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AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS
AND NEEDS OF HISPANIC PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS IN ONE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation Presented

by

JULIO CESAR RODRIGUEZ QUILES

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1994

School of Education

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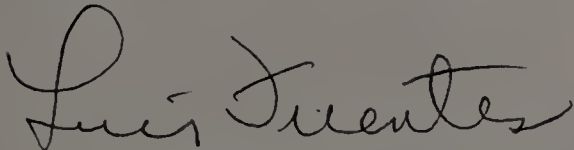
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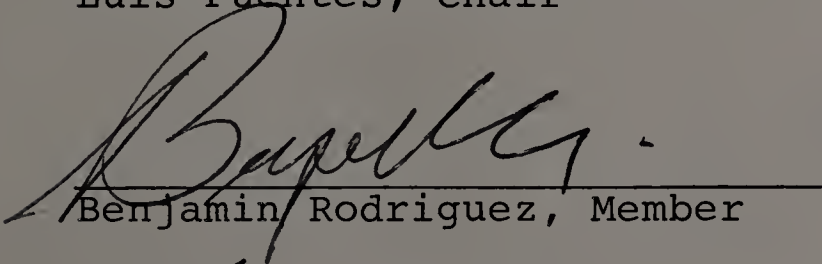
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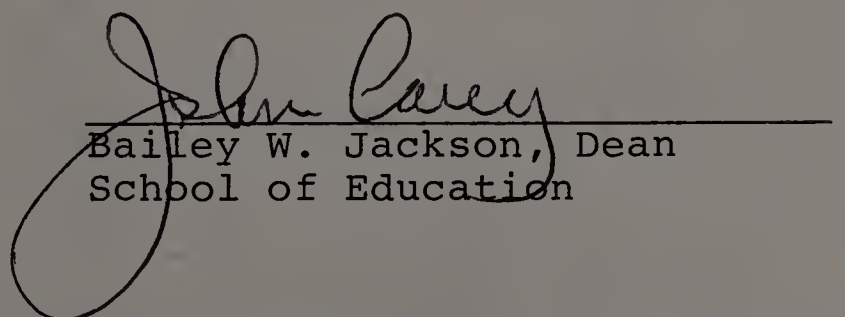
Luis Fuentes, Chair



Benjamin Rodriguez, Member



Juan C. Zamora, Member



Bailey W. Jackson, Dean
School of Education

This research is dedicated

to

The Families of Children with Special Needs,

who are in the search of services, lack information,
and face needs due to language barriers.

and to

My Family:

My Wife, Aida; My Son, Julio Eduardo;
and My Daughter, Lizaida Marie,

for their patience, love, and motivation
to finish my doctorate.

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ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS
AND NEEDS OF HISPANIC PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS IN ONE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL DISTRICT

FEBRUARY, 1994

JULIO CESAR RODRIGUEZ QUILES

B.A., UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO

M.SC., INTERAMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Luis Fuentes

This study describes the socioeconomic characteristics, assesses the basic information about special education the Hispanic parents are interested in knowing about through educational workshops and orientation, and identifies the need for services that allow the Hispanic parents active participation in the educational processes of their children with special needs.

The involvement of parents in the education of their children with special needs at the national level was mandated by Public Law 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. According to this Federal Law, the parents have the right to be active participants in decision making related to the educational needs of their children, especially in the development of

the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). According to the literature reviewed, parents are usually less prepared to actively participate in IEP conferences since they possess the least amount of knowledge pertaining to laws, advocacy, rights, sources, and special education procedures. Studies have demonstrated that participation of parents in the decision-making process has been passive, limited to giving and receiving information, and sometimes simply signing the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). The lack of knowledge about Public Law 94-142 and about the procedures of special education related to services makes necessary the creation of educational workshops addressed to parents of children with special needs.

In the first part of this study, it was found that Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this research study show particular socioeconomic characteristics that should be taken into consideration when active participation and involvement in the educational process of their children with special needs is expected.

Findings in the second and third part of this study should be taken into consideration by school personnel, administrators, and community-based program directors when planning, developing, and providing educational workshops, counseling, and orientation to a culturally-diverse population.

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C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

The impact of a child with special needs on a family makes necessary family adjustments that may be social, economic, emotional, or psychological. These adjustments require professional intervention, whether it be medical or psychological. These professionals should be able to offer adequate services taking into consideration the special conditions of the child as well as the ethnic or cultural differences of the family.

Adequate orientation and participation of parents in the educational process of their child with special needs is important since this participation will be more effective and genuine; and as a result, the child will receive greater benefits.

Cultural factors, such as language, socioeconomic levels, and academic levels, should be considered, as well as orientation and the support services needed when planning and implementing educational workshops. When these factors are taken into consideration in the planning and implementation of educational workshops, the goals and objectives planned, as well as parent participation, could be achieved according to the purpose of educational workshops.

Parents have the right and responsibility for knowing and understanding not only Public Law 94-142 ("The Education of All Handicapped Children Act") but also the state law of special education of the state in which they reside.

For the purposes of this study, Special Education Law of the State of Massachusetts (Chapter 766) will be considered. The need for knowing the provisions of the special education law is related to the participation of parents in their children's education and due process. The law requires the creation of educational workshops geared to parents of children with special needs.

It is necessary to explore the socioeconomic characteristics of Hispanic parents and the services related to their participation in the educational process of their children with special needs. This exploration should occur before developing and providing them with educational workshops. This will provide an opportunity for considering the condition of their child and to consider the cultural differences of the family. Thus, parents will better understand the conditions and needs of their child and will participate more actively in their child's education when adequately exposed to educational workshops (conferences, courses, lectures, films), their rights, and the special conditions of their child. Parents will be better able to:

- Know and understand the condition and needs of their child;
- Use the support services available in the community;
- Know the laws and regulations that guarantee their rights;
- Demand better services for their child;
- Participate actively in the educational process of their child;
- Cope with acceptance of their child's condition and with the limitations imposed by the condition;
- Apply simple techniques of behavior modification;
- Help their child in school homework;
- Assist their child with appropriate skills (parental skills);
- Help and reach out to other parents of children with special needs.

Statement of the Problem

When President Gerald Ford signed the Special Education Act of 1975 and it was enacted as Public Law 94-142, many parents of children with special needs reacted with joy. It was not until after this federal law ("The

Education for All Handicapped Children Act") that parents were given, for the first time, the right to be active participants in the educational planning process for their children with special needs.

Prior to the passage of both Public Law 94-142 and the Massachusetts State Law Chapter 766, the most obvious barrier against parents participating in the educational process of their children was that schools were not legally required to involve parents in the educational process. This practice went against the constitutional rights to procedural and substantive due process and equal protection (Crawley, 1990).

The involvement of parents in the education of their children with special needs at the national level was mandated by Public Law 94-142 ("The Education of all Handicapped Children Act of 1975"). According to this federal law and state laws (such as Massachusetts State Law Chapter 766), parents have the right to be active participants in the decision-making process related to the educational needs of their children, especially in the development of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

The passage of Public Law 94-142 and Massachusetts State Law Chapter 766 benefited parents by guaranteeing an appropriate education mandated by law and emphasizing parents as partners in the decision-making process. Definitely Public Law 94-142 and Massachusetts State Law

Chapter 766 formed the basis for changes in treatment and attitudes toward parents. However, research has demonstrated that participation of parents in the decision-making process has been passive, limited to giving and receiving information and sometimes to simply signing the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) with little knowledge of its content (Crawley, 1990; Gilliam, 1979; Goldstein et al., 1980). According to Crawley (1990), parents are usually less prepared to actively participate in IEP conferences since they possess the least amount of knowledge pertaining to laws, advocacy, rights, resources, and special education procedures.

For parents to become effective participants in the educational process or in developing an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), they must be provided with opportunities to gain knowledge and skills (Katz et al., 1980). According to Katz et al. (1980), the intent of Public Law 94-142 for parental participation in planning for the education of their children can best be met if helpful training programs are organized and conducted for parents in the public schools.

The lack of knowledge about Public Law 94-142 and the procedures of special education related to services guaranteed by the Special Education Act of 1975 makes necessary the creation of educational workshops addressed to parents of children with special needs.

The participation and involvement of parents in the educational process of their children have aroused the interest of administrators of special education. Findings presented by the Second Annual Congressional Report in 1980 on the implementation of Federal Public Law 94-142 demonstrate that half of all the meetings programmed for the IEP are generally passive (signing, providing, and receiving information).

The intent of Public Law 94-142 and the Massachusetts State Law Chapter 766 with respect to parents has been that of guaranteeing them the right and opportunity to be truly active participants in the educational process of their children with special needs. However, when the research literature is examined about the participation of parents in the educational process of their children, it is found that their participation is limited (Crawley, 1990; Shevin, 1983; Simpson, 1990).

There are several reasons for limited participation of parents in the educational process of their children with special needs. Chinn (1984) states that mistrust, bad experiences with school personnel, and a lack of understanding among parents and school staff, as well as cultural differences, affect the decision of parents to get involved in the educational process. The majority of parents of children with special needs lack knowledge and skills for participating in the educational process

(Allen & Stefanowski, 1987; Fewell & Vadasy, 1986; Reese & Serna, 1986; Shevin, 1983; Simpson, 1990).

There are several factors that might affect the involvement and participation of parents in the educational process of their children. For this researcher, these factors might affect directly or indirectly the involvement of parents in the educational process. Cultural impact or "culture shock", limitations in the English language, high mobility, economics or financial ability, level of education, and pressures between different ethnic groups are among the factors that might limit the involvement and participation of Hispanic parents in the educational process of their children in special education programs.

The involvement and participation of parents in the educational process of their children with special needs is not an easy task. It requires the intervention of professionals adequately prepared to offer an appropriate service geared to satisfy the needs of parents according to the unique or specific condition of their children.

According to studies conducted by Goldstein and Turnbull (1982), parents at education meetings tend to dwell more on personal and domestic problems than on the curriculum and placement of their child within the program.

According to Shultz (1987), the following aspects or factors should be considered when developing educational

educational workshops and orientating parents of children with special needs: individuality of parents, nature and needs of the child with special needs, and characteristics of the family.

In a study conducted by Lynch and Stein (1982), it was found that 85% of all Hispanic parents are not aware of the services available to their children. According to this study, parents did not understand the goals and objectives that are indicated in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). For this reason, they tend to be absent. Many of the parents who do attend require that the IEP be explained to them more than once and in detail.

An increase of children with special needs in Western Massachusetts has been evident in recent years. There are approximately 143,000 children registered in programs of special education in the State of Massachusetts.

The site selected for this study is a city of 43,704 people located in Western Massachusetts. The 1990 Census indicated that 31.1% of the total population is Latino, which represents a dramatic increase from the 1980 Census (13.8%). In the school system, the 1980 Latino enrollment was 29%; and by 1989, it had increased to 60%.

For the school year 1991-1992, the district selected for this study had a school population of 7,200 students who were distributed as follows:

Anglo	2,407
Hispanic	4,711
Various	82

Of the 7,200 students in the school system, 1,249 students receive special education. Of the 1,249 students receiving special education, 875 are minority. Of the 875 minority students, 828 are Hispanic.

For the school year 1989-1990, the minority students receiving special education in this school district were distributed as follows:

Hispanic	737
Other Minorities:	
American Indian	5
Asian	3
Black	63
Total of Minorities	808

Characteristics and the needs of minority and Hispanic parents of children with special needs should be taken into consideration prior to developing any educational workshop that allows parents active participation and involvement in the educational process of their children or youths.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate and describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the targeted population as well as to assess the need for orientation and the type of educational training that will allow Hispanic parents active participation in the educational

process of their children with special needs in this Western Massachusetts school district.

Sufficient information to link background, knowledge, and the need of services will be obtained through an extensive review of the literature and an analysis of data from questionnaires administered to randomly-selected Hispanic parents.

It is from the literature review and an analysis of the 46 questions in the administered questionnaire that sufficient information will be obtained to link three sets of data:

- (1) The socioeconomic characteristics of Hispanic parents with children in special education programs;
- (2) Basic information about Special Education which Hispanic parents are interested in or need to know;
- (3) Service needs related to participation in the educational process that Hispanic parents with children in special education have.

Through a review of the literature and an analysis and interpretation of the survey administered to parents of children with special needs, the following research questions will be answered:

- (1) What are the socioeconomic characteristics that describe Hispanic parents of children with special needs in the selected school district?
- (2) Do Hispanic parents in the selected area possess the characteristics of high mobility?
- (3) How does mobility affect the parents of children in Special Education programs?
- (4) What factors should be considered in the planning of educational workshops and orientation of parents of children with special needs?
- (5) What academic level of education did responding Hispanic parents of children with special needs possess?
- (6) Do Hispanic parents of children in Special Education programs in the selected area speak and understand the English language?
- (7) Do Hispanic parents of children with special needs read and write in English and in their own language?
- (8) What basic knowledge (themes or topics) related to the educational program of their children are Hispanic parents

in the selected area interested in acquiring?

- (9) What basic services do Hispanic parents need for their participation in the educational process of their children?
- (10) Where do Hispanic parents of children with special needs prefer to receive orientation services?
- (11) Who do Hispanic parents prefer to offer orientation services and educational workshops and conferences?
- (12) How do Hispanic parents prefer to orient themselves and receive educational training (to learn and be informed about the condition of their child and how to help him or her)?
- (13) What are the limitations Hispanic parents have in the participation and involvement in the education of their children in Special Education programs?
- (14) Is it necessary to develop educational workshops and orientation to insure active participation of Hispanic parents in the educational process of their children with special needs?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of essential words and terms give meaning to this study.

Active Parental Involvement

Active parental involvement is a comprehensive term that advocates the education and training of parents to utilize their talents and skills to make decisions that will promote better welfare for them, their child, and school. This definition takes into account mental, physical, emotional, and social needs which can be met through parental involvement.

Additionally, Mopsik and Agard (1986) define active participation as "parents who work closely with school personnel, raise questions regarding terms they do not understand, state the educational goals and preferences they have for the child, offer suggestions regarding possible instructional strategies, and voice their agreement or disagreement with placement and program decisions" (p. 67).

Assessment

Assessment is defined as test observation, or interview, which is done to determine a child's ability in a specific area (Federation for Children with Special Needs).

Chapter 766 (1972)

In 1972, Massachusetts enacted a comprehensive special education law, now commonly referred to as Chapter 766. Chapter 766, Massachusetts Special Education Law, is designed to define the needs of children requiring special education in a broad and flexible manner, to minimize the child's development in the least restrictive environment. Chapter 766 contains eight basic mandates (Federation for Children with Special Needs):

- Schools must provide equal educational opportunities to all children regardless of their age, sex, race, religion, national origin, or disability.
- Schools must educate handicapped children in the least restrictive environment possible to meet the educational needs of the child. This means that, as much as possible, children with special needs must have their programs in regular education classes, and that necessary supports and adaptations must be provided.
- Schools must provide services that help children with special needs to reach their maximum feasible potential development.
- Schools cannot use disability labels to categorize and development programs for

those children in the school with special needs.

- Instead, schools must develop an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) which outlines the student's strengths and needs, individual learning objectives, and the services needed to meet those objectives.
- Children with special needs are entitled to services under Chapter 766 from the age of three until their twenty-second birthday.
- Parents have specific rights under this law, including the right to request special education services, the right to participate in the development of the IEP, and the right to appeal school decisions about special education services for their children.
- The local school system is responsible for providing these education and related services to children at no cost.

Child in Need of Special Education

According to Chapter 766 (1991), a child in need of special education is any child who has been determined to need special education in accordance with the provisions of 321.0 (Team Meeting: notice to parent; determination of need for special education) of Chapter 766 regulations

or has been referred to the program described in 502.7 (Home Hospital Program on Chapter 766 [1991]). Such determination or referral must be based upon a finding that a child, because of temporary or permanent adjustment difficulties attributes arising from intellectual, sensory, emotional, or physical factors; cerebral dysfunction; perceptual factors; or other specific learning impairments, or any combination thereof, is unable to progress effectively in a regular education program and requires special education. Children of ages three and four shall qualify as children in need of special education, if any of the above-mentioned characteristics exist.

Child or Youth with Special Needs

Child or youth with special needs will be synonymous with the term "Children with Disabilities" according to the "Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990".

Consent

According to Chapter 766 regulations, consent is an agreement by a parent who has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, in his or her native language or other mode of communication, understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity, and understands that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any

time. The consent describes the activity and lists the records (if any) which will be released and to whom.

Counselor

In 1978, the American Mental Health Counselors Association Certification Committee defined the professional counselor as: "One who is involved in the process of assisting individuals or groups, through a helping relationship, to achieve optimal mental health through personal and social development and adjustment to prevent the debilitating effects of certain somatic, emotional, and intra- and/or inter-personal disorders."

Due Process

Due process is defined as procedural safeguards established to insure the rights of exceptional students and their parents (McLoughlin & Lewis, 1981).

Educational Process

Educational process for this researcher will mean the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) of the child with special needs; parent-teacher conference and involvement in the teaching-learning process (cooperation and assistance in the classroom and helping the child with homework and other activities).

Free and Appropriate Public Education

According to Chapter 766 regulations, free and appropriate public education is special education and related services which:

- (a) are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;
- (b) meet State education standards;
- (c) include preschool, elementary school, or secondary education;
- (d) are provided in conformity with an Individualized Educational Plan which meets the requirements of these regulations, and assures maximum possible development.

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

According to Chapter 766 regulations (322.0), the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) shall describe the special education and related services which the child requires and shall include the statements required by this provision as well as any other information which the Division shall require.

Least Restrictive Environment

According to Chapter 766 regulations (1991), least restrictive environment is the program and placement which

insures that, to the maximum extent appropriate, a child in need of special education, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, is educated with children who are not in need of special education and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of a child in need of special education from a regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the special needs is such that education in regular class with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Parent

According to Chapter 766 regulations (1991), "parent" is defined as father or mother, guardian, person acting as parent of the child, or educational advocate who has been appointed in accordance with Division procedures.

Passive Parental Involvement

Passive parental involvement involves the parent providing information about the child's home behavior to school evaluation teams and attending conferences regarding the child but remaining an observer except when offering additional information or agreeing to the action proposed.

Placement

According to the Federation for Children with Special Needs, "placement" is defined as assignment in the class program or school where a child receives his or her education and special education services.

Public Law 94-142 (1975)

On November 29, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed into law "The Education for All Handicapped Children Act". Public Law 94-142 was passed to provide additional federal funding for those states agreeing to give a free and appropriate education to children with handicapping conditions. With the passage of Public Law 94-142, each state assumed the legal responsibility for educating all handicapped children regardless of the nature or severity of their handicapping conditions. A lack of funding or resources may not be an excuse for non-compliance with The Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

The Act states that its purpose is:

- To ensure that all handicapped children have available a free and appropriate education within definite times;
- To protect the rights of these children and their parents;
- To assess and assure the effectiveness of educational programs.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) is also designed to provide the following:

- Non-discriminatory assessment in diagnosis;
- The right to due process which protects exceptional children and youth from erroneous classification and denial of equal education and protection;
- Placement of disabled students in an educational setting that is the least restrictive environment;
- An individualized program plan which ensures an appropriate education;
- Involvement of parents in their children's education.

Related Services

As stated in Chapter 766 regulations (1991), "related services" is defined as transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child in need of special education to benefit from special education, including (but not limited to) the following services:

- Vocational, carrier, and rehabilitative counseling;

- School health services (meaning services provided by a qualified school nurse or other qualified school person);
- Orientation and mobility services (peripatology);
- Occupational therapy;
- Physical therapy;
- Social and psychological services (services to the parent shall be directly related to the achievement of the objectives of the child's IEP);
- Support services (same as related services).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Federation for Children with Special Needs

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is the first civil rights law guaranteeing equal opportunity for more than 35 million Americans with disabilities.

Under this section, no otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall solely, by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by an executive agency or by the United States Post Office.

Individuals protected by Section 504 are defined generally as any person who:

- has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- has a record of such impairment; or
- is regarded as having such impairment.

Special Education

According to Chapter 766 regulations (1991), special education is specially designed instruction at no cost to the parent(s) or guardian to meet the unique needs of children in need of special education, including development of the child's educational potential. The term shall include:

- Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings;
- Instruction in physical education.

Justification of the Study

By the year 2000, the United States expects to experience an increase in its population of approximately 39.5 million people of non-English language background (National Advisory Council for Bilingual Education, 1981). Children, ages 5 to 14, of non-English-language background

are expected to increase to 5.1 million by the year 2000.

In the 1984-1985 school year, the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education estimated that there were 35 million Limited English Proficient (LEP) children. On the other hand, the U. S. Office of Special Education estimated that 12% of all students will need special education services (Brown, 1987; Erikson & Walker, 1983). Also, Baca and Bransford (1982) have estimated that approximately one-half million students, ages 5 to 12, have special needs and come from non-English-language background.

