



The Choice of an Educational Placement by Parents of Children Eligible for Special Education Services

Rinat Namer Furstenberg Lital Barlev
Adi Hercowitz-Amir Tamir Ayali

Editor: Raya Dash

English translation (Abstract): David Simmer

Graphic design: Anat Perko Toledano

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Myers JDC Brookdale Institute

P.O.B. 3886, Jerusalem 9103702, Israel

Tel: 02-6557400

brookdale.jdc.org.il/en | brook@jdc.org

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Abstract

Background

The most recent amendment of the Special Education Law – 5748 – 1988 (Amendment 11 in 2018) established the right of parents to choose the type of educational placement for their children from among three options: a regular kindergarten or class, a special education class in a regular school, or a special education kindergarten or school. Previous studies in Israel have not examined the considerations that guide parents in choosing an educational placement for their child.

Objectives

1. To examine the considerations of parents in choosing the type of educational placement for their child and the factors that are likely to influence their decision.
2. To understand the differences between the considerations of parents choosing various types of educational settings and the differences across population groups.
3. To examine the views of parents toward the Eligibility and Characterization Committee within the local authority, which decides on the student's eligibility for special education services.

Method

1. A **literature review**.
2. **In-depth interviews** – Fifteen interviews were conducted with parents whose children's cases were considered by an Eligibility and Characterization Committee and with professionals and policy makers in the Ministry of Education.
3. An **online survey** among 1,562 parents of children entering first grade or higher whose children's cases were considered by an Eligibility and Characterization Committee in 2021-2. The survey was in the form of a structured questionnaire.

Findings and Recommendations

The report describes the considerations used by parents to choose the type of special education placement for their child, the characteristics of parents who tend to choose each type, and the concerns parents have when making their choices. Also examined were the main factors that might encourage parents to choose inclusion in a regular classroom, along with their attitudes and feelings toward the Eligibility and Characterization Committee.

In light of the study's findings, recommendations for improving the decision-making process, increasing the number of those who choose inclusion in regular classrooms, and choosing the approach used according to the characteristics of the parents (such as population group, level of education, etc.).