

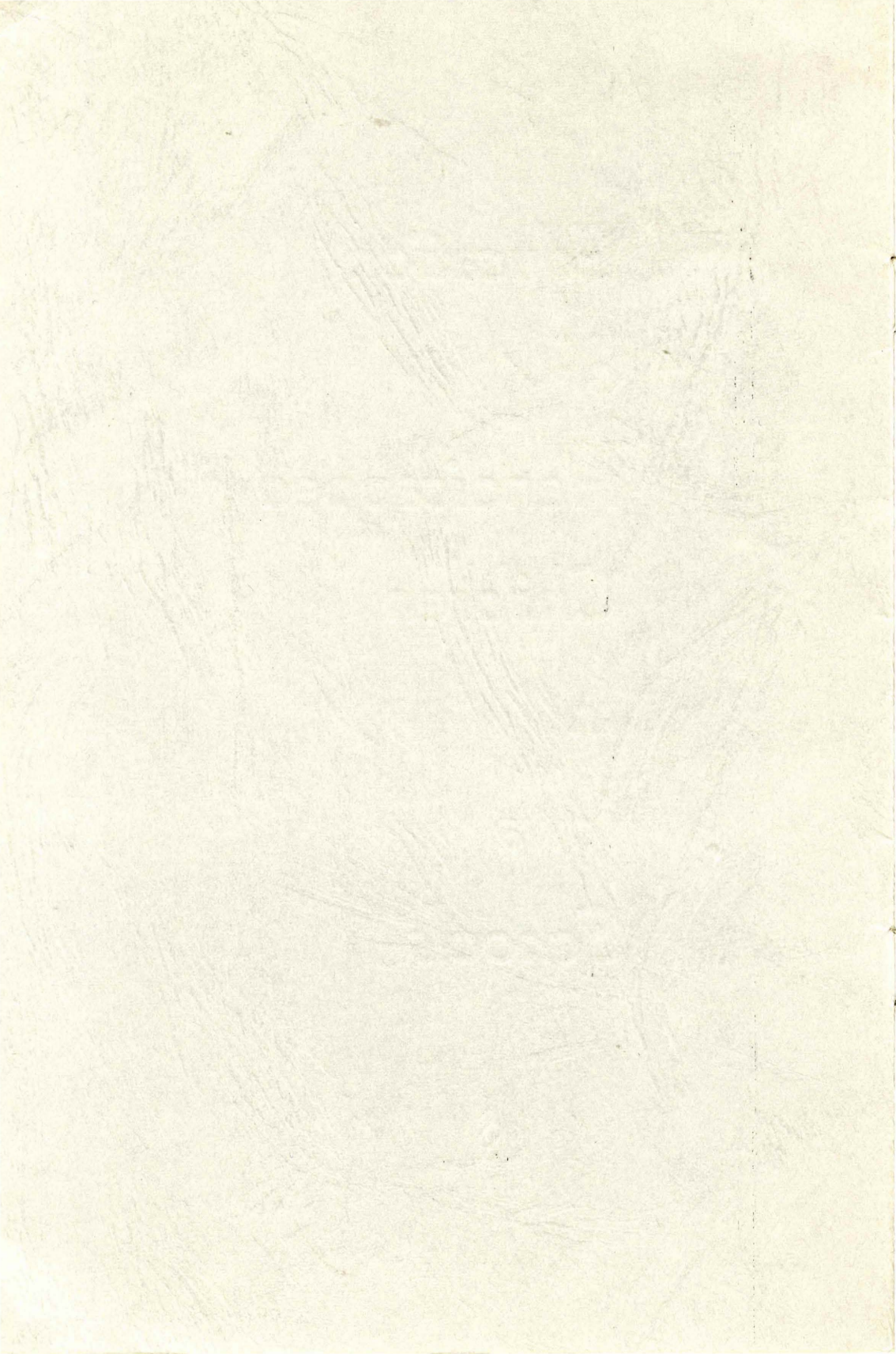
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**Education
of
Handicapped
Children
In
Iowa
Schools**

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3-31



This material was originally prepared by the following staff members of the Iowa State Division of Special Education and was printed in *The Educational Bulletin*, State Department of Public Instruction:

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Iowa Society for Crippled Children and Adults, Inc.
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Iowa Association for Retarded Children, Inc.

