

https://dspace.org/

Parental attitudes towards mainstreaming/inclusion of children with special educational needs in regular classrooms and schools

Glassman, Jennifer A.

2014-04-04
http://hdl.handle.net10539/14506

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING/ INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS

JENNIFER A GLASSMAN

JOHANNESBURG 1999

PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING/ INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS

JENNIFER A GLASSMAN

RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, IN PART FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN EDUCATION (EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)

JOHANNESBURG 1999

PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING/ INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS

JENNIFER A GLASSMAN

RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, IN PART FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN EDUCATION (EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)

JOHANNESBURG 1999

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my own work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Education (Educational Psychology) in the Division of Specialised Education, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.



JENNIFER GLASSMAN

JOHANNESBURG

DATE: February 1999

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the following:

To Professor Mervyn Skuy, who supervised me, for his knowledge, interest and patient guidance throughout the preparation of this dissertation.

To the parents of the Grade One, Two and Three children at Forest Town, Delta Park, Norwood and Houghton Primary schools who participated in the study.

To Merle Werbeloff for her sound advice and help in the statistical analyses.

To Marge, my mother, who has been a never-ending source of support and love throughout all my years of study. Without her constant encouragement and belief in me I would never have reached my dreams.

To my father, so far away yet always so near.

To Steven, to whom this work is dedicated, for his endless love, support and care which helped me through many difficult hours. There are no words to express my appreciation.

ABSTRACT

This study examines parental attitudes towards mainstreaming/inclusion in South Africa, which was recently adopted as part of the new educational dispensation. The sample included parents of children in four different school types in Johannesburg, and the survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire with multiple-choice and open-ended sections. The respondents totaled 255 out of a possible 400 (64%). Statistical analyses used included factor analysis, analysis of variance and independent group t-tests. The results indicated an overall neutral or negative attitude towards mainstreaming by parents, with parents of children in special and remedial schools being more negative. Parents felt that gifted children or those with mild to moderate learning disabilities were the most suitable candidates for mainstreaming, whilst children with severe mental retardation, sensory impairments, or behavioural disorders were the least suited. Parents were concerned that teachers would not be able to cope with the demands of the mainstream classroom because of inadequate training or time. They were also concerned that classes would be too large, that children of differing abilities would not be able to cope with the academic and social demands placed on them, and that general educational standards would drop. Only 20% of parents felt that mainstreaming would be successful, and most parents were not clear about what measures could help to implement this educational approach in South Africa. The implications of these results were discussed, with a view to future research and interventions to allay parental fears about mainstreaming/inclusion

Keywords: mainstreaming; inclusion; children with special educational needs; parental attitudes; parental concerns

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
CHAPTER ONE: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. MAINSTREAMING	4
3. PARENTAL ADVOCACY GROUPS	6
4. PARENTAL ATTITUDES	8
5. PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF MAINSTREAMING	10
5.1 Opinions of Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs	10
5.2 Opinions of parents of Children without Special Educational Needs	12
6. SUGGESTIONS FROM PARENTS FOR IMPROVING MAINSTREAMING	14
CHAPTER TWO: THE STUDY	
1. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY	16
2. AIMS OF THE STUDY	17
3. METHOD	18
3.1 Sample	18
3.2 Procedure	20
3.3 Survey Instrument	21
3.4 Experimental Design	22
3.5 Statistical Analysis	23

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

1. Section 1: Attitudes of parents of the four school types to general, social and academic benefits of mainstreaming 25
2. Section 2 Comparison of parental attitudes in the four school types to general, social and academic benefits of mainstreaming 25
3. Section 3: Parental attitudes towards the coping abilities of teachers 27
4. Section 4: Comparison of parental attitudes in the four school types towards teachers' coping abilities 27
5. Section 5: Parental opinions concerning which parents are suited to mainstreaming 28
6. Section 6: Parental concerns regarding mainstreaming 29
7. Section 7: Parental concerns on the future success of mainstreaming 30
8. Section 8: Parental role in the implementation of mainstreaming 31

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

1. INTERPRETATIONS OF THE FINDINGS 33

1. Aim 1 33
1.1 Section 1 33
1.2 Section 2 34
1.3 Section 3 and 4 35
1.4 Section 5 36

2. Aim 2 37
2.1 Section 6 37
2.2 Section 7 38
2.3 Section 8 38

2. GENERAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS 39

3. SHORTCOMINGS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH 40

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 41

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 41

REFERENCES 44

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Mean Score of 33 items in questionnaire 48
Appendix 2: Parental Questionnaire 49

TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 2.1 Descriptive sample information 19

Table 3.1 Attitude scale mean for the four different school types 25

Table 3.2 Summary results of 1-way ANOVAS comparing the three attitudinal scales across the four school types 26

Table 3.3 Mean attitudes towards teacher's coping abilities for the four school types 27

Table 3.4 Summary results of 1-way ANOVAS comparing the attitudes towards teachers' coping ability across the four school types 27

Figure 3.1 Bar diagram of attitudes to mainstreaming in general across the four educational settings 26

Figure 3.2 Bar diagram of parents' opinions of suitable candidates for mainstreaming 28

Figure 3.3 Bar diagram of parental concern regarding mainstreaming 29

Figure 3.4 Bar diagram of parents' opinions of how successful mainstreaming will be 30

Figure 3.5 Bar diagram of parental suggestions as to how they saw their role in the implementation of mainstreaming 31

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

Brennan (in Donald, 1993) defines special educational need as follows: " A special educational need exists when any disability (physical, sensory, intellectual, emotional, social or any combination of these) affects learning to the extent that any or all of special access to curriculum, special or modified curriculum, or specially adapted conditions of learning, are necessary if the pupil is to be appropriately and effectively educated". This definition concentrates on intrinsic disabilities, such as physical or neurological problems, and is more appropriate to a privileged first-world setting than to the South African situation. In South Africa widespread inequalities have existed in the provision of basic education to the population such that the majority of black South African students are academically retarded. In such a context, extrinsic factors like socio-economic deprivation have created the special educational needs which are so prevalent, and the role of intrinsic factors may be secondary (Donald, 1993; Skuy & Partington, 1990).

The Gauteng Department of Education defines mainstreaming as a process whereby children with special educational needs are placed in ordinary classrooms and expected to adapt to the current curriculum there, with aid from the teachers. Inclusion is defined as a similar process, but where the curriculum is adapted to children with special educational needs, so that these children are not expected to carry the full burden of adapting to the new classroom setting. Inclusion is therefore an optimal type of mainstreaming, according to the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE, 1996). In the present study it is considered that inclusion was always the optimal form of mainstreaming, so the terms mainstreaming and inclusion are used interchangeably.

Mainstreaming, the philosophy of placing children with special educational needs in regular class settings to provide an optimal learning situation, has been the subject of considerable research (Cohen, 1986). The consequences of mainstreaming for the child with special needs and for the other children have been extensively studied. Much

attention has also been devoted to teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming, but parental attitudes to the concept have been largely overlooked (Hayes & Gunn, 1988; Mlynek, Hannah & Hamlin, 1982; Peck, Carlson & Helmstetter, 1992; Simpson & Myles, 1989).

Mainstreaming has special relevance for South Africa. The education system under apartheid enforced a system of segregation and exclusion, based on different cultures and languages, which compromised certain ethnic groups (Burden, 1995; Naidoo, 1996). This system also deemed it undesirable to integrate children with different educational needs whether these were physical, mental, emotional or behavioural, thus compromising their education, as curricula and instructional practices employed in specialised education may have been different from and inferior to those employed in general education (Giangreco, Edelman & Cloninger, 1993; Soodak & Erwin, 1995). Students classified as having special educational needs were channelled out of the mainstream setting into a school catering for the particular need. In practice this system effectively only applied to white, coloured and Asian pupils, however, because of a severe shortage of facilities for black children (Skuy & Partington, 1990).