The data mentioned above offers an idea of the importance of an educational plan to provide for future cases in Special Education, especially among Limited English Proficient children. One aspect to be considered is the preparation of bilingual educational and professional resources that satisfy and understand the educational and cultural needs of this growing population.

As the population of Hispanics increases throughout the nation and in Massachusetts, there will be a need for bilingual education resources to attend to the educational needs of this population.

The problems of misclassification and displacement of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in special education classes in the past have raised the important

issue of the dearth of qualified bilingual professionals to assess and instruct Limited English Proficient students (Erickson & Walker, 1983; Landurand, 1987).

In spite of new trends and Special Education Law regulations about the identification, evaluation, and placement of students to receive special education, minority children continue to be classified as learning disabled or educable mentally retarded (Erickson & Walker, 1983; Tucker, 1983). With the intention of restraining the irregularities in special education and to solve the problems of identifying minority handicapped children and misidentifying normal minority children, national organizations raised the question of discriminatory testing in the early 1970s and called for a moratorium on the use of standardized tests with minority children (Oakland, 1987; Samuda, 1983).

Children who are culturally and linguistically different have often been mislabeled as handicapped (Erickson & Walker, 1983). In the past, the need of identifying and evaluating appropriately children with special needs was an issue for worry. As Bergin (1987) stated, bilingual education teachers began to notice an increased placement of handicapped children in their classroom.

Minority children, and especially Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, were not only mistakenly

labeled but they were also identified wrongly (Jones, 1976; Oakland, 1987).

According to Erickson and Walker (1983), the fields of Bilingual and Special Education have been required to provide appropriate identification and education for children with special and unique needs. Section VII of the Bilingual Education Act (1972) and Public Law 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975) are laws created to satisfy this need.

Parents as well as organizations and advocate groups attracted public attention by taking the problems to federal and state courts arguing that their children needed the same opportunities and the same rights to an appropriate education. The need for regulations and laws has been necessary to guarantee the rights of handicapped children, parents, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.

The participation of parents in the educational process of their children is legally guaranteed by mandates of the courts. The new laws guarantee the right to a free and appropriate education to children with special needs, who are culturally and linguistically different.

This new trend and law make necessary the creation and planning of educational workshops directed to parents who should be aware of the educational process of their children with special needs and at the same time to

encourage and empower them to be active participants in the process. This enables parents to better serve their children with special needs.

Delimitations of the Study

The following are delimitations of this research study:

- (1) This study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. Thus, no hypothesis will be tested on it.
- (2) This research study is delimited to the Spanish-speaking Hispanic parents with children in Special Education Programs at the site selected for this study.
- (3) The instrument used was a questionnaire. The researcher designed an anonymous questionnaire in order to encourage selected parents to freely respond.
- (4) This study is focussed in one site situated in Western Massachusetts.
- (5) This study is focussed on the socio-economic characteristics and the needs of services that allow Hispanic parents of children or youth with special needs to be active participants in the

educational process in the site selected for this study.

- (6) All subjects are parents or guardians with children at any school level.

Significance of the Study

This research study will increase the awareness of training and support needs of Hispanic families of children with special needs and the awareness of their individual limitations, culture, and language differences.

The counseling, training, and support services will offer parents an opportunity to help their children perform efficiently in the school and community which should result in improving the academic and social achievement of their children.

Families have different needs and characteristics that should be considered in the planning of the delivery of services.

This study should develop awareness among school principals, special education directors, administrators, and service providers of the socioeconomic characteristics of Hispanic families of children with special needs as well as their need for counseling, training, and support services. It will also help one to consider the individual characteristics, cultural and language

differences, which are priorities within the annual plan.

The phenomenon of multiple-characteristics which characterize Hispanic families offers scholars and educational and community leaders a target point of priority which might be researched and related to the services and academic achievement of the children with special needs in Special Education Programs.

The parents of children with special needs are in need of acquiring knowledge and skills that can help them to adequately perform their responsibilities. It is important that the service provider and school personnel consider a continuous in-service education as part of their annual goals and objective plan, in order to provide appropriate and competent services that satisfy the population with cultural and language differences in need of support.

The study will contribute to develop awareness, considering that the parents and their children should be the main priority in the planning of goals and objectives for each year.

This research study contributes to scholars, educational systems, community support services, and people in decision-making positions. This research is conducted with the expectation of creating awareness in schools and communities.

Finally, the results of this study should be considered for the development of proposals with the objective of creating programs that offer services to this population.

C H A P T E R I I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historical Overview of Special Education

In the early history of America, education was the privilege of the upper classes. It was not until the nineteenth century that states began to pass and enforce compulsory education laws (Knoblock, 1987). Institutions, like schools, responded to the changes occurring in America. Due to the social advances brought about by urbanization, industrialization, and immigration, the schools were to perform an important social function, a function that Katz (1987) called "cultural standardization." Knoblock (1987) mentions that schools were to provide a way to socialize and train the young to be better, more productive workers.

According to Knoblock (1987), the spread of compulsory education meant that schools had to begin to deal with students with disabilities. The only place that children with mental retardation, blindness, or deafness could receive an education was in an institution. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, these children were considered disruptive influences in the public schools. James Van Sickle, Superintendent of the Baltimore Public Schools, stated in 1908:

The presence of a class of one or two mentally or morally defective children so absorbs the energies of the teacher and makes so imperative a claim upon her attention that she cannot, under these circumstances, properly instruct the number commonly enrolled in a class. School authorities must, therefore, greatly reduce this number, employ many more teachers, and build many more school rooms to accommodate a given number of pupils, or else they must withdraw into small classes these unfortunates who impede the regular progress of normal children. The plan of segregation is now fairly well established in large cities; and superintendents and teachers are working on the problem of classification, so that they may make the best of this imperfect material. (Sarason & Doris, 1987, p. 263)

As a result of the opinion expressed by Van Sickle, school systems began to segregate disabled students who were forced on them through compulsory education (Sarason & Doris, 1987). According to LaVor (1987), Boston established the first public day school for the deaf in 1869; New York City initiated special education classes in 1874; Cleveland initiated classes in 1875; and Providence, Rhode Island, established special classes for the mentally retarded in 1896. According to Willner (1975), the first state legislation for the care and education of mentally retarded individuals was authorized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1848. By 1900, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Connecticut, Kentucky, Rhode Island, and Illinois had established state schools for retarded citizens.

Many large cities had started special education classes for the mentally retarded: Chicago in 1898;

Boston in 1899; Philadelphia in 1899; and New York in 1899 (Scheernberger, 1987).

Knoblock (1987) states that many of the first special education classes served as dumping grounds for a broad range of students who did not fit typical classes. Sarason and Doris (1987) stated that these classes might include "slow learners, the mentally subnormal, epileptics, learning disabilities, chronic truants, behavior problems, physically handicapped, or immigrant children suffering from language or cultural handicaps." Through the twentieth century, special education grew at a steady pace. Scheernberger (1987) has written that by 1922, 133 cities in 23 states had enrollments of 23,252 pupils in special education classes of all types.

One of the states that began to enact special education laws was New Jersey. New Jersey passed a law mandating special education for mentally retarded students in 1911 (Sarason & Doris, 1987; Scheernberger, 1987).

Within the next ten to fifteen years, a large number of states passed laws mandating special education, providing state aid for special education, and requiring local school districts to identify students with handicaps.

In spite of the gradual expansion of special education programs, students with severe disabilities were excluded from public education up until the 1970s. Lakin (1983)

reported that it was not until the mid-1950s that special education programs in schools were serving more mentally retarded persons than were public institutions. Between 1920 to 1950, the federal government initiated a number of programs designed to benefit the disabled during that period (Knoblock, 1987). In the aftermath of World Wars I and II, federal vocational programs directed at disabled veterans were initiated.

As part of President Theodore Roosevelt's New Deal, the Social Security Act (which has become a basic income maintenance program for people with disabilities) was passed in 1935.

The forces for change grew steadily throughout the 1950s and exploded in the field in the 1960s and 1970s. The 1950s and 1960s marked a new era in the history of society's treatment of people with disabilities. The era started with pleas for modest reforms. By the end of the late 1960s and 1970s, parents and professional leaders and disability rights advocates demanded fundamental changes in education and social service systems.

Beginning in the 1950s, a new generation of leaders, allied with parent groups, directly challenged prevailing practices and attitudes toward the disabled. They waged their battles in public forums, the courts, and in legislatures.

In the 1950s, parents began uniting to form strong local, state, and national organizations. The first national organization for retarded persons, what is now the National Association for Retarded Citizens, was founded in 1950. Gradually, parents of children with other kinds of disabilities organized to form organizations such as the National Society for Children with Autism, the Spina Bifida Association, and the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (Knoblock, 1987).

Parent groups have grown increasingly aggressive in advocating for their children's rights. Initially, parents came together to provide each other mutual support, to share information, to sponsor fund-raising events, and even to operate schools and day programs.

In the 1960s and 1970s, parent groups demanded quality services from school districts and other service providers. Parent groups took their demands to federal courts and to legislatures. Some organizations composed of people with disabilities were developed during the 1970s. Blacks, Hispanics, and women were organized to confront societal prejudice and discrimination; disabled adults joined together to form groups like the Disabled in Action and the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities.

Child advocacy groups have started to focus public attention on the exclusion of disabled and minority children from public schools.

In 1970, the Task Force on Children Out of School published a scathing indictment of school exclusion in Boston, entitled "The Way We Go to School" (Knoblock, 1987). "At a time when the public school must take giant strides to prepare children for today's world," the report's introduction read, "some children have been excluded from school, others discouraged from attending, and still others placed in special classes designed for the inferior." The Task Force concluded that large numbers of culturally, physically, mentally, and behaviorally different children were denied the right to equal educational opportunity.

A report issued by the Children's Defense Fund in 1973 estimated that as many as two million children with disabilities were denied the right to a public education.

Toward the end of the 1960s and 1970s, public interest and civil rights advocates began to direct their attention to the plight of children and adults with disabilities, as well as to protect the rights of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in public school programs. Their efforts resulted in a long series of victories throughout the 1970s.

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that separate educational facilities are "inherently" unequal in its landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Court emphasized the importance of education in modern life:

In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be available to all in equal terms. (Fischer & Sorenson, 1985)

When the Supreme Court issued this landmark decision outlawing racial segregation in schools, few could have predicted that the logic underlying this decision would be incorporated by federal judges ruling on the educational rights of students with disabilities.

As a result of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted to address the issues of educational practices in schools. Title VI, Section 601, of the Act stated that "no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Public Law 88-352, Title VI, 601, 78 Stat. 252, July 2, 1964). The purpose of this provision was to ensure that all individuals have equal access to federally-sponsored programs. According to Title VI, a school system was mandated to address Limited English Proficient (LEP) students with linguistic and cultural needs in school settings (Landurand, 1987).

Four years later, the first Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was passed to address the special education needs

of the children with limited English ability in the United States. Section 702 of the Act, 1968, specifically states that:

In this way, the Limited English Proficient student continues to learn important skills and knowledge through his/her first language while learning English.

This approach was designed to prevent students from being educationally deprived (Landurand, 1987).

It was not until the 1970s that victories were seen in courts on behalf of children with disabilities or special needs. In cases such as the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia, parents and the Association for Retarded Children challenged the traditional school practices of exclusion and segregation. The parents claimed that the laws were unconstitutional because they violated the rights to due process and denied the rights to equal protection under the laws. In 1971, the plaintiff (PARC) and the defendants (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) settled the case through what is called a consent agreement. The agreement supported the right to an education in clear and unequivocal terms (Knoblock, 1987). In the second case (Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia), the right to an appropriate education for "other" exceptional or disabled children was established.

This case challenged the exclusion of children identified as "mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, hearing or speech impaired, and physically handicapped" in schools in Washington, D. C.

In both cases, the rights of the children with disabilities were upheld by federal judges as constitutional. Children with disabilities had the right to a free, public education in the least restrictive setting or environment. Both cases had an impact on the entire nation. The judgments or rulings in those cases served as a model for the creation and an enactment of Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, passed by Congress in 1975.

Massachusetts Special Education: Historical
Overview and Chapter 766 (The Comprehensive
Special Education Law)

There exists nationally a demand of services for children, adolescents, and youths with special needs or handicapped conditions (Willner, 1975). Generally, educational programs for handicapped children have been formulated on diverse guidelines; and programs have fallen into four categories: state institutional placement, private school education, public school special education, or exclusion from education entirely (Willner, 1975). According to Weatherly and Lipsky (1977), university-based

special education professionals have questioned the efficacy of special classes for children with different kinds of needs. Willner (1975) indicates that the four categories of programs mentioned for handicapped children are utilized in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Task Force on Children Out of School published a report, "The Way We Go to School", in 1971 in which it exposed practices in Special Education classes in Boston. The report revealed an absence of uniform policy; failure to provide assessment and services required by state law; widespread misclassification of normal intelligence as retarded; use of special classes as dumping grounds; and denial of special services for those who need them (Task Force on Children Out of School, 1971; Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977).

The report generated concern and influenced the passage of Chapter 766, Special Education Act of Massachusetts (Curran, 1976; Howard, 1982; Landurand, 1987; Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977). Howard (1982) states that the report or study recommended that a school committee make a commitment to provide an adequate educational program for all children, which would incorporate four major principles:

- All children should be educated in the least restrictive environment;

- The needs of children should be determined on an individual basis;
- The evaluation prior to placement should include more than simple tests;
- There should be joint cooperation of systems and institutions within the city and state.

Howard (1982) also points out that the report attracted much attention, and it provided the impetus for the passage of Chapter 766. He also notes that three of the four recommendations were incorporated into the regulations. According to Willner (1975), because Massachusetts public schools have failed in providing equal educational opportunities for all children, the state legislature was urged by parent groups, professionals, and concerned citizens to reform the laws pertaining to the education of the handicapped.

On July 17, 1972, the landmark legislation in the area of special education, according to Curran (1976), was signed into law in the State of Massachusetts by Governor Francis Sargent (Willner, 1975). The Governor signed into law "Chapter 766, An Act to Further Regulate the Laws Relative to Children Who Require Special Education and Providing Reimbursement There For" (Willner, 1975). According to Curran (1976), Chapter 766 is also called the Daly-Bartley Act. Landurand (1987) indicates that the law

was to take effect in September of 1974. Weatherly and Lipsky (1977) confirm that the provisions of Chapter 766 took effect in September of 1974.

Chapter 766 called for philosophical and practical change in educational practice regarding the handicapped. Initially, the law sought to eliminate labels, i.e., mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, physically handicapped, learning disabled, etc. (Curran, 1976). The law replaced the former categories with what Curran (1976) calls "blanket definition"--school-age child with special needs.

Chapter 766 mandates public schools to provide educational programs for all handicapped children. In addition, the law provides for schools to take census and reevaluate children presently in public school special education classes in the State of Massachusetts (Willner, 1975). Curran (1976) specifies that the law charges public school systems with the responsibility for providing an education to all special needs persons, ages 3 to 21, who reside in their school district. The local school system is responsible for the screening, identification, and service delivery program of those with special needs. One of the goals of the law is to encourage the participation of special needs children in regular education programs, community based, to the fullest extent possible (Curran,

1976). Chapter 766 contains the following important provisions:

- (1) Right to a free evaluation;
- (2) Right to an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) to fit the student's needs;
- (3) Early identification of special needs;
- (4) Mainstreaming-integration into regular school programs to the maximum possible and not labeled according to disability;
- (5) Parental involvement in all decisions made;
- (6) Quarterly progress reports and annual writing of the educational plan.
(Landurand, 1987)

Weatherly and Lipsky (1977) also specify that in contrast to past practices, the provisions of the law require that family guidance and counseling for the child's parent or guardian be available as well as social and medical services for the child.

According to Crawley (1990), the underlying assumption of Massachusetts State Law Chapter 766 (the State's major Special Education Law), establishing a role for parents as members of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) team for their handicapped child, was the best way to ensure that each handicapped child would receive an appropriate education involving those who know him or her best and have the child's best interest at heart.

Crawley (1990) further emphasizes that Chapter 766 benefited parents by (1) guaranteeing an appropriate

education mandated by law, and (2) emphasizing parents as partners in the decision-making process.

Chapter 766 has caused major changes in the field of education, especially special education. The provision or requirements for parent and student involvement, the emphasis on individualized programs, and the mandated accountability have affected how school personnel view their roles and organize their tasks. With the passage of this law, many school districts have created new services and new programs, which have benefited school personnel (whether regular or special), students, and parents as well (Landurand, 1987).

Legal Issues Related to Special Education and Bilingual Education

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)

The case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) dealt with the integration of students. The importance of education was clearly established in the Brown case. Minors of the Afro-American race, through legal representatives, sought the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to schools in their community. They had been denied admission to schools attended by White children under laws requiring or permitting the segregation of races. Segregation was alleged to deprive the plaintiffs of the equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth

Amendment. The plaintiffs contended that segregated public schools were not "equal" and therefore they were deprived of the equal protection of the laws.

The U. S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in the public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment. In addition to proclaiming that the doctrine of separate but equal has no place within the field of public education and that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal, the Court reminded the states and their localities of the importance of education to the individual when it decreed that the opportunity of education is a right which must be available to all in equal terms (Zettel & Ballard, 1982).

The Supreme Court ruled that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal (Fischer & Sorenson, 1985).

The Civil Rights Act (1964)

The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s focused the plight of minorities throughout the United States. As a result of the movement, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 addressed the issue of educational practices in schools. Title VI, Section 601, of the Act stated that, "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to

discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Public Law 88-352, Title VI, 601, 78 Stat. 252, July 2, 1964).

This provision intended to ensure that all individuals have equal access to federally-sponsored programs. According to Title VI, a school system is mandated to address Limited English Proficient (LEP) students' linguistic and cultural needs in a school setting, as well as students with special needs. Any school system could be found guilty by the Office of Civil Rights of discriminating against culturally and linguistically different students if that system denies equal access to this population of students (Nuttall, Landurand, & Goldman, 1984, p. 42).

Omark and Erickson (1983) state that the Civil Rights Act must be considered the foundation for later legislative and judicial action concerning the rights of language minority children because it stipulates the right of freedom from discrimination for ethnic minorities. It applies to a wide spectrum of social and educational services, stipulating that no persons shall be discriminated against by virtue of race, color, or national origin in any service program receiving federal assistance. Many later court decisions concerning education were based on the Civil Rights Act, including the right of language minority individuals to receive services specific to their needs.

The Bilingual Education Act (1968)

One of the important and significant developments in the historical context of bilingual education was the bill introduced in Congress in 1967 by Senator Ralph Webster Yarborough of Texas. It passed as an amendment to Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It was enacted as the Bilingual Education Act, and it was conceived primarily to meet the needs of children whose home languages were other than English (Cordasco, 1987).

The Bilingual Education Act (B.E.A.), Section 702, states:

In recognition of the special education needs of the large numbers of children of limited English speaking ability in the United States, Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance and imaginative elementary and secondary programs designed to meet these special educational needs. For the purposes of this title, "children of limited English speaking ability" means those who come from environments where the dominant language is other than English. (Public Law 90-247, Title VII, Sec. 702, 81 Stat. 861, 1968)

The enactment of the Act reversed the policy of "one language" in the school systems and committed the force of the government to meeting the educational needs of children of limited English proficiency. Federal funds were provided for the establishment of bilingual instructional programs, development of bilingual curricula and materials, and bilingual teacher training (Landurand, 1987). The intent of the Act was to provide grants to local

educational agencies in communities throughout the United States with the sole aim of establishing local bilingual programs.

Such funds provided legal inducement for school districts to develop alternative regular educational programs for minority language children (Landurand, 1987).

It is established in the Bilingual Education Act that "Congress declared it to be the policy of the United States, in order to establish equal educational opportunity for all children: (a) to encourage the establishment and operation, where appropriate, of educational programs using bilingual education practices, techniques, and methods; and (b) for that purpose, to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies and state educational institutions for certain purposes, in order to enable such local educational agencies to develop and carry out such programs in elementary and secondary schools, including activities at the preschool level, which are designed to meet the educational needs of such children, with particular attention to children having greatest need for such programs; and to demonstrate effective ways of providing for children of limited English proficiency, instruction designed to enable and to achieve competence in the English language."

The bilingual education programs supported under the Bilingual Act of 1968 were designed to meet the educational needs of students from 3 to 18 years of age who have limited English proficiency and who come from homes where the dominant language is other than English. The purpose of the Federal legislation is for students in this target group to develop greater competence in English, to become more proficient in the use of two languages, and to gain from increased educational opportunity. According to Title VII, the student's home language is to be used as the principal medium of instruction while the student is gaining proficiency in English (Fischer & Sorenson, 1985; Landurand, 1987).

