

NEWS

OF EDUCATION

The Value Of Special Education

(NAPSA)—Improved teaching methods have helped millions of American children with special needs reach new academic heights.

Studies show that a growing number of students with disabilities have joined their non-disabled peers and mastered grade level material. In addition, the number of students with disabilities who graduate high school and continue with a post-secondary education or move on to employment increases every year. Many say these achievements are largely due to special education.

“The work done by special educators and related service professionals is remarkable,” says Nancy Safer, executive director of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). “Special education helps students succeed,” she says—a notion supported by research.

The *20th Annual Report To Congress* states that the number of students with disabilities who graduate high school has increased by more than 30 percent in the past 10 years. Additionally, a 1998 study concluded that “special education programs on average have a significantly beneficial effect on performance.”

Many educators attribute the effectiveness of special education to the unique teaching styles the concept entails.

Effective strategies for teaching students with disabilities include intense, sustained instruction with a small student-to-teacher ratio, peer tutoring, direct



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instruction and specific skill instruction.

A recent George Mason University study found that among other things, children taught with such techniques improved in reading by a factor of four to one and in mathematics—including life skills, money and time management—by a significant factor as well.

According to Safer however, the benefits of special education may not be limited to the classroom. Today, special education helps teach children the skills they need to live and work independently in society. For many of the millions of American children with disabilities, that’s all the help they’ll need.

For more information, visit www.cec.sped.org.