

# Special Education and the Community Outside the Education System

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**Section Three, Professional Policies, Part 1 Chapter 5**

## **Special Education and the Community Outside the Education System**

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### **Liaison with Other Agencies and Organizations**

Children and youth with exceptionalities and their families require the services of many agencies which deal with their various needs. In most cases, individual agency efforts can be made more effective through a cooperative interagency and interdisciplinary approach whereby special education has a primary function for liaison with other agencies and organizations.

This approach will not only encourage a consistent effort on the part of all concerned with the child's education and development, but will provide for joint establishment of the priorities and respective responsibilities for meeting the child's needs. Public policy should be encouraged at the state, provincial, and federal levels for a coordinated approach to multifunded projects under one application procedure to ensure comprehensive services to the child. Such policies should support and facilitate intergovernmental cooperation as well as interagency linkage. The Council encourages policies which promote a coordinated approach to planning for the needs of children and youth with exceptionalities and which strengthen the relationships of special education to public and private agencies providing services. The Council at all levels should consistently support a coordinated effort.

Public Participation Administrative units at all levels of government responsible for providing leadership must have responsibility for developing policy regarding the education of children and youth with exceptionalities. However, such policy must reflect the thinking of all persons involved in the education of children and youth with exceptionalities. The Council believes that advisory committees can help government agencies assess problems, plan and set priorities, and develop and oversee policies regarding the education of children and youth with exceptionalities. The Council further believes that all policies involving education of children and youth with exceptionalities should be brought before recurring public and legislative scrutiny.

The School and the Family Parents must have access to all available necessary information in order to be able to make optimal decisions about the child's education and to fulfill the family's obligations to the child.

As a means of strengthening special education programs, the parents of children with exceptionalities and organized community groups should be given a responsible voice in educational policy formation and planning activities.

The primary consumers of educational services, the children, should not be ignored as a valuable resource in the evaluation of the organization and delivery of services.

As a means of strengthening the family in fulfilling its obligations to children with exceptional needs, the schools should provide educationally related counseling and family services. In cases of clear educational neglect, the schools, through qualified professional personnel, should make extraordinary arrangements for educational services.

Access includes making information available at convenient times and locations and providing information in the parent's native language or mode of communication whenever necessary.

### **Private Sector**

The private sector (nonprofit) has long played a significant role in the field of special education. The elements of the private sector (nonprofit) are varied and encompass the full gamut of levels of educational programs and services from preschool education through higher education, research, demonstration projects, personnel training, technology, and the development and production of media and materials. Increasingly, a working relationship has developed between the public and private sectors (nonprofit) regarding children and youth with exceptionalities.

The Council believes that private enterprise (nonprofit) can make major contributions to the development of adequate special education services. The Council urges cooperation between government and private enterprise (nonprofit) to meet the needs of children and youth with exceptionalities. The Council urges that legislation be flexible enough to allow administrative agencies to involve the private sector (nonprofit) in all aspects of program development.

The Council believes that the opportunity for all children to receive an education is a public responsibility, but that program operation of such services may be conducted in varied settings and through a variety of public and private (nonprofit) agencies. For this reason, The Council supports the development and provision of special services in both the public and private sectors (nonprofit) and the support for such services through public funds, under public control and supervision.

The Council believes that when children with exceptionalities receive their education in the private sector (nonprofit) as a matter of public policy, then the appropriate state public agency shall approve the education program and personnel in such facilities, certify that the program is appropriate to the child's educational needs and is provided at no expense to the child or his family, certify that the facility meets appropriate health and safety standards, and guarantee that all rights of children with exceptionalities and their families are maintained.

The Council for Exceptional Children.  
(1997). CEC Policy Manual, Section Three (pp. 71--92)  
Reston, VA: Author