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A SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS'  
PREFERENCES FOR PLACEMENT IN THE  
EDUCATIONAL CONTINUUM

by  
Margaret DiPalma

A Thesis  
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate division  
of Rowan College

May 6, 1996

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Professor

Date Approved May 6, 1996

## ABSTRACT

Margaret DiPalma  
A Survey of Special Education Students'  
Preferences for Placement in the  
Educational Continuum  
1996  
Dr. Stanley Urban, Advisor  
Learning Disabilities

Inclusion of special education students in the regular classroom setting is an issue that has caused much debate over the past decade. Many school districts have approached this issue by offering a continuum of services while others are slowly eliminating all self-contained classrooms. These special education students are placed in a resource center program which provides in-class support in the regular classroom. The decision making process for student placement in the least restrictive environment has involved the education professionals and the child's parents. Rarely is the student's preference in the placement decision ever considered.

The purpose of this survey was to determine the education preferences of ten perceptually impaired middle school students who have experienced both self-contained and resource center instruction. The subjects interviewed are currently in a pull-out resource center program for most academics. Eight of the ten subjects are involved with in-class support for science and/or social studies.

The results of the survey indicate that eight of the subjects prefer resource center to self-contained placement. Many of the special education students favor changing classes and being with their peers in the regular classroom with the aid of in-class support.

## **MINI - ABSTRACT**

**Margaret DiPalma**  
**A Survey of Special Education Students'**  
**Preferences for Placement in the**  
**Educational Continuum**  
**1996**  
**Dr. Stanley Urban, Advisor**  
**Learning Disabilities**

Ten middle school perceptually impaired students were interviewed to determine their preference for educational placement. It was determined that the majority of the students prefer the resource center program over the self-contained placement. Many of the students prefer changing classes and being with their peers in a regular classroom setting.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family for their support and patience throughout this project.

I would also like to thank Dr. Stanley Urban for his guidance and inspiring knowledge in the field of Special Education.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background Statement

One of the most controversial topics in special education today deals with the issue of inclusion. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that students with learning disabilities are entitled to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE), in the least restrictive environment (LRE). (N.J.A.C. 6:28-1.1). Court decisions in the past decade have assisted in "Defining and clarifying the concepts of LRE... but courts have preferred to leave questions of special education policy development to special educators." (Yell, 1995). The decision process for determining educational placement in the least restrictive environment varies from school district to school district. When deciding on an educational placement for a child, questions are directed toward the professional in the educational field and the parents of the child with special needs. Often the child's input in the decision making process is not even considered. The changes that are rapidly taking place in the field of special education directly affect the disabled child. Student's input about their preferences of placement can only help us in deciding the direction we should be going in the field of special education. There are few studies which focus on the disabled child's preferences and perceptions of their educational placement.

### **Need For This Study**

The number of self-contained classrooms is rapidly diminishing in the public schools in order to comply with IDEA, which mandates the least restrictive environment. As a result, students are being integrated into the regular classroom, with resource center support with a pull-out and/or in-class support instructional setting. Jenkins and Heinen found that through a study of students' preferences of placement, students do in fact have a preference about their educational placement and should be consulted. (Jenkins, et. al., 1989). Although students do need guidance in making decisions about their educational placement, it is important to determine what the special education child prefers. Being aware of children's insights can assist educated professionals in deciding which program and placement is best for each individual child.

### **Purpose of The Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the preference of placement for perceptually impaired students (grades 5 through 8) who have participated in both a self-contained and resource center placement during their educational experience. All of the students to be surveyed had been placed in a self-contained classroom before being placed in a resource center environment. A sample of 10 students classified as perceptually impaired will be individually interviewed. Most of the classified students are pulled-out for the subject areas of math, reading and English. The students receive in-class support in the regular classroom for science and/or social studies, and are mainstreamed for all non-academic subjects.



### **Research Question**

The data gathered in this study will be used to answer the following general research question: Do former self-contained perceptually impaired middle school students prefer resource center with in-class support over their previous self-contained placement?