Mainstreaming has been adopted as a central tenet of the new inclusive education system in South Africa with the intention of eradicating these inequalities. It is considered that this will allow all children equal access to educational resources in accordance with their constitutional rights (Naidoo, 1996). This will ultimately prepare children for productive lives in their community regardless of race, religion, gender or educational need (Naidoo, 1996; Soodak & Erwin, 1995).

The concept of mainstreaming developed from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975. The act required schools to educate students in the least restrictive environment. The clause relating to the least restrictive environment provides a legal basis for making decisions about where to teach children (Shinn, Habedank & Baker, 1993). The act also established procedures to ensure that children with disabilities were educated, as far as possible, together with children without disabilities. It stipulated that segregated

programmes were to be used only when the nature of the child's special needs precluded satisfactory instruction in general education (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994).

The least restrictive environment therefore refers to the legal principle that students with disabilities are to be educated as close as possible to the general educational environment. It refers to the education of individuals in programmes that address unique needs while still promoting freedom as much as possible (Roberts & Mather, 1995). Wigle and Wilcox (1996) suggested that least restrictive environment refers to any institutional climate designed to provide a free and appropriate public education and is independent of any delivery context, the ultimate goal being to enable each child to realise their potential. Mainstreaming is an educational term that refers to the practice of placing children with disabilities in the general educational classroom with the proviso that additional instructional support would be available there. Therefore the child is expected to adapt to the curriculum. "Inclusion" as an educational term refers to the policy of including special educational needs in the goals and methods of teaching and in the curriculum. Thus the curriculum fits the child rather than vice-versa. Mainstreaming and Inclusion are therefore ways of meeting the least restrictive environment requirement of the law (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994). The additional instructional support, and adapting the curriculum to the child, are not mutually exclusive. Ideally, mainstreaming/ inclusion involves both.

There is little research to document what parents consider the ideal environment for their child with special educational needs (Shinn et al; 1993), and the available studies reveal diverse views on the subject. A range of views is also held by teachers and school administrators (Wigle & Wilcox, 1996). Ryndak, Downing, Morrison & Williams (1996) proposed that the least restrictive environment for a particular child should be decided on an individual basis by the teacher, administrators and parents rather than on an a global basis. This idea is supported by Shinn et al (1993) who suggested that not all parents desired a move towards mainstreaming, as they were satisfied with the pre-existing special educational services. Mc Kinney and Hocutt (1982) found that many parents were not

involved in planning the direction of their child's education whether the child had special needs or not.

Moreover Bunch (1991) noted that almost a decade after McKinney and Hocutt's work, many parents were not even aware of those educational programmes that were already in place. Green and Shinn (1994) comment that parents' perceptions may not be based on a thorough understanding of the content and procedures of the education system. They are concerned that, if parents' knowledge is not up to date, how can they be effective in decisions made that affect the future of their children's education.

2. Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming was historically the term used to signify deinstitutionalization (Roberts & Mather, 1995). Mlynek, Hannah and Hamlin (1982) have defined mainstreaming as "Educating handicapped children to the maximum extent possible with the non-handicapped child". It is a technique which attempts to help the child with special educational needs to integrate into society in a warm and embracing manner (Burden, 1995). A fundamental assumption with mainstreaming is that additional services will be made available to accommodate a child with special educational needs, but this will take place in a system of schooling, which remains essentially unchanged (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994).

The additional resources will benefit the whole school community (Burden, 1995). Mainstreaming has emerged because educators believe that children with special educational needs did not benefit from placement in separate special schools or classrooms. They proposed that these children would benefit academically, socially and psychologically from being placed in an environment which included a broader range of children (Cohen, 1986).

A major goal of mainstreaming is to prevent the stigmatising and stereotyping which were widespread when children with special needs were not taught together with other children (Simpson & Myles, 1989). This often led to ridiculing which adversely affected their development. Many parents believe that mainstreaming can enhance the self-concept of children with special educational needs, by exposing them to normal peer models (Mlynek, Hannah and Hamlin, 1982). Butler (1996) stated that the effects of mainstreaming would stimulate exactly the kind of experience in the lives of children with and without special educational needs and the kind of reflective dialogue among adults that is necessary to achieve change in the public educational policy in the short-term. In addition social attitudes toward people with disabilities in the long-term would also be influenced positively.

Christie (1998) studied the attitudes of teachers in schools in Gauteng towards the implementation of mainstreaming. While many teachers felt that mainstreaming was desirable in principal, most felt it was not practical in the present setting. One major concern was the perceived inability of teachers to cope in the mainstream setting without additional support and training. Almost all respondents felt that teaching in mainstreamed classes would increase their workload, and make it difficult for them to meet the demands of children with and without special educational needs. Some respondents felt that the age difference between children with and without special educational needs could be a problem if these children are all in the same mainstreamed class. Respondents stated that in the mainstream setting, children with special educational needs would only be adequately attended to if classes were no larger than 15.

Choles (1997) looked at the attitudes of teacher educators towards mainstreaming in South Africa and concluded that there was a general ambivalence towards this educational approach, with concerns expressed that only children with mild special educational needs could be adequately accommodated in mainstream classes. They recommended that the different categories of special educational need would have to be recognised. The educators felt that in order to prepare teachers adequately for the mainstream setting, the

teacher training institutions would have to train all teachers to teach children with special educational needs, preferably at a pre-service level, but otherwise on an in-service basis. The teacher educators felt that mainstreaming definitely prepared children better for life in society at large.

The result of these recent studies indicate that the implementation of mainstreaming in South Africa could be jeopardised unless interventions were developed which could change the attitudes of the educators involved.

3. Parental Advocacy Groups in the USA

The Compulsory School Law in the United States of America was passed in 1919. It stated that if children did not fit into the regular education curriculum, they would be excluded from it. This angered parents of such children and they realised that they had to uphold the rights of their children by demanding equal educational opportunities.

The aims of the parental advocacy groups were to develop a relevant classification system for children with special educational needs as well as designing appropriate educational curricula. Parents learned that they could be most effective if they worked together.

In 1933 a group of mothers in Ohio campaigned for a special class for children with special educational needs to be formed, as these children were excluded from the regular classroom by the Compulsory School Law. It was agreed that the parents concerned would fund these classes. The campaign was successful, and thus the first class for children with special educational needs was established.

It was only in 1955, that legislators and policy makers consulted parents for advice on how to proceed in developing public policies and laws to serve the best interests of the children with special educational needs. During the 1950's parents focused their work on the legislative branch of government and in 1958 Public Law 58-926 was passed, which

provided support for universities to prepare teachers to work with children with mental retardation.

In the 1960's parents focused their attention more on the executive branch of government. The grass-roots structure for building effective support systems for children with special educational needs grew rapidly. This was all due to several important parent and professional organisations that were formed and worked together in the two decades. In the 1960's parents also developed strong commitments to the policy whereby services for their children should be provided by the public sector (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990, Paul & Simeonsson, 1993)

The 1970's was an important era for the parental advocacy groups in the United States of America. The Developmental Disabilities Construction Act in 1971 was signed. This ensured that a formulation grant programme was implemented to assist states in providing a broad range of services for the life long needs of the developmentally disabled. The Developmental Disability Assistance Act of 1975 extended and revised some provisions of the 1971 Act. The Bill of Rights specified basic rights of the person with developmental disabilities and called for appropriate treatment services. Included in the Bill was the concept of parent advocacy groups. This acknowledgement of the groups enabled the advocacy groups to expand their role, by utilising the legal system to their advantage in their work with state and local agencies. If such agencies did not provide adequate services for children with special educational needs legal action was instituted. Thus parents that had previously worked in the legislative and executive areas, were more involved in the judicial branch of government (Turnbull &Turnbull, 1990).