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Forward

The purpose of this publication is to provide professional educators and interested citizens of the State of Iowa with facts necessary to a better understanding of educational programs for exceptional children.

It is important that communities recognize their responsibilities to their handicapped children. This publication may be useful in encouraging more groups to give time, effort and understanding to the problems of educating these children who have special needs.

Every child is first and foremost the responsibility as well as the joy and pride of his parents. This is equally as true for the child with a handicap as for the normal child. Many professional groups offer assistance in providing for handicapped children. These specialists join in urging parents not to relinquish their own responsibility to these children.

The materials prepared by the staff members of the Division of Special Education will furnish excellent resource materials for programs for Parent-Teacher Associations, for civic and fraternal groups and for educational associations.

The materials included in this booklet have been printed through the cooperation and the financial contributions of the Iowa Congress of Teachers and Parents, the Iowa Society for Crippled Children and Adults and the Iowa Association for Retarded Children.

Education for All Children

The "average child," or as some persons refer to him, the "normal" child, is the one who appears to the casual observer as having no handicapping condition.

On this point the casual observer and the child frequently disagree. The girl with freckles in high school often feels she is greatly handicapped by a unique condition. Similar feelings may be found in the fat boy or girl or the boy or girl with an outsized nose, ears, or other unusual feature.

These feelings, in turn, may lead to anti-social behavior and may truly handicap the youngster's educational and social development. In this sense, many children and adults are handicapped in some fashion.

Special education deals with these "normal" children in addition to those who have such marked handicaps that they require special teaching techniques, equipment or other adjustments in school so they may develop to their maximum capacity. In dealing with the children regarded as average, the special education program emphasizes prevention.

At least 10 to 12 per cent of our school age children have problems which require some special adjustment in the school program. The scope of the problem and the challenge it presents to the public school can better be anticipated when we realize this estimate is conservative.

The 49th Yearbook, Part II of the National Society for the Study of Education classifies these children needing supplementary classroom help as:

1. Visually handicapped
2. Acoustically handicapped
3. Speech handicapped
4. Orthopedically handicapped and cardiopathic
5. Epileptic, the tubercular and children with glandular disorders
6. Mentally handicapped

7. Gifted child

8. Socially handicapped

The Iowa State Department of Public Instruction subscribes to the objectives of the NEA Educational Policies Commission which are "self-realization, human relationships, economic efficiency and civic responsibility." For the above children to achieve these objectives creates special educational problems.

Because exceptional children are like average children in most respects they require regular methods of instruction and, in addition, require more individualized instruction, which includes diagnostic services, flexible class placement and other adjustments.

In 1946 the Iowa Legislature authorized the creation of the Division of Special Education to supervise both the educational and financial phases of a program of special services for these children. The Division sets general standards for methods of operation and administration and provides direct consultative assistance to local school personnel. One supervisor and five consultants are employed at the state level to carry out the responsibilities outlined in Iowa Code 281.

Financial aid is provided to local school districts or county boards of education on an excess cost basis so these local areas will be able to furnish adequate educational opportunity to their exceptional children.

Special provisions for exceptional children are not intended to pamper them. They are like their classmates and to that extent can be educated in similar fashion. But their special needs are such that they require services which extend beyond those offered the average "normal" child. Recognition and action in the light of these facts are basic to the development of an adequate educational program.

Special Education Looks At the Gifted Child

Many of Iowa's more progressive school administrators are becoming aware of the problems which confront gifted children in their schools. Some of these schools are embarking on realistic programs designed to more nearly provide equal educational opportunity for these children of superior intellect.

The Division of Special Education may not provide funds to help with the education of gifted children at the present time unless they suffer from a physical problem or until there is an emotional maladjustment. Special education personnel frequently find, among those children referred to their attention for emotional or behavior disorders, children whose intellectual level would make them potential leaders in academic, social, political or scientific circles.

Instances in which the natural and all-encompassing curiosity of a gifted child has been seriously stifled by a rigid system of conformity do come to attention all too often. Each of Iowa's public school psychologists and special education supervisors have in their files case histories in which extreme maladjustment and frustration have resulted because of the school's inability to properly identify superior

intelligence and to properly stimulate and challenge its development. Some administrators still feel that while the handicapped child and the child of sub-normal intelligence need an individualized program, the child of superior ability can get along with no special help and indeed should not require as much teacher time as the average child.

