

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 049 575

EC 032 052

AUTHOR Emerson, T. L. W.; Wilson, J. J.
TITLE The Education of Handicapped Children in Australia.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Pan Pacific Conference on the Education of Exceptional Children (Honolulu, Hawaii, February 9-12, 1971)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Policy, *Conference Reports, *Educational Practice, Educational Trends, *Exceptional Child Education, *Foreign Countries, *Handicapped Children, Historical Reviews
IDENTIFIERS Australia

ABSTRACT

A paper dealing with the education of handicapped children in Australia, presented at the Pan Pacific Conference on the Education of Exceptional Children (Honolulu, Hawaii, February 9-12, 1971), is featured. The provision for the education of handicapped children in one state, Victoria, is described in detail, and the ways in which other states differ from Victoria's pattern is then outlined. An historical background, the present educational system, the placement of handicapped children, the training of teachers, the curricula, employment opportunities, and successes, problems, and future plans are covered. (CD)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION
& WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR
ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF
VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECES-
SARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDU-
CATION POSITION OR POLICY.

PAN PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON THE EDUCATION OF
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND YOUTH
HAWAII, 1971

THE EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN AUSTRALIA

- T.L.W. Emerson
Director of Special Services,
Education Department of Victoria,
Melbourne, Australia
- J.J. Wilson,
Director of Planning,
Commonwealth Department of Education and Science,
Canberra, Australia

January, 1971

ED049575

EC0320 059E

I GENERAL BACKGROUND

Australia today has a population of nearly 13 million and it has a total area of 3 million square miles. Australia became a federation of six States in 1901, with the central Government having constitutional responsibility for certain specific areas of activity and residual powers remaining with the States. Under this system the primary responsibility for the provision of education within the States rests with the State governments, the Commonwealth Government having a similar responsibility in the Territories directly under its control - the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

During the 19th Century the six British colonies, which were later to become the six Australian States, all established systems of compulsory education, beginning with the Education Act of 1872 in Victoria, followed by similar Acts in Queensland (1875), South Australia (1875), New South Wales (1880), Tasmania (1893) and Western Australia (1893). These Acts, with subsequent amendments, constitute the legal basis of the education systems in operation in Australian States today.

Although the systems of education in each State are not identical, they have many similar features. In each case responsibility for framing policy under the Education Act and having it put into effect rests with a Minister for Education who is a member of the State Cabinet. The administrative authority in each State is an Education Department headed by a Director-General of Education. Separate divisions of the State Education Departments usually administer primary, secondary and technical education. Other divisions look after matters such as the recruitment and training of teachers, pupil guidance, research and the education of handicapped children. Although some States have introduced measures designed to decentralise the administration of the education system to some extent, the Australian picture in general terms is one of fairly large centralised systems rather than

for example, the local education authorities that typify the scene in the U.S.A., Britain, and some other countries.

Government schools, established and maintained by the State Education Departments, are attended by about three out of every four Australian school children. There are no fees for tuition in these schools. Parents are expected to buy most of their children's books, personal equipment and uniforms, and to pay fees for the use of sports equipment and other facilities. These expenditures are tax deductible and the cost of textbooks in some States is subsidised by the government.

These schools are financed from general State Government Revenue, there being no taxes specifically for education; neither are there local government rates or levies for educational purposes.

The schools are totally controlled by the Education Department and the teachers are employed by the Department, the link between the teacher in the school and the administration being a school inspector who regularly visits all schools in his inspectorate, reporting on them to the administration and at the same time providing advice where required by the teachers. At most schools associations of parents and interested citizens are actively involved in promoting the interests of each school and the welfare of the pupils, and providing additional equipment. However, they exert no authority over the staff, the management of the school or the selection of subjects to be taught.

While school attendance is compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 15, they are not required to attend a government school if they are receiving "regular and efficient" instruction elsewhere. Approximately one child in four goes to a non-government school, where tuition fees and other expenses must be paid by the parents. Most of these schools are conducted by religious denominations, with the Catholic Church conducting the largest number. They receive financial assistance from both State and

Commonwealth governments.

Financing Programs for the Handicapped

Under the Australian Federal system of Government, the Commonwealth Government levies virtually all income tax while the State Governments raise revenue in fields such as estate duty, entertainment taxes, and so on. The Commonwealth Government provides substantial revenue grants to the States and these currently represent about half of the States' revenue.

Funds for education, including education of the handicapped, are allocated by each State Government, along with funds for all other areas of State Government responsibility in the annual budget which is presented to the State Parliament. This shows detailed estimates of expenditure for each Government Department. The budget papers are not usually drawn up in such a way as to show total expenditure on the education of handicapped children, for example, separately from expenditure in other areas of education. The amount to be expended on the education of handicapped children would in general terms be determined by decisions taken at senior levels in the State Departments concerned and finally by the State Governments.