While the advances made in the 1960's and 1970's were great, they only dealt with children who had mild to moderate learning disabilities and it was not until the late 1970's that provisions of services for severe disabilities was made. This took the form of Public Law 94-142 which ensured that all children, no matter how profound their disabilities, were entitled to receive an education appropriate to their level of functioning, in a public

school. There was an amendment to PL94-142 in 1986, which authorised services for pre-school children with special needs PL99-457 (Turnbull &Turnbull, 1990).

Through concerned parental effort, progress had been made in the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. The parents' movement contributed significantly to the development of legislation which prevented discrimination of children with special educational needs. There is little documented evidence of similar campaigns in countries other than the USA.

4. Parental Attitudes

The success of mainstreaming is partly dependent on the parental attitudes to and perceptions of it, as it is felt that, if these attitudes are positive, this will translate into similar attitudes in the child. Conversely if parents are critical of the system it is likely that this negative attitude will adversely influence the child (Cohen, 1986). Clearly, the parental viewpoint is of concern, but little research has been conducted into parental views and perceptions regarding the educational placement of their child. There is some work documenting anecdotal experiences of parents with children in mainstream settings (Mlynek et al, 1982; Peck et al, 1992). Without parental support, any major educational reform is unlikely to succeed (Myles & Simpson, 1990).

Analytical studies of the parental attitudes have yielded inconsistent results for a number of reasons. There has been no common terminology used in relation to the subjects and the interventions. For example there is inconsistency between studies in the definition of subject groups ('special-needs students', 'specific-learning-disabled students', and 'mild', 'moderately' or 'severely' disabled students) and interventions (mainstream education, integrated class, inclusive class, non-inclusive class or special education class). This makes it difficult to compare different studies (Butler, 1996). There is also sparse information concerning the psychometric properties, validity and factorial structure of the questionnaires used in these studies. The designs of many of the studies are descriptive or

poorly controlled for variables (Butler, 1996; Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994; Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996).

Parental attitudes can obviously be influenced by first-hand experience of their child's placement, whether the child had special needs or not (Drake, 1995). Turnbull et al (1982) proposed that parents of children who attended a mainstream kindergarten were more supportive of mainstreaming than those parents whose children who had not attended such a school. It has been suggested that parents with at least one child (without special educational needs) in a mainstream setting would be more supportive of the concept than parents with no direct experience of mainstreaming, because direct involvement often serves to demystify the subject. Moreover, if the parent's direct experience of mainstreaming was positive, this would be strongly predictive of a supportive attitude towards integrating children with and without special needs (Green & Stoneman, 1989).

However some research by Haynes and Gunn (1988) noted that first-hand experience may influence parental attitudes negatively. They noted that parents of children, who attended first year of school in an inclusive setting, had a more negative attitude towards the mainstream programme than parents with children in first year of school who attended a segregated school. The researchers noted that the attitudes expressed prior to the introduction of mainstreaming might be an inaccurate guide to views enunciated after its implementation.

It has been suggested that a hierarchy exist as to who parents in the general population perceive possible candidates for mainstreaming should be. Parents felt that it was more desirable to mainstream children with physical disabilities than those with learning disabilities. Children with severe mental retardation and emotional difficulties were perceived to be the most undesirable candidates for mainstreaming, as the parents believed that they would be disruptive in class (Berryman, 1989, Cohen 1986). These perceptions were based on preconceived ideas and stereotypes rather than on a deeper understanding of children with special needs (Drake, 1995).

Younger parents tended to display more positive attitudes to mainstream programmes than older parents as they may have been more involved in attempting to dissolve labelling (Berryman, 1989). Socio-economic factors influence parental attitudes to mainstreaming, as mothers in families with higher income had a more negative attitude towards mainstreaming at the pre-school level than mothers from lower income settings (Green & Stoneman, 1989).

5. Perceived Benefits and Disadvantages of Mainstreaming

Researchers have proposed that both parents with and without children who have special educational needs have experienced mainstreaming to have benefits and drawbacks for their children on an academic and social level. In some cases, parents perceived that there were benefits on an academic level, but drawbacks on a social level, or vice-versa. This contributes to the apparently conflicting results of some studies.

5.1 Opinions of Parents of Children With Special Educational Needs

Parents of children with special educational needs were found in different studies to have a range of varying opinions, as postulated by different authors regarding the perceived benefits and disadvantages of mainstreaming on a social and academic level.

5.1.1 Positive attitudes with respect to both social and academic development

Parents of children with special educational needs postulated that the integration of young children with special educational needs should be promoted because children without special needs could serve as models for the acquisition of developmental and social skills for the children with special needs (Reichart, Lynch, Svobodny Anderson, Di Cola & Mercury, 1989). Parents also suggested that a pre-school child with special needs would benefit from integrated programmes as these would provide more meaningful observational learning as well as increased social and verbal interaction with developmentally advanced peers. The child would also experience higher levels of play (Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994).

5.1.2 Positive attitudes towards social development

One of the main benefits of mainstreaming a child with special needs, as perceived by their parents, is the child's social progress, as many of the children would now be involved in school activities which may not have been provided before (Mlynek et at, 1982). In addition, the children's interaction with other peers would enhance their social skills, self-esteem and self-concept (Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989; Green & Shinn, 1994; Lowenbraun et al, 1990). Parents also felt that they might develop a more positive attitude towards their children with special educational needs if they saw the child participating in chronologically appropriate behaviours and activities with other children in a normalised environment (Bailey & Winton, 1987). Parents of mentally retarded children expressed strong support for mainstreaming as they felt that the social skills acquired would benefit their child greatly, even if the academic input was less (Mlynek et al, 1982).

5.1.3 Positive attitudes towards academic development

Although most parents who had children first placed in special classes or schools and then in a mainstream setting claimed that both placements offered the same academic opportunities (Lowenbraun et al, 1990), some parents experienced an improvement in their child's academic skills in the mainstream setting (Green & Shinn, 1994). Parents have also suggested that the increased stimulation provided by the mainstream classroom improved their child's academic progress (Hanline & Halvorsen, 1982). Some parents supported integration of their children into the mainstream classroom only for instructional and academic purposes, with social progress of their children being better catered for in a segregated setting (Green & Shinn, 1994).

5.1.4 Negative attitudes towards social development

On a social level, parents of children with special needs had fears that their children would be exposed to ridicule and social rejection (Reichart et al, 1989; Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994). They were concerned that their child would not form friendships in the mainstream setting (Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989) and they felt it was necessary to retain the segregated programmes to protect their children from possible labelling and ostracization (Mlynek et

al, 1982). Parents of children with special educational needs claimed that the specially trained teachers in the special schools and classes improved the child's self esteem and helped them with social skills. In addition, parents wanted their children to be exposed to role models from the disabled community as well, as this might be reduced in the mainstream setting (Green & Shinn, 1994; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1989). Some parents worried that integrating their child with special needs would reinforce the disability in their mind, and lead to additional emotional stress. This also could lead to unrealistic expectations from the child (Bailey & Winton, 1987; Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994).

5.1.5 Negative attitudes towards academic development

Parents of children with special educational needs were concerned that their child would not cope with the academic workload of a mainstream class. The potential for failure and disappointment was considered to be very high (Shinn & Green, 1995; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1982). Many parents were satisfied with the segregated classes and felt that the mainstream teachers had less time and poorer skills for their child. In addition, they were concerned about the lack of access to amenities that were previously available to the child with special educational needs (Bailey & Winton, 1987; Simpson & Myles, 1989)

In general, parents of children with severe disabilities or severe mental retardation were less supportive of mainstreaming than other parents (Cohen, 1986). Parents of mentally retarded children felt that they had global problems, which prevented them from functioning adequately in a mainstream setting (Mlynek et al, 1982). There has been little additional research on this area in the past decade.

