



LET HER
LEARN

STOPPING SCHOOL PUSHOUT
for Girls with Disabilities

ABOUT THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

The National Women's Law Center is a non-profit organization that has worked for more than 40 years to expand opportunities for women and their families, with a major emphasis on education and employment opportunities, women's health and reproductive rights, and family economic security.

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Authors: Karen Schulman
Kayla Patrick
Neena Chaudhry

Design and Production: Beth Stover

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GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES

Girls with disabilities face significant barriers to getting the education to which they are entitled. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees students with disabilities ages 3 through 21 the right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment and requires that special education and related services be made available to every eligible child. Yet many girls with disabilities are missing out on the educational opportunities that the law promises them. Studies suggest that schools are not identifying all of those girls who have disabilities, and even when girls with disabilities are identified, the special education services they receive may not be sufficient to help them succeed in school and prepare for life after school.

Girls with disabilities also experience substantial barriers—insufficient attention, disproportionate discipline, sexual abuse and violence, and restraint and seclusion—that endanger their ability to stay and succeed in school, as well as their future employment and financial prospects. For example, 8.4 percent of girls with disabilities served by IDEA, including 21.3 percent of multiracial girls with disabilities and 18.6 percent of Black girls with disabilities, received one or more out-of-school suspensions, compared to 2.8 percent of girls without disabilities. Policymakers, schools, and communities can all take steps to better recognize and meet the needs of girls with disabilities and boost their chances for educational and career success.

This report summarizes the obstacles that prevent girls with disabilities from learning and thriving and makes recommendations for helping girls with disabilities overcome these obstacles so they can succeed in school and beyond.

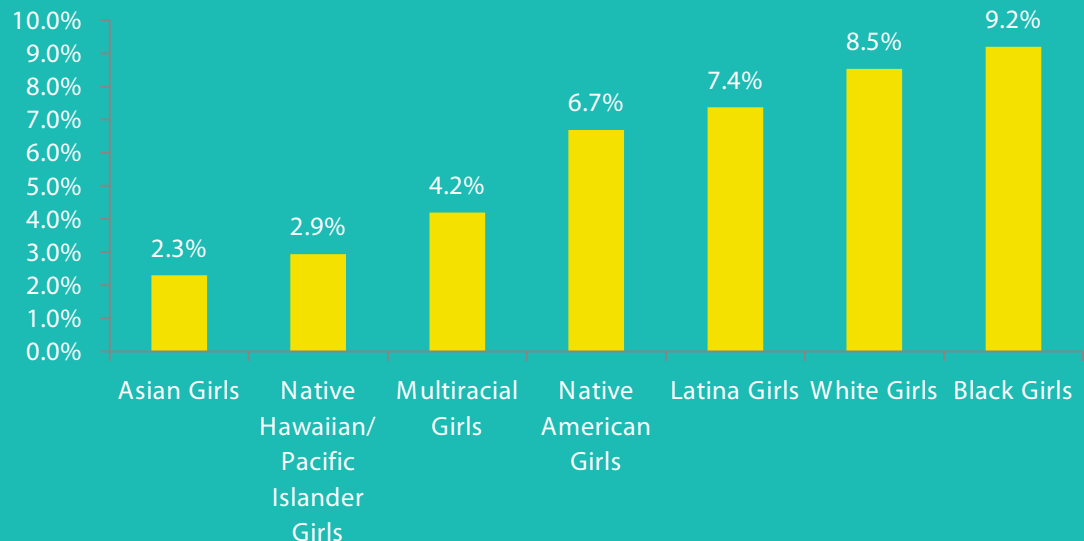
INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Under federal law, public schools must create a written Individual Education Program (IEP) for every student receiving special education services through IDEA. The law specifies the elements that the IEP must contain, which include the student's present level of educational performance, the special education and related services to be provided, annual educational goals, and a description of how the student's progress will be measured and reported. The law also sets out who must be part of the team that develops the IEP, including the student's parents, at least one of the student's general education teachers, at least one special education teacher or other special education provider, a school district representative, a school psychologist or other specialist who can interpret the student's evaluation and test results, and the student if age 16 or older. — Center for Parent Information and Resources, *The Short-and-Sweet IEP Overview* (March 2013)