Although the major responsibility for education of the handicapped rests with State Education Departments, the State Health Departments are also involved in the education of the mentally handicapped - to a significant degree in two States as indicated later.

In addition to the general revenue grants it provides to the State Governments (which can be expended on any area of State responsibility), the Commonwealth Government also provides special grants for education. The Commonwealth's activities in this field are outlined below.

Commonwealth Activity in Education

Although Education is primarily the responsibility of the States, the Commonwealth Government, acting through the Department of Education and Science, has instituted a number of measures of direct assistance to educational

institutions within the States and to students throughout Australia, and is also engaged in educational activities arising from its responsibilities in such areas as Immigration and Social Services. These activities by the Commonwealth are additional to its direct responsibilities for education in the Commonwealth Territories. Some of the Commonwealth grants for educational purposes in the States are directly relevant to the education of handicapped children.

(1) Science and Library Facilities Grants

The Department of Education and Science administers a Commonwealth program of capital grants for science and library facilities to government and independent schools. Schools for the handicapped are eligible for assistance under these programs provided they have students at the secondary education level. In the allocation of these funds, State Education Departments decide the order of priority amongst Government schools, while Advisory Committees have been set up in each State to advise the Minister for Education and Science on the order of priority among applications from independent schools. Sub-committees of these Advisory Committees are at present investigating the special needs and problems of schools for the handicapped.

(2) Per Capita Grants

Since the beginning of 1970 the Commonwealth has been assisting with the running costs of independent schools throughout Australia at annual rates of \$35 for each primary pupil and \$50 for each secondary pupil enrolled at the school. Special legislative provision is made for handicapped children in that the Minister is given the discretion to decide, in regard to these children, what will be regarded as primary and as secondary education. He has ruled that these schools should receive payments at the primary rate for children who are of the age of primary pupils in ordinary schools and who are receiving a program of education or training, as well as for any

pre-school age children enrolled who are taking part in a definite education or training program as distinct from merely being minded. The secondary education rate is paid for all handicapped children aged 13 years or over, including those beyond the normal school leaving age who are continuing in full-time schooling or who are in the process of transition from school to sheltered workshop.

In the 1970 school year a total of (A)\$150,000 was paid out in per capita grants to 116 non-government schools for handicapped children in respect of some 3,700 children.

(3) Welfare Grants

The Commonwealth Government has recently introduced a scheme to provide grants for the benefit of handicapped children which are broadly of a welfare nature. Through the Department of Social Services, capital grants at the rate of (A)\$2 to (A)\$1 are made by the Commonwealth to voluntary bodies for constructing and equipping facilities including schools and hostels for handicapped children. In addition the Department of Health provides a running cost subsidy to voluntary bodies of (A)\$10.50 per week for each handicapped child accommodated in residential institutions.

.....

Because of the diversity between the education systems of the six Australian States it is not feasible in this paper to deal with them all in detail. Consequently, the approach adopted is to describe the provision for the education of handicapped children in one State, Victoria - the second largest in Australia - and then to discuss briefly the ways in which other States differ from this pattern.

II THE EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN
IN THE STATE OF VICTORIA
BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest provision for Victorian handicapped children was made by voluntary organizations which received government assistance in the form of grants of land as well as subsidies towards the erection and maintenance of buildings. In this way schools for the deaf and the blind were established before 1872.

In 1872 the Education Department of Victoria was established and by Act of Parliament education became free, compulsory and secular for all children from 6 to 14 years of age. Exemptions were granted to children who were sick or infirm. The need for the exemption inspired moves to provide suitable education for these children, and the power to establish special State schools was granted in the Education Act of 1890, and it was further defined in the Act of 1901. These amendments resulted in the creation of the first hospital school in 1908 with the teacher moving from bed to bed in a children's ward. Education of handicapped children was made compulsory by the Education Act of 1910, and other hospital schools were opened in 1926, 1935 and 1955.

Departmental inquiry into "the education of sub-normal children" resulted in a special school for mentally handicapped children being established in 1913 at Bell Street, Fitzroy, an inner suburb of Melbourne. The school was under the headmastership of Mr. S.D. Porteus who later established an international reputation for his work on intelligence tests. Sixty children attended this school, many being brought from the more distant suburbs.

In 1915 another school was opened on the other side of the city
Lague. The first school in a Mental Health Authority residential
Evolution was opened at the Children's Cottages, Kew, in 1929.