Dr. Paul Witty, national authority on gifted children and Director of the Psycho-Educational Clinic of Northwestern University, in a speech made at the 1956 annual meeting of Iowa supervisors of special education described the gifted child as, "any child whose level of performance is consistently remarkable in a line of worthwhile endeavor." Witty cited several studies which dispel some widely accepted myths in regard to the gifted. These studies show the gifted to be superior to groups of normal children in physical development, social maturity, emotional adjustment, play activities, intellectual development and academic achievement.

Schools in Iowa and the nation are attempting different methods of handling the education of their gifted. Programs of modified acceleration

Special Education Looks

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This group of supervisors was among those who discussed ways of planning programs for gifted children at the September meeting of supervisors of special education. They are from left to right: Dean Jacobs, Jefferson and Wapello counties; Elva Bramhall, Henry and Louisa counties; Vera Pierce, Davenport; Wayne Bruce, Clinton county; Sigurd Walden, Cerro Gordo and Worth counties; and Ruby Van Meter, Des Moines.

Local Supervision of Special Education

Sixty-nine Iowa counties are helping meet the education needs of handicapped children in their public schools by employing trained supervisors of special education. These supervisors work in cooperation with other specialists, public school personnel and public and private organizations.

Conservative estimates point out that at least 10 per cent of our public school pupils today are sufficiently handicapped to require service of trained special education personnel. The supervisor's primary duty is to coordinate these services. At the same time he seeks to create an awareness of the problems of this vital 10 per cent by informing both school personnel and the general public.

Special Education Looks

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and enrichment within the regular curriculum are used successfully in some systems. Selected grouping of the "major work" type, where superior children are brought together for their academic work but allowed to return to their regular groups for non-academic programs, has been used in Cleveland for years. New York has successfully brought together entire schools made up of gifted children.

Enrichment programs can be successfully carried out in any school or classroom if teachers are actually interested and guided in providing the best education for all children. Materials and supplies are available in any school which the imaginative teacher can use for the better stimulation and development of the gifted child. Special education persons will gladly offer their assistance in identifying superior children and will help in individualizing programs for such youngsters.

In addition to supervising other special education personnel, the supervisor is expected to help identify the exceptional child and plan group and individual programs with public school administrators. This would include the provision for necessary physical facilities to implement such a program and the provision of sufficient aid to teachers so they can adequately carry out the program. It is also fundamental that the good supervisor carry out a full program of parent consultation as well as cooperating closely with medical and para-medical professions.

The large majority of the 42 supervisors of special education now serving in Iowa are located in one, two or three county areas. Six cities also employ supervisors of special education.

During the 1955-1956 school year a unique program was initiated in a four-county area. Not only was a supervisor employed in this area but also speech therapists and a full time public school psychologist. This original program was sufficiently successful to encourage several such cooperative endeavors.

An adequately staffed unit of this size assures that the service of personnel trained in specialty areas are available for more frequent pupil contacts, thus contributing to a greater economy of human and financial resources.

As school districts reorganize into larger and more efficient units, special education will play an increasingly important part in providing the leadership to meet the individual needs of pupils. Newly reorganized districts may profitably use the services of local supervisors or state consultants to help formulate long range planning.

Speech and Hearing Services Are Available

Speaking of Speech and Hearing

“ . . . a . . . i . . . you . . . ay?” (What did you say?) This very roughly illustrates how the barrier of poor hearing with resulting poor speech might block the path of effective communication.

We are all aware that five to ten per cent of the pupils in a school may have speech and hearing problems which will also interfere with their personality growth, social development and ability to learn. Both the child and his communication, therefore, are affected in varying degrees by a speech and hearing problem.

These problems also often have an undesirable effect on those around the child. The conscientious teacher may become overly concerned at the expense of her other children. Parents may find the problem to be causing tension in the home. Children may feel socially ill at ease when in the presence of a child with such a problem. Or another teacher may, in all good faith, by attempting to help the child only aggravate the problem. Still another child with a mild hearing or speech problem may go unnoticed without skillful testing by experienced personnel.

