Fact Sheet: Advancing Racial Equity in Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education (Abridged)

Read the full fact sheet at https://ectacenter.org/topics/racialequity/factsheet-racialequity-2023.asp

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The science is clear that the first years of children's lives set the foundation for their healthy development. A young child's race, gender, location, language, and ability should not determine their access to needed services, experiences, and outcomes.

1. Access to early intervention and early childhood special education for eligible children is a civil right provided under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
   1. 20 U.S.C §1400(c)(6)
   2. 34 CFR §303.1
   3. 20 U.S.C §1400(d)(1)(a)
   4. 20 U.S.C §1400(d)(1)(b)

2. IDEA includes requirements and priorities focused on equity, such as addressing disproportionality in identification and disciplinary practices.
   6. 20 U.S.C §1416
   7. 20 U.S.C §1418(d)(1)

3. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) provides funding to states to serve a diverse group of children with disabilities and their families.
4. Children who have access to early intervention and early childhood special education services and programs are more likely to have better outcomes compared to those who do not receive services.


5. Racial and economic disparities occur in access to early intervention and early childhood special education screening, identification, and referral.


7. Part B (ages 3–21) programs serve more Black and Hispanic children compared to other racial groups; however, there are racial differences in the disability categories under which they are deemed eligible.


8. Racial disparities occur in the outcomes for individuals with disabilities, and these disparities start early.


9. Children and families experience better outcomes when there is a racial/ethnic match with their educators.


10. Racial disparities that exist in disciplinary practices negatively impact children's learning opportunities.