In 1914 the Correspondence School had been established and this later made it possible to provide for home-bound and hospitalised children. Following an epidemic outbreak of poliomyelitis in 1937, a visiting teacher service was established to help these children wherever possible. It was a combination of correspondence lessons and the personal help of a visiting teacher.

In 1918 a voluntary agency, the Yooralla Hospital Committee, first established a special school for severely physically handicapped children. This was helped by the Education Department, through the loan of teachers

and finally it was taken over entirely as a State school in 1942. The Yooralla Committee continued to provide the necessary treatment facilities in conjunction with the Health Department and the Royal Children's Hospital.

In 1950 a school was opened at the Marathon Spastic Centre. In this case the Department worked in conjunction with the Health Department, the Royal Children's Hospital and a voluntary agency, the Spastic Children's Society.

The Education Department has never established its own school for blind children. This has been carried on for a great many years by the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, but the Department established in 1941 a class for partially sighted children with special equipment to minimize their difficulties.

In 1913 the School for Deaf Children, which had been run by a voluntary agency, became a State school staffed and supervised by the Education Department, but conducted in premises provided by the voluntary agency. In 1927 the Department erected a building in the Institute grounds and has added buildings subsequently.

Recently funds have been provided to expand the facilities for the education of handicapped children. Three specially designed schools for mentally handicapped children will accommodate 144 children each in 12 classes.

will also be a gymnasium, a homecrafts unit and art/craft facilities.

will open at the beginning of the 1972 school year.

Two new schools for physically handicapped children are at present in the design stage. These schools represent the first real attempt at a totally planned situation where the school, and the treatment facilities will be designed as a single integrated unit. The construction of these two schools will be a joint enterprise with the Education Department providing funds for the educational facilities and a voluntary agency, with some Federal Government aid, providing the treatment facilities.

THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Under the Education Act 1957 (and the subsequent proclamation of the raising of the school leaving age from and inclusive of February, 1964), education of educable handicapped children is compulsory, in general, from 5 to 15 years.

The Education Department also provides for certain groups of physically handicapped children at the pre-school level (e.g. deaf children). Crippled children may be admitted from 4½ years (as are children in normal schools), and services are provided for selected senior pupils who may continue to Higher School Certificate standard.

No fees are payable for the Department's educational services.

The aims are:

- (i) Social competence
- (ii) The highest level of self dependence
- (iii) The dignity of becoming a participating member of the community.

Existing facilities in the State of Victoria may be summarised as follows (a statistical summary is attached).

(A) The Intellectually Handicapped

Special School education is generally provided to the end of the year in which the child turns 16 years but it is compulsory only until the age of 15.

- (i) Eleven Day Special Schools. Pupil teacher ratios are 12:1

conducted by the Mental Health Authority.* Pupil teacher ratios 12:1.

- (iii) Three special units in normal schools for mentally handicapped children.

The specialist teachers also provide individual educational programs for handicapped children who are socially well adjusted in normal schools, and give consultative advice to teachers on request.

(B) Emotionally Disturbed Children

- (i) One residential School. This unit has been established by the Mental Health Authority, but the school is staffed by the Education Department.*

Pupil teacher ratio is 5:1

*Footnote:- As well as providing the school buildings in its four residential institutions, the Mental Health Authority works closely with the Education Department in providing for the needs of intellectually handicapped children. For children deemed to be "educable" the Education Department provides teachers; for those deemed "trainable but ineducable" the M.H.A. trains personnel and subsidises voluntary agencies in the management of Day Training Centres. There are 39 Day Training Centres in Victoria catering for approximately 1500 children and youths.

The term "educable" is descriptive rather than diagnostic. It summarizes a conclusion by experts as to how the developmental needs of a particular handicapped child can best be met at a particular time, and it does not necessarily carry an implication of any finality in assessment.

Following an extensive study involving several disciplines of the many aspects of the child's development and functioning, the expression "educable" is a conclusion of expert opinion as to his ability to respond to learning experiences. In many ways the usage of the term is an unsatisfactory survival from a past when children were labelled, often on the basis of a single criterion such as an intelligence test, and then either assigned to or excluded from educational provisions.

The practice now is to try to assess as specifically as possible the kind of developmental needs the child has, and then to plan an individual program which will best meet those needs. His placement between alternatives then becomes a matter of decision as to where such a program can most readily be provided.

With both the Education Department and the Mental Health Authority, there is close professional consultation between those concerned with the placement of mentally handicapped children. This includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and teachers.

- (ii) Three Adjustment Centres. These special centres in normal schools are designed to meet the needs of children who have experienced difficulty in adjusting to the normal school environment. The pupils may be habitual truants and/or show disruptive, anti-social behaviour. It is the aim of the centre to promote greater personal resources in areas of emotional and social development with a view to more adequate adjustment when returned to normal school.