State Services Provided

Through the Department's Division of Special Education, every school in Iowa has access to financial assistance with speech and hearing therapists' salaries and travel expenses, expenses incurred by a child's attendance at a speech clinic, costs arising from purchase of hearing aids and with expenses incurred through transportation of pupils to speech centers. The Division also loans individual and group hearing testing equipment and table model hearing aids.

Two consultants are employed by the Division to assist with the development of local programs and to provide leadership and direction to these programs.

Advisory Committees for speech therapy and hearing conservation work with the state consultants toward improving existing policies and practices.

Local Services

Currently speech and hearing services are being sponsored by 36 counties and 19 local Boards of Education. These Boards represent 60 of Iowa's 99 counties. Only 18 counties are making no apparent effort to supply their children with these services.

Local areas design the framework within which the services are to be provided. Generally speaking, an effective program will evidence concern for three groups of children.

1. Those with severe speech and hearing problems who require direct and regular attention from a therapist.
2. Those with more or less minor problems who can be helped through regularly guided teacher and parent help.
3. All children for improved speech development and conservation of hearing.

Effectiveness of the local program is also governed by the amount of teamwork between classroom teachers, school administrators, outside agencies, speech therapists and other special services in the school system. Dr. Wilbur A. Yauch, a former principal of the campus school, College of Education, Ohio University, has stated:

“The key to improvement and eventual elimination of the (speech) defect is re-education, a full time job. As long as the specialist is expected to carry the entire load of such responsibility, it is difficult to see how desirable levels of success can be obtained.”

Educational Achievement For the Physically Handicapped Child

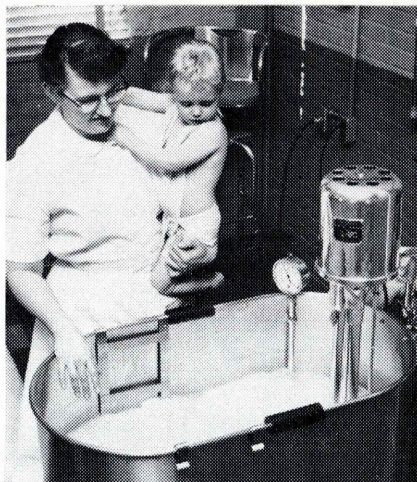
Fundamental to sound educational philosophy is recognition that a child can best be educated in a group with his peers.

The physically handicapped arouse ready sympathy in the school and community because their handicaps are frequently conspicuous. Physically impaired children make up about 3 per cent of our school population, or, in Iowa approximately 16,000 boys and girls.

The Iowa legislature has recognized the extra needs of these crippled youngsters and has created a plan for educational aid. Chapter 281 of the Iowa Code permits local school districts which provide special education for handicapped students to be reimbursed for costs incurred in excess of the average per pupil cost. The aim is to permit these children to have the same educational opportunity as other children.

Educational planning for physically handicapped children is done only after careful study and evaluation of individual abilities and needs. All supervisors of special education can help the administrator and teacher with these evaluations and in planning an effective program. These special programs are actually carried out only after a physician, licensed to practice in Iowa, has specifically approved the child to participate.

The school can help to provide special public or private transportation to and from school as may be necessary. Older school buildings with many stairs frequently prevent the crippled youngsters from moving in and around the building. This necessitates help from others, if the child is to utilize the lunchroom, restroom, or classrooms on various floors.



Loving care is very important but it is not enough. Professionally trained therapists are employed to help them learn to walk . . . to talk . . . to use their hands.

If it is medically impossible for the child to be in school, electrical school-to-home equipment is recommended. This equipment, operated over regular telephone lines, permits the child to participate in the regular classroom activities by listening and responding. Such a program supplements rather than substitutes for home instruction.

A teacher going to the home may be the only practical expedient for continuing academic instruction for the youngster. However, in normal child development, social growth is of equal importance to the acquisition and mastery of academic skills. Association with only the immediate family and adult teachers does little to foster social growth. Therefore, when at all possible, home instruction should be bolstered by electrical school-to-home equipment.