This approach, endorsed by Title VII legislation, was designed to prevent students from becoming educationally deprived. Study of the history and culture of the student's home language is also considered an integral part of bilingual education (Anderson & Boyer, 1978; Landurand, 1987).

Office of Civil Rights Memorandum (1970)

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) issued the famous May 25, 1970, Memorandum also called "The OCR Memorandum". The OCR Memorandum was issued by J. Stanley Pottinger, Director of the Office of Civil Rights (Landurand, 1987). This Memorandum addressed the issue of inappropriate

placement of minority students in special education classes. The Memorandum specified that "the failure to utilize evaluation techniques for minority children which are as effective or appropriate as those used for non-minority children has resulted in a higher incidence of improper placement or improper non-placement of minority children in such classes than of non-minority children (Pottinger, 1970).

According to the Memorandum, school districts must not assign minority group students to classes for the mentally retarded on the basis of criteria which essentially measure or evaluate English language skills (Nuttall, Landurand, & Goldman, 1984).

As a result of the 1970 Memorandum, the Director of the Office of Civil Rights formed a Task Force that consisted of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American educators, social scientists, and community leaders who developed strategies and recommendations for minority students in classes for the handicapped (Nuttall, Landurand, & Goldman, 1984).

Diana v. California State Board of Education (1970)

The Diana v. California State Board of Education case was filed in the District Court for the Northern District of California in February of 1970. This landmark case involved misclassification of Mexican-Americans and

Chinese-speaking children into classes for the mentally retarded. Nine Mexican-American public school students charged that the school board had placed them in classes for mentally retarded children on the basis of scores achieved on the Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler tests. They also charged that these tests were tests of verbal aptitudes based on the English language, and that the tests were standardized on White native-born Americans.

In a consent decree, the State of California agreed:

- that all children whose primary language is not English should be tested in both their primary language and English;
- to eliminate "unfair verbal items" from tests;
- to reevaluate all Mexican-American and Chinese students enrolled in EMR classes using only non-verbal items and testing them in their primary language;
- to develop IQ tests reflecting Mexican-American culture and standardized only on Mexican-American tests. (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1990)

This case specified the need to assess the intellectual ability of non-English proficient children in their native language. With appropriate testing, the nine Mexican-American students who were previously identified as mentally retarded were proven to be of average intelligence (Omark & Erickson, 1983).

Landurand (1987) specified that the principle that students' linguistic or cultural differences cannot be construed as evidence of an educationally handicapping condition was clearly established in this case.

Covarrubias v. San Diego Unified

School District (1971)

The Covarrubias v. San Diego Unified School District (1971) case further raised the issue of the inappropriate use of standardized intelligence tests to place children in classes for the mentally retarded. The case initiated the concept of awarding damages to students who were judged to suffer irreparable harm because of unfair labeling. This case was settled by consent decree on July 31, 1972. It established the right of the plaintiffs to monetary damages as a result of their being misclassified as "handicapped".

Mills v. Board of Education of the

District of Columbia (1972)

In 1972, the parents and guardians of seven children of school age brought a class action suit against the Board of Education, the Department of Human Resources, and the Mayor of the District of Columbia. The plaintiffs sought a declaration of rights and an injunction of the defendants for excluding them from education, and compelling the defendants to provide them with immediate and

adequate education and educational facilities in the public schools or alternative placement at public expense (Singletary, Collins, & Dennis, 1978).

Federal Court Judge Joseph Waddy issued an order and decree providing that every school-age child living in the District of Columbia, regardless of any exceptional condition or handicap, had the constitutional right to a free and suitable publicly supported education. In addition, the Court indicated that before any eligible handicapped child could be excluded from a regular school program, alternative educational services designed to meet the child's needs (including special education or tuition grants) had to be provided (Goldberg, 1982; Zettel & Ballard, 1982).

According to Knoblock (1987) and Hume (1987), the *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* (1972) case challenged the exclusion of children identified as "mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, hearing or speech impaired, visually impaired, or physically handicapped" from the Washington, D. C., schools.

Hume (1987) states that the *Mills* ruling and the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) agreement laid the foundation and some of the building blocks of Public Law 94-142. Not only did handicapped children win access to schools, but the state had to

locate and evaluate them and design for each an individual program. Schools could not change placements without due process.

Both cases, Mills and the PARC, had repercussions throughout the nation. The two cases were credited with establishing the right of handicapped children to special public education (Hume, 1987; Knoblock, 1987).

Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children
(PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972)

In 1972, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) brought suit against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the state's failure to provide all retarded children with a free, public education. The suit's goal was to establish the legal right of the retarded to access a public education. PARC attacked the Pennsylvania laws that allowed the Commonwealth to refuse to educate any child, whom a public school psychologist certified as uneducable and untrainable, to indefinitely postpone admission to public school of any child who had not reached the mental age of five years, and to exempt the handicapped child from the state compulsory attendance laws (Johnson, 1986).

Singletary, Collins, and Dennis (1978) mention that the plaintiffs alleged that the first statutes (uneducable and untrainable) and the second statute (mental age of

five years) in question were constitutionally infirm both on their faces and as applied in three broad aspects. First, plaintiffs argued that these statutes offended due process because they lacked any provision for notice and a hearing before a retarded person is either excluded from a public education or a change is made in his or her educational assignment within the public school system. Second, they asserted that the two provisions violated equal protection because the premise of the statutes, which assumed that certain retarded children are uneducable and untrainable, lacked a rational basis in fact. Finally, plaintiffs contended that because the constitution and laws of Pennsylvania guaranteed an education to all children, these two sections violated due process by denying this given right to retarded children.

Zettel and Ballard (1982) report that the PARC suit was resolved by a consent agreement that specified the state could not apply any law that would postpone, terminate, or deny mentally retarded children access to a publicly supported education. Furthermore, the agreement required the state to locate and identify all school-age children who were excluded from the public schools and to place them in a free, public program of education and training appropriate to their capacity. Knoblock (1987) states that the PARC consent agreement supported the right to an education in clear and unequivocal terms.

The Equal Education Opportunity Act (1974)

The Equal Education Opportunity Act (1974) addressed the problem of discrimination against limited English proficient students. The Act stated that:

No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin by . . . the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs.

(Public Law 93-380, Title II, 204, 80 Stat. 515, August 21, 1974)

According to the Equal Education Opportunity Act, limited English proficient students should not be discriminated against or be denied participation in the educational system because of language barriers. It is implied that these students are entitled to special education services in a language that they understand.

Public Law 94-142 (1975)

In November of 1975, Congress of the United States passed a law related to educational opportunities for all handicapped children in the country. This law, signed by President Gerald Ford on November 29, 1975, is known as Public Law 94-142 and is cited as "The Education for All Handicapped Children Act" (Hume, 1987). Shrybman (1982) states that this law is the culmination of a movement to provide equal educational opportunity for all handicapped children. It incorporates many of the requirements that

courts and state legislatures already had established to ensure that handicapped children within their jurisdictions received free and appropriate public education.

Shrybman (1982) also mentions that many of the provisions of Public Law 94-142 were in fact required in earlier federal laws, so it is the descendant of a long line of legislation aimed at the education of handicapped children. The major federal law to which Public Law 94-142 is related is the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, Public Law 89-10. This Act provided federal funding for programs to help educationally deprived children. In the same year, Public Law 89-313 amended Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to assist in funding agencies to provide special education to handicapped children who were not covered under Public Law 89-10.

Rothstein (1990) points out that The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was founded on constitutional principles of equal protection and due process. While there is no direct constitutional right to education or special education, states that provide education to citizens of their states must do so on an equal basis. Any denial of this state-created right requires due process. States could choose to comply with these equal protection and due process requirements by setting up a program of special education without following the federal requirements of the Act, as long as the special education

program meets the constitutional standards of equal protection and due process.

The Act is a funding statute that creates substantive rights. Under the Act, the Federal Government would provide supportive funding to those states that provide special education within the framework of federally-developed guidelines. The Act is not intended to cover the entire cost of special education (Rothstein, 1990). Although no state is required to accept funding under Public Law 94-142, those that do must provide the services and protections mandated (Goldberg, 1982).

Shrybman (1982) and Goldberg (1982) state that in studying the needs of education for handicapped children, Congress found that there were more than eight million handicapped children in the United States whose special education needs were not being fully met. They also discovered that more than half were not receiving appropriate educational programs and that one million of them were excluded entirely from the public school system, forcing their families to obtain their education, if at all, at great expense. Yet, it was in the national interest that the Federal Government assist state and local efforts to provide programs to meet the educational needs of the handicapped in order to assure equal protection of the Federal Law.

Rothstein (1990), Hume (1987), Goldberg (1982), Shrybman (1982), and Levine and Wexler (1981) specify that Congress stated its general purpose in enacting Public Law 94-142 was to ensure that all handicapped children had available a free and appropriate public education. Also, Congress wanted to ensure that the rights of handicapped children and their parents or guardians were protected. Other purposes for the enactment of the law were to assist states and localities in providing for the education of all handicapped children by providing federal funds and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate handicapped children.

According to Rothstein (1990), one of the major principles or keystones of the law is that education is to be provided to all handicapped children of school age from 6 to 18 years of age. In addition, states that provide education to children between 3 and 5 and between 19 and 21 must also provide special education on an equal basis. A 1986 amendment to the Act provides for additional incentive grants for infants and toddlers.

By 1991, states were required to have educational programs for all handicapped children between 3 to 5 years of age. In addition, federal funding was available for early intervention services for handicapped infants and toddlers up to the age of 2.

As part of the key provisions of the law, the Act provides that children are eligible for services if they have one or more of the following handicapping conditions: hearing impairment, speech impairment, visual impairment, physical impairment, learning disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbances, chronic or long-term health problems.

In addition to educational services, the Act requires the provision of related services necessary to help the child learn, such as speech and language therapy, medical services for diagnosis or evaluation purposes, physical therapy, transportation, parent counseling, vocational education, and college placement services.

The second major principle of the Act is the mainstreaming mandate that comes about as a result of the requirement or provision that education is to be provided in the least restrictive appropriate placement (McLoughlin & Lewis, 1981; Rothstein, 1990).

It is important to emphasize that the Act requires a handicapped child to be placed in the least restrictive appropriate setting; that is, while the goal is to move or place the child to a less restrictive setting, for some children, full time in a regular classroom may never be an appropriate placement.

Rothstein (1990) mentions the third principle of the Act which is that education is to be individualized and

appropriate to the child's needs. The Act requires that once a child is identified as being handicapped, an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) must be developed with the involvement of several educators and parents.

The provision of the law requires that the IEP be reviewed annually by the child's parents and teachers, and a representative of the school district. This plan should indicate the child's present level of school performance, the educational services to be provided, and specific criteria to measure his or her progress. School districts must maintain records of the Individualized Educational Plan of each child.

The final principle of the Act is that education is to be provided free. This provision requires that all of the child's educational needs are to be provided at no cost to the parent, regardless of their ability to pay (Rothstein, 1990).

Due Process

The procedural safeguards, or due process procedure, set out in The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, or Public Law 94-142, are the law's cornerstone for protecting the rights of handicapped children (Goldberg, 1982). They provide students and parents the right to challenge any aspect of a child's special education program, including the very question of whether the child

is handicapped; whether evaluations should be performed; how the child should be classified, if at all; the particular programs or services to be received; and the specific location of the program of special education and related services.

The basic concept of due process in special education derives from the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution which states that no state shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws (Shrybman, 1982).

The general purpose of the Amendment is to protect individuals from the state and its various public institutions. A public school system is one type of public institution included in the term "state". Therefore, states and local public school systems may not deny any child the equal protection of the laws, nor can they deprive them of life, liberty, or property without due process of the law (Shrybman, 1982).

Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1990), Rothstein (1990), Johnson (1986), and Fischer and Sorenson (1985) mention five provisions required by The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975), Public Law 94-142, under the right to due process. The law requires state and local school districts to adopt the following procedures or guarantees to parents and children:

1. The right to examine records

The handicapped child's parents have the right to inspect all of the child's relevant educational records.

2. The right to prior notice

The Act requires that parents be notified before a school district proposes to initiate change (or refuses to initiate change), the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free, appropriate public education to the child. The law also requires that the notices inform the parents fully, in the parent's native language, of the procedural safeguards available under the law. The notice must include a description of the action the school district proposes or refuses to take, an explanation of the reasons for the decision, a description of the option of each test or report used as basis for the decision, and any other relevant information.

3. The right to file complaints and have an independent due process hearing

The parents have a right to present complaints about their child's educational program and the right to have those complaints decided by an independent due process hearing. Any issue related to identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student can be the subject of a due process hearing. The hearing must be provided at the expense of the school district and convenient to both parties. Both parties are entitled to legal counsel. The parents have the right to have the child present; and at the conclusion of the hearing, the parents have the right to receive the written findings of fact and the decision.

4. The right to judicial review

The law gives either party (parents and local school districts) the right to appeal for judicial review of the hearing held at a local level.

5. The right to a surrogate parent

A child may be assigned a surrogate parent when the parent or guardian is not known,

the parents are unavailable, or the pupil is a ward of the state. The surrogate represents the child as a parent in all matters pertaining to the identification, evaluation, program, placement, and provision of a free, appropriate public education.

The term "due process" is a legal one. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) mandates due process safeguards in all matters relating to decisions about special education. Due process safeguards protect parents' and children's rights in all procedures related to the identification, assessment, and placement of a child. Due process is the basic way any parent or child can make sure the child gets the appropriate education he or she needs.

The Lau Remedies (1975)

In 1974, the *Lau v. Nichols* case became a landmark decision in favor of Limited English Proficient (LEP) children in the United States. The United States Supreme Court found that the school system in San Francisco, California, failed to provide appropriate and adequate language instruction to Chinese students. This procedure, according to the United States Supreme Court, violated

their rights to an appropriate education under Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In 1975, the Office of Civil Rights established a Task Force to implement proper assessment and placement procedures to meet the educational needs of the Limited English Proficient students. The Task Force outlined approaches in a special report called "The Lau Remedies" which constituted an affirmative step in providing Limited English Proficient students with an appropriate education. The report required school districts to incorporate procedures that would enable them to provide equal educational opportunity to Limited English Proficient children.

Bergin (1987) specifies that, according to "The Lau Remedies," school districts should:

- (1) Identify the numbers of Limited English Proficient students in the school system;
- (2) Assess the language dominance of such students in both English and their native language;
- (3) Provide an appropriate instructional program that would ensure an equal educational opportunity. (p. 8)

"The Lau Remedies" are guidelines that school districts need to follow in order to ensure the rights of any student who is not proficient in the English language (that is, whose language is other than English) to an appropriate educational program.

Lora v. Board of Education of the
City of New York (1977)

The Lora v. Board of Education of the City of New York (1977) case was a class action suit brought by Black and Hispanic students who claimed that their right to a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment had been violated by the Board of Education of the City of New York. The students were identified as emotionally disturbed and were segregated in separate schools and facilities. The judge held that the process used in New York City to evaluate students' "special day schools" violated the students' right to treatment and due process; to the extent that students were referred to largely racially segregated schools, there was a denial of equal educational opportunity in clear violation of Title VI of the U. S. Civil Rights Act; and New York City's fiscal or monetary problems did not excuse violation of the students' rights (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1990).

According to Landurand (1987), the court affirmed the principle that the overrepresentation of minority students in special education constituted a violation of the students' rights. The key issue of this case was an alleged lack of facilities in the New York City public schools which resulted in limited special education programs for students with emotional problems. The court

found that Black and Hispanic students were disproportionately assigned to these classes and were discriminated against on the basis of race.

Jose P. v. Ambach (1979)

The Jose P. v. Ambach (1979) case concerned the appropriate educational placement of culturally and linguistically diverse students in New York City. A group of handicapped children and their parents, represented by groups such as the Handicapped Persons Support Unit and supported by the Public Education Association and the Advocates for Children of New York, brought suit against the City of New York claiming their children were being deprived of an appropriate public education because the City had not placed the children nor properly identified them.

The judge mandated that the school system address the issues of identification of students with special needs, create an office to disseminate information about handicapped children programs, and provide full educational programs and services, including bilingual efforts, for students with "limited English proficiency". The court also mandated that the New York City Board of Education evaluate students in their native language or by whatever means a student in the school system is able to speak or communicate.

This case has helped the efforts of various professionals involved in the Education field as well as by parents in the cause for handicapped children and Limited English Proficient (LEP) children (Levine & Wexler, 1981).

A Summary and Conclusion of the History
of Special Education and the Legal
Issues Before and After
Public Law 94-142 (1975)

In the first part of the review of literature, the historical and legal aspects of Special Education were described. The legal issues that have been a landmark to the provisions and regulations which guarantee and keep on guaranteeing children with special needs a free and appropriate education and parents with due process safeguards were examined. In addition, the need of parents to organize themselves in order to obtain more and better services for their special needs children was discussed.

In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), the court determined that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal and that segregation prevented an opportunity for equal education. Under the legislative mandates and issues related to special education and to new practices in education and the rights of the minority population, new laws were created which addressed educational practices in schools, such as The Civil Rights Act

(1964), the Bilingual Education Act (1968), Section 504 (1973), The Equal Education Opportunity Act (1974), and Public Law 94-142 (1975). Also, two determinations of courts--Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972) and Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia (1972)--established the right of handicapped children to special public education.

Under executive mandate, the issues of inappropriate placement of minority students in Special Education classes and the inappropriate language instruction to minority students were addressed. Under the judicial mandates, the Courts determined the following:

- Diana v. California State Board of Education (1970)

The Court determined that the students' linguistic or cultural differences cannot be evidence of an educationally handicapping condition.

- Covarrubias v. San Diego Unified School District (1971)

The Court established the right to monetary damage as a result of the misclassification as "handicapped".

- Lora v. Board of Education of the City of New York (1979)

The Court found that minority students were disproportionately assigned to Special Education classes and were discriminated against on the basis of race.

- Jose P. v. Ambach (1979)

The Court determined that students be evaluated in their native language before placing the students in Special Education classes.

These legal issues brought about new trends and new practices to the field of Education, especially Bilingual Education and Special Education, which resulted in a guarantee to an equal educational opportunity for all students. These legal issues have helped professionals in the field of Education, parents, and children obtain rights that federal and state special education laws provide them with.

Rationale for Parent Training

According to Simpson (1990), it is extremely unrealistic to assume that parents of children with special needs participate properly with professionals in the development of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for their

children if they lack adequate training and experience. Simpson also suggests that in order for parents to be meaningful contributors to the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) conference, they must be provided with appropriate training.

Participation of parents in the educational process of children with special needs who require some services of special education demand some basic skills that will allow good communication between school personnel and parent(s). Basic skills in reading, writing, and comprehension in the English language are necessary for appropriate participation in the educational process of their children.

Also, for parents to become effective partners in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) process, they must be provided with opportunities to gain knowledge and skills (Katz et al., 1980). For Katz et al. (1980), the intent of Public Law 94-142 for parental participation in planning for the education of their children can best be met if helpful training programs are organized and conducted in the public schools.

Strickland (1983) points out that few parents know or understand the provisions of Public Law 94-142 (1975) because to obtain the necessary information consumes a lot of time and is often frustrating. On the other hand, some parents feel more pressured under the demands and tasks

that professionals impose on them for the better development of their children. Concerning the participation of parents in the education of their children, it has been pointed out that parents of special needs children have had successful participation in the process of behavior modification. The involvement of parents in the education of their children involves social and legal values, and it is also more effective when parents are properly oriented (Bersani, 1985).

Ironically, parents are usually the least prepared to actively participate in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meetings since they possess the least amount of knowledge pertaining to laws, advocacy, rights, resources, and special education procedures (Crawley, 1990). It was stated that the education and training of Hispanic parents of children with disabilities are important to the building of confidence and competency in parents.

According to Layser (1985), the rate of participation of parents in the education of their children is low in conferences and meetings because they do not feel competent. Studies related to parental participation have demonstrated the limited participation of parents in the educational process of their children (Goldstein, Strickland, Turnbull, & Curry, 1980). The studies of Goldstein, Strickland, Turnbull, & Curry (1980) suggested the need for parental training.

Shea and Bauer (1985) suggest that if parents are included and oriented about the evaluation process as part of the educational process, they could provide a great deal of assistance to the child's instructional programs. Parents are the principal experts in relation to their children and also they often know more about their children than the experts they consult (Gliedman & Roth, 1986); Turnbull & Turnbull, 1978).