(C) Ancillary Educational Units

(i) Demonstration Unit and Tutorial Centre

This is a primary resource unit designed to help the class teacher to meet more adequately individual learning disabilities in language arts and reading. It conducts in-service training programs in diagnostics and remedial teaching: it displays and evaluates a comprehensive range of reading and associated language arts materials: it provides a consultant service, on request, to teachers.

(ii) Seventy-one Opportunity Remedial Centres

For children whose progress in basic skill learning is slow, these centres are staffed by specialist teachers who have a threefold responsibility. In the morning they assist slow learners with basic skills: the group does not exceed 15 and each child reverts

to normal classrooms in the afternoons for essential social development. The specialist gives individual tutoring in the afternoon to short-term children requiring assistance in reading or mathematics: groups are limited to 6 children. The third aspect of responsibility concerns consultative work with classroom teachers, especially those from whom the slow learners and short-term cases derive.

(iii) Remedial Centres.

These Centres provide facilities similar to the afternoon sessions of the Opportunity Remedial Centres.

(D) The Socially Handicapped

Twenty special schools are located either in Children's Homes or in church and family welfare institutions. Children may be awaiting court proceedings, on remand, or under sentence. Education is provided for youths up to the age of sixteen in Youth Training Centres and beyond that age in Prison Training Centres. Pupil teacher ratios are 15:1.

(E) The Physically Handicapped.

There are five Day Special Schools for children handicapped by physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, poliomyelitis, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, congenital or post-accident abnormalities, defects of the heart, haemophilia, asthma, epilepsy, bronchiectasis, and nephritis. Pupil teacher ratios are 8:1.

Most pupils travel home at the end of the school day, but some live in hostels conducted by voluntary agencies.

For children who are in hospital, special hospital schools or visiting teacher services in wards and special classrooms are provided.

The Invalid Section of the Correspondence School serves home-bound children and some children at both primary and secondary levels in hospitals and special schools.

(b) Those with Impaired Hearing

There are approximately 1,000 children in Victoria in this category. Education for an educable deaf child is compulsory at the age of $4\frac{1}{2}$ years (for the normal child the age is 6 years). But referrals from the Commonwealth Acoustic Laboratory and medical sources are made as soon as diagnosis is confirmed: generally this is at the age of 12 to 18 months, but it sometimes occurs at 5 months or, in the case of partially deaf children, at the age of 2 years.

At this point the parents may attend the Department's Parents Guidance Service. Early speech-reading and language awareness are featured as well as counselling from a clinical psychologist. Gradually the children are absorbed into a Readiness Program which prepares them for appropriate placement. Provision is also made for a small group of "deaf/blind" children.

Approximately half of the children are suitably placed in normal schools with the support of 27 trained teachers of the deaf known as the Visiting Teacher Service.

A kindergarten, two oral schools and a combined method school cater for the remainder of the children. The pupil teacher ratio is 8:1 (oral deaf) and 5:1 (combined methods deaf).

The Department's only residential provision for handicapped children is a hostel for girls and boys who come mostly from country areas. A nominal fee is charged. This hostel is attached to an oral school, but residential provision for other schools for deaf children is made by voluntary agencies.

(c) Those with limited Vision

These children are "legally blind" but have some residual sight. They attend a special school which has an enrolment of 36 and is staffed by 8 teachers. Special equipment provided includes magnifiers and large type as well as a circuit television unit.

The enlargement equipment is used, on request, for children who have impaired vision but who are catered for and contained adequately in normal schools.

(d) Those Needing Speech Therapy

There are 31 speech therapists operating in 14 centres. For 1970 the treatment record was 4215. As at 31/12/70:

Number of children under treatment	1939 (319 in special schools)
" " " on temporary discharge	450
" " " discharged	465
" " " medically examined and awaiting treatment	1905

(e) Those Needing Corrective Exercises

Three gymnasiums provide for children with bad posture or minor physical defects which are remedial.

THE EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Children in need of special educational help are sometimes identified only because their failure to cope at school causes concern both to parents and teachers.

Those with more obvious handicaps are often referred before the children actually begin school, sometimes on the advice of physicians, sometimes by one of the voluntary agencies. Hospital clinics, child guidance clinics, the school Medical Service, the Commonwealth Acoustic Laboratory, and social welfare groups also make referrals.

The basic philosophy underlying educational provision for handicapped children is that wherever possible they should share the school experiences of other children, but never at the expense of either their own welfare or educational progress of others.

Medical, psychological, sociological, and educational factors are all considered in determining the child's needs. Every placement is preceded by a comprehensive individual study, but no special placement is made without the consent of the parents. All placements are on a trial basis and subject to review, and no child can be enrolled in a special facility without the formal approval of the Education Department after a recommendation from the Psychology and Guidance Branch.

