

EDUCATION OF THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILD

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**By
Beverly P. Collins
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ABSTRACT

It takes a good many plans and several types of school organizations to meet the changing needs of the various types of handicapped children.

To help the handicapped child best, the classroom teacher should make herself familiar with the following factors:

- (1) Age the defect occurred.
- (2) Nature and severity of the handicap.
- (3) Child's ability.
- (4) The reaction of others to the handicap.
- (5) Traumatic events.
- (6) Type of help child is given.
- (7) Personality of the child.

These are all factors influencing the educability of the handicapped child.

Few school systems have a comprehensive appraisal group of medical, psychological, and educational personnel to determine the educational placement of a child. Help can be obtained through local or state school systems. Most school systems offer special educational services through consultant help and teacher guidance.

Normalcy, to the extent that it is possible, is stressed in the education of all the handicapped groups. The regular public school classroom, or special classes located within a public school building, are generally thought to be the ideal places in which to educate the majority of the handicapped population. The curriculum for the handicapped child should follow that of the normal school as far as possible for his educational goals are the same as those of his nonhandicapped peers.

Even more important than education is the adjustment and happiness of the handicapped child. The classroom teacher, by virtue of her position, is able to guide the child into wholesome social relationships. The teacher's attitude toward a handicapped child will influence the attitude of the entire class toward the child. If the teacher shows a willingness to have the child in her classroom, and if she is astute about the child's abilities, a class attitude of acceptance will follow. A handicapped child does not want sympathy or pity. He wants to have fun. He wants to learn. He wants to be a regular guy, held to the same rules as other children in his age group. He wants to be included in the give and take of daily life. The teacher must assume an equal roll with medical personnel and parents in influencing the life of the exceptional child.

Within the handicapped group, the brain injured may require special adaptive techniques that the normal teacher

cannot provide. Considerable research and programming is being carried on in the field of perceptual learning and brain injury. If the classroom teacher is interested in the field of perceptual learning, she can keep abreast of this new information through professional journals. A good deal of new information concerning child development can be applied to teaching techniques for all children.