Background on Girls with Disabilities

Girls with disabilities confront barriers to being identified for and receiving appropriate special education services under IDEA. In the 2013-14 school year, there were approximately 1.88 million girls ages six to 21 identified as having disabilities by IDEA¹—8.4 percent of girls in elementary and secondary education.² The percentage of girls receiving special education services varies by race: 9.2 percent of Black girls, 8.5 percent of white girls, 7.4 percent of Latina girls, 6.7 percent of Native American³ girls, 4.2 percent of multiracial girls, 2.9 percent of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander girls, and 2.3 percent of Asian girls are served under IDEA (**Figure 1**).⁴

Figure 1. Percentage of Girls Served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by Race



Source: NWLC Calculations from 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC).

The number of girls identified as having disabilities under IDEA is roughly half the number of boys identified (**Figure 2**).⁵ The discrepancy is particularly high for some disabilities. For example, five and a half times as many boys as girls are identified as having autism. In contrast, for physical disabilities such as those related to vision and hearing, the number of girls identified is only slightly lower than the number of boys identified.⁶

GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED UNDER SECTION 504

This report focuses on data for girls with disabilities served under IDEA, but there are also over 383,000 girls with disabilities (1.6 percent of girls in elementary and secondary education)—and over 595,000 boys (2.3 percent of boys in elementary and secondary education)—served under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.⁷ This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities by programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Under Section 504, school districts must provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students who have a physical or mental condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities.⁸

The definition of disability under Section 504 is **broader than that** under IDEA, which identifies 13 specific categories of disabilities. As a result, a child who does not qualify for services under IDEA may qualify for services under Section 504. Students who qualify under Section 504 must be provided with a plan for how they will have access to learning at school; yet, unlike the Individualized Education Program (IEP) required under IDEA, the 504 plan does not have a standardized format and does not have to be written. Students are not charged for services provided under Section 504. However, states, which receive additional funding for students eligible under IDEA, do not receive additional funding for students eligible under Section 504.⁹

There are more than twice as many boys as girls identified with disabilities under IDEA for certain racial groups, including Asian students (2.7 times as many boys as girls identified), multiracial students (2.7 times as many boys as girls identified), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students (2.5 times as many boys as girls identified).¹⁰

It is not clear the extent to which the discrepancy in identification of disabilities between girls and boys is due to an actual discrepancy in the prevalence of disabilities versus a discrepancy in the likelihood of identification for special education services. This disparity may simply reflect that more boys than girls have certain disabilities. But it is also possible that girls are equally likely to have certain disabilities as boys, yet less likely than boys to be identified as such.¹¹ Since we do not have a separate, “true” measure of the prevalence of disabilities among girls and boys, it is difficult to determine the role of bias versus biology. However, studies that have attempted to use objective measures to

Figure 2. Number of Students Served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by Gender and Type of Disability

Type of disability	6 to 21 years old		
	Male	Female	Male to Female Ratio
All disabilities	3,770,750	1,879,635	2.01
Autism	399,598	73,681	5.42
Emotional disturbance	256,362	86,710	2.96
Other health impairment	561,870	228,734	2.46
Developmental delay	92,593	39,427	2.35
Speech or language impairment	675,197	334,488	2.02
Traumatic brain injury	15,974	9,063	1.76
Specific learning disability	1,379,873	830,620	1.66
Multiple disabilities	76,672	47,079	1.63
Orthopedic impairment	29,703	19,499	1.52
Intellectual disability	232,560	167,692	1.39
Visual impairment	13,846	10,967	1.26
Deaf-blindness	680	582	1.17
Hearing impairment	35,822	31,093	1.15

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, Children three to 21-years-old served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, by age group and sex, race/ethnicity, and type of disability: 2013-14, available at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.50.asp. Calculation of ratios by the National Women's Law Center.

isolate the effects of gender bias in identification show that girls with special education needs similar to those of boys are less likely to be referred for services.¹²