The knowledge of parents about the special needs of the handicapped child is of importance in the development of the Individualized Educational Plan [IEP] (Allen & Stefanowski, 1987; Simpson, 1990). Many parents lack the knowledge and necessary skills to actively participate in the development of the Individualized Educational Plan (Allen & Stefanowski, 1987; Beste, 1986; Mayer, Vadasy, Fewell, & Schell, 1986; Nye, Westling, & Laten, 1986; Reese & Serna, 1986; Shevin, 1983).

Parent Participation and Involvement
in the Educational Process of
Children with Special Needs

"Education can be viewed as a humanizing process in which the learners, students, teachers, school staff, parents, and others become more conscious of themselves when they become involved" (Colon, 1982, p. 1).

Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), established a role for parents as members of the Individualized Educational Plan Team. The parent's role in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) process has been clarified in the requirements issued by the U. S. Office of Special Education. It states the following:

The IEP meeting serves as a communication vehicle between parents and school personnel, and enables them, as equal participants, to jointly decide what the child's needs are, what services will be provided to meet those needs, and what anticipated outcome may be. (U. S. Office of Special Education, 1981, p. 5462)

School personnel no longer had the authority to unilaterally make decisions regarding final placement, programs, and services. The passage of Public Law 94-142 (1975) and Massachusetts State Law Chapter 766 (1972) benefited parents by guaranteeing an appropriate education mandated by law and emphasizing parents as partners in the decision-making process.

According to Crawley (1990), active parental involvement historically has been and continues to be a problem since the initiation of Public Law 94-142 (1975) and Massachusetts State Law Chapter 766 (1972) despite their legal mandates. In spite of the legal struggle that the parents have in their participation and involvement in the education of their children, there exists difficulties

and conflicts of misunderstanding, and tension between the parents and professionals involved (Gorham, 1975; Simpson, 1990).

Studies on the participation of parents in the individualized educational planning process after the passage of Public Law 94-142 (1975) have revealed that most parents played a passive role rather than an active role in underlying the policy intent of the law (Lynch & Stein, 1982; Turnbull & Winton, 1986). Also, these studies indicate that parent participation was essentially confined to receiving information from school personnel and to verifying information pertaining to home matters.

The Impact of Children with Special Needs in the Family and in Society

Many studies have been written about children with special needs and their impact on family members (Birenbaum, 1986; Breslau, Staruch, & Mortimer, 1986; Dodge, 1986; Dunlap, 1979; Farber, 1986a, 1986b; Fewell & Vadasy, 1986; Holt, 1986a, 1986b; Jacobson & Humphrey, 1986; Olshansky, 1986; Simpson, 1990; Wikler, 1981).

Despite reports that parental reaction tends to proceed through typical stages (Drotar & Baskiewicz, 1984), it is apparent that individual parents respond with varying degrees of stress and debilitation (Roskies, 1986). The degree of stress associated with this event is

determined, in part, by the parent's subjective perceptions of the event. However, parents of handicapped infants express similar emotional sequences of disappointment.

According to Eden (1984), five factors or stages were proposed as a result of a study on how parents of young, severely handicapped children faced their experience: shock, confusion; refusal, denial; guilt, anger; despair, depression; and adjustment, recovery, and acceptance.

Stress can be experienced regardless of the adjustment stage since it relates in large part to daily caretaker realities. The intensive involvement with a handicapped child will be a stressful task for the family. The prolonged dependency of chronically ill and developmentally disabled children requires parents to do more for them for longer periods of time than is required for parents of a non-handicapped child (Lyon & Preis, 1983).

Disruption of family routines can occur due to the intensive time demands posed by the handicapped infant. Klein (1986) reported that several sets of parents of deaf-blind children said that they had never been on a vacation alone, and seldom went out on a weekend because of difficulties in finding baby sitters. Farber (1986) and Wolfensberger and Menolascino (1986) have examined stages of parental adjustment and adaptation to their child's diagnosis. They also concluded that parental expectations and service needs are related to chronic stress. Other

studies have indicated that single-parent families with developmentally disabled children experience even more stress (Beckman, 1986; Holroyd, 1986) and also have greater difficulty accepting and adapting to their disabled child than two-parent families.

Studies suggest that the presence of a handicapped child is related to financial problems, social isolation, marital discord, sibling adjustment problems, and restriction of family activities, health problems, household disorganization, and disruption of relationships with family and friends (Beckman-Bell, 1986, Farber, 1986a, 1986b; Fewell & Vadasy, 1986). Also, data have been reported on higher than normal divorce rates (Love, 1973; Tew, Lawrence, Payne, & Rawnsley, 1993) among parents of handicapped children and incidents of increased marital discord (Featherstone, 1980; Gath, 1986). Wikler (1981) pointed out eight specific types of stress that were significantly higher for families who were experiencing a transition to adulthood with their retarded child: time demands on the mother; negative attitudes toward the handicapped child; limits on family activities; dependency needs of the child; lack of activities for the child; poor health of the mother; low family integration; and behavior problems of the child.

It is important to restate that investigators found increased marital and family disruption as a result of the

birth of a retarded or handicapped child (Farber, 1986a, 1986b; Holt, 1986a, 1986b; Lonsdale, 1986; Love, 1973).

According to Salisbury and Intagliata (1986), parental discord, divorce rates, and impaired marital integration are no greater than in the general population.

According to Jacobson and Humphrey (1986), parental stress increases when the child begins school and during adolescence. Stagg and Catron (1986) also state that considerable data indicate that parents of handicapped children experience periods of increased stress as life events and changes are experienced by their children. However, several other investigations refute the presumption of the negative impact of the child with special needs in the family (Farber, 1986a, 1986b; Skelton & Hoddinot, 1986).

Public laws, such as Public Law 94-142 (1975) and Public Law 99-457 (1986), and numerous court cases have played critical roles in supporting families with handicapped members. According to legislation and litigation, efforts have opened school services to all handicapped children, lowered ages for services, and provided for parent participation in educational decisions about their children as well as children's and parents' rights. The involvement and participation in the education of their child will also give security and confidence to parents.

Gath (1986) found, in his study on marital stress on parents, that children with Down Syndrome lived in homes where marital breakdown or severe disharmony could be found in 9 of the 30 families with Down Syndrome.

On the other hand, positive measures were higher in families with children having Down Syndrome. These parents felt drawn closer together and strengthened by their shared tragedy, a view also reported by Burton (1986).

D'Arcy (1986) reported in his study that 73 of 90 mothers of children with Down Syndrome claimed their marriages remained happy or unchanged after the child's birth.

The child with special needs has an impact in one form or another on the family, as Fewell and Vadasy (1986) pointed out: siblings, grandparents and other relatives, family roles, family time, finances, and finally relations with society. Also, Fewell and Vadasy (1986) pointed out five events that are often stressful for parents of children with special needs: confronting the handicap, early childhood, school entry, beginning adult life, and maintaining adult life.

In past societies, people with handicapped conditions were shunned or neglected. In many cultures, a child born with a deformity was viewed as an evil omen or as a sign of the moral corruptions of the parents. In medieval

Europe, the retarded and mentally ill were sometimes burned to death as witches or agents of the devil.

Families with children with special needs were looked upon as struggling martyrs, people to be admired for their virtuous submission to the suffering of their tragic offspring. Severe handicapping conditions still make some people uncomfortable because of either the vestiges of superstition or their ignorance about handicapped conditions. Some people react to handicaps with uncertainty, discomfort, and even repulsion.

Developing public awareness and understanding about handicapped conditions are needed. Workshops in universities have been developed in order to educate people and to create changes in public awareness.

According to Buscaglia (1975), in recent times the child with special needs has received acceptance, pity, education, and employment. Society's view today defines an impairment as a medical condition to be "treated" (Fewell & Vadasy, 1986).

Today, the child with special needs is supported by notable advocacy support groups in society, such as the Association for Retarded Citizens, Easter Seal Society, Parent to Parent Groups, Coalitions for Citizens with Disabilities, etc. Also, Public Law 94-142 (1975) has played a critical role in supporting children's and parent's rights, school services, and educational provisions.

Needs of Parents of Children
with Special Needs

Schulz (1987) states that it is a fallacy to assume that the needs of children and of parents are separate.

If we assess the parents' strengths and needs, the results will show the educators and training providers the needs of the parents of the special needs child (Neeley, 1987). For example, the nature and needs of a child with a physical disability will demand skills and strategies from the parents in order for them to cope properly with their child's needs. According to Simpson (1990), different parents will need different educational training programs. Schulz (1987) pointed out five needs that apply to all parents of children with special needs: (1) emotional understanding and support; (2) information and facts; (3) a greater degree of active participation in the planning of educational training; (4) the ability to maintain and identify themselves as parents; and (5) the ability to maintain and identify themselves as participating members of the community and as competent individuals within themselves through a dynamic understanding of their role in the habilitation process.

The needs of parents of children with special needs are related to developmental stages of the child and the ability of the family to cope. Schulz (1987) also pointed out that parental needs increased with the age of

the child under conditions producing the most stressful situations:

- (1) Emotional Support: At birth of the child's exceptionality or disability
- (2) Information: At the time of the diagnosis of exceptionality or special needs
- (3) Involvement: School age
- (4) Expectation: As parents age

Parent Assessment

Most parents of children with special needs want and are in need of help with a number of aspects of their child's development. In order to provide parent training and information services, it is important to identify techniques and models through appropriate assessment.

Schulz (1987) pointed out the following areas of assessment:

- (1) Knowledge of legal rights
- (2) Behavior management
- (3) Child development
- (4) Exceptional conditions (definitions, characteristics)
- (5) Instructional skills
- (6) Family environment

In order to successfully conduct parent training, it is important to include interests and needs of the participants in the planning and development of the subjects or topics. Because of the great variability in parent characteristics and the difficulties with child-rearing, individually-tailored programs may be more effective in producing desired results for a wider range of parents.

For Schulz (1987), appropriate planning for parent education programs should be based on continuous needs assessment. In relation to the assessment of parents' strengths and needs, Schulz has suggested that parents of children with special needs are individuals who respond to school personnel and programs in different ways. Schulz also recommends that factors, such as the age and the special needs of the child's condition, the demographic data about the family, and the interaction within the family, should be considered in assessment of the family of children with special needs.

On the other hand, Schulz stated that parents' needs are not static, and that assessment should reflect individual and family changes. In relation to parent participation, Schulz stated that adequate needs assessment can help educators plan more appropriate programs, which, in turn, will facilitate parents' involvement and success with their children.

Characteristics of the Family

According to Schulz (1987), a number of parent education programs have ignored the differences in parental values and the needs among groups of ethnic and socio-economic diversity.

Lack of awareness of the differences has frequently led to conflict in the programs for each group, and it has not helped parents adapt to the multiethnic society in which they live (Strom, Rees, Slaughter, & Wurster, 1987). Differences and expectations should be assessed and accommodated in program planning if the training needs of all parents are to be met (Schulz, 1987).

Schulz (1987) also pointed out some variables that are consistent with strengths and needs of families with children with special needs:

- (1) Socioeconomic Level
- (2) Educational Level
- (3) Ethnic Background
- (4) Experiences with the Children (Impact)

Socioeconomic Level. In order to assess maternal strengths and needs in child-rearing, a Questionnaire (Parent as a Teacher Inventory) was administered to a population representing three socioeconomic levels (Strom, Rees, Slaughter, & Wurster, 1987). The results of the inventory administered to the parents indicated greatest difference in the mothers' feelings regarding

control of their children's behavior; lower-class mothers revealed a desire for greater control over their children's behavior than upper-class groups; lower-class mothers had less confidence in themselves as teachers of their children.

According to Eheart and Ciccone (1982), four main topics of concern were found in relation to the needs of low-income mothers of developmentally-delayed children:

- (1) Material concerns seem to continue to grow or are intensified throughout the pre-school years of a developmentally-delayed child's life;
- (2) The severity of a child's development delay appears to be a significant variable in relation to maternal needs;
- (3) Maternal needs may be created primarily when children cause changes in ongoing conditions in their mother's lives;
- (4) Safety needs tend to surface when low-income mothers are subjected to changes associated with caring for a developmentally-delayed child.

According to Schulz (1987), the socioeconomic aspect of the parents with children with special needs is related to the needs in terms of resources in the home, access to treatment, and availability of parents' time with their

children. Poverty is also associated with stress in the family and thus relates to family interactions and psychological needs (Fewell & Vadasy, 1986; Schulz, 1987).

Educational Level. Education is related to socioeconomic status. According to Schulz (1987), education offers an independent clue to a family's motivation and needs. There is a difference in the needs of parents of children with special needs when educational levels are considered. In a study conducted by Kershman (1982), it was found that among parents of deaf-blind children, the least well-educated group of parents expressed a significantly greater need for training in four areas: family roles and interactions; health care and maintenance; handicapping conditions; and affective adjustment. Also, these parents expressed a strong need for training and a desire for learning in a wide variety of areas. The most well-educated subgroup of parents in the study scored their need for training in the area of curriculum and interaction significantly lower than the other subgroups of parents.

It is important to be aware of parents' educational level when preparing, planning, and implementing educational training. Programs designed to improve parents' knowledge and skills should emerge from a sound assessment of their abilities and areas of need (Schulz, 1987).

Ethnic Background. According to Dembo, Sweitzer, and Lauritzen (1985), parents of different cultural groups have different goals of parenting and childrearing.

A study of parenting attitudes and skills among Black, non-Hispanic White, and Mexican-American mothers revealed that, in general, the non-Hispanic White mothers (as compared to Black mothers) indicated less need to control their children, had greater confidence in themselves as teachers, and generated interest and skills in playing with their children (Storm, Rees, Slaughter, & Wurster, 1987).

Rodriguez (1987) pointed out that many minority group parents feel inadequate and unformed because they lack the necessary communication skills to express themselves. Also, Rodriguez stated that negative experiences of their own may prevent their participation in parent education programs.

Schulz (1987) concluded that in order to prevent the perpetuation of this insecurity, it is essential that the training needs of minority parents be determined and met. He also stated that cultural and linguistic strengths should be evaluated and used in programming.

Experiences with Children. Parents who have helped raise siblings and who have successful experiences with other children are more comfortable with their own

children. The degree of experience and confidence also affects the kind and amount of training parents need as well as the training skills they have to share (Schulz, 1987).

Parents and other people with experiences in working with children with special needs may be prospective parent trainers.

Schulz (1987) pointed out that factors, such as the sex of the parent, marital status, and parenting, are family characteristics to consider in planning parent education programs. Schulz also pointed out that adequate assessment can help educators plan more effective programs.

Level of Participation

As parents have diversified needs, they also demonstrate varied kinds and levels of participation in educational planning and implementation.

Schulz (1987) states that school personnel should consider the degree to which parents want and are able to participate.

According to the "Mirror Model of Parental Involvement" by Kroth (1980), the following can be noted:

- All parents might provide information concerning the child's preschool medical and social history;

- Most parents could provide relevant information during the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) process;
- Some parents might become strong advocates for services for special needs students;
- A few parents might become involved enough to form active groups and conduct parenting workshops themselves. (Heron & Haris, 1987)

This model ("Mirror Model of Parent Involvement") provides directions for planning parental education programs.

The level of parental involvement depends on factors related to time, other commitments, educational background, degree of interest, experience, and confidence (Schulz, 1987). The demographic variables most predictive of mothers' involvement are family income level and mother's and father's education levels (Cone, Delawyer, & Wolfe, 1985).

Finally, parent involvement programs will serve the community and children with special needs when their program design reflects the differences found among parents (Kroth & Otteni, 1983).

The Counselor in Special Education

The counselor is a professional service facilitator who is academically well-prepared and who possesses counseling skills and experience to perform a unique and needed service in the community. Among his or her

functions, the counselor offers services to families in the community; however, in the school field, his or her efforts are geared to the children and youths in need. The counselor's function in the field of Special Education has been expanded. The school counselor's services are in great demand since the enactment of Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975). With the passage of this law, the necessity of a counselor who would serve a population with special characteristics and needs emerges.

Public Law 94-142 (1975) requires that the school counselor be supportive and facilitate the process of integration of the child with special needs (Giusti, 1985; Morales, 1981). The counselor plays needed roles such as consultant, coordinator, lawyer, companion, and advisor to the special needs child and parents (Giusti, 1980). According to the University of Missouri-Columbia, College of Education (1987), its module, "Counselors and Special Needs Students", states: "Considerable responsibility has been placed on the school counselor" to ensure that the "development needs of special needs learners are provided for in a systematic, comprehensive, and equal manner."

Doyle (1970) and Hansen (1971) state that the integration of exceptional children to the mainstream may result in an area of specialization in the field of Counseling. According to McIntosh and Minifie (1979), counselors

should work with special education teachers in attempting mainstreaming programs. Figueroa (1985) states that there has been a demand for professionals, especially counselors, who could serve the growing school population of children with special needs.

Figueroa (1985) indicates that the counselor should have knowledge about the different special conditions or exceptionalities and their psychological implications for the individual and his or her family. The counselor should be aware of each aspect of the following laws: Public Law 94-142 (1975); and Public Law 93-112, Sections 503-504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. Figueroa (1985) also states that the counselor needs to develop basic skills that could help him or her to work with a Special Education population. According to Noble and Kampwirth (1979), the school counselor should be directly involved in implementing the law (Public Law 94-142). Noble and Kampwirth (1979) also state that at minimum the school counselor should be responsible for evaluating and writing the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) in the social, emotional, and adaptive area, for a special needs child. This, in itself, will ensure the presence of qualified professional psychological input in the process of counseling or assisting handicapped or special needs children.

Figueroa (1985) points out the main purposes of the counseling program for the child with special needs:

- Help the student develop a positive self-image;
- Offer orientation services and individual counseling services in the school;
- Provide information, training, and make contact with school personnel, students, parents, and the community to eliminate prejudice and negative stereotypes about the child with special needs.

Appropriate orientation services for the child with special needs (Figueroa, 1985) are directed to the following:

- School counseling and guidance
- Personal counseling
- Guidance in career development

In addition to providing career guidance and counseling activities, assessment of the special needs students' abilities, attitudes, interests, academic skills, and vocational skills for the purpose of developing adequate educational programs is required as part of a counselor's function (University of Missouri-Columbia, College of Education, 1987, p. 1).

Kameen and Parker (1979) and Noble and Kampwirth (1979) suggested the following functions for the counselor to help the parents and children in special education programs:

- The counselor will help to verify and cope with crisis situations.
- The counselor will help with parent education, teaching parents problem-solving techniques.
- The counselor will provide emotional support.
- The counselor will act as listener: listen to their experiences of crisis; parental concern; level of aspiration; guilt; feelings of joy, happiness, success, and satisfaction.
- The counselor will serve as a placement team member.
- The counselor will help with IEP implementation: social, emotional, and adaptive.
- The counselor will serve as a representative of the child (Advocate).
- The counselor will act as coordinator of services between parents and school.
- The counselor will conduct group and individual counseling with children and parents.
- The counselor will help the student in the selection of courses.
- The counselor will act as teacher consultant.

The counselor who works with the family of a special needs child intervening in crisis needs special training

in order that his or her mediation be comfortable to the family. The counselor may assist in the following possible family problems:

- Depression;
- Stress, anxiety;
- Impact of the handicapped on the child in the family;
- Process of accepting the member with disabilities (stages): denial, guilt and anger, and adjustment;
- Consequences of the handicapped: separation, divorce, neglect, etc.

The role statement of the American School Counselors Association (1985) suggests that the counselor should offer the special needs child the following services, among others:

- Individual and group counseling to clarify values and develop coping and planning skills;
- Formal and informal assessment of abilities, personality traits, and interests;
- Training, goal setting, and decision making for the selection of a career path;
- An opportunity for integrating academic and career planning.

Sarkees and Scott (1985) have suggested that the counselor should help the special needs child in modifying and establishing realistic goals, in establishing a favorable learning environment, in matching learning styles with teaching styles, and in establishing readability levels for materials used. Also, the counselor should help in the selection of appropriate instructional materials, and in the modification of existing materials.

Kravitz (1983) suggests that counselors could perform an effective service as advocates for students being considered for special education services. He states that counselors must be able to determine if a student has been adequately assessed.

Another consideration a counselor should be aware of is the effective counseling services of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) students whose home language is other than English and who may not be performing conceptually and linguistically at a level equal to district standards (Hurtado, 1979).

Garcia and Ybarra-Garcia (1978) suggest the following strategies to counselors for counseling Hispanics, which can be also used with other LEP students, among others:

- Learn as much as you can about the Hispanic culture;
- Try to understand the student's background;

- Be aware of the importance of the family in a Hispanic culture;
- Be aware of the cultural conflicts that a Hispanic may be faced with;
- Be aware of personal biases of cultural and racial stereotypes;
- Be aware of the social forces affecting the Hispanic;
- Be aware of unconscious stereotypes or perceptions.