### **Significance of This Study**

The results of this research will be valuable to all the persons involved in making placement decisions for special education students. The students' preferences of their educational placement has the potential to raise provocative issues regarding the types of programs offered in this school district. The information gathered from this survey may address some of the issues and concerns this district may have regarding inclusion. The results may suggest the types of future training, programs and workshops that the district may need in order to work with the disabled population in a regular classroom setting. Lastly, this study will demonstrate the value of student consultation when deciding on an educational placement.

### **Limitations**

A limiting factor of this study is the number of students involved. A small sample of 10 students classified as perceptually impaired, grades 5 through 8 will be asked to participate in this study.

## **Definition of Terms**

*Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*- Ensures that all pupils with educational disabilities, have available to them a free, appropriate public education as that standard is set under the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142).

*Public Law 94-142*- Provides a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) with related services for students with disabilities, ensures the protection of those rights, assists states and localities in providing for the education of all children with disabilities, and ensure the effectiveness of these efforts.

*Least Restrictive Environment*- According to PL 94-142, the educational placement for students with disabilities is as close to the regular classroom as feasible.

*Inclusion*- The opportunity for all students with the full range of disabilities to be educated in age-appropriate regular classes and to be full participants in all aspects of the total school day.

*Perceptually Impaired*- A specific learning disability manifested by a severe discrepancy between the pupil's current achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas: basic reading skills, reading comprehension, oral expression, listening comprehension, mathematics computation, mathematics reasoning, and written expression. (N.J.A.C. 6:28-3.5-8 ii).

*Self Contained*- A class composed entirely of exceptional children, usually all categorized under the same label, who therefore do not participate in regular academic programs with

their normal peers.

*Resource Center-* Offers individual and small group instruction (supplemental or replacement) for the disabled individual in a separate classroom or regular classroom.

*Pull-Out Instruction-* Taking the disabled child out of the regular classroom and providing instruction in a resource center classroom.

*In-class Support-* Special education teacher provides assistance for the disabled child in the regular classroom setting.

*Mainstream-* The process of bringing exceptional children into daily contact with nonexceptional children in an educational setting.

*Integration-* Mixing of students who are handicapped and nonhandicapped in education and community environments.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

There is an ongoing and as yet, unresolved debate involving the merits of inclusion. There appears to be no argument in the compliance aspect that students with disabilities should be placed in the least restrictive environment. To what extent is the inclusive placement the most appropriate for all disabled students is the question that has received controversial answers and views. Many studies have been conducted emphasizing the importance of disabled students being placed back in to the regular classrooms for academic and social-emotional growth. Two highly respected professionals in the field of education, Jim Kauffman and Mara Sapon-Shevin, support different views on the topic of inclusion. Sapon-Shevin believes that all children should be served in their own district's school, in the regular classroom setting. She emphasizes the importance of teacher preparation, training and the restructuring of the curriculum to meet all students' needs. Kauffman believes that schools are moving too quickly when dealing with inclusion and that a full continuum of possible placements should be an alternative for disabled students. Kauffman argues that there is not enough research indicating that the regular classroom is able to provide superior services for all disabled students. Sapon-Shevin believes the social aspects of learning from age appropriate peers in a regular classroom setting positively promotes the disabled child's image. The counter response from Kauffman indicates that if one were to ask the disabled students where they

would want to receive instruction, one may find that they prefer to be in special classes and do have better social experiences in the special class. (O'Neil, 1995).

A study conducted by Jenkins and Heinen surveyed elementary special education students along with remedial and regular students. When students were asked their preferences for pull-out versus in-class instruction, seventy-two percent of special education students from pull-out programs preferred that type of program over in-class. Special education students receiving in-class services split evenly for pull-out and in-class. Sixty percent of special education students integrated in a regular classroom preferred in-class help. Grade level was significant, with more older students than younger selecting pull-out. When special education students were asked why they chose the pull-out mode as opposed to the in-class, the perception was that the students felt the specialists (special education teacher) could give more and better help in a pull-out model and it is less embarrassing than having a special education teacher come in to the classroom to assist. Special education students' reasons for choosing in-class service as a preference were to be able to stay with classmates, avoid the embarrassment of pull-out, and the convenience of staying in one place. (Jenkins, et al., 1989).