While there are no definitive explanations for why girls with disabilities may be less likely to be identified for special needs services, research suggests some possible reasons. Girls' disabilities may tend to be less visible to teachers and other adults when those disabilities present differently. For example, the massive discrepancy between boys and girls in identification for emotional disturbance—with nearly three times as many boys identified as girls (**Figure 2**)—may be due to differences in observable behavior between boys and girls. While boys are more likely to act out and disrupt classes, girls are much more likely to display internalized behavior such as anxiety, depression and withdrawal—behaviors that are less noticeable and more easily tolerated in a classroom.¹³

Similarly, more research is needed to determine the extent to which the differences in identification across racial groups reflect differences in the likelihood of having a disability versus differences in being identified. For example, Black girls are four times as likely as Asian girls to be identified as having disabilities under IDEA—as shown in Figure 1, 9.2 percent of Black girls versus 2.3 percent of Asian girls are identified.¹⁴ This pattern may have a range of explanations—from differences in experiences and resources in the early years of life that affect the need for special education services once the girls are in school, to over-identification of Black girls and under-identification of Asian girls stemming from racial stereotypes and assumptions.¹⁵

Barriers to Success in School for Girls with Disabilities

Even when girls are identified as eligible for special education services, they may not receive the supports and education they need. Girls with disabilities face a number of serious barriers to succeeding in school—including lack of attention, disproportionate discipline, sexual abuse and violence, and restraint and seclusion. These barriers can have a number of harmful consequences, including frequent absences from school, low achievement levels, failure to graduate from high school, lack of opportunities to pursue higher education, unemployment, and poverty. These troubling outcomes are interrelated and affect girls with disabilities both during their elementary and secondary school years and long after.

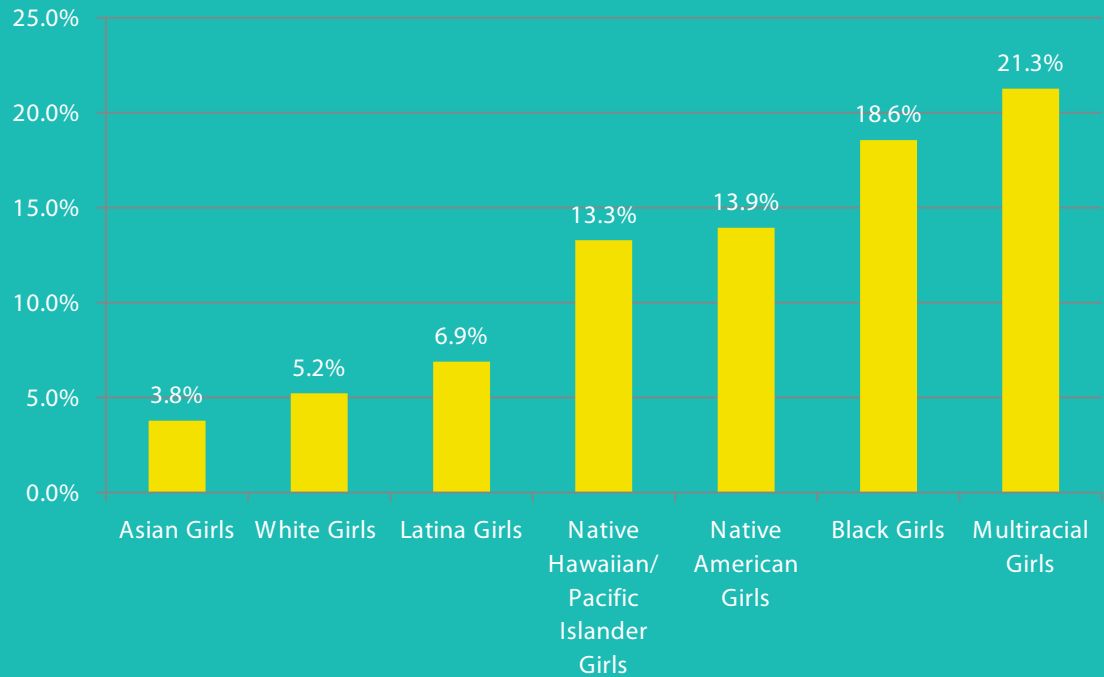
Insufficient Attention

Girls with disabilities may not get sufficiently noticed in class because they do not call attention to themselves or because their teachers have low expectations for them, due to stereotypes related to both their gender and their disabilities.¹⁶ For girls with disabilities who are referred to a separate special education classroom (because an inclusive environment is not sufficient to address their needs), these problems may be exacerbated by the fact that, due to the gender discrepancy in identification, girls are likely to be outnumbered by boys in that classroom.¹⁷ Yet there is insufficient research on the extent to which biases affect teachers' expectations of girls with disabilities, effective strategies for overcoming those biases, or instructional approaches that successfully engage all students, including girls with disabilities.

