

Public Abstract

First Name:Sarah

Middle Name:Marie

Last Name:Parsons

Adviser's First Name:Colleen

Adviser's Last Name:Heflin

Co-Adviser's First Name:Irma

Co-Adviser's Last Name:Arteaga

Graduation Term:SS 2017

Department:Public Administration

Degree:PhD

Title:Three Essays on Special Education Placement in Early Childhood and K-12 Education

Special education law mandates that children with disabilities be offered free appropriate public education. Under federal policy, schools are responsible for identifying children with disabilities that adversely affect their educational performance and providing services to these students to allow them to learn and thrive in school. Each of the following essays examines student placement in special education to describe how placement practices align with the goals of special education. Each uses national data and regression analysis to empirically examine the relationships between observable child characteristics, policy parameters, and special education placement. The second chapter identifies services and settings in early childhood that are associated with special education placement upon entering school. The third chapter examines processes by which children graduate out of receiving special education services. In the fourth chapter, I examine education funding parameters and their association with special education placement rates. These essays highlight the challenges of special education placement decisions.