

Resources Enhance Special Ed Services

(NAPS)—For more than 25 years, federal law has guaranteed a free appropriate public education to children and youth with disabilities. In 1997, the U.S. Congress reaffirmed and strengthened this commitment by reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, better known as IDEA '97.

Even though there have been many milestones of achievement in special and general education as a result of this Act, some concerns still exist. Some educators still face challenges in understanding and implementing this law. In addition, more culturally and linguistically diverse children continue to be served in special education, than would be expected from the percentage of diverse students in the general school population.

Fortunately, there are a variety of federally funded resources that are available to educators to help understand and implement IDEA '97 and provide special education services to all students including culturally, linguistically diverse students. The ILIAD (IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators) Partnership located at the Council for Exceptional Children supports the efforts of local administrators to implement IDEA '97 by providing timely and accurate information about the law.

The ILIAD Partnership Project is one of four national projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. ILIAD works with the Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE), the Associations of Service Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education (ASPIIRE), and the Policymaker Partnership (PMP) IDEA Partnership Projects to deliver a common message and increase understanding of IDEA '97.

Among some of the benefits of the project are:

- Training and resources on cultural and linguistic diversity in special education.



A variety of resources are available to help educators provide better services for students with disabilities.

- Professional development resources for staff training activities;
- Access to the *IDEA National Resource Cadre*, a resource network of individuals who provide timely and accurate information on IDEA '97 to a variety of audiences;
- Accurate, easy-to-understand information and guidance on IDEA '97;
- An information staff that answers phone and e-mail questions about IDEA '97;
- Web resources on IDEA '97—many of which are free. (Because it is a federally funded project, the Web site and all resources and materials are non-copyrighted and allow unlimited access to reproduction with proper citation);
- Referrals to other federally funded resources that can match specific needs.

"ILIAD keeps [our] organization informed and abreast of the latest developments with the implementation of IDEA and its '97 amendments. The project has been adept at bringing very diverse groups together in face-to-face meetings that have been very effective."

***Alicia Sosa,
National Association for
Bilingual Education,
August 25, 2000***

To learn more about IDEA '97, visit the ILIAD/ASPIIRE Web site at www.ideapractices.org or call 1-877-232-8332 toll-free or toll-free TTY 1-866-915-5000.