

SERVICES PROVIDED FOR THE  
EXCEPTIONAL CHILD IN THE  
CLARKSVILLE-MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
1975-1976

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SERVICES PROVIDED FOR THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD  
IN THE CLARKSVILLE-MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
1975-1976

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A Field Study  
Presented to  
the Graduate Council of  
Austin Peay State University

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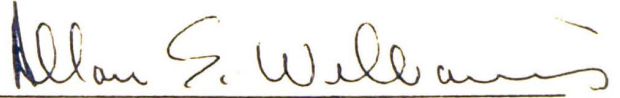
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements of Education 699  
Field Study

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by  
Richard L. Billmyer  
Winter, 1976

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Field Study written by Richard L. Billmyer entitled "Services Provided for the Exceptional Child in the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System 1975-1976." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Specialist in Education degree.

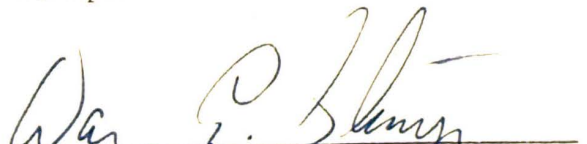


Major Professor

We have read this field study  
and recommend its acceptance:

  
Second Committee Member  
Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Graduate Council:

  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## INTRODUCTION

A quiet revolution has been fought within American education during the past few years. Its goal is the right to an education for all American children, and particularly those usually known as "the handicapped," those who, because of mental, physical, emotional, or learning problems, require special education services. Their number is estimated to be seven million, one million of whom receive no educational services at all. Only forty per cent of these children are receiving the services they need.<sup>1</sup>

The exceptional child in American education has suffered much in the past at the hands of educators and society. Many school systems throughout the country have systematically overlooked the needs of the exceptional child. Very few school districts provided any educational programs specifically to remedy the plight of the exceptional child.

Early man condemned the mentally retarded to a position of isolation, due to not knowing the causes of the condition and ignorance on the subject of mental retardation. Early attempts at helping the exceptional child in society met with very little success. It was the

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick J. Weintraub, Public Policy and the Education of Exceptional Children, (The Council for Exceptional Children, 1976), p. 7.

beginning of the eighteenth century before any real improvements were made. Even at that it was only a beginning and not much improvement was of a permanent nature.

The period most beneficial to the exceptional child was the early 1950's when a series of federal legislation provisions established grants for research and training of personnel in education of the handicapped. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy boldly committed some of the country's resources to the cause of handicapped individuals in general and to the mentally retarded in particular.

The manner in which our nation cares for its citizens and conserves its manpower resources is more than an index to its concern for the less fortunate. It is a key to its future. Both wisdom and humanity dictate a deep interest in the physically handicapped, the mentally ill and the mentally retarded. Yet, although we have made considerable progress in the treatment of physically handicapped, although we have attacked on a broad front the problems of mental illness, although we have made great strides in the battle against disease, we as a nation have for too long postponed an intensive search for solutions for the problems of the mentally retarded. That failure should be corrected.<sup>2</sup>

President Kennedy's mandate established a President's Committee on Mental Retardation made up of leading professionals in a variety of fields related to special education. The committee surveyed the national scene with regards to the problem of the mentally retarded and

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<sup>2</sup>Frank M. Hewett, Education of Exceptional Learners, (Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1974), p. 50.



the need for increased services. Its recommendations, as well as the impetus of the surging special education movement, were reflected in Public Law 88-164, which allocated federal funds for training professional personnel in areas of the handicapped and for supporting research and demonstration projects in special education. In 1967, a bureau for education of the handicapped was established in the United States Office of Education to administer research, educational, and training programs supported by the federal government across the country. Never before in history had so much enthusiasm for the handicapped been generated to bring positive change to benefit the handicapped in the United States. From this federal move to change conditions and ideas on handicapped children, the states began to institute legislation and provide services to the handicapped.<sup>3</sup>

Tennessee was one of the first states to pass through the state legislature a law specifically intended to cover special education (TCA 839). The intent of the legislature was to provide the necessary programs to permit children the right to education regardless of their handicapped condition. Since the legislature has passed strong laws guaranteeing the education of all children, local systems have been required to assume responsibility to set up the necessary programs on

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<sup>3</sup>Weintraub, p. 27.

the local level to meet the intent of the law. We in Montgomery County currently receive in excess of \$600,000 to fund programs for the exceptional child. This paper will point out the various services provided the exceptional child by the local school system.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Reginald L. Jones, Special Education Transition, (Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1974), p. 150.