Finally, the counselor should be more active in his or her role not only with the students but also with the community, parents, and the family. Counselors need a much broader view of handicapping conditions. They should be trained to work with a high incidence of special needs or conditions and also with a culturally diverse population. The counselor is a professional who works as a team member in the school setting with the purpose of helping students in their school integration as well as their community. One of the counselor's major goals is to encourage students' potentiality and well-being and to help the family in using the community resources that will help them achieve more successfully in society.

The Bilingual Special Education
Teacher

To succeed in teaching the child with special needs, at the same time showing cultural and linguistic needs, the academic preparation and the skills the teacher possesses to meet the objective of guaranteeing an appropriate education for these children and the skills needed to support the parents should be considered.

In 1979, multicultural teacher training was formally institutionalized by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). According to Chinn (1984), bilingual special education teacher training was one strategy for promoting cultural pluralism in our schools. Chinn also states that it was an effort designed to promote equal educational opportunity for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who are also handicapped.

According to the graduate program in Bilingual Special Education offered at Bank Street College of Education in New York City, the following bilingual special education competencies and roles are pointed out:

- Diagnose the child's strengths and weaknesses utilizing formal and informal assessment and measures
- Determine language dominance and proficiency of the Hispanic children
- Develop and implement individualized educational programs for each child

- Work with support systems (parents, classroom teachers, interdisciplinary teams) to coordinate efforts for each child's benefit
- Serve as an advocate for all handicapped students
- Provide individualized or small group instruction to mainstreamed bilingual children with special needs
- Assist regular classroom teachers with educational programs of bilingual handicapped children
- Provide regular classroom teachers with continuous inservice training in the area of assessment and teaching of bilingual handicapped children
- Develop informal bilingual assessment instruments in the perceptual area, academic and language functioning
- Develop bilingual/multicultural materials appropriate for bilingual children with special needs
- Assist special educators in meeting the linguistic and cultural needs of the Hispanic handicapped children
- Develop multicultural curriculum activities
- Informally assess the Hispanic child's strengths and weaknesses taking into consideration cultural, linguistic, and social-class background
- Understand the historical factors, cultural characteristics, and behaviors of diverse Hispanic groups
- Understand the developmental process of the first- and second-language acquisition and language disorders in bilingual children

- Understand the impact of poverty on Hispanic families and the impact of social class and cultural discrimination
- Implement multicultural educational activities
- Understand and become aware of personal attitudes and biases that affect teachers' relationships with Hispanic family members
- Implement appropriate activities to include the Hispanic family as an instructional resource
- Assist students in achieving their full academic potential in the home language and culture as well as in English
- Teach reading, science, social studies, and other academic and non-academic subjects in the home language and in English, using those methods most suited to each child's learning style
- Develop and implement elementary school curriculum for bilingual children with special needs
- Create, evaluate, and use bilingual, bicultural materials
- Diagnose each student's strengths and needs and develop appropriate learning activities based upon these
- Differentiate among differences, delays, and disorders, when evaluating a child's language
- Understand the legal basis for special education and the implications for classroom instruction
- Understand the historical factors, cultural characteristics, and behaviors of diverse Hispanic groups
- Understand the background of Federal legislation on bilingual education and handicapped children's education

- Know about Public Law 94-142; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504; Lau v. Nichols Case; and other important legislations

What Parents Need to Know About Special Education

The responsibility of parents in regard to their children's education goes beyond providing them with the necessities to attend school. In other words, parents of children with special needs may have many questions, such as, "What is going to happen with school?" "Whom should I ask?" "Where should I call or write for orientation related to the services we receive?" and "What are my future options?"

Kauffman and Pullen (1987), in their pamphlet, "What Should I know About Special Education?" answer the most common questions parents have about Special Education. The answers provide parents with a guide and at the same time educate and introduce them to the field of Special Education.

The questions are classified in eight areas: Special Education, Referral, Evaluation, Eligibility, Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), Placement, Mediation and Due Process Hearing, and Additional Resources.

1. Special Education:

- What is Special Education?
- What are Related Services?
- What laws apply to Special Education?

2. Referral:

- What does "referral" mean?
- Who refers students for evaluation?
- What should be done before a student is referred?
- Will I be told about my child's referral?
- Does "referral" mean that my child will be placed in Special Education?

3. Evaluation:

- What is an evaluation?
- How long does an evaluation take?
- What kinds of tests are given?
- Who is involved in an evaluation?
- Who will see the evaluation results?
- What if I disagree with the results?
- How much does the evaluation cost and who will pay for it?
- How often is a student in Special Education evaluated?
- How will I be involved in decisions after the evaluation?

4. Eligibility:

- What does "eligibility" mean?
- Who attends an eligibility meeting?
- How can I contribute to the eligibility decision?
- What if my child is not eligible for Special Education?
- What if my child is eligible for Special Education?

5. Individualized Educational Plan (IEP):

- What is an IEP?
- What must be included in an IEP?
- Who writes the IEP?
- What is an IEP written?
- Will I be asked to discuss my child's IEP?
- Why is the IEP important?

6. Placement:

- What kind of placement may be considered?
- What does the law say about placement?
- Do I have a right to participate in the decision about my child's placement?
- What if I disagree with the school's decision to place my child?

7. Mediation and Due Process Hearing:

- What are my rights if I disagree with the school?
- What is a "hearing"?
- When should I request a hearing?
- How do I obtain a hearing?
- What are my basic rights at a hearing?
- What else should I consider about a hearing or court action?

8. Additional Resources

- Where can I turn for help if I have questions or problems?

Summary and Conclusion on the Rationale for Parent Training

In the second part of the review of literature, "The Rationale for Parent Training" introduced the need and importance of providing educational workshops and counseling for parents of children with special needs which may result in active and appropriate participation in the educational process of their children. "Parent Participation and Involvement in the Educational Process of Children with Special Needs" discussed the issues related to the little or no participation and involvement of parents in the educational process. The lack of

orientation and education in the field of Special Education has been discussed as well as the consequences in the process of parent participation in the education of children with special needs. "The Impact of Children with Special Needs in the Family and in Society" was discussed considering the negative and positive aspects of the impact. The new trends and practices implemented by service providers to the children or youngsters with special needs were also reviewed.

"The Needs of Parents of Children with Special Needs" discussed the different factors that can influence the active participation of parents in the educational process, such as needs of parent assessment, characteristics of the family, socioeconomic level, ethnic background, etc.

Competencies and roles in the field of "The Bilingual Special Education Teacher" and "The Counselor in Special Education" have been reviewed as essential elements in the disinvolvement, adaptation, and acceptance of the family towards the child's special needs throughout one's developmental stages. Social and cultural diversity have also been considered to achieve an understanding in the relationship and intervention with the child and the family.

Finally, "What Parents Need to Know About Special Education" was reviewed with the purpose to better understand the basic knowledge that every parent of children

with special needs should know in order to be an active participant in the educational process.

The two parts of the review of literature discussed the historic and social aspects and the new trends and practices in services to serve a school population with special needs and their families. These new trends and practices in the provision of services have emerged as a result of legal and educational issues providing rights and opportunities to children with special needs.

Laws, such as The Special Education Law, Public Law 94-142 (1975), have provided children with special needs as well as their parents with rights and due process. These have also required more specialized professionals to properly and effectively work with children as well as with parents. These laws, contrary to practices in the past, require active participation from parents or guardians of the child in the educational process.

These legal-educational issues in the field of Special Education and Bilingual Education have offered rights and opportunities to children with special needs as well as to their parents. Although these laws exist, there is still a need to review and amend them in order to offer a just and proper education that is in constant demand.

C H A P T E R I I I

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology employed in this study for exploring and describing the socioeconomic characteristics of Hispanic parents of children with special needs. In addition, it presents the extent of knowledge about special education and the needs parents have in order to be active participants in the educational process of their children in one Western Massachusetts school district.

The methodology includes a description of the setting and sample population, research design, data collection instrument, validation of the instrument, data collection procedures, and the statistical analysis.

The study methodology was designed to address the following three sets of data:

- (1) Socioeconomic characteristics of the Hispanic parents of children with special needs;
- (2) Basic information about Special Education that parents are interested in knowing;
- (3) Service needs related to participation in the educational process that parents receive.

Setting and Sample Population

The site selected for this study is a city of 43,704 people located in Western Massachusetts. The site selected is characterized by a very high Hispanic population. The 1990 Census indicated that 31.1% of the total population is Hispanic, which represents a dramatic increase from the 1980 Census (13.8%). For the school year 1991-1992, the district selected had approximately 7,200 students in the school system. From this estimated amount, 1,249 students received special education services and 875 (or 70.1%) are minority students. From the total minority student population (875), 828 (or 95%) were Hispanic.

The sample population for this study consisted of Hispanic parents of children and youths with special needs in special education programs in the site selected for this study.

Research Design

This research study sought to answer 14 research questions. Research Question #1 ("What are the socio-economic characteristics that describe Hispanic parents of children with special needs in the selected school district?"); #2 ("Do Hispanic parents in the selected area possess the characteristics of high mobility?");

#5 ("What academic level of education did responding Hispanic parents of children with special needs possess?"); #6 ("Do Hispanic parents of children in Special Education programs in the selected area speak and understand the English language?"); and #7 ("Do Hispanic parents of children with special needs read and write in English and in their own language?") involved the socioeconomic characteristics of Hispanic parents with children and youths with special needs in special education programs. Research Question #4 ("What factors should be considered in the planning of educational workshops and orientation of parents of children with special needs?") provided information about factors that should be considered in the planning of educational workshops for parents of children and youths with special needs. Research Question #8 ("What basic knowledge [themes or topics] related to the educational program of their children are Hispanic parents in the selected area interested in acquiring?") provided information related to the knowledge Hispanic parents are interested in knowing. Research Question #9 ("What basic services do Hispanic parents need for their participation in the educational process of their children?") and #13 ("What are the limitations Hispanic parents have in the participation and involvement in the education of their children in Special Education programs?") provided information about the needs and limitations Hispanic parents have

in participation and involvement in the education of their children in special education programs. Research Question #10 ("Where do Hispanic parents of children with special needs prefer to receive orientation services?") involved the preferences Hispanic parents have as to where to receive orientation and services. Research Questions #11 ("Who do Hispanic parents prefer to offer orientation services and educational workshops and conferences?") and #12 ("How do Hispanic parents prefer to orient themselves and receive educational training [to learn and be informed about the condition of their child and how to help him or her]??") provided information about the preferences the Hispanic parents have as to how to receive educational training.

Research Question #14 ("Is it necessary to develop educational workshops and orientation to insure active participation of Hispanic parents in the educational process of their children with special needs?") tells the main purpose for this study and solicits information concerning needs for development of educational workshops and orientation to insure active participation of Hispanic parents in the educational process for their children and youths with special needs in special education programs.

The following research questions are answered through the analysis and interpretation of the survey administered to Hispanic parents: #1 ("What are the

socioeconomic characteristics that describe Hispanic parents of children with special needs in the selected school district?"); #2 ("Do Hispanic parents in the selected area possess the characteristics of high mobility?"); #5 ("What academic level of education did responding Hispanic parents of children with special needs possess?"); #6 ("Do Hispanic parents of children in Special Education programs in the selected area speak and understand the English language?"); #8 ("What basic knowledge [themes or topics] related to the educational program of their children are Hispanic parents in the selected area interested in acquiring?"); #9 ("What basic services do Hispanic parents need for their participation in the educational process of their children?"); #10 ("Where do Hispanic parents of children with special needs prefer to receive orientation services?"); #11 ("Who do Hispanic parents prefer to offer orientation services and educational workshops and conferences?"); #12 ("How do Hispanic parents prefer to orient themselves and receive educational training [to learn and be informed about the condition of their child and how to help him or her]?"); #13 ("What are the limitations Hispanic parents have in the participation and involvement in the education of their children in Special Education programs?"); and #14 ("Is it necessary to develop educational workshops and orientation to insure active participation of Hispanic

parents in the educational process of their children with special needs?"). The following research questions were answered through the review of the literature: #3 ("How does mobility affect the parents of children in Special Education programs?"); #4 ("What factors should be considered in the planning of educational workshops and orientation of parents of children with special needs?"); and #14 ("Is it necessary to develop educational workshops and orientation to insure active participation of Hispanic parents in the educational process of their children with special needs?").

Data Collection Instrument

The research instrument, "Cuestionario Para Padres Hispanos de Ninos Con Necesidades Especiales" (Questionnaire for Hispanic Parents of Children with Special Needs), was used to explore and describe the socioeconomic characteristics and needs of educational training and services of Hispanic parents with children and youths in special education programs in a determined site selected in Western Massachusetts. (See Appendix C.)

The questionnaire was designed and developed by this researcher. It is composed of 46 closed and semi-closed items geared to obtain information on three specific areas:

- (1) Description: Socioeconomic characteristics
- (2) Knowledge: Basic information related to special education
- (3) Service Needs: Services and facilities that allow parents to be active participants in the educational process of their children/youths in special education programs

Items 1.1 to 2.9 in the questionnaire solicited information about socioeconomic characteristics and mobility (e.g., marital status; academic level; proficiency in English language and the native language [Spanish]; income; time living in the site selected for this study; [city] or state; reason to move; other states in which they have lived, etc.).

Item 3.0 requested information as to whether the child or youth received special education. Items 3.1 to 3.9 provided information of the respondents' interest in knowing about special education topics and to receive educational workshop training (e.g., school regulations related to special education; the law and procedures of special education; federal and state special education laws; knowledge of parents' and child's rights; understanding terms used by doctors and other professionals related to the education of the child; getting to know the Individualized Educational Plan [IEP] content; procedures for obtaining special education services; how to use Due Process when not satisfied with services received and to

know the following topics through educational workshops and orientations: visual impairment, brain damage, learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, genetic disorders, AIDS, language development disorders, speech problems, physical impairment, autism, severe health problems, etc.

Items 4.1 to 5.6 solicited knowledge about service needs, such as transportation; community resource information guides (e.g., legal services, community programs, organizations, etc.); counseling services provided by the school for the child or youth and parents; appropriate physical facilities in the house or apartments (e.g., ramps, elevators, bathroom facilities); more bilingual professionals; translators for school meetings; access to school libraries to obtain information related to the child's special needs; how to help the child with homework; to receive orientation and information in home, school, community agencies; to receive educational workshops and conferences by parents, teachers, counselors; to learn and be informed about the child's special needs through discussion groups, individuals (one-to-one), informal conferences, videos, informative fliers, newspapers, by telephone, books, magazines; by observation of teachers' classes and other professionals and discuss questions; formal courses; and conferences by various professionals.

Validation of the Instrument

The "Cuestionario Para Padres Hispanos De Ninos Con Necesidades Especiales" (Questionnaire for Hispanic Parents of Children with Special Needs) was validated using face validity and content validity. Face validity "often is used to indicate whether the instrument, on the face of it, appears to measure what it claims to measure" (Isaac & Michael, 1971, p. 82).

Face validity of the instrument was established by four Hispanic professionals in the fields of Special Education, Counseling, Social Work, Education, and Administration. This researcher asked for the cooperation of these four professionals by sending letters to each of them. Their assistance was selected based on their professional background and experience. They reviewed the questionnaire and made suggestions for changes in the format and content.

Content validity was established by reviewing literature by Schulz (1987), Shea and Bauer (1985), and the researcher's experience as a special education teacher.

Data Collection Procedures

This researcher made personal contact through the community-based after-school program directors. Letters requesting invitations to parents' meetings were sent

to community-based service agencies and programs (see Appendix B). The purpose of attending the meetings was to have an opportunity to be introduced to parents, and to talk about the study, its purpose, and its possible benefits to Hispanic parents of children and youths with special needs in the community.

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed (randomly) throughout the community. The researcher explained the procedures for responding to the questionnaire and asked the subjects to return the questionnaire or call for assistance.

Statistical Analysis

This study is descriptive and explorative in nature. It does not necessarily seek or explain relationships, test hypotheses, make predictions, or get at meanings or implications. The intent of this study was to collect detailed factual information that best describes the socioeconomic characteristics of Hispanic parents of children with special needs. In addition, the intent of this study was to collect information as to the parents' knowledge of special education and the needs parents have in order to be active participants in the educational process of their children or youths in special education programs in this Western Massachusetts school district.

The data analysis used for this study was quantitative. Quantitative analysis uses descriptive statistics.

Limitations of the Study

In order that the content of this investigation be viewed in the proper perspective, the following limitations must be kept in mind:

- (1) This study was limited to exploring and describing the socioeconomic characteristics and needs of services that allow Hispanic parents of children/youths with special needs to be active participants in the educational process.
- (2) Findings of this study are limited to the site selected in Western Massachusetts and should not be used to represent this population at a state or national level.
- (3) This study was limited due to lack of support from the school system in the site selected in Western Massachusetts.
- (4) There was no participation from parents of children with special needs in the pre-school and kindergarten levels in the site which was selected for this research study.

- (5) There was lack of research related to mobility and its effect on parents' participation in the educational process of their children with special needs.
- (6) Of the total 100 questionnaires distributed to Hispanic parents in the community, 75 were returned. This represents 75% of the total questionnaires distributed.

C H A P T E R I V
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The present research study was undertaken in order to explore and describe the socioeconomic characteristics and the need for orientation and educational training that allow Hispanic parents active participation in the educational process of their children and youths with special needs in special education programs. This chapter presents a detailed explanation of the data and discusses the respondents' characteristics and needs in a general and in a detailed manner. A summary of major findings completes this chapter.

The data obtained in this research study reveal important aspects that should attract the attention of school administrators and service providers before the development, planning, and provision of educational training and orientation services to parents of special needs children in a culturally diverse community. Also, it should get the attention of community agencies and leaders in order to establish strategies and services that consider the socioeconomic differences and needs of parents as well as the handicapping conditions of their children. It is hoped that this will benefit and increase the participation of Hispanic parents in the educational

process of their children through community education programs.

Characteristics of Respondents

Age

According to the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed, 9 (or 12%) were between the ages of 20 to 29; 41 (or 55%) were between the ages of 30 to 39; 22 (or 29%) were between the ages of 40 to 49; and 3 (or 4%) were 50 years of age or more. None of the Hispanic parents surveyed were between the ages of 15 to 19 (see Table 1).

Gender

According to the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed, 63 (or 84%) were female and 12 (or 16%) were male (see Table 2)

Marital Status

According to the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed, 30 (or 40%) were married; 21 (or 28%) were separated; 12 (or 16%) were divorced; 9 (or 12%) were classified as "other"; and 3 (or 4%) were widows (see Table 3).

Academic Preparation

Of the 75 Hispanic parents who responded to the questionnaire, 16 (or 21%) have an educational level between first and sixth grade; 25 (or 33%) have an

Table 1
Age of Parents Surveyed
(n = 75)

Age Range	Frequency	Percent
15 to 19 years	0	0
20 to 29 years	9	12
30 to 39 years	41	55
40 to 49 years	22	29
50 or more years	3	4
Total:	75	100

Table 2
Gender
(n = 75)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	63	84
Male	12	16
Total:	75	100

Table 3
Marital Status
(n = 75)

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	30	40
Separated	21	28
Divorced	12	16
Other	9	12
Widow	3	4
Total:	75	100

educational level between seventh and ninth grade; 11 (or 15%) completed high school level (grades 10 to 12); 9 (or 12%) did not complete their high school diploma; 10 (or 13%) have a university and college level education; and 3 (or 4%) of the Hispanic parents surveyed completed their General Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.), vocational school, or other. One respondent (or 1%) did not answer this question (see Table 4).

Place of Birth

Of the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed, 61 (or 88%) were born in Puerto Rico; 8 (or 11%) were born in the United States; and 1 (or 1%) was born in another place [Dominican Republic] (see Table 5).

Time Living in the United States

In relation to the time living in the United States, out of the 75 Hispanic parents who responded to the questionnaire, 24 (or 32%) have lived in the United States between 1 to 5 years; 21 (or 28%) have lived in the United States between 6 to 10 years; 17 (or 23%) have lived in the United States between 11 to 15 years; 3 (or 4%) have lived in the United States between 16 to 20 years; and 10 (or 13%) have lived in the United States 21 years or more (see Table 6).

