Issues in Labeling Young Children with Developmental Delay: Whose Responsibility is It?

Abstract

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 required states to provide comprehensive, coordinated, family-centered special education services to children from birth to age 9 after being identified as 1) being developmentally delayed, or 2) having conditions that could lead to delay, or 3) at risk for developmental delay. Within the provisions of IDEIA 2004, states have been encountering a number of obstacles including: a) wide variation in definition, b) over-identification, c) family and cultural diversity, d) appropriateness of norm-referenced tools, and e) cost involved in providing services. The purpose of this article is to highlight issues pertaining to the discrepancies in defining the term “developmental delay” and further discuss the transition process from Part C to Part B.

Key Words: Early intervention, developmental delays, early childhood education, special education.

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