

Public Abstract

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Title:THE NEED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION IN KINDERGARTEN FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS OF UNKNOWN ETIOLOGY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) PART C AND PART B PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

The current study examined the relationship between the amount and type of services delivered to children in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C program, the number of years and placement for services in IDEA Part B preschool programs and children's readiness to enter kindergarten without special education services. The primary purpose of the study was to provide information to the state department responsible for the rules governing special education programs in Missouri.

This study included 3,401 children with developmental delays of unknown etiology who entered Missouri Part C between 2007 and 2009. The data collected included children's age, gender, race, poverty level, access to Medicaid and private insurance, amount of Part C services, years enrolled in Part B preschool and time spent in the regular classroom.

In addition to descriptive statistics, logistic regression analysis was used to examine the relationships between Part C services, participation in Part B preschool and placement in special education in kindergarten for young children with developmental delays of unknown etiology.

Results revealed amount of Part C services, years in Part B preschool and time spent in the regular classroom were significantly associated with children's readiness to enter kindergarten without special education.

Given the sample utilized for the current study, the findings may not be generalized to all children in IDEA Part C; specifically children with mild developmental delays or children with specific disabilities. Results provided implications for policies guiding programs that serve children with developmental delays.