## Background Discussion

The foundations of the field of Special Education can be traced to the earliest records of man. When differences were noted in earlier man's appearance or behavior, he was either considered devine or tortured, exorcised, sterilized, ignored, exiled, exploited, or destroyed. Their problems have been explained in terms of superstition. They have been pitied, cared for in various ways and in some cases accepted by society.<sup>5</sup>

Special Education in American society has developed from four historical determiners. They are survival, superstition, science, and service. Throughout most of history, the demand for survival was the primary determiner of the fate of the physically handicapped individual. During the Greek and Roman periods, the practice of exposure and infanticide threatened their existence. War, poverty, barbarism and disease took their toll of the handicapped during the Middle Ages and as late as the eighteenth century. In London, more than one half of the children born died before the age of ten. For this reason, few handicapped children survived. For those who did survive their plight as

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<sup>5</sup>Charles Van Riper, Speech Correction, (Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 20.

street beggars and paupers was all that could be expected of life. The change of survival of the handicapped throughout history has been poor.<sup>6</sup>

Man's fascination with the unexplained, whether it is in the natural world or in the behavior of his fellow man, has turned out to be the primary determiner of the fate of the mentally handicapped. The superstitious beliefs stand as testimony to man's limitless imagination in the face of the unknown. In primitive society man viewed deranged behavior as caused by good and evil spirits. During the Middle Ages man was plunged into an error of darkness caused by his earlier belief in spirits, both good and evil. The mentally retarded who were displayed as court fools or jesters seemed to have the favor of God. The mentally ill were often considered to be possessed by Satan, and were targets for cruel and inhumane treatment, inflicted by God-fearing individuals. Hundreds of years later, people were condemned as witches and burned to death simply because their behavior was out of step with the church, state or community.<sup>7</sup>

Science has stood throughout history as opposed to superstitions and has tried to explain man's behavior through observation, study, and

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<sup>6</sup>Hewett, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

experimentation. Hippocrates tried to explain mental illness as a disease brought on by natural causes instead of the anger of the gods. This concept was to be again overshadowed by superstition. It was not until the 18th century did science again gain its prominence and mental illness was thought to be caused by psychological factors as well as medical causes. At this same period of time, the educational aspects of inflicted individuals was to surface and bring great change to the way people were to be treated. Itard's work based on observation and study was to be the springboard for far flung changes in attitudes. Later, Binet was to contribute significantly in proving individual differences existed in everyone. Other scientists made breakthroughs in the field of mental illness at this time.<sup>8</sup>

As was stated earlier, the person who was different from others suffered much. They were usually condemned and made to suffer much from mankind, while in some societies they were to enjoy an existence of reverence. It is apparent the handicapped individual's chances for survival, the understanding of his problem, the scientific contributions to his welfare and development, the range of services available to help him to develop and utilize his true potential exist in greater measure today than ever before. All exceptional children are first and foremost

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 54.



learners ready at all times to learn something and only secondarily handicapped by conditions that limit learning.<sup>9</sup>

The following pages will deal with the various services established to meet the needs of the exceptional child in the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System.

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

## THE ANIMAL SCHOOL

The Administration of the School Curriculum  
With References to Individual Differences

By: Dr. G. G. Reavis

Once upon a time, the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of "a new world." So they organized a school.

They adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming, and flying. To make it easier to administer the curriculum, all the animals took all of the subjects.

The Duck was excellent in swimming - in fact better than his instructor; but he made only passing grades in flying and very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming in order to practice running. This was kept up until his web feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in school so nobody worried about that except the Duck.

The Rabbit started at the top of the class in running, but had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up work in swimming.

The Squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground

up instead of from the treetop down. He also developed "charlie-horse" from over-exertion and then got "C" in climbing and "D" in running.

The Eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class he beat all the others to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there.

At the end of the year, an abnormal eel could swim exceedingly well, and also run, climb, and fly a little, had the highest average and was valedictorian.

The Prairie Dogs stayed out of school and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their child to a badger and later joined the groundhogs and gophers to start a successful private school.

Does this fable have a moral?



## Discussion of Services

The Clarksville-Montgomery County School System, with a total school population of 17,000 students, ranks at the very top in providing services for the exceptional child. The support of administrators and regular classroom teachers is second to none. The spirit of the professional staff is at the highest point in years. It is the belief in the school system the child comes first. The philosophy of the special services divisions reflects this by stating, "All children should be provided the opportunity to develop academically, physically, emotionally, and socially to their fullest potential in the mainstream of education with supportive Resource Specialists as needed." As these needs are met, all students will be more able to assume their optimal roles in life. Every student receives the services he needs by regular teachers, as well as specialists to supplement the regular school program.

The Division of Psychological Services provides personnel to verify student's handicaps by a comprehensive series of tests. The basic emphasis of the psychological services department is bringing psychological knowledge skills, and techniques to bear on the problem referred by the school. This service is not to be considered as a separate entity, but as an integral part of the school system. Multi-disciplinary team is utilized in obtaining pertinent data for providing the

most appropriate recommendation toward meeting the needs of the student. It is this joint effort which dictates the success of appropriate supportive services for the classroom teacher.

