

Diversity in Early Childhood Intervention Leadership

Current Facts and Challenges

- The U.S. Department of Education (2003a) found that 38.8% of public school students were minorities in 2000, up from 29.6% in 1986. In addition, the number of students who spoke a language other than English at home rose from 6.3 million in 1979 to 13.7 million in 1999 (U.S. Department of Education, 2003b). Minority teachers, on the other hand, accounted for only 13% of the faculty (Wald, 1996).
- The number of ethnically and linguistically diverse students is continuing to grow. By the year 2005, children and adolescents of color will make up as much as 40% of the U.S. youth population (*Embracing the dynamics of difference*, 1997).
- Schools with high concentrations of black and Hispanic students uniformly have the most teachers with the least experience and the least qualifications for the subject they teach (Darling-Hammond, 1998).
- Infants and toddlers ages birth to 2 who are served under IDEA, Part C, reflect the growing diversity of the U.S. The children represented are African-American (15%), Hispanic/Latino (18%), Asian/Pacific Islander (4%) and American Indian/ Alaskan (1%). (www.ideadata.org, 2001).
- Special education teachers who served primarily students ages 3-5 classify themselves as Asian (2%), Black (5.8%), White (90%) and "other" (2%). 6.4% consider themselves Hispanic and 93.6% do not (SPeNSE, 2002).
- The lack of diverse teachers reflects the lack of diversity in college enrollment. "Among race and ethnic groups, a greater percentage of White high school graduates (63.1%) were enrolled in college than were black (54.8 %) or Hispanic (51.5 %) graduates" (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2002).
- Only 20 percent of undergraduates in teacher education are minority-group members (Olson & Jerald, 1998).
- Of the major population groups, Latino students have the highest rate of attendance at community colleges. Thus, the community college experience/associate degree experience is of great importance in tracking changes in educational attainment (Kaufman, Chavez, & Lauen, 1998; McMillen & Kaufman, 1998)
- Membership lists of several leading early education organizations reveal that there is very little African American representation. Fewer than three percent of the 4,800 members of the Society for Research in Child Development are African American (Kuhn, 1993). Of the 50 regular members of the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education in 1993, only 6% are African American (Mobley, 1993). Of over 400 local, state and regional affiliate leaders of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, fewer than five percent are African American (Smith, 1993 in Moore, 1993).
- In a survey of African-Americans in early childhood leadership positions, 90% percent of respondents reported that they encountered racism in the field. Further, 64% felt that they are sometimes treated as token leaders (Moore, 1993).

- Financial constraints, institutional racism, lack of mentors, misguided leadership training initiatives and lack of opportunities to publish and do research, are frequently cited impediments for diverse individuals seeking leadership positions (Moore, 1993; Luna & Cullen, 1995; Cruz, 1997).

References

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (1998). ASHA membership grows to nearly 93,000. *ASHA Leader*, 3(7), 5.
- Chang, H.N., Muckelroy, A., & Tobiassen, D. (1996). *Looking in, looking out: Redefining childcare & early education in a diverse society*. San Francisco: California Tomorrow Publication.
- Choy, S.P., Henke, R.R., Alt, M.N., Medrich, E.A., & Bobbitt, S.A. (1993). *Schools and staffing in the United States: A statistical profile, 1990-91*. Washington, DC: NCES.
- Cook, L.H., & Boe, E.E. (1995). Who is teaching students with disabilities? *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 28(1), 70-72.
- Cruz, J. (1997). Commentary. In S. L. Kagan & B. Bowman, *Leadership in early care and education*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). *New standards: Old inequalities: The current challenge for African-American education*. In *State of Black America 1998*. Washington, DC: National Urban League.
- Embracing the dynamics of difference: Cultural competence in children's mental health. (1997, Spring). *Networks: National Technical Assistance Center Newsletter*.
- Division for Early Childhood (1997). *DEC Membership Report*. Reston, VA: DEC/CEC.
- IDEA Data. (2001). www.ideadata.org
- Kaufman, P., Chavez, L., & Lauen, D. (1998). *Generational status and educational outcomes among Asian and Hispanic 1998 eighth graders*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Luna, G., & Cullen, D.L. (1995). *Empowering the faculty: Mentoring redirected and renewed*. Report 3, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports. Washington: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education.
- McMillen, M., & Kaufman, P. (1998). *Dropout rates in the U.S. 1998*. Washington, DC: NCES.
- Moore, E.K. (1993). *Paths to African American leadership positions in early childhood education*. Washington, DC: NBCDI.
- Morgan, G., Azer, S., Costley, J., Genser, A., Goodman, I., Lombardi, J., McGimsey, B. (1993). *Making a career of it*. Boston, MA: The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2000a). *Editorial projects in education, 1998*. Washington: GPO.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). *The condition of education 2002*. Washington: GPO.
- Olson, L. & Jerald, C. D. (1998). The teaching challenge. Quality Counts: Who should teach? *Education Week Special Issue*, XVII, 16.
- Saenz, T. I., Wyatt, T. A., & Reinard, J. C. (1998). Increasing the recruitment and retention of historically underrepresented minority students in higher education: A case study. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 7, 39-48.
- SPeNSE. (July 2002). *Key Findings for SPeNSE/ Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education*. www.spense.org
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (May 2002). *College enrollment and work activity of 2001 high school graduates*. www.bls.gov/
- U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics (2003a). *Digest of education statistics, 2002*. (NCES 2003-060). Washington, DC: Author.
- U.S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics (2003b). *The condition of education, 2003*. (NCES 2003-067). Washington, DC: Author.
- Wald, J.L. (1996). *Culturally and linguistically diverse professionals in special education: A demographic analysis*. Reston, VA: National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education, the Council for Exceptional Children.
- Willie, C. V., Garbaldi, A. M., & Reed, W. L. (Eds.) (1990). *The Education of African Americans*, 3. University of Massachusetts: William Monroe Trotter Institute.