

Children and Youth With Disabilities

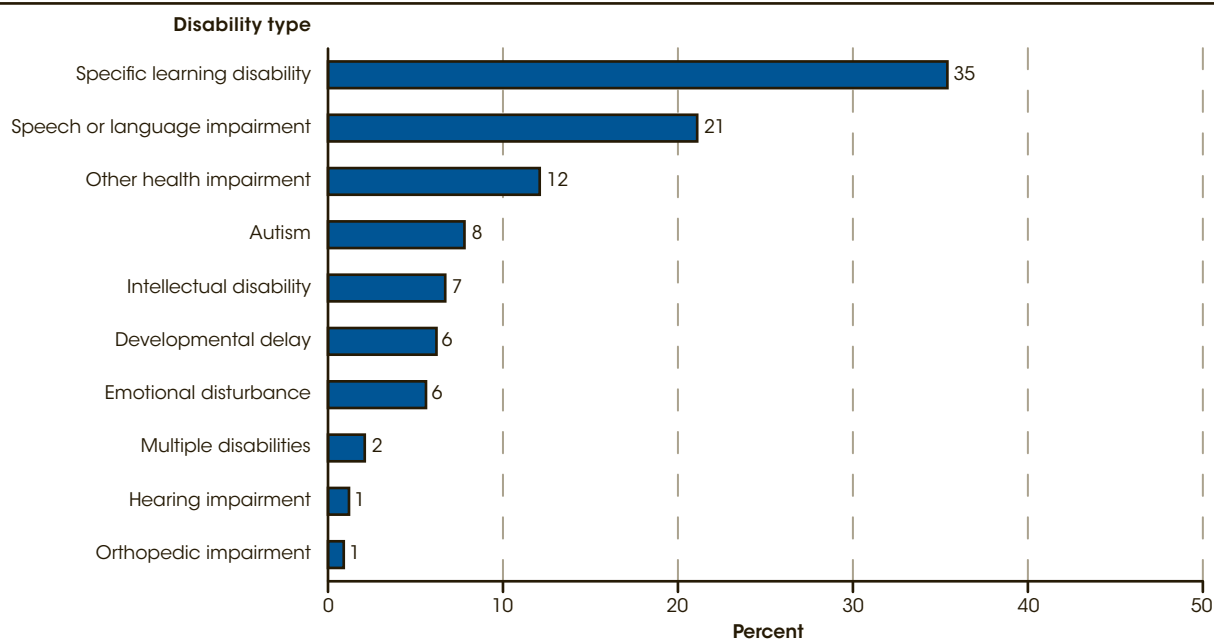
The number of children and youth ages 3–21 receiving special education services was 6.4 million, or about 13 percent of all public school students, in 2012–13. Some 35 percent of students receiving special education services had specific learning disabilities.

Enacted in 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), formerly known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), mandates the provision of a free and appropriate public school education for eligible children and youth ages 3–21. Eligible children and youth are those identified by a team of professionals as having a disability that adversely affects academic performance and as being in need of special education and related services. Data collection activities to monitor compliance with IDEA began in 1976.

From school years 1990–91 through 2004–05, the number of children and youth ages 3–21 who received special

education services increased, as did the percentage of total public school enrollment they constituted: 4.7 million children and youth ages 3–21, or about 11 percent of public school enrollment, received special education services in 1990–91, compared with 6.7 million, or about 14 percent, in 2004–05. Both the number and percentage of children and youth served under IDEA declined from 2004–05 through 2011–12, with some evidence of leveling off in 2012–13. By 2012–13, the number of children and youth receiving services under IDEA had declined to 6.4 million, corresponding to 13 percent of total public school enrollment.

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of children ages 3–21 served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, by disability type: School year 2012–13



NOTE: Deaf-blindness, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairments are not shown because they each account for less than 0.5 percent of children served under IDEA. Due to categories not shown, detail does not sum to total.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database, retrieved October 3, 2014, from <https://inventory.data.gov/dataset/8715a3e8-bf48-4eef-9deb-fd9bb76a196e/resource/a68a23f3-3981-47db-ac75-98a167b65259>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 204.30.