For children with sensory defects, ascertainment committees comprising educators, psychologists and physicians advise on initial placement, and subsequent placement when deemed advisable as a result of regular reviews.

TRANSPORT

The Education Department meets the cost of taxis and buses chartered for the daily transport of pupils to Departmental special schools for physically and mentally handicapped children. It also meets the full running costs of a voluntary agency for the daily transport to special schools of physically handicapped children.

Where services are not applicable, conveyance allowances are paid to parents (up to \$100 a year if public transport is used or up to \$20 a year if the parents' private transport is used). Subject to certain conditions conveyance allowances may also be paid to parents whose children are attending remedial classes.

THE TRAINING OF SPECIAL TEACHERS

The specialist teacher in Victoria must be, in the first instance, a fully qualified teacher: usually he or she has been trained specifically for elementary teaching. The courses available are:-

Trained Special Teacher's Certificate

This is an additional full-time course lasting one year for teachers of mentally, socially, emotionally and physically handicapped children. For

1971 the normal complement of 60 students comprise 15 who must have qualified as elementary teachers and are completing the year's extension on student salaries. Two year courses for elementary teachers are being phased out and most teachers are now required to do a three year course. For a third year extension, the salary is \$1,584 per annum if the student is living at home or \$1,654 if not. For fourth year extensions the respective salaries are \$1,747 and \$1,818.

The other 45 students are fully qualified, successful teachers with a minimum of three years' experience. They are being paid their normal salaries.

Trainee Teachers Certificate for Teacher of the Deaf

Teachers from all Australian states as well as South-East Asia are trained at the Glendonald (Victoria) Training Centre for Teachers of the Deaf. The Victorian Education Department annually has 25 teachers at the Centre: 18 are extensions after completion of an elementary teacher's qualification and 7 are fully qualified and experienced teachers. Salary arrangements are as above. The course lasts one full year.

Diploma of Speech Therapy

This is a three-year full time course available only to fully qualified and successful teachers with a minimum of three years' experience. Full scale normal salaries are paid during the entire period of training.

Psychology and Guidance Officers

Minimum requirements are a full teacher qualification, a degree that includes a psychology major, and at least two years' teaching experience. Under the Psychological Practices Act, after these qualifications have been secured officers must undergo an internship of three years under the direction of a fully qualified Departmental psychologist.

Homecrafts Teachers

Annually 6 extended students and 6 classified teachers are trained for a full year for service in special schools.

Art/Craft Teachers

These are also free courses and extended studentships of one year's duration. On completion of the course teachers are placed in elementary schools as well as special schools. There are currently 35 trained art/craft teachers serving handicapped children in special schools.

CURRICULA

Slow Learning Children in Opportunity Remedial Centres

The curriculum follows the normal curriculum but steps are geared to suit the rate of progress of each individual child. The majority proceed to post-primary schools where a modified curriculum is provided.

Intellectually Handicapped Children

Individual attention is given to pupils in developing basic skills according to the capacity of each child, but the curriculum also includes physical education, music, dancing, speech training, art, needlework, wood-work, metal-work, pottery, weaving, work with gem stones, homecrafts, and the conduct of their own canteen. For senior girls there are lessons in make-up as well as household management.

Physically Handicapped Children

Curricula for physically handicapped children range from programs for the mentally handicapped immobilised beginner to Higher School Certificate for senior pupils, and from training in specialised communication skills for the deaf baby and its parents to apprenticeship training.

Curricula are adapted to meet the needs of pupils and the physical

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC
tions of their placement. Some of these pupils are taught in wards and special classrooms in hospitals. Here complex teaching problems are set by

the comparatively rapid turnover in hospital school populations, the widely varying abilities of these pupils, and the diverse courses of study being undertaken by them (particularly the considerable number of pupils undertaking secondary and technical courses). Specially adapted programmes are provided for home-bound children through correspondence tuition and assistance from visiting teachers. Other day special school pupils follow a wide range of programmes which proceed in conjunction with medical treatment. Furniture and equipment and materials of learning are adapted wherever necessary to enable pupils to participate in such programs.

Deaf Children

For deaf children, specialised teaching stresses language development, auditory training, speech teaching, and speech reading. For those children unable to establish adequate oral communication, combined methods provide also for training in finger spelling and signing. Emphasis is placed on early diagnosis of deafness and early introduction to communication skills. Selected deaf children in normal schools receive individual tuition in speech reading and auditory discrimination from visiting teachers of the deaf.

Partially Sighted Children

Partially sighted children follow programs closely approximating to those in normal schools, with the help of specialised magnifying equipment and material printed in large type.