Disproportionate Suspensions

Girls with disabilities are more likely to be suspended than girls without disabilities—8.4 percent of girls with disabilities received one or more out-of-school suspensions compared to 2.8 percent of girls without disabilities. Girls of color with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to suspensions. For example, 21.3 percent of multiracial girls with disabilities served by IDEA and 18.6 percent of Black girls with disabilities served by IDEA received one or more out-of-school suspensions, compared to 5.2 percent of white girls with disabilities served by IDEA (**Figure 3**).¹⁸

Figure 3. Percentage of Girls Served under IDEA Who Are Suspended from School, by Race



Source: NWLC Calculations from 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC).

Black girls with disabilities are 3.5 times more likely to be suspended than white girls with disabilities.

These disparities in exclusionary discipline rates are alarming and suggest that schools and teachers are not doing enough to provide girls with disabilities the supports and learning environment they need.¹⁹ Schools and teachers often lack effective strategies for addressing behavioral issues—which may be related to children’s disabilities—that do not involve removing them from school. Educators also may be unfairly punishing students—based on bias or stereotypes—when they are not doing anything wrong (see *Let Her Learn: Stopping School Pushout for Girls of Color* for further discussion).²⁰ And just as research has shown that Black girls are more likely to be suspended or expelled despite exhibiting no more frequent or serious misbehavior than white girls,²¹ girls with disabilities—and particularly girls of color with disabilities—may similarly suffer discriminatory discipline unrelated to their behavior. It is important for schools to recognize and address how the intersection of gender, disability, and race can lead to biased treatment of these girls.²² The high rates of suspension of girls with

disabilities is particularly concerning given that they may not be receiving the special educational services to which they are entitled while they are out of school.

In some cases, girls with disabilities are permanently removed from their schools and placed in alternative schools. In the 2015-16 school year, nearly 2.4 percent of girls with disabilities served by IDEA were placed in separate schools.²³ More research is needed on the extent to which such placements are used inappropriately for discipline and whether girls with disabilities are receiving the educational services to which they are entitled under IDEA in alternative schools.²⁴

Sexual Abuse and Violence

Girls with disabilities are at great risk of sexual abuse and violence. In general, children with disabilities (of both genders) are more likely than children without disabilities to experience abuse and violence. For example, a meta-analysis of studies found that children with disabilities were 2.9 times more likely than children without disabilities to be sexually abused.²⁵ Data also indicate that girls and women with disabilities are more likely than girls and women without disabilities to experience violence. From 2010 to 2014, the rate of violent victimization among females ages 12 and older with disabilities (30.3 per 1,000) was almost triple the rate among females without disabilities (11.0 per 1,000).²⁶

Girls with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and violence due to a range of factors, including physical challenges that can prevent them from protecting themselves, dependence on caregivers or others who may abuse them, stereotypes about people with disabilities, and lack of opportunities for comprehensive sexual education.²⁷ When they do experience abuse or violence, girls with disabilities may have difficulty communicating what happened or convincing others to believe them, or may decide not to report incidents because it would make it harder for them to fit in with their peers.²⁸ As a result, girls with disabilities who are victims of sexual abuse or violence may not receive the help they need to recover and may not be able to spur actions from school officials or others to prevent future abuse.

