

IV. FACT SHEET: EXPANDED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Background and Need

During the past decade, the foundation has been laid for a comprehensive program of support for educational programs and services for mentally retarded, hearing and speech impaired, deaf, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, crippled, and other health impaired children. Beginning with the Cooperative Research Act in 1954, Congress has enacted legislation to provide assistance for research and demonstration projects and for personnel training programs in the education of handicapped children. Over 32,000 fellowships and training grants have been awarded in all areas of education for the handicapped. Last year 8,300 grants were awarded in the area of teaching programs for handicapped children. The Captioned Films for the Deaf program, twice amended since 1958, now includes research, training, production and dissemination activities which are reaching an annual audience of 1.5 million.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 offers direct educational benefits to handicapped children. In addition, it was amended to include State-operated or -supported schools which provide free public education to handicapped children. Also enacted in 1965 was the National Technical Institute for the Deaf Act. This Institute will supplement the post-secondary educational opportunities for the deaf provided only by Gallaudet College. In the summer of 1966, an HEW Task Force on Handicapped Children and Child Development reviewed the Department's programs for the handicapped and suggested priorities of effort and means for improved coordination of programs.

In the last days of the 89th Congress, two important pieces of legislation for handicapped children were enacted. One authorized the Model Secondary School for the Deaf at Gallaudet College. The other added Title VI—Education of Handicapped Children—to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This title authorized earmarked funds for projects to develop education programs for the handicapped, and directed the Office of Education to establish a Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped. The establishment of the new Bureau was announced by the Office of Education on January 12, 1967.

Although these enactments provide an impressive foundation for research, professional training, and development of special education programs for handicapped children, we must continue to expand their educational opportunities.

Of the estimated 5 million children, or 10 percent of the school-age population, appreciably limited by one or more handicapping conditions, only about 40 percent are receiving the benefits of special education programs. Half of the public school systems in the United States report that they do not provide educational services for even one type of handicapping condition.

Little beyond verbal acknowledgement has been provided for the education of hundreds of multiply handicapped children. Some handicapped children must remain on residential school waiting lists 5 or 6 years before being accepted into an education program; this almost destroys a child's chance to prepare for his future and to prepare to contribute to our Nation's future.

Early diagnosis and identification of a handicapping condition is essential and basic to formulating an education program for a handicapped child. There should be a focal point at which such diagnosis can be provided to help decide how best to allocate available resources to meet the needs of all handicapped children.

The great obstacle to developing and providing educational programs for handicapped children is the critical shortage of trained personnel—teachers, teachers of teachers, supportive personnel. Of the estimated 300,000 teachers and other personnel necessary to provide educational opportunities to all handicapped children within this decade, there are now only about 70,000. And at this time, there are only about 300 institutions of higher education capable of offering training for the preparation of professional personnel, often only in one area. If the 300,000 goal is to be attained, a nationwide personnel recruitment program, utilizing comprehensive and innovative information-dissemination methods, must be immediately initiated.

Proposal

The proposed amendments for improvement of the education of the handicapped would provide a variety of expanded educational opportunities for all handicapped children. The proposed *Regional Resource Centers*, which would