A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO THE EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

By combining under the Director of Special Services not only the education of handicapped children but also twelve specialised inter-divisional services, the opportunity has been provided for closer co-ordination of skills.

It will already be apparent that the resources of the Psychology and Guidance Branch, of the Homecrafts Branch, and of the Art/Craft Branch are fully available to handicapped children. So too are the skills of the Curriculum and Research Branch.

In addition to this, however, the Physical Education Branch has devoted two years to a special study of the needs of handicapped children and a senior officer is permanently assigned to this area.

Special assistance for mentally handicapped children as well as deaf children has also been initiated by the Speech Therapy Branch. Particular attention to the needs of the handicapped has been paid by the Audio Visual Education Centre and this has also involved close collaboration with the research section of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The Publications Branch is engaged on a typographical study to determine the type faces most suitable for normal vision and those most suitable for impaired vision. Financial assistance and advice has been given by the Camps Committee to the Camp for Special Schools (Mentally Handicapped). Consultant services have also been available to the Camp for Physically Handicapped Children.

More recently the resources of the Library Services Branch and the Music Branch have been directed to the special needs of various types of handicapped children.

Multi-disciplinary approaches extend beyond these fields. There is close liaison with the Chair of Special Education at Monash University and the first year of a five year longitudinal study of specific reading disabilities has just been completed. This research originated from the findings at the Demonstration Unit and involves the Psychology and Guidance Branch, the Curriculum and Research Branch, the Speech Therapy Branch, the

A JOINT ENTERPRISE

The Education Department works in very close liaison with voluntary agencies concerned with handicapped children as well as with other government bodies such as the Social Welfare Department, the Mental Health Authority and the Health Department.

Close liaison is also achieved in the activities of post-school placement groups who assist in planning for post-school training where appropriate, and for placement in sheltered employment where suitable. These groups include representatives of the Department's teaching and psychological staffs, representatives of the voluntary agencies, and representatives from the Commonwealth Employment Service and the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED

A recent survey of children leaving the Victorian Education Department's Schools for Intellectually Handicapped Children reveal these facts:-

- (1) About three-quarters of the children attending Special Schools for the intellectually handicapped can be employed if suitable help is available in preparing for a job, finding a job and during the "settling in" period. Left entirely to their own initiative, parents will not achieve this degree of success.
- (2) Systematic parent counselling would help some parents to accept their child's handicap and the limitations in his employment, and it would help all parents in building up their child's strengths and in actually obtaining employment for him.

(3) We cannot say with any certainty that certain difficulties preclude employment, or that certain assets ensure it. An employable personality is built by a continual awareness in all concerned with the child of the need to throw into the positive side of the balance every possible experience which can be of value in achieving independence and social adjustment.

In the three year period considered in the survey, 60% of school leavers had obtained employment and better than 90% of these have remained in employment either by holding their jobs or by moving to similar or better work.

For Physically Handicapped Children employment is more difficult. Only 14% of children leaving special schools have gone straight to employment other than that provided in sheltered workshops. A further 16% were referred for Commonwealth Rehabilitation training. At present 20% of school leavers are employed while a further 10% are likely to be employed. However, half of these are post-polio cases. As the numbers of post-polio children are rapidly diminishing, the employment ratio is likely to drop.

Inability to use public transport, to negotiate stairs, to use a toilet, or to manoeuvre a wheelchair through an office are all limiting factors in securing employment.

Deaf Children Leaving Special Schools

About 93% have been placed in employment, some after a period of training at the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Centre.

Partially Sighted Children.

Providing early parent counselling takes place, employment is generally not difficult to find.

SUCCESSSES, PROBLEMS AND FUTURE PLANS

Successes in Existing Programs in Victoria

We feel that particular success has been achieved in educating handicapped children in the State of Victoria in the following instances:

- The 1965 Remedial Education Committee Report postulated that:-

"It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that every child is given an educational program appropriate to his level of attainment and the nature of his educational difficulties."

From the recommendations of that report have stemmed the following:

- (i) Establishment of the Demonstration Unit.
 - (ii) Conversion of Opportunity Grades (a type of segregation within a normal school) to dual purpose Opportunity Remedial Centres.
 - (iii) The establishment and acceptance by teachers of consultant specialist teachers.
 - (iv) The introduction of "open" education on a limited basis for mentally handicapped pupils.
- The influence of the Psychology and Guidance Branch in changing the attitudes of teachers and the effect of smaller teacher-pupil ratios in normal classes have jointly resulted in schools showing an increasing capacity to contain a variety of individual differences within normal classrooms.
 - The results of the visiting Teachers of the Deaf service in "open education".
 - "Open education" for the majority of partially sighted children by the provision of large-type material and specialist advice to class teachers.
 - "Open education" for physically handicapped children by provision of special aids, ramps, and professional advice in normal schools.