Restraint and Seclusion

Girls with disabilities are disproportionately subject to restraint and seclusion in school, which can cause serious physical and emotional harm. In the 2013-2014 school year:

- 9,056 girls with disabilities served under IDEA were subjected to physical restraint—a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move his or her torso, arms, legs, or head freely;²⁹
- 3,855 girls with disabilities were subjected to seclusion—the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving;³⁰ and
- 456 girls with disabilities were subjected to mechanical restraint—the use of any device or equipment to restrict a student's freedom of movement.³¹

These numbers may understate the extent to which restraint and seclusion are used due to underreporting by schools.³²

Girls with disabilities under IDEA account for 25.6 percent of girls who are mechanically restrained, 48.8 percent of girls who are secluded, and 70.0 percent of girls who are physically restrained, even though they account for just 8.4 percent of the total population of girls in public schools.³³ Multiracial girls with disabilities under IDEA are three times more likely to experience seclusion than girls of other races.³⁴

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In its 2016 guidance letter to school districts, the U.S. Department of Education notes that while these disparities do not automatically prove discrimination, they need to be carefully examined and the use of these practices minimized to the extent possible.³⁵ The use of restraint or seclusion can be traumatic for students and may have particularly severe impacts on students whose disabilities make them physically or emotionally vulnerable.³⁶ The Department recommends that “school districts never use mechanical restraint, that school districts never use physical restraint or seclusion for disciplinary purposes, and that trained school officials should use physical restraint or seclusion only if a child’s behavior poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others.”³⁷

Many schools have reduced the use of restraint and seclusion by implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports, which is a multi-tiered schoolwide approach to creating an environment that encourages children’s learning and development while minimizing problem behavior for all children.³⁸ Studies have found that this approach has been effective in promoting positive behavior, reducing behavioral problems, and decreasing referrals for discipline.³⁹

High Rates of Absenteeism

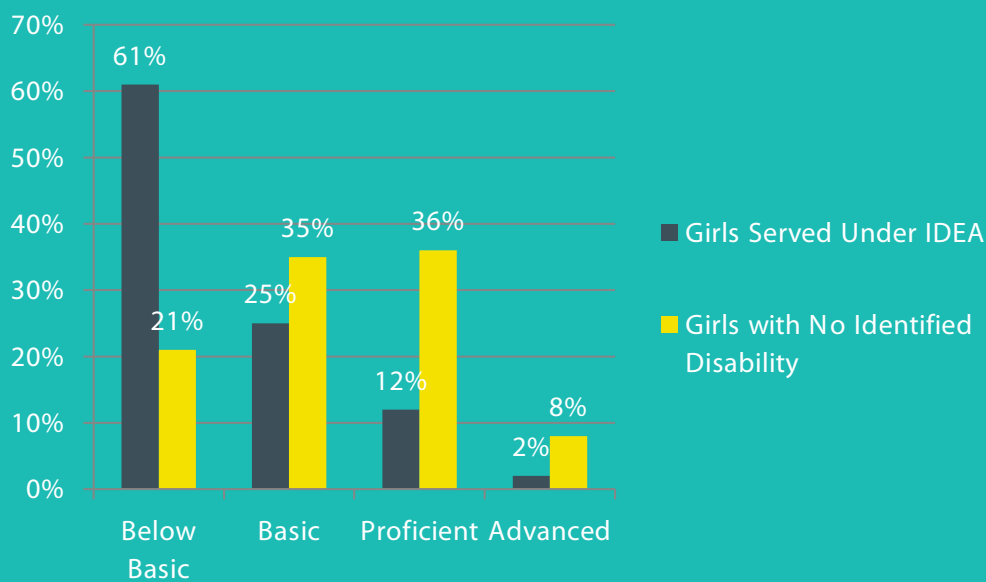
Girls with disabilities have very high rates of absenteeism. They may be more likely to be absent due to health problems tied to their disabilities or an environment that is unwelcoming or that does not accommodate their special needs.⁴⁰ One out of five girls (19.5 percent) served by IDEA are chronically absent, compared to 17.3 percent of boys served by IDEA, 13.1 percent of all girls, and 12.9 percent of all boys.⁴¹ Such high levels of absenteeism are a major concern given studies showing that chronic absenteeism can negatively affect students’ learning, school performance, chances of graduation, and prospects after school.⁴²