5.2 Opinions of Parents of Children Without Special Educational Needs

Studies have also yielded a range of varied findings or views regarding the benefits and drawbacks that parents of children without special educational needs perceive mainstreaming to have. These are elaborated below.

5.2.1 Positive attitudes towards social development

Parents of children without special needs felt that the interaction between the children would lead to greater understanding of individual differences, and more tolerance and acceptance of these differences (Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994; Green & Stoneman, 1989; Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996). Children in mainstreamed settings have experienced improved self concept, an increased sense of commitment to personal principles, more awareness of other peoples' needs and fewer prejudices and stereotypes, and the parents noted the positive effects (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996; Peck et al, 1992). Many parents of children without special needs were satisfied with mainstreamed programmes as they felt their children had benefited socially, and developed more positive attitudes to life (Green & Stoneman, 1989). Furthermore, parents of children without special educational needs noted that their children did not develop undesirable behaviours from integration (Reichart et al, 1989).

5.2.2 Positive attitudes towards academic development

Parents of children without special educational needs did not perceive any academic benefits for their children from mainstreaming (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996).

5.2.3 Negative attitudes towards social development

On the other hand, some parents of children without special educational needs felt that the presence of children with special needs in the same classroom would promote immature and inappropriate behaviour in their children (Bailey & Winton, 1987; Reichart et al, 1989). They were concerned that their children would develop inappropriate interactions with children with special educational needs, such as becoming condescending or emotionally over involved (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996). In addition parents of children without special educational needs were concerned that their children could be mean and cruel to children with special educational needs. They were concerned that this could place stress on the children with special educational needs who might begin to feel inferior and encounter adjustment difficulties (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996).

5.2.4 Negative attitudes towards academic development

Parents of children without special educational needs felt that the children with special educational needs would have an adverse effect on the academic needs of their children. They stated that mainstream programmes might impede the academic progress of their own child (Cohen 1996; Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996). The parents were concerned that the standard and quality of education would be lowered, as their children would move at a slower pace (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996). In addition they were concerned that curricula and instructional approaches would not meet the needs of the child without special educational needs in the mainstream setting (Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994). They were concerned that the teacher would spend more time with the children with special needs than the other children, thus being unable to provide a stimulating environment. There was concern expressed about teachers not being trained or qualified to cope in a mainstream setting (Bailey & Winton, 1987; Green & Stoneman, 1989; Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996).

6. Suggestions from Parents for Improving Mainstreaming

Parents believe that mainstreaming would be more beneficial if three issues were addressed, namely the child, the staff and the school environment (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996).

With reference to the child, parents considered that the nature and severity of the disability should be carefully assessed in terms of perceived ability to cope, before placement in an integrated setting (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996). With reference to the professional staff, areas of concern were the ratio of staff members to children, the qualifications of teachers, and the availability of specialists. Parents have repeatedly cited unqualified teachers as the main drawback to mainstreaming (Green & Stoneman, 1989; Reichart et al, 1996). Instructional effectiveness in the classroom was considered to be at risk in the mainstream setting, unless the aforementioned factors were optimised (Bailey & Winton, 1987). Additional staff, such as volunteer helpers, was deemed necessary, and specific professional attention would need to be paid to behavioural problems (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996; Simpson & Myles, 1989). As far as the school environment is concerned, parents

stated that the present infrastructure would have to be improved with the provision of additional funds. Smaller classes, more teaching aids and materials, and improved facilities were deemed necessary to make mainstreaming work (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996).

CHAPTER TWO: THE STUDY

1. Rationale of the Study

Separate education systems for regular children and those with special educational needs were in place in the United States until the 1960's. Many parents of these children with special educational needs perceived this education system as inferior, exclusionary and paralleling the inequalities of racial segregation in the USA (Soodak & Erwin, 1995). Parents also felt that employing a curriculum different from that used in general education precluded integration into the broader society (Soodak & Erwin, 1995). Parents and educators in the USA campaigned for a more integrated educational system, which did not discriminate against learners with special educational needs, and from the 1960's mainstreaming was implemented in certain states. Mainstreaming is the practice of placing children with disabilities in the general educational system, with appropriate instructional support (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994). Inclusion is seen as an optimal type of mainstreaming, which involves adapting the curriculum to suit the child, rather than the other way round. Inclusion ensures that the mainstream is broadened to cater to all, in terms of goals and approaches adopted in the classroom.

The legacy of the segregated educational system in South Africa is the fact that the majority of black South African students may be academically impaired. Although this group has the greatest need for regular and special education, the inappropriate and unequal provisions of the past have meant that this need has still not been met, although attempts to redress the balance were made in the early 1990's (Skuy & Partington, 1990). A central tenet of the new education policy was that of mainstreaming/inclusion, whereby children with special educational needs would be integrated into the regular school setting, with appropriate additional guidance, and changes to the curriculum (The ANC Policy Framework Discussion Document for Education and Training, 1994). This policy of mainsreaming/inclusion was adopted as the philosophy behind a new and appropriate education system, one which would ensure all children in South Africa equal access to education, in accordance with their constitutional rights.

The successful implementation of mainstreaming demands that teachers are adequately trained to cope with this educational approach, and that parents and teachers are supportive of mainstreaming in general. It is pertinent therefore to know what parents actually feel about mainstreaming before the system is implemented. Their concerns about its implementation could give insight into potential problems which might be averted.

From the research that has been conducted abroad parents with and without children with special education needs indicated a mixed attitude towards the concepts of integration and mainstreaming. However, it was indicated that mainstreaming had both positive and negative aspects. To date there has been little research conducted in South Africa on parental attitudes towards mainstreaming. Even outside South Africa this subject has not been extensively investigated. Consequently a study of parental attitudes and beliefs toward mainstreaming is needed. It is hoped that the present study will expand our knowledge of parental attitudes towards mainstreaming to give a more coherent picture of what parents in South Africa think of this educational alternative policy and approach.

This study is essential as parents need to be involved in decisions made regarding the education of their children, and if they are generally critical of mainstreaming this could jeopardize the whole process. Furthermore, if parents are shown to be supportive of mainstreaming the process will be that much more forthcoming. Research from the United States has supported this view, as the inclusive education system there recommends that parents should be involved in the decision making process of their child's education. This philosophy is considered essential for the educational system to be effective and successful (Wilgosh, 1994).

2. Aims of the Study

There were two main aims of this study:

2.1 First aim

To determine and compare the attitudes of parents with children in a regular school, in a regular school with an aid class, in a remedial school and in a special school to:

a) the general, social and academic benefits of mainstreaming

b) the coping ability of teachers in relation to mainstreaming

c) the appropriateness of mainstreaming for children with various degrees of special educational needs

2.2 Second aim

To examine concerns and recommendations regarding mainstreaming, of parents with children in a regular school, a regular school with an aid class, a remedial school and a special school.

3. Method

The Method of this study is described in terms of the sample, the procedure employed, the survey instrument, the experimental design and the statistical techniques.

3.1 Sample

The sample consisted of parents of children who attended a regular school, a regular school with an aid class, a remedial school or a special school, in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. All parents of children in grade one to standard one in these four school types were targeted. Those in regular schools were included whether their children had special educational needs or not. If parents had more than one child in a school, separate questionnaires were handed out for each child. In total 400 questionnaires were handed out, and 255 were completed (64% response rate). The majority of parents sampled were white, because the survey was carried out in a largely white area. The sample is thus biased, and the results cannot be generalised to the whole population.