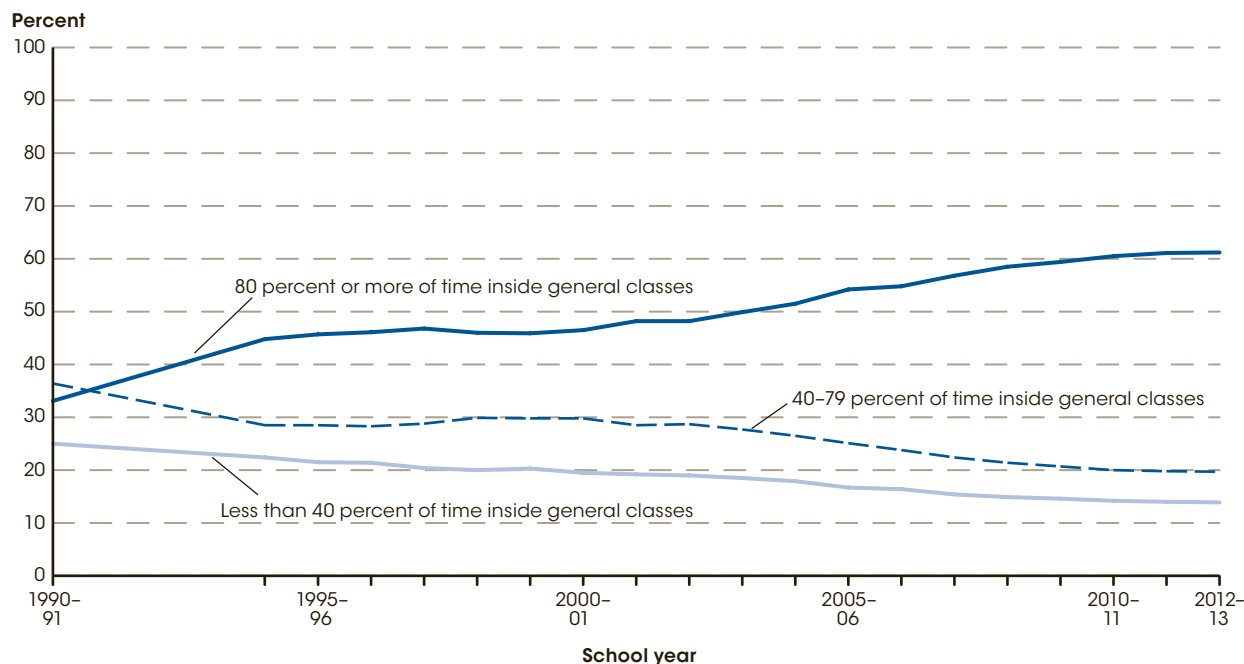
In school year 2012–13, a higher percentage of children and youth ages 3–21 received special education services under IDEA for specific learning disabilities than for any other type of disability. A specific learning disability is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to

listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. In 2012–13, some 35 percent of all children and youth receiving special education services had specific learning disabilities, 21 percent had speech or language impairments, and 12 percent had other health impairments (including having limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart

condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes). Children and youth with autism, intellectual disabilities, developmental delays, or emotional disturbances each accounted for between 6 and 8 percent

of students served under IDEA. Children and youth with multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, orthopedic impairments, visual impairments, traumatic brain injuries, or deaf-blindness each accounted for 2 percent or less of those served under IDEA.

Figure 2. Percentage of students ages 6–21 served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, placed in a regular public school environment, by amount of time spent inside general classes: Selected school years 1990–91 through 2012–13