- . The additional year of training given for teachers of the deaf and teachers in special schools, classes, and services.
- . Effective use of the Initial Teaching Alphabet for mentally handicapped children, and of the Peabody Kits for educationally deprived physically handicapped children.
- . The development of auditory training facilities in conjunction with specialist resources of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.
- . Educational services for home bound children and children in hospitals.
- . The establishment of an extensive transport system for handicapped children.

Problems in Existing Programs

The major problems encountered in Victoria in recent years have been:

- . Obtaining sufficient finance for buildings, equipment and supplies.
- . Up-dating the training of specialist teachers and maintaining their professional growth.
- . Creating career opportunities in special education at least equivalent to those in general fields.
- . If it is accepted that learning disabilities must be reached not only through development of perceptual deficits but primarily through the remediation of motor disorders, costly equipment will be necessary; and current financial resources are scarcely equal to the task.
- . Reduction of travelling time by extension of schools and by modification of transport services.

- Waiting lists for mentally handicapped children; and for children requiring speech therapy. In the latter case, the need is for more speech therapists. At present they must be experienced, capable and fully qualified teachers before they are accepted for the three year full-time course for the Diploma of Speech Therapy.
- Adequate provision for the transition stage between completion of "special" schooling and employment.

Future Programs and Plans

Some elements of particular interest in future planning for handicapped children in Victoria are:

- The second year of a five year multi-disciplinary study of language and reading disabilities has commenced. Its findings are expected to have a profound effect on methods to be used for handicapped and other children.
- The establishment of a Remedial Clinic to deal with problems of severe and specific learning disabilities.
- The erection of two large day special schools for physically handicapped children by 1973.
- The erection of three day special schools for mentally handicapped children by 1972.

(Note: Plans for these schools are based on a forward looking approach to the specific needs of handicapped children and are the result of advice from experienced teachers and medical personnel as well as architects).

- Modification of curricula in the light of opportunities provided by modern buildings and the real needs of the pupils as well as the findings of modern research.

- . A survey is currently being taken to re-assess the training course for teachers of mentally, socially, emotionally and physically handicapped children.
- . The need to provide career opportunities for specialists has already been partially recognised. It is hoped that further progress will be made in this direction.
- . New schools and an extension of the "open education" developments are expected to solve the problem of waiting lists for mentally handicapped children.
- . New legislation is expected to be passed making it possible to employ speech therapists who are not teachers. They will be under the direction of trained teacher speech therapists. Consideration will need to be given to a course for teacher-speech therapists that provides a quicker avenue to this field than at present.
- . Promotion of community attitudes whereby handicapped persons are accepted by society during and after the period when "official" provision is made.
- . Community involvement in the transition stage between school and employment.

..25/.

III EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN
IN OTHER AUSTRALIAN STATES

Differences in Approach

As indicated earlier, the situation in the State of Victoria has been outlined by way of example of the present situation of the teaching of handicapped children in Australia.

It should be made clear, however, that there are two matters of substance where the several States of Australia differ in their approach: the relative involvement of Public Health Authorities in the education of mentally handicapped children compared with Education Authorities; and the degree of involvement of voluntary agencies compared with that of Government authorities.

Concerning the involvement of Public Health Authorities, in the States of Victoria and Queensland the Health Authorities are generally responsible for the care of what are termed the moderately and the severely mentally handicapped.

In other States the Education Authorities are responsible for the "moderately" mentally handicapped and there is some sharing of responsibility with the Health Authorities for the "severely" mentally handicapped. There does however, appear to be a trend towards an increasing degree of involvement of educationists in Australia in the training and education of both the moderately and the severely mentally handicapped.

Concerning the relative involvement of voluntary agencies in the education of handicapped children, again the pattern shows some variation between the States. In the three larger States, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, voluntary bodies play a significant role particularly in the care of the moderately and severely mentally handicapped, while in the three smaller

States, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania it is generally true that the voluntary bodies play a less important part in the actual education of handicapped children.

The substantial involvement of voluntary bodies in the States of Victoria and Queensland may be partly a reflection of the fact that the care of "moderately" mentally handicapped children in these States has been the responsibility of the Health Authorities which are not otherwise involved in education. In both these States the subsidies provided to the voluntary bodies by the State Governments are very substantial e.g. in Victoria the Government pays the award salaries of teachers in centres for mentally handicapped children and makes available a 3:1 subsidy on buildings and fixed equipment.

