



NLTS2 Update

Spring 2002



The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) is sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education. NLTS2 will provide a rich description of the characteristics, experiences, and achievements of youth who are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and will identify factors that contribute to positive outcomes for youth.

Current Data Collection Activities

We are now in the process of completing our first wave of school data collection activities and are very excited to be receiving thousands of surveys, assessments, and transcripts. We have sent out school program surveys, teacher surveys, and school characteristic surveys to schools and have assessed hundreds of youths ages 16 through 18.

Upcoming Activities

We will begin our second round of parent interviews in the spring of 2003 and will end in the summer of 2003. We look forward to speaking with families again about their experiences.

Parent Interview Findings

We conducted interviews with parents during the spring and summer of 2001. This newsletter describes what we've learned during these interviews about the types of disabilities, age, gender, and racial background of youth in this study. We have learned a great deal beyond these areas as well, which we hope to share with you in future newsletters.

Disabilities. Almost 13% of all youth age 13 through 16 who were enrolled in school in the 2000-01 school year receive special education. More than six in 10 students (62%) in this age group who were receiving special education were classified as having a learning disability. Those with mental retardation and with emotional disturbances were 12% and 11% of students receiving special education, respectively. Youth with other health impairments and with speech/ language impairments were 5% and 4% of students with disabilities. The remaining disability categories comprised 6% of secondary-school-age students receiving special education. More than half (55%) of all youth with disabilities were reported to have more than one kind of disability. Besides those classified as having multiple disabilities or deaf-blindness, secondary disabilities were particularly common for youth with mental retardation (82%) or emotional disturbances (76%) and least common for those with hearing (37%) or visual impairments (36%).

Age/Gender. When NLTS2 interviews were conducted with parents, youth spanned the age range of 13 through 17, with an average age of 15.2. Almost two-thirds (66%) of youth with disabilities were boys. OSEP longitudinal studies of infants and toddlers and of elementary and middle school students with disabilities show that boys are a similarly large proportion of

children and youth with disabilities across the age range.

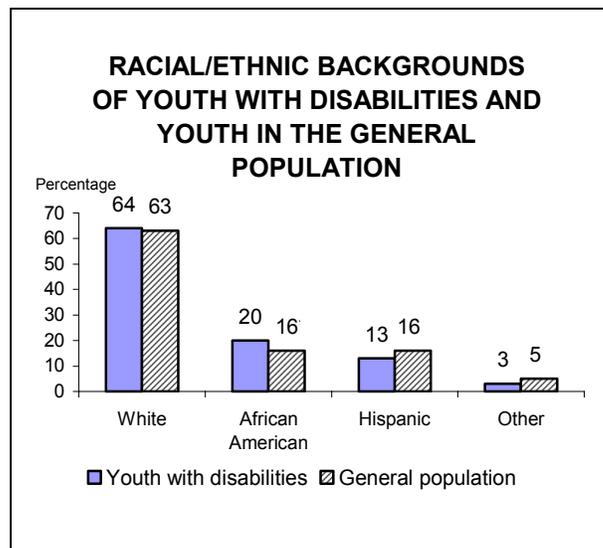
Among adolescents, boys were particularly large percentages of those with autism (85%), emotional disturbances (77%), or other health impairments (73%).

In contrast, the proportion of boys among youth with hearing or visual impairments was very close to that of the general population.

Racial/ethnic background. Although white youth were about the same percentage of youth with disabilities as of the general population, there were differences for other groups (see

chart). African Americans were 20% of youth with disabilities, compared with 16% of the general student population. In contrast, there were fewer Hispanics among youth with disabilities than among youth as a whole (13% vs. 16%), and fewer of those of mixed or other racial/ethnic backgrounds (3% vs. 5%). Similar differences in the distributions of the various

racial/ethnic backgrounds occur across the age range. For example, among infants and toddlers with disabilities, 21% were African American, compared with 15% in the general population of young children.



Looking Ahead

Through quarterly topical updates, NLTS2 will keep parents and youth informed of study activities and findings. NLTS2 has tremendous potential for making a difference in the lives of youth with disabilities in transition; with your support and help, it will.

NLTS2 welcomes feedback!
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