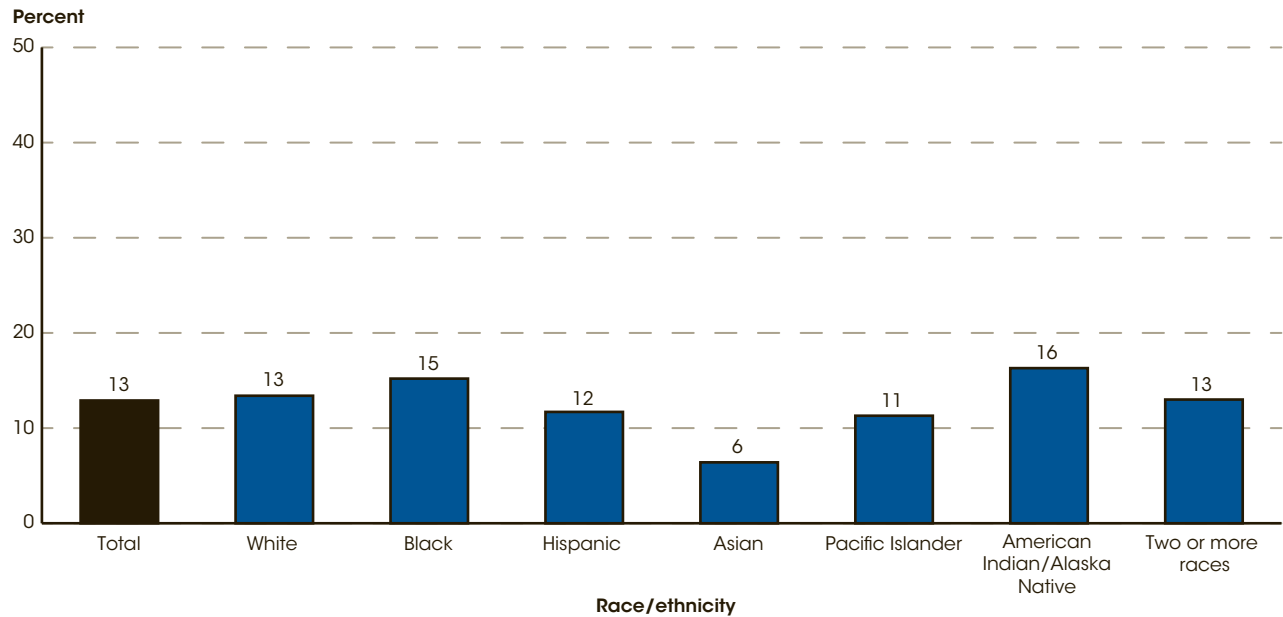


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database, retrieved October 3, 2014, from <https://inventory.data.gov/dataset/8715a3e8-bf48-4eef-9deb-fd9bb76a196e/resource/a68a23f3-3981-47db-ac75-98a167b65259>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 204.60.

About 95 percent of school-age children and youth ages 6–21 who were served under IDEA in 2012–13 were enrolled in regular schools. Some 3 percent of children and youth ages 6–21 who were served under IDEA were enrolled in separate schools (public or private) for students with disabilities; 1 percent were placed by their parents in regular private schools; and less than 1 percent each were in separate residential facilities (public or private), homebound or in hospitals, or in correctional facilities. Among all children and youth ages 6–21 who were served under IDEA, the percentage who spent most of the school day (i.e., 80 percent or more of time) in general classes in regular schools increased from 33 percent in 1990–91 to 61 percent in 2012–13. In contrast, during the same period, the percentage of those who spent 40 to 79 percent of the school day in general classes declined

from 36 to 20 percent, and the percentage of those who spent less than 40 percent of time inside general classes also declined from 25 to 14 percent. In 2012–13, the percentage of students served under IDEA who spent most of the school day in general classes was highest for students with speech or language impairments (87 percent). Approximately two-thirds of students with specific learning disabilities (67 percent), students with visual impairments (64 percent), students with other health impairments (64 percent), and students with developmental delays (62 percent) spent most of the school day in general classes. In contrast, 16 percent of students with intellectual disabilities and 13 percent of students with multiple disabilities spent most of the school day in general classes.

Figure 3. Percentage of children 3–21 years old served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, by race/ethnicity: School year 2012–13



NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database, retrieved October 3, 2014, from <https://inventory.data.gov/dataset/8715a3e8-bf48-4eef-9deb-fd9bb76a196e/resource/a68a23f3-3981-47db-ac75-98a167b65259>; and National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2012–13. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 204.30 and table 204.50.

In school year 2012–13, the number of children and youth ages 3–21 who were served under IDEA as a percentage of total enrollment in public schools differed by race/ethnicity. The percentage of children and youth served under IDEA was highest for American Indians/Alaska Natives (16 percent), followed by Blacks (15 percent), Whites (13 percent), children and youth of Two or more races (13 percent), Hispanics (12 percent), Pacific Islanders (11 percent), and Asians (6 percent). In most racial/ethnic groups, the percentage of children and youth receiving services for specific learning disabilities combined with the percentage receiving services for speech or language impairments accounted for over 50 percent of children and youth served under IDEA.

The percentage distribution of children and youth ages 3–21 who received various types of special education

services in 2012–13 differed by race/ethnicity. For example, the percentage of students with disabilities served under IDEA for specific learning disabilities was lower among Asian children (23 percent) than among children overall (35 percent). However, the percentage of students with disabilities who received services under IDEA for autism was higher among Asian children (18 percent) than among children overall (8 percent). Additionally, students who received services for emotional disturbances accounted for 8 percent of Black children served under IDEA, compared with 6 percent of children overall. Among children and youth who received services, the percentages of Pacific Islanders (9 percent), American Indians/Alaska Natives (9 percent), and students of Two or more races (14 percent) who received services for developmental delays under IDEA were higher than the percentage of children overall (6 percent).

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, tables 204.30, 204.50, and 204.60

Glossary: Disability, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Regular school