The information about the sample follows in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Descriptive Sample information

Variable	*Percentage of respondents*	*Comment*
School Type		
Regular School	21	Parents with children in remedial schools outnumbered parents of children in the other school categories
Regular School with Aid Class	20	
Remedial School	40	
Special School	19	
Number of children per family		
1	13	The majority of families (59%) had 1 or 2 children
2	46	
3	28	
4	8	
5 or more	4	
Sex of respondents		
Male	14	Most of the respondents who completed the questionnaire were mothers
Female	86	
Age of respondents		
20-25	1	The largest group was 35-39, closely followed by 40-49
26-29	6	
30-34	18	
35-39	36	
40-49	34	
50-59	4	
60 and more	1	
Home language		
Afrikaans	13	English was the modal home language, with 66% of the respondents speaking the language
English	66	
IsiNdebele	2	
IsiXhosa	7	
IsiZulu	2	
Sesotho	1	
Seswati	2	
Sesotho Lebowa/Sepedi	3	
Setswana	1	
Tshivenda	1	
Xitonga	1	
Other	1	
Highest Level of Education		
Standard 5	2	84% of the respondents have obtained at least a standard 10
6	0	
7	1	
8	5	
9	4	
10 or higher	84	

Variable	*Percentage of respondents*	*Comment*
Level of Tertiary Education		
NTC1	1	Two-thirds of the parents with tertiary education had obtained either a diploma or a degree
NTC2	2	
NTC3	4	
Certificate	2	
Secretarial course	21	
Diploma	37	
University Degree	31	
Other	2	
Occupation of Respondents		
Independent and high Professional	3	50% of the parents had highly-skilled occupations
Salaried Professional	11	
Administrative Position	22	
Senior clerical position	14	
White Collar	32	
Skilled manual	4	
Semi-skilled manual	0	
Routine non-manual	0	
Unskilled manual	12	
Other	2	

Note: In all tables rounding errors occurs when percentages do not sum to 100

3.2 Procedure

A pilot study was conducted in a commercial office with a random group of ten parents who filled the criteria for selection. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and comment on questions that were difficult to understand as well as the format of the questionnaire. The recommendations were taken into account on revision of the questionnaire.

Four public schools in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg were identified as providing a cross section of children whose parents who would be suitable candidates for the study.

These schools comprised of:

- a regular school;
- a regular school that had Aid Classes for children with learning disabilities;
- a remedial school where the children with learning disabilities where placed in smaller classes with a remedial teacher;

- a special school where the children had learning and/ or physical disabilities, were placed in smaller classes, and given access to remedial and other paramedical services.

The researcher approached each principal, presented the study to them and requested permission to conduct the study in his or her school. The principal was required to brief the teachers who would be involved in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. The researcher provided the questionnaires to the respective principals and each class teacher distributed them to the children in her/his class.

Parents were asked to return the questionnaire within one week.

3.3 Survey Instrument

A seven page anonymous questionnaire was developed to determine parental attitudes toward mainstreaming/inclusion. (The questionnaire is reproduced in full in the Appendix, p.49).

The questionnaire began with a brief introductory letter to the parents, which explained the concept of the study as well as a list of terminology and definitions to help them complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire itself consisted of five sections:

- The first section determined the type of school their child attended. In line with the four school types included in the study, the following options presented were:
- a regular school
- a regular school with an Aid Class
- a remedial school
- a special school

- The second section requested biographic information about each family. The parents were asked to indicate their age, home language, level of education and occupation.

- The third section consisted of thirty- four items which the parents answered using a five point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items were constructed to tap the subscales of parents' attitudes to and perceptions of:

  - mainstreaming/inclusion in general
  - children's academic needs
  - children's social needs
  - teachers' abilities to cope in the mainstream setting
  - accessibility to paramedical and teacher aid services

- The fourth section required parents to choose from a list of thirteen categories of disabilities which they perceived to provide suitable candidates for mainstreaming.

- The final section consisted of optional open-ended questions, which allowed parents to comment on any issues regarding mainstreaming not addressed in the questionnaire. Specifically parents were asked to comment on what role they as parents could play to improve mainstreaming and how successful they thought mainstreaming was at the present time.

3.4 Experimental Design

This study employed a cross sectional survey design in which the responses of subgroups are compared and associated with biographic variables. Specifically the attitudes towards aspects of mainstreaming of parents of children in the different school types were compared and related to the biographical variables.

3.5 Statistical Analysis

3.5.1 Factor analysis

An attempt was made to use factor analysis to reveal the underlying factor structure of attitudes towards mainstreaming (section 3 of the questionnaire). The results of a maximum likelihood factor analysis revealed three factors with eigenvalues greater than one. According to the Haisen's criterion, these three factors were rotated for conceptual relevance. The resultant factors, however, jointly explained only 34% of the scale variance, with the first factor explaining 27%. This first factor was interpreted as a "general attitudes" factor, while the other two factors were considered too weak for interpretation.

3.5.2 Cronbach's Alpha

As the factor analysis procedure failed to reveal clear factors the researcher computed the internal consistency reliabilities of the overall scales and of the subscales that had been specifically designed to tap the dimensions of parents' attitudes to general, social and academic issues relating to mainstreaming, as well as teachers' coping skills.

Cronbach's Alpha scales for the overall scale was calculated at 0,83; The reliabilities for the general attitude subscale was 0,89; the social subscale was 0,68; the academic subscale was 0,59; and the teachers subscale was 0,67. The questionnaire thus had sufficient internal consistency to afford an examination of the attitudes to mainstreaming identified in the Aims.

3.5.3 Analysis of Variance

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) technique was used to compare the attitudes of parent groups categorized by the type of school their children attended (the independent variables) on general and specific attitudes to mainstreaming (the dependent variables). Post hoc Scheffe comparisons were computed on significant F ratio statistics. Corresponding means and standard deviations were examined.

3.5.4 Independent group t-test

T-tests were used for pairwise comparisons of attitudes of independent groups. In particular the post hoc Scheffe test used would examine which group differed on attitudes to mainstreaming.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

The results of the study are listed in eight sections, each addressing an aspect of the aims outlined in Chapter Two.

1. Section 1: Attitudes of parents of the four school types to general, social and academic benefits of mainstreaming.

Mean scores in each group were calculated for each item on the questionnaire as well as for the general, social and academic subscales in order to assess parental attitudes to mainstreaming in general and whether mainstreaming is considered to have social and academic advantages. These results are tabulated (see Table 3.1). A score below the neutral point is evidence for a negative attitude, and a score above the neutral point is evidence of a positive attitude.

Table 3.1 Attitude scale means for the four school types

	Mean attitude by school type						
Variable	Neutral point	Regular	Regular with aid	Remedial	Special	Overall mean	Items with positive means on all four subgroups (schools) of the sample
General	57 (19 items)	53,06	50,51	47,80	46,09	49,37	7 of 19 items
Social	12 (4 items)	10,79	10,71	11,03	10,52	10,76	O of 4 items
Academic	18 (6 items)	16,42	16,06	16,14	16,58	16,30	2 of 6 items

The group means are clearly below the neutral point for each subscale. Each item mean of each subscale was assessed on whether it exceeded the neutral point of 3 for all groups. As shown in Appendix A, only a minority of these items tapping the subscales of general, social and academic aspects of mainstreaming had means indicative of positive attitudes across all four groups. In the case the of 19 items tapping general attitudes of parents to mainstreaming, seven of the items fulfilled this criterion, compared to none of the social items and two of the six academic items.

Thus parents expressed negative attitudes to mainstreaming in general, and negative attitudes towards social and academic benefits of mainstreaming, irrespective of the type of schooling their child attended at that time.

