



Laws Supporting Early Childhood Inclusion

Early childhood inclusion is supported by the passage of two major acts of federal legislation; the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) and the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA). Originally passed in 1986, IDEA upholds the rights of children with disabilities, ages birth through 5 years, to free and appropriate education. Special instruction and services must be provided to meet the unique needs of each individual. The ADA, passed in 1991, prevents public facilities, including child care programs, from denying services to persons because they have disabilities. The major provisions of each of these laws are listed below.

Major Provisions of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*

- Extends free public school education to preschool children (ages 3, 4, and 5 years) with disabilities
- Creates early intervention services for infants and toddlers (ages birth through 2 years) with special needs and their families
- Locates and identifies children with special needs
- Provides a non-discriminatory, multidisciplinary evaluation by qualified professionals
- Provides related services, including transportation and such supportive services as are required to assist a child to benefit from special education
- Assures parental involvement and consent in all aspects of the educational process
- Assures confidentiality of records

Major Provisions of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*

- Prohibits discrimination in employment, public services, public accommodations and transportation
- Promotes community integration by prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability by entities such as
 - hotels
 - restaurants and bars
 - theaters, concert halls, stadiums
 - auditoriums, convention centers
 - stores, malls
 - offices, hospitals
 - terminals, depots
 - museums, libraries, galleries
 - parks, zoos
 - schools
 - day care centers, senior citizen centers, shelters
 - gymnasiums, spas, recreation centers ■

Note: From Mainstreaming Young Children: A Training Series for Child Care Providers (pp. 8-9), by P.W. Wesley, 1992, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center. Copyright 1992 by Patricia W. Wesley. Reprinted with permission.