The following programs are provided for the students of the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System:

1. Hearing Impaired
2. Homebound Instruction
3. Intellectually Gifted
4. Learning Disabilities
5. Multiple Disabilities
6. Resource
7. Severe Behavioral Disorders with Autistic Tendencies
8. Severely Multiple Handicapped
9. Speech Therapy
10. Transitional class for Emotionally Disturbed
11. Comprehensive Development Unit

Hearing Impaired programs serve individuals, ages 3 to 21 years, with a hearing loss sufficient to interfere with the natural acquisition and development of speech and language. Services of the elementary aged children are housed in an elementary school, with children in secondary schools being served on an itinerant basis. The regular school environment provides an atmosphere for the development of relationships between the normal and hard of hearing children.

All deaf children are educationally retarded compared to their hearing peers and their disability makes learning slow and difficult. The hearing specialist plans a complete academic program in accordance with the student's needs and activities. Children are enrolled in regular classes for many academic and non-academic activities, but spend a

large part of each day in the hearing specialist's room for specialized instruction and remedial work.

The purpose of this program is to provide an atmosphere for the development of relationships between the normal and the hard of hearing child, and in this atmosphere, to provide the best possible education for the hard of hearing child so that they may function in a hearing society.

The hard of hearing or deaf child can perform in a regular classroom with the understanding and support of the classroom teacher. It is generally conceded the prime years for the development of language are the years between two and four. The normally hearing child can and does develop much language spoken and to develop a rather sophisticated speech pattern. Generally speaking, his speech patterns will be influenced by members of his family and people outside the family with whom he has contact. These include playmates, people he listens to on the street, in church and in other public gatherings, television, radio, movies and records he hears.

Parents, as well as many professionals in the area of speech and hearing disorders, receive and retain serious confusion between the terms speech and language. Speech and language are not one and the same. Language takes many forms, both verbal and non-verbal. Speech, along with writing, is an expressive verbal aspect of language. Speech, as with writing, is but a vehicle for language, the vehicle by which we



express our thoughts, feelings, emotions and ideas on the verbal level.

Speech reading is another aspect of verbal language. Its counterpart is reading. Both are receptive verbal language activities. We cannot learn to read until we have learned to function with language at the verbal level. If the teacher understands the hard of hearing child has a lag in speech development due to lack of hearing and the teacher makes adjustments inside the classroom for the child, then success can be achieved.

Homebound instruction is a teaching service for students who are unable to attend school for an extended period of time. A specialist for the disability must certify the student will be unable to attend school for a period of two weeks or longer. The program enlists the cooperation of the school principal and of the classroom teachers where the child is enrolled. Several home instructors serve all elementary and secondary schools. Students are taught for one-and-a-half hour sessions twice a week.

The objective of the program is to provide an uninterrupted education for the student. The teacher obtains work assignments from the student's respective schools. Pupils needing remedial work receive this instruction so they may work to their expected potential.

The program for the talented and gifted is designed to provide educational experiences commensurate with the individual student's needs, abilities and interests. The students selected for the program

are recommended by teachers and screened by a multidisiplinary team. A standardized reading level of two years above grade placement is a further requirement for this program. Each class is limited to a maximum of fifteen students.

The goals for individuals participating in the gifted program include:

1. The student will develop creative thinking abilities.
2. The student will develop tolerance for individualism in all persons.
3. The student will be provided with opportunities for interacting within a group.
4. The student will develop logical and critical thinking toward becoming the leaders of tomorrow.

The Tennessee State Board of Education uses the following definition of learning disabilities: "Any child who exhibits a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language is considered learning disabled. These disorders may be manifested in disorders of listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental asphasia, and other impairments to the central nervous system. They also include conditions which have been referred to as functional retardation and educational retardation. They do not include learning problems which are primarily due to other handicapping conditions (TCA 49-2914A).

The ultimate objective is to channel students back to full participation in the regular classroom program. The students will be taught to cope with their deficient areas through training. The instructional program is basically two-fold in nature, providing programming for each child in auditory, visual and motor training, and academic activities based on individual levels of functioning.

The child with learning disabilities is the child who, for various reasons, is unable to function academically and or socially-emotionally with his age group. He may be perceptually handicapped, moderately mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed. These children differ from normal children not in kinds of behavior, but in degree. They are more like other children than unlike them. They sometimes experience great difficulty in coping with, adjusting to, or benefiting from the structure and composition of a regular classroom situation.

An ideal program of activities for an exceptional child, as for the normal child must reflect a balanced emphasis on social emotional adjustment and upon academic achievement.