2. Section 2: Comparison of parental attitudes to general, social and academic benefits of mainstreaming in the four school types.

The results presented in Table 3.1 above were compared by means of a one-way ANOVA and a post hoc Scheffe test to identify pairwise differences in the case of significant F Ratios.

Table 3.2 One-way ANOVAs comparing the three attitudinal subscales across the four school types

	Mean square		
Variable	Effect	Error	F(3;251)
General	627,76	160,80	3,90 *
Social	3,12	3,00	1,04
Academic	3,29	14,72	0.22

* p<0,05

According to the results of Table 3.2, there is a significant difference between attitudes of parents to mainstreaming in general according to the type of schooling of their children. No significant inter-group differences are evident in the case of social and academic attitudes.

The result of the post hoc Scheffè test used to examine which groups differed significantly on attitudes to mainstreaming in general revealed one significant pairwise difference, i.e. attitudes of parents of children in regular schools versus those in the remedial school (p<0,05). There is thus a significant difference between parents of children in regular schools versus remedial schools. The former have a more positive attitude to mainstreaming. The higher means of regular school and regular school with an aid class (53,06 and 50,51 respectively) versus those of the remedial school and the special school groups (47,80 and 46,09 respectively) also suggest a difference in parental attitudes based on school type even though these means are not always significantly higher. Figure 3.1 below provides a diagrammatic representation of the means of the four school types on the general attitudinal subscale.

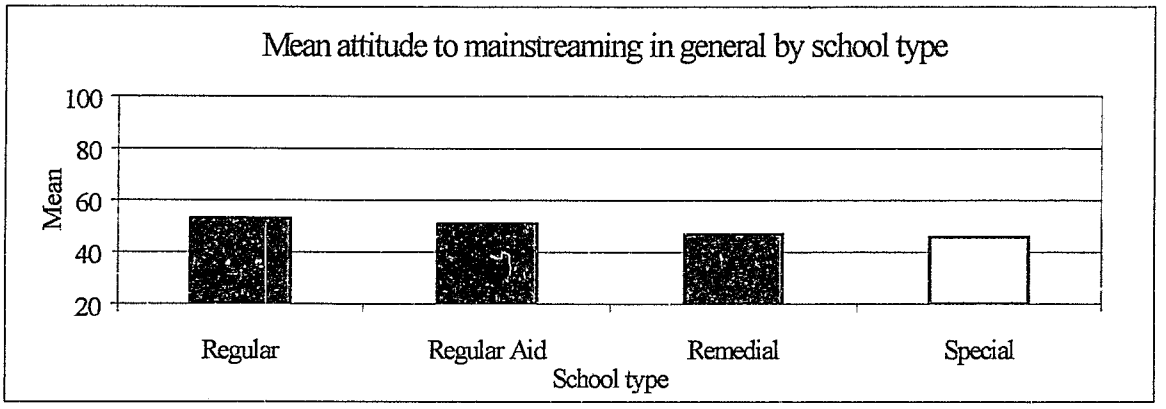

Figure 3.1: Attitudes to mainstreaming in general across the four school types

3. Section 3: Parental attitudes towards the coping abilities of teachers

Mean scores reflecting attitudes of parents towards the teacher's coping ability were calculated. In Table 3.3, the means of the four groups are presented together with the number of items of the subscale for which the attitudes of all four groups of respondents were positive (see Appendix A). As previously, higher scores are indicative of more positive attitudes.

Table 3.3 Mean attitudes towards teacher's coping abilities for the four school types

		Mean attitude by school type					
Variable	Neutral point	Regular	Regular with aid	Remedial	Special	Overall mean	Items with positive means on all four groups
Teachers coping abilities	21 (7 items)	21,00	21,00	20,91	21,71	21,16	3 of 7 items

According to the results of Table 3.3 the means of the four groups on the seven item scale are close to the neutral point of 21. Further, four of the seven item means indicate negative items for all four groups. This result is not significant ($p>0,05$).

There is thus insufficient evidence to support either a positive or a negative attitude towards teachers' ability to cope in the mainstream classroom.

4. Section 4: Comparison of parental attitudes towards teachers' coping abilities in the four school types.

The attitudes of parents in the four school types to teachers' coping abilities were compared by means of a one-way ANOVA. The results are tabulated in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 One-way ANOVA comparing the attitudes towards teachers coping abilities across the four school types

	Mean square		
Variable	Effect	Error	F(3;251)
Teachers' coping	7,46	9,43	0,50

According to the results of Table 3.4, there is no significant difference between attitudes of parents towards the teachers' coping abilities irrespective of the type of schooling. The neutral attitudes are common to parents with children in all four school types.

5. Section 5: Parental opinions concerning which children are suited to mainstreaming.

The responses of parents are illustrated in Fig. 3.2. The specific definition of each category of child was listed in the questionnaire, together with an overall definition of mainstreaming.

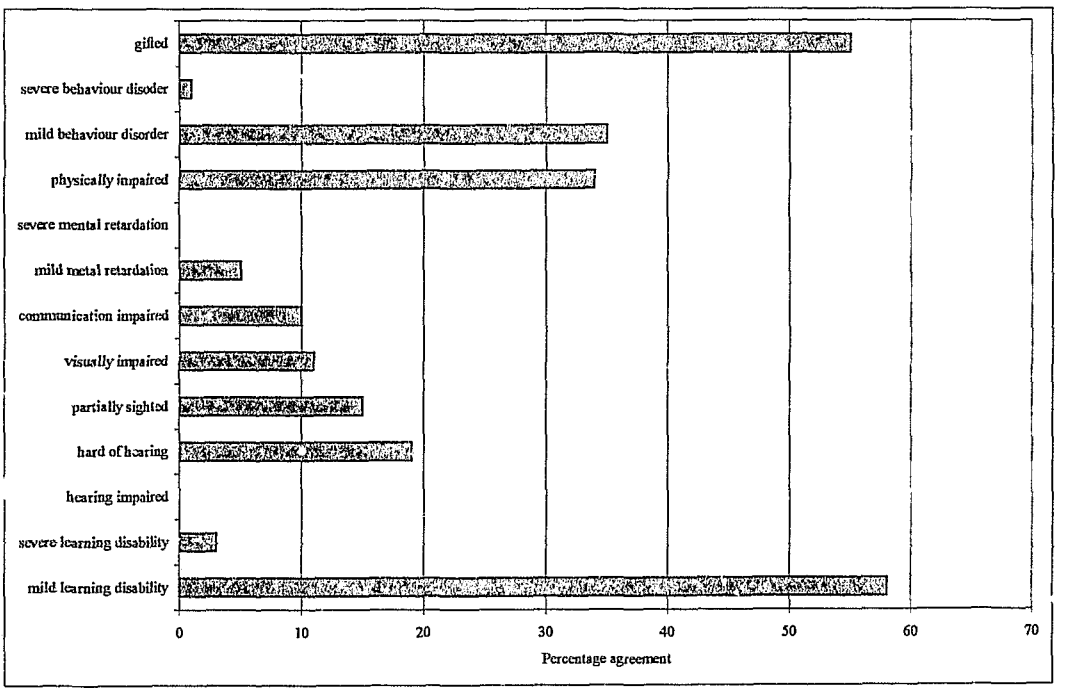

Figure 3.2 Parents' opinions of the suitable candidates for mainstreaming

Parents' opinions of suitable candidates for mainstreaming were assessed for each category of disability and/or giftedness. In Fig. 3.2, the percentage of parents who responded positively to mainstreaming for individual categories is represented by a horizontal bar graph. According to the percentages, a slim majority of parents (but less than 60%) regard gifted and mild/ moderate learning disability candidates as suitable for mainstreaming. Approximately a third of all parents regard mild behaviour disorder and physical impaired children as suitable candidates for mainstreaming, while approximately 15% regard partially sighted and hard of hearing children to be suitable. Approximately 10% of parents regard visually impaired (blind) and communication impaired children as suitable for mainstreaming. Fewer than 5% of parents regard mainstreaming suitable for the remaining categories.