Co-ordination of Voluntary Agencies

In the State of New South Wales the Government has established a Consultative Council on the Intellectually Handicapped comprising representatives from Government agencies and the major voluntary bodies to advise it on the provision of facilities - health, education and social welfare - in the field of the mentally handicapped. Co-ordination of activities, both as between individual voluntary bodies and between voluntary bodies and the Government, is also encouraged through the allocation of Government subsidies. A Standing Committee of the several Government Departments having responsibilities in the field advises on the allocation of Government subsidies, which are substantial, and ensures as far as possible the rationalisation of facilities and the avoidance of duplication.

Although this co-ordinating machinery applies in the field of the mentally handicapped only, this encompasses the largest number of handicapped children as well as the area in which voluntary bodies are most active -

In the State of Queensland, the education as well as a substantial part of the health and welfare services for the "moderately" mentally handicapped is largely in the hands of a large and well organised voluntary body, the Queensland Subnormal Children's Welfare Association, whose activities cover virtually the whole of the State. Consequently, co-ordination particularly in the sense of avoiding the duplication of facilities, is more or less automatically assured. The Association conducts 20 schools and employs 93 full-time teachers as well as operating a number of sheltered workshops, hostels and employing its own diagnostic staff.

The State Government provides substantial subsidies in the form of a fixed amount per teacher (\$7,000 at present) and grants for capital expenditure. It also matches funds raised by the Association on a \$ for \$ basis up to a certain maximum. In 1968/69 the State Government assistance amounted to \$278,000.

In that year, the Association received Commonwealth Government assistance for capital works amounting to \$189,000. The Association now also receives Commonwealth grants towards school running costs, amounting to \$37,500 in the 1970 school year, and Commonwealth subsidy towards the running costs of its hostels for handicapped children of some \$23,000 in 1969/70.

Summary of Provisions for Handicapped
Children by Victorian Education Department

Type of Handicap	School or Facilities	Pupil Enrolment	Number of Trained Tchrs. supplied by Educ. Dept. 1970
<u>Deafness</u>	4 Day Special Schls.	424	88
	1 Hostel	32	2
	Teaching Services:-		
	Parent Guidance	80	8
	Visiting Teachers	471	27
<u>Partial Sight</u>	1 Day Special School	36	8
<u>Crippling H'cap</u>	5 Hospital Schools	71	15
	5 Day Special Schools	467	74
	1 Correspondence/ Visiting Teacher Unit	450	9
<u>Intellectual</u>	11 Day Special Schls.	1000	137
	3 Institutional		
	Spec. Schls: M.H.A.	297	40
	71 Opportunity/Remedial Centres	1065 long term)	71
		1633 short term)	
		3 "Op'n education" special units	60
	1 Visiting teacher	15	1
<u>Emotional</u>	1 Institutional Spec. School: M.H.A.	36	8
	3 Social Adjustment Grades	22	3
<u>Social/ Educat.</u> 1	20 S.W.D. ^o , Church, Prison and Instit. ¹ Spec. Schls.	907	126
<u>Educational</u>	1 Demonstration Unit	-	13
	12 Remedial Centres	168	12
	3 Remedial Reading Units	-	4
	Totals	7234	651

1. 27% 605,000 +
 A \$ 11 374 A \$ 1 = U.S. \$ 1.12
 \$ 20 = 22.40
 \$100 = 112.00

2. Central
 5 Divs
 D.S.S.
 Vol. orgs. / S.W.D. - Health - HIA

3. Teacher Training + I.S.E.
 TPTC TSp TC TTDC H'Craft A/C
 P & G Sp. Ther. P.Ed. AVE

4. Teacher ratios / Transport

5. Buildings

6. Referrals + Ages of admission 4½ 5m
 6 4½

7. Basic Philosophy
 " Every Child -----
 " Loc. comp. / self dep./ dignity
 " Share -----

Framework for "open" education

Deaf VIT + 4 + hostel + P & G
 Blind/P-sighted - logs + 1
 P-handicapped 5 hosp. 1 Corres/VT 5 Spec.
 E-h'capped 1 + 3

BUT

H. h'capped 11 + 3 + 71
 THRUSTING PHILOS. DOWN THROATS -
 Excessive Caution

FIRSTLY -

- 8. (a) Attitudes / class sizes / climate for acceptance
- (b) Demo Unit Con
- (c) O/G O/R/C (Leg. - Int.)
 Again Con
- (d) Special Units - W'hoool E./ Shep
 Milcham
 Glenroy

9. Problems
1. Waiting lists
 2. Finance - D-G Bldgs.
Equip.
 3. Career opportunities 60 TSp.T.C. - T.C. also allowances
 4. Prof. growth -- I.S.E. -- Updating
 5. 5 yr. long. study -- computer time.
10. Film