Table 4
Academic Preparation
(n = 75)

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
None (0)	0	0
Grades 1-6	16	21.3
Grades 7-9	25	33.3
High School:		
Non-Graduate	9	12.0
Graduate	11	15.0
G.E.D.	1	1.3
College/University	10	13.3
Vocational School	1	1.3
Other	1	1.3
No Answer	1	1.3

Table 5
Place of Birth
(n = 75)

Place of Birth	Frequency	Percent
Puerto Rico	66	88
United States	8	11
Other	1	1
Total:	75	100

Table 6
Number of Years Parents Have Lived
in the United States
(n = 75)

Years Living in United States	Frequency	Percent
1 to 5 years	24	32
6 to 10 years	21	28
11 to 15 years	17	23
16 to 20 years	3	4
21 or more years	10	13
Total:	75	100

Time Living in the City Selected for This Study

According to the data obtained, 18 (or 24%) of the respondents have lived in the site selected for this research study between 0 to 3 years; 17 (or 23%) of the respondents have lived in the site selected between 4 to 6 years; 39 (or 52%) of the respondents have lived in the site selected 7 to 10 years; and 1 (or 1%) respondent has lived in the site selected for this study 11 years or more (see Table 7).

Time Living in Present Apartment or House

According to the data obtained, 26 (or 35%) of the 75 Hispanic parents who responded to the questionnaire have lived in their apartments or houses less than one year (0 to 11 months); 36 (or 48%) of the respondents have lived in their apartments or houses between 1 to 3 years; 9 (or 12%) of the respondents have lived in their apartments or houses 4 to 6 years; and 4 (or 5%) of the respondents have lived in their apartments or houses between 7 to 9 years. None of the respondents have lived in their dwellings 10 or more years (see Table 8).

Reasons for Moving (Parents Selected

More Than One Reason)

According to the data collected in the site selected for this research study, the respondents selected the following reasons for moving: commodities, physical

Table 7

Time Living in This City or Town
(n = 75)

Years Living in City/Town	Frequency	Percent
0 to 3 years	18	24
4 to 6 years	17	23
7 to 10 years	39	52
11 or more years	1	1
Total:	75	100

Table 8

Time Living in Present Apartment or House
(n - 75)

Time Living in Apartment/House	Frequency	Percent
0 to 11 months	26	35
1 to 3 years	36	48
4 to 6 years	9	12
7 to 9 years	4	5
10 or more years	0	0
Total:	75	100

facilities, others, problems with landlord, personal, fire, and familiar. Five (or 7%) of the respondents did not answer this question (see Table 9).

Cities and States Parents Have Lived

According to the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this research study, the following states and cities have been identified as places they have lived: New York City (18); New Jersey (6); Springfield, Massachusetts (4); Buffalo, New York (3); Pennsylvania (3); Chicago, Illinois (2); Chicopee, Massachusetts (2); Connecticut (1); California (1); Florida (1); Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1); Washington, D. C. (1); Virginia (1); Texas (1); and Westfield, Massachusetts (1). Thirty-one (or 41%) of the respondents have not lived in any other state or city other than the sited selected for this study (see Table 10).

Planning to Return to Their Country

(Birth Place)

According to the Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this research study, 30 (or 40%) of the respondents answered "No" to the question as to whether they will return to their place of birth (Puerto Rico); 29 (or 39%) of the respondents answered that they

Table 9
Reasons for Moving

Reasons for Moving*	Frequency
Commodities	37
Physical facilities	15
Others	15
Problems with landlord	9
Personal	9
Fire	5
Familiar	2

*Results shown in order of frequency.

Table 10
States and Cities Parents Have Lived
(n - 75)

State/City	Frequency
New York	18
New Jersey	6
Springfield, Massachusetts	4
Pennsylvania	3
Buffalo, New York	3
Chicago	2
Chicopee, Massachusetts	2
Ohio	1
Connecticut	1
California	1
Virginia	1
Texas	1
Westfield, Massachusetts	1
Total:	44

"Do Not Know"; and 16 (or 21%) of the respondents answered "Yes", that they will return to their place of birth [Puerto Rico] (see Table 11).

First Language

According to the data obtained, 73 (or 97%) of the Hispanic parents surveyed responded with Spanish as the first language; and 2 (or 3%) of the Hispanic parents responded with English. None of the parents have any other language other than Spanish and English (see Table 12).

Language Mostly Used in the Home

Of the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed, 60 (or 80%) of the respondents use the Spanish language to communicate in the home; 10 (or 13%) of the Hispanic parents use both Spanish and English; and only 5 (or 7%) use the English language (see Table 13).

Do the Parents Surveyed Speak and Understand English?

According to the collected data, of the 75 Hispanic parents who responded to the questionnaire, 59 (or 79%) speak and understand English; and 16 (or 21%) do not speak and understand English. Of the 59 respondents who speak and understand English, 38 (or 64%) of the Hispanic parents speak and understand English "a little", and 14

Table 11
 Planning to Return to Their
 Country [Birth Place]
 (n = 75)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	16	21
No	30	40
Do Not Know	29	39
Total:	75	100

Table 12
 First Language
 (n = 75)

Language	Frequency	Percent
Spanish	73	97
English	2	3
Other	0	0
Total:	75	100

Table 13
Language Mostly Used in the Home
(n = 75)

Language Mostly Used in the Home	Frequency	Percent
Spanish	60	80
English	5	7
Spanish/English	10	13
Other	0	0
Total:	<u>75</u>	<u>100</u>

(or 24%) speak and understand English "a lot". Seven respondents (or 12%) did not specify "a lot" or "a little" (see Table 14).

Do the Parents Surveyed Read and Write
in Their Own Language (Spanish)?

According to the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this research study, 68 (or 91%) can read in their own language (Spanish) and 7 (or 9%) do not read. In relation to reading, 4 (or 6%) responded that they can read "a lot", and 1 (or 1%) responded that that he or she could read "a little". Sixty-three (or 93%) of the respondents did not specify "a lot" or "a little" in relation to reading (see Table 15).

In relation to writing, 63 (or 84%) responded that they can write in their own language (Spanish), and 8 (or 11%) responded that they do not write in their own language. Four (or 6%) of the respondents answered that they can write "a lot", and 1 (or 2%) responded that he or she could write "a little". Fifty-eight (or 92%) of the respondents did not specify "a lot" or "a little" in relation to writing. Four (or 5%) of the Hispanic parents who were surveyed did not answer "Yes" or "No" in relation to writing (see Table 16).

Table 14

Do the Parents Surveyed Speak and
Understand English
(n = 75)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	59	79
Classification of "Yes":		
A Lot	14	24%
A Little	38	64%
Did Not Specify	7	12%
No	16	21
Total:	75	100

Table 15

Do the Parents Surveyed Read in Their
Own Language [Spanish]
(n = 75)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	68	91
Classification of "Yes":		
A Lot	4	6%
A Little	1	1%
Did Not Specify	63	93%
No	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>
Total:	75	100

Table 16

Do the Parents Surveyed Write in Their
Own Language [Spanish]
(n = 75)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	63	84
Classification of "Yes":		
A Lot	4	6%
A Little	1	2%
Did Not Specify	58	92%
No	8	11
No Answer	4	5
Total:	75	100

Do the Parents Surveyed Read and Write
in English?

According to the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this research study, 36 (or 48%) of the respondents indicated they can read in English, and 39 (or 52%) of the respondents indicated they do not read in English. In relation to reading, 4 (or 11%) of the respondents answered that they can read English "a little", and there were no respondents who answered that they can read English "a lot" (see Table 17).

In relation to writing, 35 (or 47%) of the respondents answered that they can write in English "a little", and there were no respondents who answered that they can write "a lot" (see Table 18).

Family Composition (Number of Persons
Living in the Home)

According to the Hispanic parents surveyed, 13 answered that between 2 to 3 persons live in their home with the child; 28 answered between 4 to 5; 30 answered between 6 to 7; and 3 responded that more than 8 persons live in the home. One respondent did not answer this question (see Table 19).

Relationship with the Child

Of the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed, 70 indicated having a brother relationship with the child; 18 indicated

Table 17

Do the Parents Surveyed Read in English
(n = 75)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	36	48
Classification of "Yes":		
A Lot	0	0
A Little	4	11%
Did Not Specify	32	89%
No	39	52
Total:	75	100

Table 18

Do the Parents Surveyed Write in English
(n = 75)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	47
Classification of "Yes":		
A Lot	0	0
A Little	3	9%
Did Not Specify	32	91%
No	40	53
Total:	75	100

Table 19
Family Composition
[Number of Persons Living in the Home]
(n = 75)

Number of Persons Living in the Home	Frequency
2 to 3 persons	13
4 to 5 persons	28
6 to 7 persons	30
8 or more persons	3
No Answer	1
Total:	<u>75</u>

"other" relationship with the child; 14 of the respondents answered as a parent relationship; 1 indicated having a grandparent relationship with the child; and 1 respondent indicated having a nephew relationship with the child (see Table 20).

Income Source

According to the data collected in the site selected for this research study, the following income sources were selected by the parents: 55 of the respondents indicated receiving welfare as income; 21 indicated receiving income from disability compensation (SSI); 14 indicated receiving income from their employment; 11 indicated receiving Social Security (SS); 5 indicated receiving income from unemployment; 5 indicated receiving income from other sources; 3 of the respondents did not respond to the question; 1 indicated receiving income from retirement; and 1 indicated receiving income from one's own business (see Table 21).

Special Education Service in School

According to the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this research study, 74 (or 99%) of the respondents answered "Yes" as to having a child who receives special education in school, and 1 (or 1%) of the respondents answered that he or she "Do Not Know" (see Table 22).

Table 20
Relationship with the Child
(n = 75)

Relationship with the Child*	Frequency
Brothers/Sisters	70
Nephews	1
Grandparents	1
Uncles	0
Parents	14
Other	18

*The parents selected more than one item.

Table 21
Income Source
(n = 75)

Income Source*	Frequency
Employment	14
Retired	1
Own Business	1
Disability Compensation (SSI)	21
Social Security (SS)	11
Welfare	55
Unemployment	5
Other	5
No Answer	3

*The parents selected more than one item.

Table 22
Special Education Service in School
(n = 75)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	74	99
No	0	0
Do Not Know	1	1
Total:	75	100

Need of Educational Workshops About
Special Education (Need of Knowledge)

There were a number of themes about special education that the surveyed Hispanic parents were interested in knowing.

The following themes or topics in special education were selected by the parents surveyed in the site selected for this study as interested in knowing: knowing about topics in special education, 50 (or 67%); knowing about school regulations related to special education, 55 (or 73%); knowing about federal and state laws and procedures on special education, 55 (or 73%); knowing about the parents' and child's rights, 64 (or 85%); knowing the terms used by physicians and other professionals related to the development and education of the child with special needs, 44 (or 59%); knowing the content of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), 50 (or 67%); knowing what procedures are necessary to obtain services of special education, 40 (or 53%); and knowing the due process to follow when not satisfied with services received, 59 (or 79%). The parents had the opportunity to mark more than one item in this question (see Table 23).

Table 23

Interest in Knowing Through
Educational Workshops
(n = 75)

Themes/Topics*	Frequency (Time Selected)	Percent
Knowing about the parents' and child's rights	64	85
Knowing the due process to follow when not satisfied with services received for the child	59	79
Knowing about school regulations related to Special Education	55	73
Knowing about Federal and State laws and procedures on Special Education	55	73
Knowing about topics in Special Education	50	67
Knowing the content of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)	50	67
Knowing the terms used by the physician and other professionals related to the development and education of the child	44	59
Knowing what procedures are necessary to obtain services of Special Education	40	53

*The topics/themes are shown in order of preference.

Need of Educational Workshops About
Specific Special Education Topics

There were a number of conditions of special education that the surveyed Hispanic parents selected for this research study were interested in knowing about through educational workshops and orientations.

According to the data collected, the following special education conditions were selected by the Hispanic parents surveyed as interested in knowing: vision impairments, 23 (or 31%); brain damage, 31 (or 41%); brain injury, 23 (or 31%); learning disabilities, 52 (or 69%); cerebral palsy, 10 (or 13%); emotional disturbances, 37 (or 49%); genetic disorders, 19 (or 25%); AIDS, 29 (or 39%); problems in language development (language delay), 41 (or 55%); speech disorder, 37 (or 49%); physical impairment, 20 (or 27%); mental retardation, 32 (or 43%); autism, 13 (or 17%); severe or chronic health problems, 21 (or 28%); aural problems, 17 (or 23%); and "others", 7 (or 9%). One of the respondents did not answer this item (see Table 24).

Service Needs Related to Active Participation

There are a number of services that allow parents to be more active in the educational process of their children in special education programs.

Table 24

Need of Educational Workshops/Orientation
(n = 75)

Conditions/Topics*	Frequency (Time Selected)	Percent
Learning Disabilities	52	69
Problems in Language Development (Language Delay)	41	55
Speech Disorder	37	49
Emotional Disturbance	37	49
Mental Retardation	32	43
Brain Damage	31	41
AIDS	29	39
Brain Injury	23	31
Severe or Chronic Health Problems	21	28
Physical Impairment	20	27
Genetic Disorder	19	25
Aural Problems	17	23
Autism	13	17
Cerebral Palsy	10	13
Other	7	9

*The results are shown in order of preference.

According to the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this research study, the following service needs were selected: Transportation, 34 (or 45%); informative directory of resources and services, 40 (or 53%); counseling services provided in school for parents, guardians, or the family, 40 (or 53%); appropriate facilities according to the conditions of the child in the place where he or she lives, 14 (or 19%); more bilingual professionals, 60 (or 80%); translators for school meetings or appointments related to the child's condition, 49 (or 65%); to have access to a library for information about topics or themes related to the condition of the child and how to help him or her, 50 (or 67%); person who helps to make telephone calls for a child's appointments, read letters from the school, etc., 31 (or 41%); how to help the child with school work according to his or her condition, 42 (or 56%); how to take care of the child according to his or her condition, 16 (or 21%); educational workshops related to special education that would help in the success of the child in school, 48 (or 64%); meeting with other parents to talk about and share problems endured with the children, 36 (or 48%) [see Table 25].

Table 25

Service Needs Related to Active Participation
(n = 75)

Service Needs*	Frequency (Time Selected)	Percent
Bilingual professionals	60	80
Access to a library for information about topics related to the condition of the child and how to help or assist him or her	50	66
Translator for school meetings or appointments related to the child's condition	49	65
Educational workshops related to Special Education that would help in the success of the child in school	48	64
Counseling services provided in school for the child	47	63
How to help the child with school work according to his or her condition	42	56
Informative directory of resources and services offered by the school and community	40	53
Counseling services provided in school for parents, guardian, or the family of the child	40	53

Continued, next page

Table 25--Continued

Service Needs*	Frequency (Time Selected)	Percent
Meetings with other parents to talk about and share problems endured with the children	36	48
Transportation to go to school meetings	34	45
Person to make telephone calls for appointments, read letters from the school related to the child, etc.	31	41
How to take care of the child according to his or her condition	16	21
Appropriate facilities according to the child's condition in the place where he or she lives (physical facilities)	14	19

*The results are shown in order of preference.

Place Preferred to Receive Orientation
and Information

According to the data collected in the site selected for this research study, the following places were selected by the Hispanic parents surveyed to receive orientation and information: the home, 35 (or 47%); the school, 22 (or 29%); community agencies, 20 (or 27%); and "other", 2 (or 3%). Three (or 4%) of the Hispanic parents surveyed did not answer this item (see Table 26).

Preferences as to Who Should Offer the
Educational Workshops and Conferences

According to the data collected in the site selected for this research study, the following preferences were identified by the Hispanic parents in terms of who should offer the educational workshops and conferences: 30 (or 40%) of the parents surveyed selected parents of children with special needs; 33 (or 44%) selected teachers; 35 (or 47%) selected counselors; and 10 (or 13%) selected "others". Five (or 7%) of the Hispanic parents surveyed did not answer this item (see Table 27).

Preference as to How to Learn and Get
Information About the Special Needs of
the Child and How to Help Him or Her

According to the 75 Hispanic parents surveyed, the following data were collected as preference as to how to

Table 26
 Place Preferred to Receive
 Orientation/Information
 (n = 75)

Place/Site*	Frequency (Time Selected)	Percent
Home	35	47
School	22	29
Community Agency	20	27
Other	2	3
No Answer	3	4

*The results are shown in order of preference.
 The parents had the opportunity to mark more than one
 item.

Table 27

Preference as to Who Should Offer the
Educational Workshops and Conferences
(n = 75)

Preference*	Frequency (Time Selected)	Percent
Counselors	35	47
Teachers	33	44
Parents of Children with Special Needs	30	40
Others	10	13
No Answer	5	5

*The results are shown in order of preference.
The parents selected more than one item.

be oriented and get information about the child's condition and how to help him or her: through conferences by various specialists, 45; reading bulletins, flyers, newspapers, magazines, using the telephone, etc., 39; discussion groups, 32; videos or films, 30; informal conferences, 26; individual or one-to-one, 21; formal courses, 12; and through "others", 9. One of the parents surveyed did not answer this item (see Table 28).

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The following analyses of findings are the result of responses to the questionnaires distributed to Hispanic parents of children with special needs in one site selected for this research study in Western Massachusetts.

The data from the 28 tables presented in this chapter examine the characteristics and needs of the Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this study.

The findings show a wide scope of information on socioeconomic characteristics, and knowledge parents are interested in learning about special education through workshops and service needs in order to be active participants in the educational process of their children with special needs.

Table 28

Preference as to How to Learn and
Get Information About the Special
Needs of the Child and How to
Help Him or Her
(n = 75)

Preference*	Frequency (Time Selected)
Conferences by Various Specialists	45
Reading Bulletins, Informative Flyers, Newspapers, Magazines, Telephone, and Other Communication Media	39
Discussion Groups	32
Videos and Films	30
Informal Conferences	26
Individual (One-to-One)	21
Formal Courses	12
Others	9
No Answer	1

*The results are shown in order of preference.

In Table 1, the majority of respondents (84%) in the site selected for this study were between the ages of 39 to 49.

In Table 2, the higher percentage of respondents (84%) were females.

As indicated in Table 3, the respondents showed varied characteristics on marital status. Married was the higher characteristic (40%); and separated (28%) and divorced (16%) were the higher of others.

In Table 4, 41 (or 54%) of the respondents have an academic level between grades 1 to 9. However, it is important to note that 11 (or 15%) of the respondents have obtained a high school level of education and 10 (or 13%) of the respondents have completed a college or university education. It is important to consider the academic level in the planning and development of educational workshops in order to reach the parents' needs, and to provide adequate educational material according to their academic level. This fact is very important in the participation and involvement of parents in the education of their children, especially when decision making has to be taken.

In Table 5, the majority of respondents (88%) were born in Puerto Rico.

In Table 6, the majority of respondents (83%) have lived in the United States between 1 to 15 years.

In Table 7, a number of respondents (47%) have lived between 0 to 6 years and other respondents (47%) have lived between 7 to 10 years in the site selected for this research study.

In Table 8, the respondents show a characteristic of high mobility due to the short time they have lived in their apartments or houses. This data signify that the majority of Hispanic parents surveyed (83%) have lived in their apartments or houses less than three years at the time of responding to this research survey. The high rate of mobility (83%) should be considered as a socioeconomic characteristic of the Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this study.

This figure should be taken into consideration when school program directors, teachers, counselors, and community-based service programs are planning educational workshops and counseling services for Hispanic parents in the site selected for this study. Also, it should be considered as a variable in the participation of the Hispanic parents in the educational process of their children with special needs.

In Table 9, it can be argued that the causes for high mobility are related to housing due to commodities and physical facilities between others.

The causes of high mobility should be considered for Hispanic parents to provide housing stability through

school-community coordination services that allow those parents to get appropriate housing conditions that accommodate the handicapped condition of their children. Also, in order to expect active participation from parents in the educational process, it is important to consider the physical facilities and commodities, especially those who have children in a wheelchair. Facilities must provide mobility for getting in and out of their houses or apartments.

In Table 10, most of the respondents lived in New York and other cities in Massachusetts and New Jersey before moving to the site selected for this research study. Thirty-one (or 41%) of the respondents did not answer this item.

In Table 11, most of the parents surveyed (40%) did not plan to return to their place of birth (Puerto Rico); and the other majority (39%) of parents surveyed indicated they were not sure if they will return to their place of birth (Puerto Rico) or not. Only 21% of the parents surveyed were planning to return to their place of birth or country (Puerto Rico). This data is important because there exists in the site selected for this research study a target population that will need and should be considered for educational workshops and orientation.

In Table 12, 97% of the respondents indicated they have Spanish as their first language.

In Table 13, 80% of the respondents indicated they use the Spanish language in their homes to communicate between themselves. The respondents indicated they prefer to use the Spanish language.

According to the data collected in Table 14, 79% of the respondents speak and understand the English language, and 21% of the respondents do not speak or understand English. Of the 59 Hispanic parents who responded, 38 (or 64%) of the respondents speak and understand a limited amount of English, and 14 (or 24%) of the respondents speak and understand English fluently. Seven (or 12%) of the respondents did not answer or specify their frequency on the English language.