When special education students were asked what their preferences were for additional assistance from either the regular classroom teacher or specialist, the results indicated that in each mode, additional help from the classroom teacher was the preference. The principal reasons for choosing the classroom teacher were that the classroom teacher knew their needs and they liked their classroom teacher. The special education students who preferred assistance from the specialist (thirty percent), felt that

the specialist was able to provide more help and knew more about reading. Findings indicate that students view pull-out as no more embarrassing and stigmatizing than in-class. Stigmatization may be related more to being singled out than to the location of services. (Jenkins, et al., 1989).

This study concludes that students do not want to draw attention to their disabilities and if they encounter learning problems in the classroom and need assistance, they prefer receiving help from the regular classroom teacher. When special education students receive special education instruction, they prefer leaving the classroom for pull-out rather than having the specialist come to them. (Jenkins, et al., 1989).

Vaughn and Bos conducted a study to determine the students' knowledge and perception of special education and resource room. Twenty students with learning disabilities and 126 nonhandicapped students, grades 1 through 6, were individually interviewed. The findings from this study indicate that students' knowledge and perceptions of special education and resource room were not that different between the learning disabled student and the nondisabled student. There were significant differences between primary and intermediate students. One interview question focused on the selection of room or place that the student would most like to spend time besides his/her classroom. Out of four choices, seventy percent of the learning disabled intermediate students chose the resource room as the first or second choice. Only thirty percent of the learning disabled primary students chose the resource room as their first or second choice. Vaughn and Bos speculate that older learning disabled students are more aware of their learning difficulties and the resource room can accommodate their special needs. The

researchers believe that the primary learning disabled students may perceive themselves as capable of dealing with the expectations in the regular classroom and therefore they do not have a need to leave the regular classroom. Most students without learning disabilities ranked the resource room as a desirable place to spend time outside their regular class. The negative connotations of special education and resource room could possibly be in question. Perhaps there is the acceptance and understanding of special education and it may not be perceived as an undesirable type of placement for those students in need of such a service. (Vaughn, et al., 1987).

It appears that special education students do not want to draw attention to their disabilities and do not want to make it obvious if they are having difficulty in the regular classroom. Inclusion is taking place in many districts with varying degrees of intensity. As to what extent disabled children should be included in the regular classroom setting is still a question that each district must decide for themselves. There have been studies using models that claim to promote academic and social-emotional growth for both the disabled and nondisabled students when inclusion is intact in the regular classroom. By reviewing these models, we can get a better understanding of what course of action we should be taking in special education and what the implications may be when placing the disabled child in the inclusive setting.

Zigmond and Baker developed the model, Mainstream Experiences for Learning Disabled Students (MELD). This model was developed to accommodate the learning disabled student in the mainstream setting and to be used as an alternative instead of the referral process for special education placement. Zigmond and Baker's article reports on

the progress of 13 urban elementary students with learning disabilities at the end of one year of preparation and one year of implementation of the MELD model. The model monitors students reading achievement through administration of curriculum-based measures (CBM). The 13 students spent the first year (planning year), in a self-contained setting. The CBM measures indicated a lack of academic growth in reading when students were in a self-contained setting. After a year of planning, the learning disabled students were then placed in a regular classroom where assistance and support was given to the reintegrated students and any other students in need by the special education teacher. Data from the CBM measures from the implementation year indicated that student's progress in reading was no worse than it had been the previous year in self-contained. However, through observational and school adjustment data, the researchers did find that the learning disabled students adjusted well to a less individualized and more demanding mainstream program during the implementation year. Zigmond and Baker claim that some important elements of the MELD model were not implemented to its fullest extent during the implementation year. They found the reading programs were not modified to teach such a broad range of reading abilities. The teachers did not respond to weekly CBM data and make the necessary adjustments needed for the students having difficulty. Lastly, the same grading standards were applied to all the students without considering their various abilities and levels of performance. Zigmond and Baker believe that the MELD model could be effective, provided all the elements are intact during the implementation. (Zigmond, et al., 1990). This article emphasizes the importance of collaboration by all the educators involved in teaching the special education population.