Further Progress Needed in Achievement Levels

Data on achievement test scores show that many girls with disabilities can and do acquire the skills and knowledge they need to succeed during and after school. But many girls with disabilities have low achievement levels and need further support to reach their full potential.⁴³ For example, among twelfth-grade girls with disabilities, 61 percent are below the basic level in reading, 25 percent are at the basic level, 12 percent

are at the proficient level, and only 2 percent are at the advanced level, according to the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (**Figure 4**). By comparison, among twelfth-grade girls without identified disabilities, 21 percent are below the basic level in reading, 35 percent are at the basic level, 36 percent are at the proficient level, and 8 percent are at the advanced level.⁴⁴

Figure 4. Percentage of 12th Grade Girls at Each Achievement Level in Reading by Disability Status



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2015 Reading Assessment.

Room for Improvement in Graduation Rates

Among girls and young women ages 14 through 21 with disabilities served under IDEA who exited school, 67 percent exited because they graduated with a regular high school diploma, 15 percent received an alternative certification, 16 percent dropped out, and 1 percent reached the maximum age for services.⁴⁵ These figures show that a large portion of girls with disabilities are able to make it successfully through high school and that, while not inevitable, graduation is very possible. Yet the graduation rate is still too low and the dropout rate is still too high for these students.

Long-Term Impacts of Educational Barriers on Girls with Disabilities

The barriers described above make it harder for girls with disabilities to stay in school and succeed, which can harm their employment prospects and long-term economic security.

Insufficient Opportunities for Postsecondary Education

While many young women with disabilities successfully complete high school, they often do not receive sufficient supports and encouragement to pursue postsecondary education after they leave high school. A longitudinal study found that young adults with disabilities were less likely than young adults in the general population to enroll in postsecondary education (60 percent compared to 67 percent).⁴⁶ And among those who enrolled, young adults with disabilities were less likely than young adults in the general population to complete their postsecondary education program (41 percent compared to 52 percent).⁴⁷ Another study found that young women ages 16 to 21 with an IEP were less likely than young men with an IEP to report taking a college entrance or placement exam (38 versus 43 percent).⁴⁸

High Unemployment Rates

When barriers prevent girls with disabilities from receiving the education to which they are entitled, it becomes that much more difficult for them to gain stable employment after they finish school. Women with disabilities have low labor force participation rates and high unemployment rates. Just 16.7 percent of women with disabilities (over age 16) participated in the labor force (were working or looking for work) in 2015, slightly lower than the 22.8 percent of men with disabilities who participated in the labor force, and much lower than the 62.3 percent of women without disabilities and 75.0 percent of men without disabilities who participated in the labor force.⁴⁹ Among those participating in the labor force, 10.8 percent of women with disabilities were unemployed, similar to the 10.6 unemployment rate for men with disabilities, but more than twice the unemployment rate for women without disabilities (5.0 percent) and men without disabilities (5.2 percent).⁵⁰

Even when women with disabilities are employed, they have lower earnings than workers without disabilities. In 2015, the median income for women with disabilities working full-time year-round was \$35,800, compared to \$40,000 for women without disabilities working full-time year-round, \$48,000 for men with disabilities working full-time year-round, and \$50,000 for men without disabilities working full-time year-round.⁵¹

Risk of Poverty

The low employment and earnings levels among women with disabilities contribute to high poverty levels among this population. Almost one-third of women with disabilities are living in poverty. The poverty rate for women with disabilities ages 18 to 64 (31.6 percent) is higher than for men with disabilities (25.3 percent), women without disabilities (12.7 percent), and men without disabilities (9.3 percent).⁵²

WITH SUPPORTS, GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES CAN SUCCEED: ONE GIRL'S STORY

A girl with agoraphobia/school phobia, which had been exacerbated due to bullying at school, had been referred by the school district to the juvenile justice system for truancy. Her parents had tried unsuccessfully to get her to attend school. She had worked with in-home behavioral services but they were not able to provide sufficient support in the morning long-term to assist her in attending school regularly. She had never been evaluated for special education.