6. Section 6: Parental concerns regarding mainstreaming.

Open-ended questions were used to assess parental concerns about mainstreaming. Five main areas of concern were apparent, namely the inability of children to cope, inadequate teacher skills, excessively large classes, negative impact on the child's self-esteem and a lowering of educational standards.

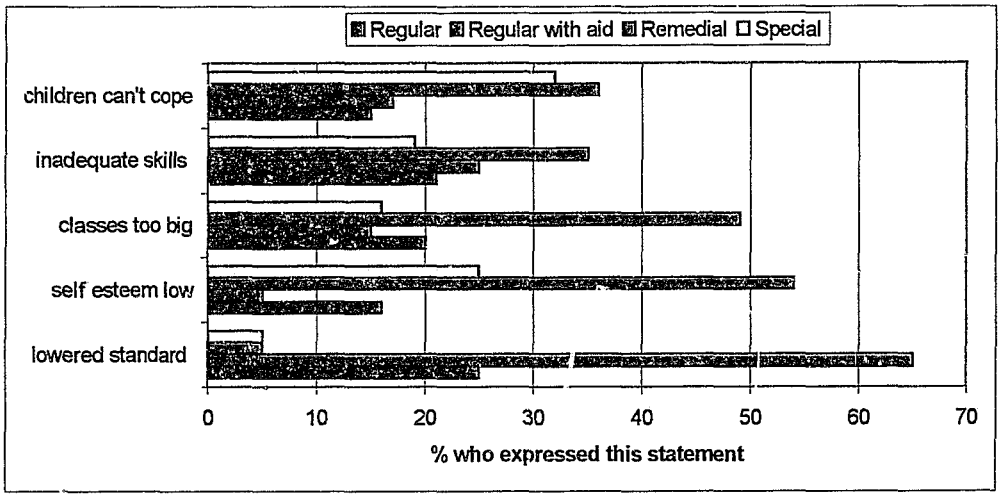

Figure 3.3 Parental concerns regarding mainstreaming

The responses of the four groups were analysed separately for each category of concern.
For each problem the percentage representation of parents of the four school types is graphed. The distribution of responses for any particular school type reflects the pattern of concerns for that respondent group. Parents of children in remedial schools are the most concerned group with the exception of the concern of lowered educational standards. In contrast, the parents of children in a regular school with an aid class are the most concerned about the lowering of educational standards, and less concerned about the other concerns relative to other parent groups. Parents of children in special schools are similarly relatively unconcerned about lowered standards, but are concerned about their children's ability to cope in a mainstream setting. Parents of children in a regular school are no more worried than any other parents group about the problems listed above.

7. Section 7: Parental opinion regarding the future success of mainstreaming.

Open-ended questions were used to assess how successful parents predicted mainstreaming would be in the future. The results are depicted in Fig. 3.4.

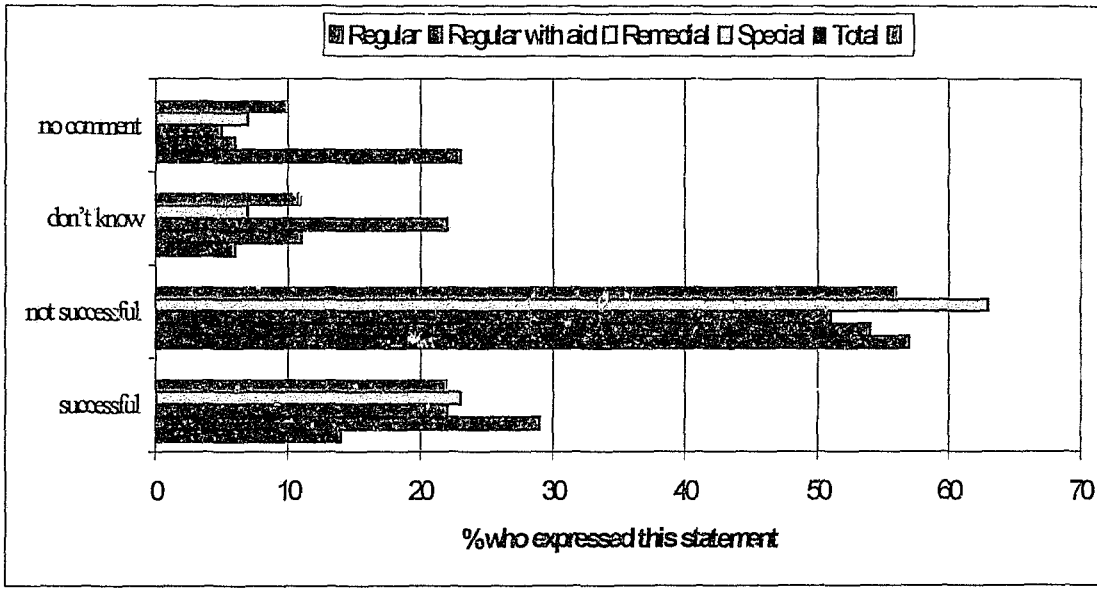

Figure 3.4: Parents' opinions of how successful mainstreaming will be

Fifty-six percent of parents who completed this question stated that they did not believe mainstreaming would be successful. Sixty-two percent of parents whose children attend a special school predicted an unsuccessful outcome, whilst fifty-one percent of parents in the remedial group, fifty-three percent in the regular with aid group and fifty-seven percent in the regular group predicted this.

Twenty-two percent of parents who completed this question thought that mainstreaming would be successful. Twenty-three percent of parents with children in a special school predicted a successful outcome, whilst twenty-two percent of parents in the remedial group, twenty-nine in the regular with aid group and fourteen percent in the regular group predicted the same. Twenty-one percent of respondents did not comment or did not know how successful mainstreaming would be.

8. Section 8: Parental role in the implementation of mainstreaming.

An open-ended question was used to assess what role parents perceived they could play in the successful implementation of mainstreaming. The results are depicted in Fig. 3.5.