Classes for the multiple disabled students are held at East Montgomery Elementary School. This self contained classroom provides for those children who, due to multiple disabilities and varying degrees of needs, cannot function successfully in the regular classroom. The student works in a regular academic-centered setting with all academic instruction done on an individual basis. Other activities are done in group settings.



The objective for this program is to aid the children in becoming better persons and to become independent of others so that they will one day be self-sufficient.

The next area we will examine is that which provides the most service to the students in this school system. Resource classes are held at all schools for students who are identified as needing individual instruction in the areas of language arts and computational skills. These students have a continuing handicap in intellectual functioning that significantly impairs their ability to relate to and to cope with their environment. These students may include the mildly to moderately retarded, the socially maladjusted or perceptually handicapped. The students are mainstreamed into the regular program for other subjects. Instructional periods with the Resource Specialist range from one period to a half day session daily.

Diagnostic prescriptive teaching methods are used in the student's individual instruction. The objectives of the program are as follows:

1. To teach those basic skills that the student has not previously attained
2. To work with the emotional and perceptual problems of the student
3. To do as much preteaching as possible so that the student meets with success in the regular classroom

At the secondary level, the development of basic learning skills is emphasized with pre-vocational and vocational skills as an ultimate objective. These students should be expected to function as contributing



independent members of society upon completion of secondary school.

The next program examined is that dealing with children who suffer from severe behavior disorders with autistic tendencies. This program is designed for school age children with severe behavior disorders and severe language deficits who display some autistic tendencies. These children are incapable of working in normal group situations. The class is housed in a self-contained classroom within an elementary school. Each child has a study carrel for individual work, and there are also designated areas in the room for group sessions.

There are three objectives for the program. One is to help the child develop an ability to relate, to interact and to communicate with people. Another objective is to help the child become more flexible within his environment so that the child can more easily adjust to change. A final objective is to help each child develop his maximum academic potential.

Classes for the severely multiple handicapped students are held in a self contained classroom at East Montgomery Elementary School. This program is one of education and therapy for the students with cerebral palsy or other neuromuscular impairments.

Broad objectives for the program include:

1. Self help skills
2. Social interaction
3. Physical, occupational and speech therapy

The students in this setting are taught to live with and work around their handicap in order to achieve their maximum potential. This is a small number of children, and the program is just now getting off the planning board. This particular educational need came about because of the closing of the center operated by Cerebral Palsy. This was eliminated after financial difficulties in the program in Nashville, in the area of fund raising irregularities, were found.

The speech therapist relies on teacher referral and screening for the caseload. Following referrals, diagnostic tests are administered to determine the children most qualified for speech therapy services. In general, a speech therapy candidate has speech and language deviations to a degree that interfere with his education and social interactions. Eighty per cent of the caseload is articulation disorders. The remaining problems include cleft palate, stuttering, and delayed language. The majority of children served are in kindergarten, first and second grades. These children are seen for short periods in groups of three and four. A special case may warrant individual therapy sessions. Broad objectives for speech services include:

1. Identification and diagnostics for each child with speech and language problems
2. Maintaining adequate records of test results, medical reports, and parent and teacher conferences
3. Follow up on all referrals
4. Consultation and cooperation with the members of the educational team

5. To provide appropriate services for each child identified through direct services or as a consultant to the classroom teacher

The transitional class for emotionally disturbed students is designed for those students who are unable to remain in the regular classroom. The children may have an emotional problem. The general objective of the class is to have the children develop self control and the social skills they will need to return to a classroom situation. There is not a set time limit to remain in the program. An individualized instructional program is developed for each child. They are slowly worked back into a classroom, beginning with a fifteen to thirty minute period, and adding classes as they are ready to cope with them. When they can again manage the large group situation, they can return to a classroom in their school zone.

Cohn School is a Comprehensively Development Unit in the school system. There are three self contained classrooms with a teacher and a full time aide. A full time combination physical education and music teacher and a speech therapist on an itinerant basis are also employed. The classes are divided into Primary, Intermediate I, and Intermediate II levels. Students are placed at Cohn School on the recommendation of the multi-disciplinary team. Students may include moderately and severely retarded children. Students may range in age from four to twenty-one years.

The broad objective of this program is placed on training the

students at their own rate of development to a maximum degree of self-sufficiency so that they may become productive members of society within a sheltered environment. Major emphasis is placed on the development of functional language, social growth, fine and gross motor skills, community awareness, music enjoyment and basic academic skills.

We have now examined the services offered by the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System for the student diagnosed as exceptional. A joint effort prevails to bring to every student those services which will help prepare him or her to lead a productive life for the future. It is the right of every student to receive from public education everything needed in the way of educational services. This has been mandated by federal as well as state laws.



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