After an attorney advocated for her, she was provided with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and an independent evaluator specializing in anxiety disorders created a desensitization plan. The district hired an aide to implement the plan and provided a full-time homebound program while the plan was carried out. Over time, the plan helped the girl enter the school building for longer and longer periods of time, until eventually she was able to attend regular classes. She graduated with a regular diploma and went on to attend community college.⁵³

Recommendations for Helping Girls with Disabilities Succeed in School

With educational supports, teaching tailored to their individual needs and ways of learning, a safe and welcoming school climate, and appropriate accommodations, it is possible for girls with disabilities to succeed in school. It is also essential to look more closely at those girls with disabilities who are graduating or demonstrating other positive outcomes and determine what helped them succeed—and apply that information to help more do the same. Policymakers, educators, parents/guardians, and advocates can take the following actions to ensure greater educational opportunities and success for girls with disabilities.

Policymakers

- Policymakers should engage girls with disabilities in the process of crafting solutions to the educational barriers they face—through youth advisory committees or other strategies—making sure to include a diverse set of voices. (One way of doing this is by creating youth advisory committees like the Young Women's Initiatives, first launched in New York City, <http://www.shewillbe.nyc/>.)
- Congress should ensure that girls with disabilities receive the educational services to which they are entitled by fully funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The federal government should cover 40 percent of the additional cost to educate IDEA-eligible students—the commitment made by Congress when it passed the law in 1975 that has never been fulfilled (the federal government currently covers only 16 percent of these costs).⁵⁴
- The U.S. Department of Education should ensure that girls with disabilities receive the services to which they are entitled by actively enforcing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- The U.S. Department of Education and states should continue to collect, analyze, and publish data through the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), IDEA, and other sources—by race and ethnicity and cross-tabulated by gender—on students identified with disabilities, the special education services they receive, the disciplinary actions they experience (including restraint and seclusion practices), and their educational outcomes.
- The U.S. Department of Education should support research on the extent to which girls with disabilities are not being appropriately identified for special education, and if so, why and what strategies will better enable appropriate referrals.

- The U.S. Department of Education should support research to determine the causes of high rates of suspensions, restraint and seclusion, and absenteeism among girls with disabilities and develop and evaluate potential strategies for reducing these educational barriers among this population.
- Federal and state policymakers should adopt legislation to eliminate the use of restraint and seclusion of students for disciplinary purposes, and to limit the use of restraint and seclusion to only those situations where a student is posing an imminent risk of serious physical harm to themselves or others.
- States should ensure that all educators are trained on their obligations towards students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other civil rights laws and outline steps they need to take to comply with these laws.

Schools

- Schools should ensure appropriate identification of girls with disabilities by:
 - Developing standardized processes for identifying disabilities that fairly assess students and that minimize the potential for bias in identifying students for special education services.
 - Providing training for teachers on appropriately identifying students for potential referrals for special education placement.
 - Providing teachers and administrative staff with training to address bias and the intersection of race, gender, and disability.
- Schools should ensure girls with disabilities receive individualized instruction and supports tailored to their needs, in inclusive environments, by:
 - Working with teachers to ensure they view students with disabilities as individuals, and not simply in terms of their disability or racial/ethnic identity.
 - Providing teachers with training, curriculum models, and ongoing guidance to enable them to focus on each student's individual learning and learning process.
 - Supporting inclusive classroom environments that allow both boys and girls, both with and without disabilities, to receive individualized attention—without segregating classes by disability and/or gender, which may only reinforce stereotypes.⁵⁵
 - Obtaining regular input from parents to guide individualized instruction plans and any necessary behavioral interventions for their children.
 - Using technology to implement personalized learning strategies while ensuring that the technology is accessible for every student.
 - Preventing inappropriate placements of girls with disabilities in alternative schools.