Affleck, Madge, Adams and Lowenbraun found no significant differences in academic achievement when comparing mildly disabled students who were once in resource room and then placed in an Integrated Classroom Model (ICM). This model is very similar to the MELD model with supportive assistance from the special education teacher. This research indicates that the model is at least as effective academically as the resource room but also provides services in a less restrictive environment (Affleck, et al., 1988). Madge, Affleck and Lownebraun analyzed the social status of elementary students with learning disabilities, comparing the learning disabled students who received resource center pull-out services with learning disabled students in the ICM program. The results indicate that the social status of the learning disabled students in both programs is significantly lower on the average than their nondisabled peers. The researchers believe that the learning disabled students in the ICM, "Have a better opportunity to blend successfully into the classroom than the children who go out to a resource room." (Madge, et al., 1990).

A word of caution is needed when placing students with learning disabilities back into the regular classroom. Educators must be willing to make the necessary adjustments or the academic progress may not be made in the regular classroom. Extensive training for learning strategies and modifications are required for any program to be effective. Zigmond and Baker worked with this urban elementary staff for one year before implementing the MELD model and there were still elements that were not used and as a result, significant academic growth was no different than if those special education students were back in a self-contained setting. Affleck and his colleagues had the ICM

model implemented for approximately three years and it has expanded through intensive training and guidance from Washington State education staff. We must consider the amount of time and training that is required before placing the disabled population back into the regular classroom setting.

Salisbury and his colleagues took a look at the perspectives of nine high school students receiving learning disabilities services in separate classrooms. The topics examined were peer acceptance, impact on perceptions of self, and perceived efficacy of special education programs. (Salisbury, et al., 1995). The results indicated that the learning disabled students did not view their special education experiences as favorable nor did they find their academic programs to be effective. The findings from this study may indicate a possible need to reform special education and integrate the special education population back in to the regular classroom. Salisbury believes, "The inclusion movement seeks to redefine responsibility for students with special needs." (Salisbury, et al., p.122). Collaboration of both the special education teacher and the regular teacher is imperative as well as restructuring of the curriculum. "Without meaningful support and a redefinition of classroom expectations, the end result will once again be negative." (Salisbury, et al., 1995).

### **Summary**

The students' input of their perspectives is what helps educators consider the possibilities of inclusion. It appears it is not just a collaborative effort among the teachers, administration and parents, but should also consider the special education child's input.

There has been a limited amount of research done on the disabled child's preferences and view on placement decisions. Madge, Affleck and Lowenbraun emphasize the importance of additional research on students' and parents' views regarding placement options and decisions. (Madge, et al., 1990). After all, the disabled students are the ones that are experiencing the academic and social struggles and triumphs day in and day out.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### Subjects of the Study

The sample for this study consists of ten perceptually impaired (PI) fifth through eighth grade middle school students located in a South Jersey suburban school district. The subjects included seven males and three females classified as perceptually impaired. Each student was individually interviewed after the second quarter marking period of the current 1995-1996 school year. The groups in this study were comprised of two male fifth grade students, two male seventh grade students, and six eighth graders (four males, two females). All of the students surveyed had been in a self-contained classroom before being placed in a resource center environment. Most of the classified students are pulled-out for replacement instruction for the subject areas of math, reading, and English. The majority of students receive in-class support in the regular classroom for science and/or social studies, and are mainstreamed for all non-academic subjects.

#### Description of the Survey Used

The sample survey, *Preference of Placement Survey* was developed to determine the preference of placement for perceptually impaired students who have participated in both a self-contained and resource center placement during their educational experience.