Preparing a youngster to achieve at his maximum possible level is the concern of every good educator. Just as remedial academic work is provided to help the youngster reach his maxi-

Physically Handicapped Children

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The Growth of Special Classes In Iowa

Special classes for both educable and trainable mentally retarded children are well beyond the stage of experimentation. A real growth in the number of children enrolled in such classes has taken place in the last few years.

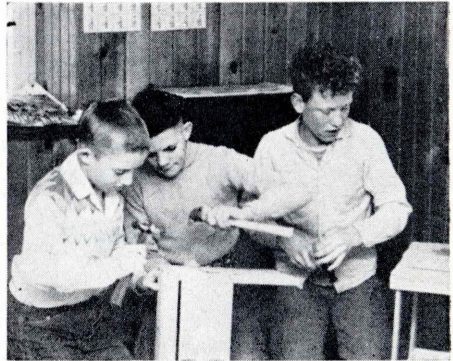
During the school year 1952-1953, there were approximately 2,200 children enrolled in all the special classes in Iowa public schools. The present school year finds about 3,375 children in such classes. About 150 of the children now enrolled in special classes are severely mentally retarded between I.Q. range of 30 to 50 and would have been ineligible for any school program in Iowa as little as three years ago.

Conservative estimates are that 2½ per cent of the population are mentally retarded. Applying this percentage to the 531,000 children enrolled in public schools in September, 1956, would result in an estimated 13,275 children under I.Q. 69 (which is the point generally accepted as the upper limit of mental deficiency).

Mentally Retarded In Regular Classes Total 8,374

The state schools for mentally re-

tarded at Woodward and Glenwood enroll 1,326 persons of school age. Private day and boarding schools enroll about 200. Thus, 3,375 in public school special classes, 1,326 in state schools and 200 in private schools total 4,901 school age mentally retarded



The above special class youngsters from Mahaska County profit from "learning by doing."

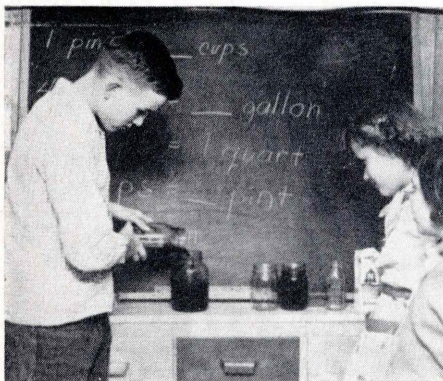
in programs especially designed for them. The remaining 9,049, with few exceptions, naturally are found in regular classrooms.

Instruction which is challenging and stimulating to the average and superior students will, almost always, be beyond the comprehension of mentally retarded children in the class. Unless a disproportionate amount of teacher-time is spent in planning individualized lessons for any retarded child in the group, he will necessarily fall farther behind the class each day. Continued failure on the part of a child will obviously result in frustration, unhappiness and frequently in undesirable behavior manifestations.

Special classes are designed around a number of boys and girls of similar ability and similar age. *Each child has*

Growth of Special Classes

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These children are acquiring vital knowledge by actual experience.

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an opportunity to succeed in some measure each day.

The curriculum must be designed around the presentation of essential material. *Fundamental academic skills are developed and a great deal of emphasis is placed on problem solving of a practical nature. Children are taught to respect authority and to get along with each other and adults.* They are allowed to form an honest opinion of the kind of vocations suitable to persons of their own ability.

They are allowed to develop self confidence and self respect essential to living a normal life in a normal society.

More Programs Are Needed

These programs must be developed to care for the needs of the great number of retarded children not now

in special classes. Some communities have provided excellent programs through elementary school age but have not provided classes at the junior high level.

Classes for high school age retarded children are scarcely more than a dream in Iowa, but are as essential to completion of the job as the normal high school is to the regular elementary school.

It is important that only a limited number of children be enrolled in a special class. The cost per child is consequently somewhat higher than for a regular class. A part of this extra cost is shared by the Department of Public Instruction through its Division of Special Education. The expenditure of money for such children in local programs is vital when you consider that estimates of life-time institutionalization vary from \$45,000 to \$100,000 per person.

References

Persons interested in further information regarding any of the problems discussed in the preceding pages are urged to contact The Division of Special Education, State Office Building or any of the organizations listed as contributors to this publication.

The following references will be useful to those wishing to explore further, means of aiding handicapped children.

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