- Schools should ensure girls with disabilities have a comfortable, secure environment for learning by:
 - Developing and providing training for teachers on effective classroom management strategies and positive behavioral interventions and supports for girls with disabilities to avoid suspensions and expulsions.
 - Providing training to all school leaders and staff on how to ensure a safe, inclusive, and responsive environment for girls with disabilities.
 - Taking steps to prevent, identify, and respond promptly and appropriately to harassment and abuse of girls with disabilities.
 - Ensuring that restraint and seclusion practices are only used when absolutely necessary to prevent imminent harm to a student and are not used in discriminatory ways.
 - Helping all students understand the experiences of classmates with disabilities and encouraging everyone to treat their fellow students—with or without disabilities—with respect.
 - Identifying and addressing any barriers that prevent girls with disabilities from attending school regularly.
 - Taking steps to ensure that the IEP process is an inclusive team process and that the concerns of girls with disabilities and their parents/guardians are heard and addressed.
- Schools should use data they collect on the educational barriers and progress for girls with disabilities enrolled in their schools—including data on absences, suspensions, restraint and seclusion, and graduation rates—in order to develop better strategies for supporting these students' education and ensure compliance with the civil rights laws.
- Schools should ensure that girls with disabilities and their families are empowered to protect their own rights to an appropriate education by providing training to students with disabilities and their families on advocating for themselves.
- Schools should ensure they are accessible and responsive to all parents/guardians of students with disabilities, including parents/guardians who themselves have disabilities, and that they provide materials and information in formats that accommodate the needs of all parents and in the primary languages spoken by the parents.

Parents/Guardians and Advocates

- Parents/guardians and advocates can obtain information from federal, state, and local agencies, schools, and community advocacy organizations about the laws related to special education and the special education services to which students with disabilities are entitled.
- Parents/guardians whose children have disabilities can inform teachers and school leaders when their children are experiencing problems at school and work with the teachers and schools to address those problems.
- Parents/guardians and advocates can learn from federal, state, and local agencies, schools, and community advocacy organizations about the process for challenging decisions related to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of children with disabilities when teachers and schools do not provide the services and accommodations to which the children are entitled.
- Parents/guardians and advocates can use available data from the CRDC, IDEA, and other sources on exclusionary discipline and restraint and seclusion of children with disabilities to make the case to policymakers and schools for changes in policies and practices and training for teachers on laws and best practices.
- Parents/guardians and advocates can take advantage of existing networks or form new networks to develop and advance policies, practices, and investments that support the educational success of girls with disabilities.

- 1 In addition, nearly 219,000 girls aged three to five were identified as having disabilities under IDEA. National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, Children three to 21-years-old served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, by age group and sex, race/ethnicity, and type of disability: 2013-14, available at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.50.asp.
- 2 National Women's Law Center calculations using data from the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2013-14. CRDC Public Use Data file contains rounded or suppressed data to protect the identity of individuals and to prevent disclosure of protected information. For more information, see the Public-Use Data File User's Manual for the 2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection.
- 3 Native American girls are those who were identified as Native American, American Indian or Native Alaskan.
- 4 National Women's Law Center calculations of data from the Civil Rights Data Collection.
- 5 National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, Children three to 21-years-old served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, by age group and sex, race/ethnicity, and type of disability: 2013-14, available at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_204.50.asp.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 National Women's Law Center calculations of data from the Civil Rights Data Collection.
- 8 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. No. 93-112, 87 Stat. 394 (1973); U.S. Department of Education, *Protecting Students with Disabilities: Frequently Asked Questions About Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities* (2015), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>.
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- 11 Emily Arms, Jill Bickett, and Victoria Graf, "Gender Bias and Imbalance: Girls in US Special Education Programmes," *Gender and Education* 20 (2008), 349-359; Kris Zorigian and Jennifer Job, LEARN NC, University of North Carolina School of Education, "Gender in Special Education" (2010), available at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/6817>.
- 12 Michael L. Wehmeyer and Michelle Schwartz, "Research on Gender Bias in Special Education Services," in *Double Jeopardy: Addressing Gender Equity in Special Education*, eds. Harilyn Rousso and Michael L. Wehmeyer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 275-76, 278.
- 13 Amy Srsic and Elisabeth Hess Rice, "Understanding the Experience of Girls with EBD in a Gender-Responsive Support Group," *Education and Treatment of Children* 35 (2012), 623-624; Wehmeyer and Schwartz, "Research on Gender Bias in Special Education Services," 274; Arms, Bickett, and Graf, "Gender Bias and Imbalance: Girls in US Special Education Programmes," 352.
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11 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 588-5180
Fax: (202) 588-5185
Email: info@nwlc.org
Website: nwlc.org