

The Big I.D.E.A.

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: The Need For Full Funding)

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Introduction

- 17% of all children in the United States are reported to have a disability (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).
- This problem directly effects the individuals who have a disability, the individual's family, surrounding peers, society, and economics.
- Young adults that possess one of the thirteen disabilities covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are less likely to attain a high school diploma or equivalent when compared to young adults without disabilities (2019).
- These individuals with disabilities are entering the career force with an unfair, unequal opportunity due to the lack of an appropriate education which is caused by the lack of funding.



Policy Issues

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has never met the 40% funding promised.
- In 2018 IDEA provided 13.4 billion dollars which amounted to only 14.6 percent of the cost being picked up by the federal government (Francis, 2019).
- Money is taken from staff members and other general programs which has a negative impact on all students.
- Resources are scarce and because of this they are unable to admit adequate services to support disabled children (National Council on Disability, 2018).

Proposed Solutions

- Fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to meet the promised 40% through the IDEA Full Funding Act.
- This act would slowly increase the funding for IDEA over multiple years while abandoning the formula they use now to calculate funds until the full amount is accomplished.
- Once IDEA is funded to the full 40% outcomes such as relief from the financial burden on state and local taxpayers, salary raises for teachers and related services personnel, the ability for districts to enhance recruitment and retention possibilities, and more support for school districts in increasing graduation rates amongst students with disabilities will be seen.
- The IDEA full funding Act will be funded by the Saving Lives by Lowering Tobacco Use Act (Harkin et al.). This will double the tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products resulting in less tobacco use or no tobacco use at all while offsetting the cost of fully funding IDEA.
- Promote funding while providing more beneficial education programs and using a more evidence-based formula to calculate funding (National Council on Disability, 2018).

Policy History

- Education for children with disabilities in the United States did not become something that was successfully advocated for until the early 1900s.
- If a disabled child took away the rights of free education and success of an abled child due to their appearance or actions being distracting then the disabled child had to yield their rights (Colker, 2013).
- IDEA was implemented in 1990, but this policy was around before then under a different name known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act which was implemented in 1975.
- The Education for All Handicapped Children Act required public schools to provide equal access to education. Although this was the goal, the lack of funding made this an impossible task.

Current Policy

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires free, appropriate education and other related services be made available to children with disabilities to further prepare them for future education, career opportunities, and everyday living tasks by funding 40% of the costs.

Section A

- People with disabilities are recognized as capable and worthy of an education provided to them freely.

Section B

- Represents the assistance for children ages three to twenty-one with disabilities.
- When a child is suspected to have a disability that effects their behavior or progress in education they are entitled to an evaluation of the suspected disability.
- Every child between the ages of three and twenty-one that qualify under this act with a disability are entitled to an individualized education plan.
- Education and services must be provided in an appropriate environment that is least restrictive.
- The child and their parent/guardians' opinions must be taken into consideration when making the individualized education plan.

Section C

- Early intervention services are available to children and their families under the age of two with disabilities.

Section D

- Provisions related to discretionary grants to support state personnel development, technical assistance and dissemination, technology, and parent-training and information centers.
- Requires the Department of Education to create a research plan to improve technology used by children with disabilities.

References

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