Written consent was given by each of the students' parents in order to participate in this study. Each student was individually interviewed February 28th, 1996, for approximately 20 minutes and asked 13 questions related to the type of instruction he/she was exposed to during his/her educational experience in both self-contained and resource center/in-class support. Probing was used when it was necessary to fully understand the subject's response. All responses to the questions were written down by the examiner. The letter to the parents, asking for written permission is presented in Appendix A and the survey instrument is found in Appendix B.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Of the twenty-two letters mailed to parents seeking permission to interview their child, fourteen parents responded. Out of the fourteen that did respond, ten parents allowed their child to participate in this study, four parents declined.

#### General Information Data

Ten middle school students classified as perceptually impaired participated in this study. The ten students received some of their instruction in a pull-out resource center program. Eight of the ten subjects also participated in the in-class support program for science and/or social studies. The following data was determined from the information gathered from the *Preference of Placement Survey* which involved 13 questions related to the type of instruction the students were exposed to during their educational experience in both self-contained and resource center and in-class support settings. Each student was cooperative during the interview and appeared to be at ease with the examiner. Many of the subjects were willing to expound on their answers when asked to do so. All the responses were written down by the examiner.

**Table I**

**Preference of Self-Contained Classroom or Resource Center Program**

Subject	Self-Contained	Resource Center	Both / Either	Comments
1		✓		I like the teachers better, I like to see more people.
2	✓			Self-Contained because we had a lot of fun in there.
3		✓		Resource Center because it's comfortable and easy. I like the way things are.
4			✓	I like to try different classes and see how it is without someone to help.
5		✓		I like the larger group and I don't have to sit in one class.
6		✓		Resource Center because it doesn't leave an impression with other kids that you're in a self-contained classroom.
7		✓		You don't have to stay in class all day.
8		✓		In self-contained I couldn't do things other people did like change classes every period.
9		✓		I don't like staying in one class all day.
10		✓		You're around other people.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>10%</b>	

Table I indicates that 80% of the students prefer instruction in the resource room as opposed to the self contained classroom. A majority of the reasons for preferring resource center dealt with changing classes and not staying in one classroom all day.

**Table II**  
Most difficult subject in Current Placement

Subject	Resource Center	In-class Support Science/Social Studies
1		✓
2		✓
3		✓
4		✓
5		✓
6	✓	
7	N/A*	
8	✓	
9	N/A*	
10		✓
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>75%</b>

**Table III**  
(In-Class Support)  
Teacher preference when asking for assistance

Subject	Resource Center Teacher	Regular Classroom Teacher	No Preference
1		✓	
2	✓		
3			✓
4		✓	
5			✓
6		✓	
7	N/A*		
8		✓	
9	N/A*		
10			✓
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>

Eight of the ten students participate in in-class support for the academic subjects of science and/or social studies. As table II shows, even though 75% percent of the students find that their most difficult subject is in the regular classroom with in-class support, they still prefer this type of program. Table III indicates that 50% percent of the special education students prefer asking their regular teacher for assistance, 12.5% percent prefer asking the special education teacher, and 37.5% percent have no preference.

\* Tables II and III do not apply to subjects 7 and 9 because In-Class Support classes are replaced with Vocational / Technical Classes.



**Table IV**  
 Response to the Question:  
 Are you enjoying school this year (1995/1996)?

Subject	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments
1	✓			Because I like to see my friends.
2		✓		I guess, because a lot of teachers are nice to me.
3	✓			I'm doing better than I thought, it's not as hard as I thought it would be. I'm getting my work done and I feel comfortable.
4	✓			'Cause I got a lot of friends and stuff.
5	✓			Because I'm learning more stuff.
6	✓			It's just fun. I go to Vo / Tech.
7	✓			Because it's my last year in middle school.
8		✓		Because I try things differently, like I go to the Vo / Tech.
9	✓			Because I like school. I like the prep center (Vo / Tech).
10			✓	It's too hard, I'm having a hard time with school work.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>10%</b>	

When the students were asked to respond to the question that asked if they are enjoying school this year, 70% percent claimed that they are enjoying school, 20 % percent stated somewhat, and 10% percent does not like school this year, as indicated on Table IV.

