5.4	6	1.0
TOTAL	447		606	