In Table 14, it is important to note that 38 (or 64%) of the 59 respondents speak and understand a limited amount of English. This should be considered as an important factor in the planning and development of educational workshops for the Hispanic parents of children with special needs in the site selected for this study.

The educational workshop providers, school personnel, and counselors should be aware of the parents' limitation of the second language before providing them with conferences and workshops.

This means that in order to design and implement educational workshops and orientation services to Hispanic parents, the first step to be considered in the

process is to assess the Hispanic parents' strengths and needs.

Bilingual personnel at special education meetings and school conferences should also be considered.

In Tables 15 and 16, 91% of the respondents surveyed indicated they can read, and 9% of the respondents surveyed indicated they cannot read their own language (which is Spanish).

The level of reading and writing should be considered when educational workshops and orientation sessions are planned in order to provide parents with appropriate printed material and audiovisual equipment according to the school level of the participants.

Tables 17 and 18 should not be taken into consideration because a large amount of the respondents (32) did not specify how well they could read and write English. However, these facts signify that a considerable amount of the respondents can at least read and write in English.

According to the data obtained in Table 19, the higher percentage of family composition (77%) was between 4 to 7 members. One respondent did not answer this item.

It is important to consider this fact when workshops are planned in order to provide for transportation and baby-sitters as requested.

In Table 20, most of the members of the family who live in the household are either brothers or sisters of the child with special needs. It is important to note that most of the respondents (61) did not include themselves as parents living in the house. Only 14 parents or guardians included themselves.

Family members play an important role in the process of acceptance of the child with special needs. It is suggested that counseling services be provided in order to deal with the adjustment and stress that family members experience from having a severely handicapped child or child with special needs in the home.

In Table 21, the two most significant sources of income are Welfare (73%) and Disability Compensation (28%). This means that most of the respondents in the site selected for this research study are low-income and are recipients of public assistance. This socioeconomic characteristic limits parents from providing quality services and housing commodities for their children with special needs.

In Table 22, 99% of the respondents have children receiving special education services in their school.

The results and analyses of the data from the first part of this study show particular socioeconomic characteristics of the Hispanic parents surveyed in the site selected for this research study that should be taken into

consideration when parent participation and involvement in the educational process of their children with special needs are expected. It also indicates that school personnel (such as principals, special education teachers, social workers, and other services providers in the school related to special education), community-based program directors, and community service agencies should consider these socioeconomic characteristics when planning, developing, and providing orientation services and educational workshops for this particular Hispanic population.

In the second and third parts of the analysis of this study, the needs of educational workshops and services will be discussed.

Tables 23 to 28 reflect the needs of knowledge about special education and the needs of services parents have in the site selected for this research study.

The first five topics or themes that the Hispanic parents were interested in knowing about through educational workshops were:

- Knowing about the rights of the parents and the child;
- Knowing the due process to follow when not satisfied with services received for the child;
- Knowing about school regulations related to special education;

- Knowing about federal and state laws and procedures on special education;
- Knowing about topics in special education.

The parents also were interested in learning more about the following topics:

- Learning disabilities
- Language delay
- Speech disorder
- Emotional disturbance
- Mental retardation

In relation to service needs, the following five services were selected by the parents (in order of preference):

- Bilingual professionals;
- Access to library for information about topics related to the condition of the child and how to help him or her;
- Translator for school meetings or appointments related to the child's condition;
- Educational workshops related to special education that would help in the success of the child in school;
- Counseling services provided in school for the child.

The following places were selected by the parents as to where to receive orientation and information:

- Home
- School
- Community agencies

Preference of Hispanic parents in terms of who should offer the educational workshops included:

- Counselors
- Teachers
- Other parents of children with special needs

Preference of the Hispanic parents surveyed in terms of how to learn and get information about the special needs of the child and how to help him or her between others included:

- Conferences by various specialists
- Reading bulletins, informative flyers, newspapers, magazines, telephone, and other communication media
- Discussion groups
- Videos and films
- Informal conferences

The findings of the second and the third part of this research study should be taken into consideration by school personnel and administrators when they plan, develop, and provide for educational workshops, counseling, and orientation to a culturally diverse population.

When providing services to parents of children with special needs and their families, it is important to consider their socioeconomic characteristics, needs, and preferences in order to successfully reach their interest and active participation in the educational process of their children that will be of benefit for school personnel, community, parents, and children.

C H A P T E R V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Having described in detail the major findings of the study in Chapter IV, this chapter attempts to:

- Summarize the most important findings about the research questions guiding this study;
- Present conclusions based on the findings of this study;
- Offer recommendations to special education program directors and administrators; community-based service agency directors; school principals; and school service providers, such as teachers, counselors, programmers, social workers, and persons necessary for the active participation and orientation of their children with special needs;
- Present recommendations for future studies.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the Hispanic parents of children with special needs. In addition, the purpose was to assess the parents' needs for orientation services and preferences for the types of topics or knowledge about

special education they are interested in knowing about through educational workshops that will allow them active participation in the educational process of their children with special needs in special education programs.

In this section, the findings derived from the analysis of the research questions are summarized, and conclusions are derived from the findings of the study.

Question #1: What Are the Socioeconomic Characteristics That Describe Hispanic Parents of Children with Special Needs in the Selected School District?

The findings derived from the analysis of Question #1 are summarized as follows:

- The majority of the respondents (84%) in the site selected for this study were between the ages of 30 to 49.
- The higher percent of the respondents (84%) were females.
- The majority of the respondents (40%) were married.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the respondents were born in Puerto Rico.
- The majority (83%) of the respondents have lived in the United States between 1 to 15 years.

- Most of the parents surveyed (40%) do not plan on returning to their place of birth, 39% are not sure if they will return, and 21% of the respondents plan to return to their place of birth.
- Spanish is the first language of 97% of the respondents.
- Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents use the Spanish language in their homes to communicate between themselves.
- In most of the responses (77%), the family composition was between 4 to 7 members.
- Most of the household members are either brothers or sisters rather than extended family of the child with special needs.
- The two most significant sources of income are welfare (73%) and social security (28%).
- Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the respondents have children receiving special education services in their school.

Question #2: Do Hispanic Parents in the Selected Area Possess the Characteristics of High Mobility?

The findings derived from the analysis of Question #2 are summarized as follows:

- Forty-seven percent (47%) of the respondents have lived in the site of this study between 0 to 6 years, and 52% have lived in the site of this study between 7 to 10 years.
- Eighty-three percent (83%) of the respondents have lived in their apartments or houses less than three years.
- Most of the respondents previously lived in New York, New Jersey, or other cities in Massachusetts before moving to the site of this study.

Question #3: How Does Mobility Affect the
Parents of Children in Special Education
Programs?

The findings derived from the analysis of Question #3 are summarized as follows:

- According to Simpson (1990), some parents report feeling alienated from their communities and are unwilling to invest time and effort in forming new relationships for fear they would soon be transferred to another area.
- According to Figler (1992), mobility is related to stress reduction, better support,

better medical care, and better educational opportunities.

- Parents in a new community will take more time in order to be related and involved with school personnel and school policy (procedures and regulations) in the education process.

Question #4: What Factors Should Be Considered in the Planning of Educational Workshops and Orientation of Parents of Children with Special Needs?

According to the findings of this study, the following factors must be considered:

- Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the respondents speak and understand the English language; 21% do not speak or understand English.
- Sixty-four percent (64%) of the respondents speak and understand a limited amount of English.
- The educational workshop providers should be aware of the parents' limitation of the second language before providing them with conferences and workshops.
- Bilingual personnel at special education meetings and school conferences must be considered.

- The academic level of reading and writing must also be considered.
- Baby-sitters and transportation should be provided whenever requested.
- The need for knowledge about special education topics, conditions, and services that allow parents an active participation in the educational process must be addressed.
- Where workshops will be held must be provided to parents.
- Who will provide the workshops must also be communicated.
- The learning preferences of parents must be considered.

Question #5: What Academic Level of Education Did Responding Hispanic Parents of Children with Special Needs Possess?

The findings derived from the analysis of Question #5 are summarized as follows:

- Fifty-four percent (54%) of the respondents have an academic level between 1 to 9, 15% have a high school level education, and 13% have a college or university level education.

Question #6: Do Hispanic Parents of Children in Special Education Programs in the Selected Area Speak and Understand the English Language?

The findings derived from the analysis of Question #6 are summarized as follows:

- Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the respondents speak and understand English, and 21% do not speak or understand English. Out of the 79% who speak and understand English, 64% of the respondents speak and understand a limited amount of English, and 24% speak and understand English fluently.

Question #7: Do Hispanic Parents of Children with Special Needs Read and Write in English and in Their Own Language?

The findings derived from the analysis of Question #7 are summarized as follows:

- Ninety-one percent (91%) of the respondents read in their own language (which is Spanish), and 9% do not read in their own language. It is important to note that 93% of the respondents did not specify how much or how well they read.

- Eighty-four percent (84%) of the respondents write in their own language (which is Spanish), and 11% do not. It is important to note that 92% of the respondents did not specify how much or how well they wrote.
- Forty-eight percent (48%) of the respondents read in English, and 52% do not. It is important to note that 89% of the respondents did not specify how much or how well they read in English.
- Forty-seven percent (47%) of the respondents write in English, and 53% do not. It is important to note that 91% of the respondents did not specify how much or how well they wrote in English.

Question #8: What Basic Knowledge (Themes or Topics) Related to the Educational Program of Their Children Are Hispanic Parents Interested in Acquiring?

The findings derived from the analysis of Question #8 are summarized as follows:

- The knowledge parents are interested in acquiring through educational workshops include the following (in order of preference):

- (1) The rights of parents and children
- (2) Due process to follow when not satisfied with services received by the child
- (3) School regulations related to Special Education
- (4) Federal and state laws and procedures on Special Education
- (5) Different topics about Special Education

Also, parents are interested in learning more about the following Special Education topics or conditions:

- (1) Learning disabilities
- (2) Language delay
- (3) Speech disorder
- (4) Emotional disturbance
- (5) Mental retardation

Question #9: What Basic Services Do Hispanic Parents Need for Their Participation in the Educational Process of Their Children?

The findings derived from the analysis of Question #9 are summarized as follows:

- In relation to services needed, the respondents selected the following (in order of preference):
 - (1) Bilingual professionals
 - (2) Access to library for information about topics related to the condition of the child and how to help him or her
 - (3) Translators for school meetings or appointments related to a child's condition
 - (4) Educational workshops related to Special Education that would help in the success of the child in school
 - (5) Counseling services provided in school for the child

Question #10: Where Do Hispanic Parents of Children with Special Needs Prefer to Receive Orientation Services?

The following places were selected by the parents as to where to receive orientation and information:

- Home
- School
- Community agencies

Question #11: Who Do Hispanic Parents Prefer
as to Who Should Offer Orientation Services
and Educational Workshops and Conferences?

Hispanic parents identified the following as their preferences as to who should offer orientation services and educational workshops:

- Counselors
- Teachers
- Parents of children with special needs

Question #12: How Do Hispanic Parents Prefer
to Orient Themselves and Receive Educational
Training (to Learn and Be Informed About the
Condition of Their Child and How to Help
Him or Her)?

Hispanic parents identified the following as their preference as to how they should be oriented and receive educational training (to learn and be informed about the condition of their child and how to help him or her):

- By various specialists
- Reading bulletins, informative flyers, newspapers, magazines, telephone, and other communication media
- Discussion groups
- Informal conferences

- Individual (one-to-one)
- Formal courses

Question #13: What Are the Limitations
Hispanic Parents Have in the Participation
and Involvement in the Education of Their
Children in Special Education Programs?

According to the findings of this study, the limitations Hispanic parents have in the participation and involvement in the education of their children in Special Education programs include the following:

- Access to a library for information about topics related to the condition of the child
- Translators for school meetings and appointments
- Educational workshops related to Special Education that would help in the success of the child in school
- Counseling services provided in school for the child
- How to help the child with school work according to his or her condition
- Informative directory of resources and services offered by the school and the community

- Counseling services provided in school for parents, guardian(s), or the family of the child
- Meetings with other parents to talk about and share problems endured with children
- Transportation to go to school meetings
- Person to make telephone calls for appointments, and read letters from the school related to the child
- Training related to care for the child according to his or her condition
- Appropriate facilities according to the child's condition in the place where he or she lives
- The academic level of the parents
- Proficiency in the second language
- Socioeconomic level
- Cultural diversity and values
- Baby-sitters at school meetings

Question #14: Is It Necessary to Develop
Education Workshops and Orientation to
Insure Active Participation of Hispanic
Parents in the Educational Process of
Their Children with Special Needs?

The need for knowledge about Special Education topics and the need of services that allow Hispanic parents more active participation in the educational process of their children with special needs suggest that educational workshops should be developed and implemented considering their socioeconomic characteristics, needs, and preferences of the targeted population in the site selected for this study.

The findings of this study have shown consistency between the literature reviewed in relation to the need for educational workshops and orientation in order to be an active participant in the educational process of the child with special needs. A review of the literature, cited in Chapter II, has shown support for consistency in the following:

- When teachers and other professionals increase orientation and information services about the educational process of the child, parent participation will also increase.

- The less parents know about the educational process and rights of special education, the less participation of parents in the development and implementation of educational service is expected.

Parent participation and involvement is not an easy task; it is a multi-disciplinary team effort between principal, teachers, and counselors.

Such elements as socioeconomic characteristics, needs, and preferences should be considered in the planification and implementation of educational workshops and training for Hispanic parents. Other factors to be considered in order to achieve successful participation and involvement of the parents of children with special needs are the following: cultural diversity, language, academic level, mobility, knowledge about special education topics, marital status, proficiency in the first and second language, baby-sitters at meetings, location of meetings, and preference on how to participate.

The printed materials provided at the workshops should be bilingual and respond to the academic proficiency of the parents.

Technical and multi-media resources should be used as a strategy for successful workshops and conferences.

Constant assessments to identify needs are essential for the successful planification and implementation of

workshops, orientations, and counseling services for the Hispanic parents of children with special needs.

The culture shock, second language limitation, mobility, economic level, academic level, and the pressure between the different ethnic groups are variables that must be considered in the little or non-participation and involvement of Hispanic parents in the educational programs of their children with special needs.

The results and analysis of this study show particular socioeconomic characteristics of the target population in the site selected for this study that should be considered when parent participation and involvement in the educational process of their children with special needs are expected. This study also reveals that school personnel, such as principals, special education directors, counselors, special education teachers, social workers, and other service providers in the school relate to the special education program. Community-based program directors and community service agencies should consider these socioeconomic characteristics, needs, and preferences when planning, developing, and providing orientation services and educational workshops for this particular Hispanic population.

When providing services to Hispanic parents of children with special needs and their families, it is important to consider their needs and preferences in order

to successfully meet their interests and gain their active participation in the educational process of their children.

Recommendations

- For positive and active parent participation in the educational process of the child with special needs, it is necessary to develop attitudes and skills that will promote communication and cooperation between parents and school personnel through educational workshops.

- Service providers at school settings and in community-based agencies must possess a professional and ethical responsibility to involve parents in the education of their exceptional children.

- Adequate needs assessments should be offered in order to help service providers plan more appropriate educational workshops, which in turn will facilitate parent involvement and success with their children.

- Parent participation can be facilitated through the design and implementation of educational workshops that also meet the needs of parents as well as the needs of their children.

- Individuality and diversity of the parents must be considered by the service providers in order to have successful educational workshops.

- Schools must hire more personnel representing a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Service providers must effectively deal with a variety of parents, including those with different languages, different cultural practices, and different values.
- Parents must be considered as primary spokespersons for their child.
- Frequent communication between school personnel and parents will lead to a more active participation on the parent's side.
- Baby-sitters and transportation should be facilitated at the workshops upon request by the parents.
- Teachers and school counselors must be involved in the planification and provision of educational workshops for parents of children with special needs.
- Counselors must take a more active role in the educational process of the child with special needs.
- School administrators must also take an active role in submitting proposals which address the needs of parents and school personnel.
- School administrators, teachers, and parents must work jointly to develop workshops which are designed to educate, motivate, and stimulate the interest of the parents and improve their attitude toward the educational process of their child.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings obtained in this study, it is recommended that:

- This study could be replicated on parents of children in different age groups, in other school systems.
- The analysis of the data obtained could be used to open new investigations in the field of Special Education.
- The findings of this study could be used to develop educational workshops for parents of children with special needs.
- This study could also be replicated with parents of different ethnicity and culture.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER AND PROPOSAL REQUESTING PERMISSION
TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY WITHIN THE
HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS;
RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

May 29, 1992

Mr. George Counter
Secretary, School Committee
Holyoke School Department
Suffolk Street
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Dear Mr. Counter:

I am a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts, School of Education, and I am in the process of conducting a research study to complete all requirements for my Doctor of Education Degree. I am requesting permission to conduct a descriptive research study on the characteristics and needs among Hispanic parents of children with special needs in your school district.

I believe that the findings of this study will be of benefit to the Special Education Program and to your school system. After the research study is complete, I will commit myself to submitting a copy of the results of this study to you.

Enclosed is a copy of the outline and the questionnaire that will be submitted to Hispanic parents of children and youth with special needs.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you need further information.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. It is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully yours,

Julio C. Rodriguez
Kelly School (534-2079)

Home Telephone:
534-1324

PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH OR STUDY IN THE HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Date: 5/29/92

To: George Counter
Superintendent

From: Julio C. Rodriguez Telephone: 534-1324 Address _____
Proponent's Name
University of Massachusetts 73 Lynch Dr.
Associated Agency Holyoke, Mass.
01040

I. Proposal Overview: (Brief description of problem or objectives of the proposed research. Use additional sheet if necessary.)

The increase of Hispanic population in Western Massachusetts has been growing in the last years. There are around 143,000 children who are registered in Programs of Special Education in the state of Massachusetts (Department of Education). It is necessary to identify the characteristics and needs of Hispanic parents prior to develop educative workshops that allow them to have an active participation and involvement in the educational process of their children.

II. Schools and Persons to be involved: No, school personnel will be involved
Hispanic parents of children with special needs in special education program.

III. Anticipated Procedures to be used:

<u>Procedures in sequence</u>	<u>Time involvement of students and/or school staff</u>
I will administrate a questionnaire to Hispanic parents. This will be my instrument to make a research project in order to finish my P.H.D. degree.	Between 15-20 minutes. The questionnaire will be completed by the Hispanic parents of children and youths with special needs.
This study will explore the characteristics and needs of the Hispanic parents with children and youths in Special Education Programs.	

IV. List and explain questionnaires or testing instruments to be used (attach samples).

The questionnaire will cover three parts: Characteristics, Knowledge and Needs. The first part will explore the characteristics of the parents. The second part will explore the knowledge that parents should have about special education and the third part will explore the needs of the parents,

V. Time Schedule

- a. To begin project: 6/10/92
- b. To terminate project: 6/18/92
- c. Date need approval: Before 6/10/92

HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
57 Suffolk Street
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040
(413)534-2006
FAX (413)534-3730

Dr. James McDonnell
Interim Superintendent of Schools



July 20, 1992

Mr. Julio Rodriguez
73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Dear Mr. Rodriguez:

Your request to do a research project within the Holyoke Public Schools was not approved by the Holyoke School Committee. Please contact my office if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,


Dr. James McDonnell
Interim Superintendent of Schools

/kh

APPENDIX B

LETTERS TO COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE AGENCIES
AND PROGRAMS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE WITH
THIS RESEARCH STUDY

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

April 8, 1993

Mrs. Bridget Galway
Director, El Arco Iris Teen Art Center
60 Hamilton Street
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Dear Mrs. Galway:

My name is Julio C. Rodriguez, and I am a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I am in the process of conducting a research study to complete all requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree.

In my study, I plan to explore the socioeconomic characteristics and needs of services of Hispanic parents of children in Special Education programs.

For this reason, I request to be invited to the next meeting of parents so that I can introduce myself and ask for their cooperation in this research study.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Julio C. Rodriguez

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

April 29, 1993

Ms. Susan Dunn Dixon
Coordinator of Education
New England Farm Workers Council
205 High Street
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Dear Ms. Dixon:

My name is Julio C. Rodriguez, and I am a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I am in the process of conducting a research study to complete all requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree.

In my study, I plan to explore the socioeconomic characteristics and needs of services of Hispanic parents of children in Special Education programs.

For this reason, I am asking permission to be invited to the next meeting of parents so that I can introduce myself and ask for their cooperation in this research study.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Julio C. Rodriguez

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

April 8, 1993

Mr. Carlos Vega
Director, Holyoke Community Partnership
60 Hamilton Street
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Dear Mr. Vega:

My name is Julio C. Rodriguez, and I am a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I am in the process of conducting a research study to complete all requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree.