**Table V**

Response to the Question:  
In what grade do you feel you have learned the most?

Subject	Grade
1	4th (Self-Contained)
2	4th (Self-Contained)
3	Present (7th)
4	Present (7th)
5	Present (8th)
6	Present (8th)
7	Present (8th)
8	Present (8th)
9	7th (Self-Contained)
10	7th (Self-Contained)

Table V indicates that 60% of the students chose their present grade level which is resource center, as the grade in which they feel they have learned the most thus far. 40% chose their past grade level which was self-contained as the grade in which they learned the most.

**Table VI**

Response to the Question:  
What would be your choice of any type of Educational Program?

Subject	Response
1	Regular Class
2	A big or small class
3	Resource Center
4	A lot of teachers
5	Large group because there are more people to help you out and you could meet a lot of new people.
6	In class support situation in a regular classroom
7	Vo/Tech (prefer big class), one teacher with another teacher to help.
8	Vo/Tech, this type of resource center like a regular classroom similar to in-class support.
9	A few kids because I don't like a lot of kids.
10	Vo/Tech with small classes

When the students were asked what type of educational program they would choose if they had an option, Table VI shows that 70% percent would choose regular and/or resource center as their placement, 20% percent chose a small class size, and 10% would choose either a big or small class size. None of the subjects chose a self-contained classroom as an educational setting.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

More of a demand has been placed on the school systems to integrate the special education student in the regular classroom, with resource center support involving a pull out and /or in-class support setting. Many of these decisions are determined by the child study team and the parents. The student's preference is rarely taken into account. Although students do need guidance in making decisions about their educational placement, it is important to determine what the special education child prefers. Being aware of children's insights can assist educated professionals in deciding which program and placement is best for each individual child.

This survey included perceptually impaired students, grades fifth through eighth, who have participated in both self-contained and resource center placement during their educational experience. This study determined the student's preference of educational placement in either a self-contained or resource center placement.

The results of this survey indicate that the majority of students prefer the resource center placement over the self-contained instructional setting. Many of the students preferred resource center because it gave the students an opportunity to change classes as opposed to staying in one self-contained classroom all day.

## **Conclusion**

Ten middle school students classified as perceptually impaired participated in this study. Eighty percent of the students prefer receiving instruction in the resource center rather than the self-contained classroom. Eight of ten students participate in the in-class support for the academic subjects of science and/or social studies. Although seventy-five percent of the special education students find that their most difficult subject is in the regular classroom involving in-class support, they still prefer this type of program over the self-contained setting. Fifty percent of the special education students prefer asking their regular teacher for assistance, while 12.5 percent prefer asking the special education teacher, and 37.5 percent had no preference.

Sixty percent of the subjects felt they have learned the most in their current educational program. Resource center with in-class support is the type of educational program that 70 percent of the students in this study would choose if given the option. None of the subjects specifically chose a self-contained classroom as an option for their educational placement.

## **Discussion**

The results of this survey were what the author had anticipated. Students do hold preferences about the type of educational program that they receive in the public school. The majority of the students prefer the resource center classroom as opposed to the self-contained setting. Many of the subjects favored changing classes, being with other peers in an in-class support setting rather than staying in one self-contained classroom the entire day.

Perhaps the issue of social pressures may have attributed to the majority of preferences favoring the resource center with in-class support. It is interesting to note that four out of ten subjects felt that they had learned the most in their past self-contained placement, even though 3 out of the 4 subjects prefer being in the resource center with in-class support. One of the subjects who claims to have learned more in the self-contained but prefers resource center with in-class support, "hates" school this year because the work is too hard. Yet this subject likes the resource center because "You're around other people." It would be beneficial to have future surveys to determine if students' preferences are attributed to social or academic factors.