In my study, I plan to explore the socioeconomic characteristics and needs of services of Hispanic parents of children in Special Education programs.

For this reason, I request to be invited to the next meeting of parents so that I can introduce myself and ask for their cooperation in this research study.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Julio C. Rodriguez

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

A: Sra. Ruth Cruz
Presidenta del Consejo
Asesor de Padres Bilingues
(Bil. P.A.C.)

Estimada Sra. Cruz:

Mi nombre es Julio C. Rodriguez y soy estudiante de la Universidad de Massachusetts en Amherst. Estoy en el proceso de hacer un proyecto de investigacion para completar todos los requisitos necesarios para el grado doctoral en educacion.

En mi investigacion me propongo explorar las características socio-economicas y necesidades de servicios de los padres Hispanos de niños con necesidades especiales.

Por esta razon solicito de usted si es posible se me extienda una invitacion en su proxima reunion de padres para introducirme y a la misma vez solicitarles su cooperacion.

Gracias anticipadas por la ayuda que me pueda ofrecer en este asunto.

Atentamente,

Sr. Julio C. Rodriguez

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Sr. Diosdado Lopez
New Bridge Director
After-School Educational Program

Estimado Sr. Lopez:

Mi nombre es Julio C. Rodriguez y soy estudiante de la Universidad de Massachusetts en Amherst. Estoy en el proceso de hacer un proyecto de investigacion para completar todos los requisitos necesarios para el grado doctoral en educacion.

En mi investigacion me propongo explorar las características socio-economicas y necesidades de servicios de los padres Hispanos con niños en programas de educacion especial.

Por esta razon solicito de usted si es posible se me extienda una invitacion en su proxima reunion de padres para introducirme y a la misma vez solicitarles su cooperacion.

Gracias anticipadas por la ayuda que me pueda ofrecer en este asunto.

Atentamente,

Sr. Julio C. Rodriguez

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

A: Dra. Maria del C. Barreto
40 Longwood Avenue
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Estimada Dra. Barreto:

Mi nombre es Julio C. Rodriguez y soy estudiante de la Universidad de Massachusetts en Amherst. Estoy en el proceso de hacer un estudio como requisito para obtener el grado doctoral en la area de educacion.

Mi estudio lo llevare a cabo mediante la administracion de un cuestionario. Este cuestionario esta compuesto de tres partes basicas que explorara las caracteristicas y necesidades de los padres Hispanos con ninos recibiendo servicios de educacion especial. Estas tres partes basicas son las siguientes: A. Caracteristicas socio-economicas; B. Conocimiento sobre aspectos basicos de educacion especial y diferentes condiciones especiales; C. Necesidades de servicios.

Siendo usted una persona con experiencia en el area de ensenanza de las destrezas de espanol, solicito por este medio su cooperacion.

Su revision del contenido y correccion del lenguaje utilizado seria muy valioso en la produccion final de este instrumento.

Gracias anticipadas,

Sr. Julio C. Rodriguez

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Sr. Melvin Figueroa
412 Maple Street
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Estimado Sr. Figueroa:

Mi nombre es Julio C. Rodriguez y soy estudiante de la Universidad de Massachusetts en Amherst. Estoy en el proceso de hacer un estudio como requisito para obtener el grado doctoral en la area de educacion.

Mi estudio lo llevare a cabo mediante la administracion de un cuestionario. Este cuestionario esta compuesto de tres partes basicas que explorara las caracteristicas y necesidades de los padres Hispanos con niños recibiendo servicios de educacion especial. Estas tres partes basicas son las siguientes: A. Caracteristicas socio-economicas; B. Conocimiento sobre aspectos basicos de educacion especial y diferentes condiciones especiales; C. Necesidades de servicios.

Siendo usted una persona con experiencia en el area de administracion y desarrollo de programas de salud para la poblacion hispana, solicito por este medio su cooperacion.

Su revision del contenido y correccion del lenguaje utilizado seria muy valioso en la produccion final de este instrumento.

Gracias anticipadas,

Sr. Julio C. Rodriguez

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

A: Sra. Elizabeth Flores
32 Lucretia Avenue
Chicopee, Massachusetts 01041

Estimada Sra. Flores:

Mi nombre es Julio C. Rodriguez y soy estudiante de la Universidad de Massachusetts en Amherst. Estoy en el proceso de hacer un estudio como requisito para obtener el grado doctoral en la area de educacion.

Mi estudio lo llevare a cabo mediante la administracion de un cuestionario. Este cuestionario esta compuesto de tres partes basicas que explorara las características y necesidades de los padres Hispanos con niños recibiendo servicios de educacion especial. Estas tres partes basicas son las siguientes: A. Características socio-economicas; B. Conocimiento sobre aspectos basicos de educacion especial y diferentes condiciones especiales; C. Necesidades de servicios.

Siendo usted una persona con experiencia en el area de consejeria, educacion especial y trabajo social, solicito por este medio su cooperacion.

Su revision del contenido y correccion del lenguaje utilizado seria muy valioso en la produccion final de este instrumento.

Gracias anticipadas,

Sr. Julio C. Rodriguez

73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

A: Sra. Nilda Guzman
332 Chicopee Street
Granby, Massachusetts 01033

Estimada Sra. Guzman:

Mi nombre es Julio C. Rodriguez y soy estudiante de la Universidad de Massachusetts en Amherst. Estoy en el proceso de hacer un estudio como requisito para obtener el grado doctoral en la area de educacion.

Mi estudio lo llevare a cabo mediante la administracion de un cuestionario. Este cuestionario esta compuesto de tres partes basicas que explorara las caracteristicas y necesidades de los padres Hispanos con ninos recibiendo servicios de educacion especial. Estas tres partes basicas son las siguientes: A. Caracteristicas socio-economicas; B. Conocimiento sobre aspectos basicos de educacion especial y diferentes condiciones especiales; C. Necesidades de servicios.

Siendo usted una persona con experiencia en el area de consejeria y educacion especial solicito por este medio su cooperacion.

Su revision del contenido y correccion del lenguaje utilizado seria muy valioso en la produccion final de este instrumento.

Gracias anticipadas,

Sr. Julio C. Rodriguez

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HISPANIC
PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
(ENGLISH AND SPANISH)

Dear Parents:

My name is Julio C. Rodriguez, and I am a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I am in the process of conducting a research study that will help me complete all the necessary requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree.

In my research study, I plan to explore the socio-economic characteristics and educational training needs of Hispanic parents of children in special education programs. For this research, I am asking your cooperation.

Please read carefully each question or statement and answer it according to your situation. I do not require personal identification; this will maintain your answers being confidential. If there is any problem or difficulty in filling out this questionnaire in terms of the language or content, please contact me.

Your participation is voluntary. The results of this investigation will help in understanding the characteristics and needs of Hispanic parents of children in special education programs. The results will be of great use in the planning of programs that meet the specific needs of orientation and training of Hispanic parents according to the condition of your child (for example, instructional programs; orientation and educational workshops that help in obtaining better participation in the educational process of your child; support services; and counseling).

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Julio C. Rodriguez
73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Telephone: 534-1324

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HISPANIC PARENTS OF
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A. CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 Age or ages of the father, mother, or guardian:

- 15-19
 20-29
 30-39
 40-49
 50 or more

1.2 Sex:

- Female
 Male

1.3 Marital Status:

- Married
 Widow
 Divorced
 Separated
 Other

1.4 Academic Preparation:

- None (0)
 Grades 1-6
 Grades 7-9
 High School:
 Non-Graduate
 Graduate
 General Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.)

1.4 Academic Preparation (Continued):

College
 University
 Vocational School
 Other

1.5 Place of Birth:

Puerto Rico
 United States
 Other

1.6 Time Living in the United States:

Weeks
 Months
 Years (please specify):
 1-5
 6-10
 11-15
 16-20
 21 or more

1.7 Time Living in This City or Town:

Weeks
 Months
 Years (please specify):
 1-3
 4-6
 7-10
 11 or more

1.8 Time Living in Your Apartment or House:

- Weeks
 Months
 Years (please specify):
 1-3
 4-6
 7-9
 10 or more

1.9 Reasons for Moving Out (if applicable):

- Fire
 Commodities
 Personal
 Familiar
 Physical Facilities
 Problems with Owner
 Other

1.10 In which other states or cities of the United States have you lived?

States: _____

Cities: _____

2.0 Do you plan to return to your country?

- Yes
 No
 Do Not Know

2.1 Your first language:

_____ Spanish
 _____ English
 _____ Other

2.2 Language mostly used in your home:

_____ Spanish
 _____ English
 _____ Other

2.3 Do you speak English?

_____ Yes _____ A Lot
 _____ No _____ A Little

2.4 Do you understand English?

_____ Yes _____ A Lot
 _____ No _____ A Little

2.5 Do you read and write in your language?

Read:

_____ Yes _____ A Lot
 _____ No _____ A Little

Write:

_____ Yes _____ A Lot
 _____ No _____ A Little

2.6 Do you read and write in English?

Read:

_____ Yes _____ A Lot
 _____ No _____ A Little

2.6 Do you read and write in English? (Continued)

Write:

Yes A Lot
 No A Little

2.7 Number of persons living in your home:

2-3
 4-5
 6-7
 8 or more

2.8 Relationship with the child (check the ones that apply):

Brothers/Sisters
 Nephews
 Grandparents
 Uncles
 Parents
 Other

2.9 Income Sources:

Employment
 Retired
 Social Security
 Unemployment
 Own Business
 Disability Compensation
 Welfare
 Other

3.0 Do any of your children receive special help in school?

- Yes
 No
 Do Not Know

B. KNOWLEDGE

Check (✓) the statements you are interested in knowing about through educational workshops:

- 3.1 Knowing about topics in Special Education
- 3.2 Knowing about school regulations related to Special Education
- 3.3 Knowing about Federal and State laws and procedures on Special Education
- 3.4 Knowing about the parents' and children's rights
- 3.5 Knowing the terms used by the physician and other professionals related to the development and education of the child with special needs
- 3.6 Knowing the content of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP): its parts, who writes it, who participates in its development or implementation; how it is, what information does it contain
- 3.7 Knowing what procedures are necessary to obtain services of Special Education
- 3.8 Knowing the due process to follow when not satisfied with services received by the child
- 3.9 Check (✓) those you are interested in knowing about through educational workshops and orientations:

- Vision impairments
- Brain damage
- Learning disabilities
- Emotional disturbances
- Genetic disorders
- AIDS
- Problems in language development
- Speech disorders
- Physical impairments
- Mental retardation
- Autism
- Severe or chronic health problems
- Aural problems
- Other

C. SERVICE NEEDS

Check (✓) the items that apply to your need:

- 4.1 Transportation (to go to meetings at school and to go to medical appointments)
- 4.2 Informative directory of resources and services offered by the school and the community (such as legal services, organizations, agencies, programs, etc.)
- 4.3 Counseling services provided in school for your child
- 4.4 Counseling services provided in school for parents, guardians, or the family of the child
- 4.5 Appropriate facilities according to the conditions of your child in the place where he or she lives (ramps, elevators, accessible bathrooms, or others; please specify: _____)

- 4.6 _____ More bilingual professionals (for example, counselors, therapists, social workers, nurses, physicians, others)
- 4.7 _____ Translator for school meetings or appointments related to the child's condition
- 4.8 _____ Have access to a library to obtain information about topics related to the condition of your child and how to help or assist him or her
- 4.9 _____ Person or Aide to:
- _____ Make telephone calls
- _____ Read letters
- _____ Other (Specify: _____)
- 5.0 _____ How to help your child with school work according to his or her condition
- 5.1 _____ How to take care of the child according to his or her condition
- 5.2 _____ Educational workshops related to Special Education that would help in the success of your child in school
- 5.3 _____ Meetings with other parents to talk about and share problems endured with the children
- 5.4 _____ Receive orientation and information in (you can select more than one):
- _____ Home
- _____ School
- _____ Through a community agency
- _____ Other

- 5.5 _____ Receive educational workshops and conferences by (you can select more than one):
- _____ Parents of children with special needs
 - _____ Teachers
 - _____ Counselors
 - _____ Others
- 5.6 _____ Orient, learn, and get information about the condition of your child and how to help him or her through:
- _____ Discussion groups
 - _____ Individual (one-to-one)
 - _____ Informal conference
 - _____ Videos and films
 - _____ Reading bulletins, informative flyers, newspapers, magazines, the telephone, or other communication media
 - _____ Observe teachers and other professionals and discuss questions and observations after
 - _____ Formal courses
 - _____ Conferences by various specialists
 - _____ Other

Queridos Padres:

Mi nombre es Julio C. Rodriguez y soy estudiante de la Universidad de Massachusetts en Amherst. Estoy en el proceso de hacer un proyecto de investigacion para completar todos los requisitos necesarios para el grado doctoral en educacion.

En mi investigacion me propongo explorar las características socio-economicas y necesidades de servicios de los padres Hispanos con niños en programas de educacion especial. Por esta razon solicito de ustedes su cooperacion.

Lea cuidadosamente cada pregunta un oracion y responda a esta segun su situacion. No se requiere informacion de identificacion personal, lo que garantiza la extricta confidencialidad de sus respuestas. De surgir alguna duda mientras usted esta contestando el cuestionario o tiene dificultad con la lectura y escritura estare a su disposicion para ayudarle.

Recuerde que su participacion es voluntaria. Los resultados de esta investigacion van a ayudar a entender mejor las características y necesidades de los padres Hispanos con niños que reciben educacion especial. Los resultados podrian ser de gran utilidad para la planificacion de programas que satisfagan las necesidades particulares de orientacion y entrenamiento de acuerdo a la condicion de su hijo. Como por ejemplo; programas instruccionales; talleres de orientacion y capacitacion para una mejor participacion en el proceso educativo; apoyo y consejeria.

Gracias anticipadas por su tiempo y cooperacion.

Atentamente,

Julio C. Rodriguez
73 Lynch Drive
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040

Telephone: 534-1324

CUESTIONARIO PARA PADRES HISPANOS DE NINOS
CON NECESIDADES ESPECIALES

A. DESCRIPCION

1.1 Edad o edades del padre, madre o encargado:

_____ 15-19
_____ 20-29
_____ 30-39
_____ 40-49
_____ 50-mas

1.2 Marque su genero (sexo):

_____ Femenino
_____ Masculino

1.3 Estado marital:

_____ Casada(o)
_____ Viuda(o)
_____ Divorciada(o)
_____ Separada(o)
_____ Otro

1.4 Preparacion academica (escolaridad):

_____ 0
_____ 1-6
_____ 7-9
_____ Escuela superior:
_____ No graduado
_____ Graduado de escuela superior
_____ G.E.D.

1.4 Preparacion academica (Continuacion):

- _____ Colegio
- _____ Universidad
- _____ Escuela vocacional
- _____ Otro

1.5 Lugar de nacimiento:

- _____ Puerto Rico
- _____ Estados Unidos
- _____ Otro

1.6 Tiempo viviendo en los Estados Unidos:

- _____ Semanas
- _____ Meses
- _____ Anos (Especifique):
 - _____ 1-5
 - _____ 6-10
 - _____ 11-15
 - _____ 16-20
 - _____ 21-mas

1.7 Tiempo viviendo en esta ciudad o pueblo:

- _____ Semanas
- _____ Meses
- _____ Anos (Especifique):
 - _____ 1-3
 - _____ 4-6
 - _____ 7-10
 - _____ 11-mas

1.8 Tiempo viviendo en este apartamento o casa:

- Semanas
 Meses
 Anos (Especifique):
 1-3
 4-6
 7-9
 10-mas

1.9 Razones para mudarse (marque las que apliquen):

- Fuego
 Comodidades
 Personales
 Facilidades fisicas
 Familiares
 Problemas con el dueno
 Otro

1.10 En que otros estados o ciudades ha vivido:

Mencione: _____

2.0 Piensa regresar a su pais:

- Si
 No
 No se

2.1 Cual es su primer lenguaje:

_____ Espanol

_____ Ingles

_____ Otro

2.2 Que idioma se usa mas en su hogar:

_____ Espanol

_____ Ingles

_____ Otro

2.3 Habla usted Ingles:

_____ Si _____ Mucho

_____ No _____ Poco

2.4 Entiende usted Ingles:

_____ Si _____ Mucho

_____ No _____ Poco

2.5 Lee y escribe en su idioma:

Lee:

_____ Si _____ Mucho

_____ No _____ Poco

Escribe:

_____ Si _____ Mucho

_____ No _____ Poco

2.6 Lee y escribe en Ingles:

Lee:

_____ Si _____ Mucho

_____ No _____ Poco

3.0 Recibe alguno de sus niños ayuda especial en la escuela:

- _____ Si
 _____ No
 _____ No se

B. CONOCIMIENTO

Marque con (✓) las que interese conocer:

- 3.1 _____ Conocer sobre temas de educación especial
- 3.2 _____ Conocer sobre reglamentos escolares relacionados con educación especial
- 3.3 _____ Conocer sobre las leyes y procedimientos de educación especial Federal y Estatal
- 3.4 _____ Conocer sobre sus derechos y los de sus hijos
- 3.5 _____ Conocer los terminos usados por el medico y otros profesionales relacionados con el desarrollo y educación del niño con necesidades especiales
- 3.6 _____ Conocer el contenido del Plan Educativo Individualizado; sus partes, quien lo redacta, quienes participan en el desarrollo e implementación, como se evalúa, que información contiene
- 3.7 _____ Conocer cuales son los procedimientos para obtener servicios de educación especial
- 3.8 _____ Conocer el debido procedimiento a seguir cuando no está satisfecho con los servicios que recibe su hijo
- 3.9 _____ Marque con una (✓) aquellas que interese conocer a través de orientación o talleres educativos:

- Impedimento de vision
- Dano cerebral
- Problemas de aprendizaje
- Disturbios emocionales
- Desordenes geneticos
- AIDS
- Problemas en el desarrollo del lenguaje
- Problemas del habla
- Impedimento fisico
- Retardacion mental
- Autismo
- Problemas cronicos de salud
- Problemas de audicion
- Otros

C. NECESIDADES DE SERVICIOS

Marque las alternativas con (✓) que apliquen a su necesidad:

- 4.1 Transportacion (para asistir a reuniones citadas por la escuela y citas medicas)
- 4.2 Directorio informativo de recursos y servicios ofrecidos por la escuela y comunidad (como por ejemplo, servicios legales, organizaciones, agencias, programas, etc.)
- 4.3 Servicios de consejeria provisto en la escuela para su hijo
- 4.4 Servicios de consejeria provisto en la escuela para padres, familia o el encargado del nino

- 4.5 _____ Facilidades apropiadas de acuerdo a la condicion donde vive su hijo/a (por ejemplo, rampas, ascensor, banos u otros; especifique: _____)
- 4.6 _____ Mas profesionales bilingues (por ejemplo, consejero, terapistas, trabajador social, enfermeras, medicos, otros; especifique: _____)
- 4.7 _____ Interprete cuando va a las reuniones de la escuela o citas relacionadas con la condicion de su hijo
- 4.8 _____ Tener acceso a una biblioteca del sistema escolar donde pueda leer u obtener informacion sobre temas relacionados con la condicion de mi hijo y como ayudarlo
- 4.9 _____ Persona que le ayude en:
- _____ Hacer llamadas telefonicas para citas
- _____ Le lea la correspondencia de la escuela
- _____ Otros
- 5.0 _____ Como ayudar a su hijo en las tareas escolares de acuerdo a su condicion
- 5.1 _____ Como cuidar a mi hijo de acuerdo a su condicion
- 5.2 _____ Talleres educacionales relacionados con la educacion especial que ayude al exito escolar de su hijo
- 5.3 _____ Reunirse con otros padres informalmente para hablar sobre los problemas que enfrentan con sus hijos

- 5.4 _____ Recibir orientacion e informacion en (puede seleccionar mas de una):
- _____ Casa
 - _____ Escuela
 - _____ Atraves de una agencia en la comunidad
 - _____ Otra
- 5.5 _____ Recibir talleres educacionales y conferencias por (puede seleccionar mas de uno):
- _____ Padres de ninos con necesidades especiales
 - _____ Maestros
 - _____ Consejeros
 - _____ Otros
- 5.6 _____ Orientarse, aprender e informarse sobre la condicion de su hijo y como ayudarlo a traves de (puede seleccionar mas de una):
- _____ Grupos de discusion
 - _____ Individual
 - _____ Conferencia informal
 - _____ Videos
 - _____ Lectura de boletines, papeles informativos, noticias, el periodico, atraves del telefono, libros, revistas, otros medios de comunicacion
 - _____ Observando maestros y otros profesionales y luego discutir mis preguntas y observaciones
 - _____ Curso formal
 - _____ Conferencias por varios profesionales especialistas
 - _____ Otras formas

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