In this study it was found that a majority of the subjects prefer asking their regular classroom teacher for assistance in the in-class support setting, rather than the special education teacher. This reconfirms Jenkins' findings that students do not want to draw attention to their disabilities and if they encounter learning problems in the classroom and need assistance, they prefer receiving help from the regular classroom teacher.

This study presented information from the special education students' perspective. Through this study, it appears that the social factors play an important role when student's make decisions about their educational program. Although social factors should be considered, the academic issues need to have an equal amount of importance when choosing the appropriate program. That is why a collaborative effort among the teachers, administration, parents, and feedback from the child, should be taken into account when choosing the least restrictive but most appropriate educational program for each individual child.

## APPENDIX A

Maggie DiPalma  
Mary S. Shoemaker School  
East Milbrooke Avenue  
Woodstown, NJ 08098

January 2, 1996

Dear Parent,

As you may be aware, I am the Resource Center teacher in Woodstown's Mary S. Shoemaker School. I am sure you are unaware, however, that I am currently pursuing my Master's Degree in Learning Disabilities at Rowan College.

As part of my final semester's work, I am conducting a study for which I need your help. There have been many studies in the past that were conducted in order to determine what type of special education is best for the children. Here, in Woodstown, we have changed from the self-contained special education classroom to an inclusive arrangement where the student remains in the regular classroom for Science and Social Studies and goes to the Resource Center for the other subject areas. In my studies, I have read many cases documenting inclusion as the best option for the child's education. The one thing that I noticed in these studies was the fact that the child's opinion was never considered and in follow-up studies, the child's impressions were never measured.

My study will take that step. I will determine the child's preference. These insights can help us to better determine the methods we should use as we prepare our special education curriculum each year.

Here's how you can help. I would like to be permitted to conduct an interview (approximately 20 minutes) with your child during the month of February within the regular school hours. The purpose of the interview is to determine his preference and how his switch from the self-contained classroom to our current method of inclusion has affected his outlook and his self-perception.

Of course, your child's name will be held in the strictest confidence and only his answers to my questions will be used in the study.

Please fill out the enclosed form and return it to me in the envelope provided. Thank you in advance for your permission. If you would like to review the questions prior to the interview or if you would like to receive a copy of your child's responses, just check the appropriate box on the form.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Maggie DiPalma

**PERMISSION SLIP FOR INTERVIEW**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Student's Name)*

**Please check the following lines that apply to your child.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **My child will be able to participate in Mrs. DiPalma's study during the month of February.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **My child will not be able to participate in Mrs. DiPalma's study.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_ **I would like a copy of my child's responses to the interview.**

**\*Please call if you have any questions. Work: 769-5437  
Home: 769-0031**

**APPENDIX B**

**PREFERENCE OF PLACEMENT SURVEY**

**Question #1**

*What academic subject do you feel to be your best?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #2**

*What academic subject do you like the least?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #3**

*Which subject is the most difficult for you and you feel you need the most help in?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #4**

*When you are having difficulty with an assignment, who do you prefer to ask for assistance and why did you choose that person?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #5**

*For science and social studies, who do you prefer receiving instruction from, your regular classroom teacher or your resource center teacher? Why?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #6**

*Did you feel more comfortable receiving instruction in a self contained classroom with one teacher in a small group setting, or do prefer receiving instruction with the regular classroom teacher and resource center teacher? Why?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #7**

*If you had a choice of any type of educational program, what would it be? Why?* \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #8**

*In what grade do you feel you have learned the most?* \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #9**

*Did you have any frustrations or difficulties being in the self contained class? If yes, what were they?*

**Question #10**

*Do you have any frustrations or difficulties being in the resource center class? If yes, what are they?*

**Question #11**

*Do you have any frustrations or difficulties being in the regular classroom for science and social studies? If yes, what are they?* \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #12**

*Are you enjoying this school year? Why?* \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #13**

*\*If you had a choice, would you choose the self contained classroom for all your subjects or would you choose the resource center class with in class support in the regular classroom for Science and Social Studies? Why?* \_\_\_\_\_

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