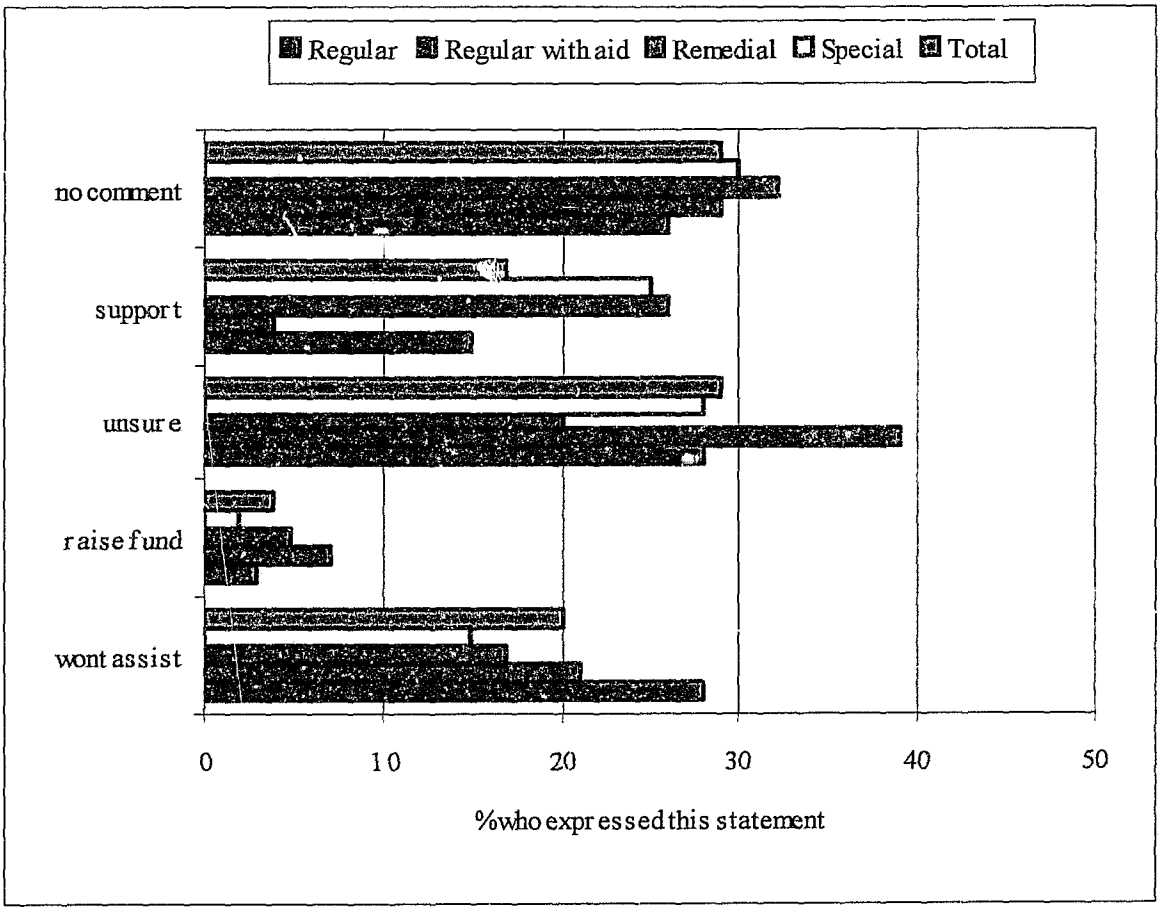

Figure 3.5: Parental role in the implementation of mainstreaming

Overall seventeen percent of respondents indicated that they would support the teachers in any way which might help to implement mainstreaming. Twenty-five percent of parents in the special school group and twenty-six percent in the remedial group expressed this view, while only four percent of parents in the regular with aid group, and fifteen percent in the regular group expressed it. Twenty percent of all parents who completed this section were not prepared to assist in the implementation of mainstreaming, with fifteen percent of parents in the special school group, seventeen percent in the remedial group,

twenty-one percent in the regular with aid and twenty-eight percent in the regular school expressing this sentiment. Raising funds to help implement mainstreaming was suggested by four percent of respondents. Overall, fifty-eight percent of parents who responded to this question were unsure of their role, or were not prepared to comment.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides an interpretation of the results of the study and draws implications from the findings of the attitudes of parents towards mainstreaming. The limitations of the study are noted and suggestions are made for future research.

1. Interpretation of Findings

1. Aim 1

The first aim of the study was to determine and compare the attitudes of parents with children in regular schools, regular schools with an aid class, remedial schools or special schools to mainstreaming in general, and to the social and academic benefits of mainstreaming. Parental attitudes to teachers' coping skills in a mainstream setting were also addressed, and a final part of this aim was to determine which children were considered by parents to be suitable for mainstreaming.

1.1 Section 1

With respect to attitudes in general, and not only related to academic or social issues, the findings showed an overall neutral or negative attitude among parents of children both with and without special educational needs. This is contrary to research in the USA, which has shown a generally favourable attitude towards mainstreaming by these parents (Bailey & Winton, 1987; Berryman, 1989; Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994; Gottlieb & Leyser, 1996; Mlynek et al, 1992; Myles & Simpson, 1990; Peck et al, 1992; Riechart et al, 1989). There are anecdotal reports from American parents of a negative attitude towards mainstreaming in general, but these have not been supported by analytical studies (Mlynek et al, 1992). A possible reason for the neutral or unfavourable attitude in this study is that South African parents are not completely familiar with the concept of mainstreaming, as this has only recently been introduced in to the country. Previous research is from the USA where mainstreaming has been in force for much longer.

With respect to attitudes towards social implications of mainstreaming, the findings of the present study could not support certain previous research showing a positive attitude towards the social benefits of mainstreaming (Lowenbraum, 1990; Peck et al, 1992). The

data are similar to those studies showing a negative attitude towards the social effects of mainstreaming (Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994; Reichart et al, 1989). A possible reason for this unfavourable attitude is that South African (predominately white) parents are sensitive about integrated social systems because of the heritage of racial discrimination in this country.

With respect to attitudes towards the academic implications of mainstreaming, the findings support previous research showing a negative attitude towards the academic implications of mainstreaming by parents of children with and without special educational needs (Giagreco et al, 1993; Peck et al, 1992). Parents both in South Africa and abroad are evidently very concerned that mainstreaming will impact negatively on the academic progress of their child, whether the child has special educational needs or not.

1.2 Section 2

A difference in the attitudes in general to mainstreaming was evident in parents from the different school types. Parents of children in a regular school or a regular school with an aid class were less negative towards mainstreaming than parents of children in remedial or special schools. (The statistical analysis could be interpreted only for attitudes in general, as design limitations precluded an accurate analysis of attitudes to the social and academic aspects.)

It appears therefore that parents of children who have more pressing special educational needs are concerned that mainstreaming would inhibit their children's progress at school. They are probably worried that their children would not receive the attention that they previously enjoyed in a specialized environment where classes are smaller, teachers are more skilled and the children's emotional needs are specifically addressed. Parents of children with special educational needs probably feel that the loss of the special aid class would negatively impact on the education of their child. This class may have provided the impetus that the child needed to achieve their potential without resorting to a segregated environment.

Findings of other researchers have supported the outcome of the present study, namely that parental attitudes to mainstreaming vary depending on the type of special educational need of their child. Generally parents of children with learning disabilities are more positive to mainstreaming than parents of children with mental retardation or emotional difficulties (Berryman, 1989; Cohen, 1986; Green & Stoneman, 1989; Mlynek et al, 1982). Parental concerns would appear to be justified, as research has shown that the needs of students with only certain disabilities can be adequately addressed in the general classroom setting. Due to the nature or severity of other disabilities, some children are better served by a special school (Butler, 1996; Manning, 1987; Roberts & Mather, 1995; Wigle & Wilcox 1996).

1.3 Sections 3 and 4

In section 3 the study was concerned with parental attitudes towards teachers' coping abilities in the mainstream setting. The results did not indicate strong assertion by these parents that teachers would either cope or not cope. Section 4 looked at whether this attitude differed depending on the type of school their child was attending at the time. The results indicated that there was no difference in these attitudes based on school type.

Previous studies have shown that most parents are concerned that teachers in a mainstream setting are not adequately trained to teach children with special educational needs. This attitude did not differ whether the child was currently attending a special school or not. Parents felt that teachers should be more thoroughly trained in instructional techniques, curriculum and motivational strategies as well as behaviour management (Bailey & Winton, 1987; Butler, 1996; Green & Stoneman, 1989; Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996; Manning, 1987; Mlynek et al, 1982; Myles & Simpson, 1990; Simpson & Myles, 1989). Parents of children in various types of schools were concerned that their children would not receive enough help from teachers due to a shortage of time, large classes and demanding children. They were also concerned that a stimulating environment would not be provided for their children (Bailey & Winton, 1987; Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996; Myles & Simpson, 1990; Reichart et al, 1989). Perhaps the reason for the indifferent/uncertain

response of South African parents to the question of the coping abilities of teachers reflects a lack of exposure to mainstreaming, because the system has not been in place for long.

1.4 Section 5

Section 5 examined parental opinions concerning which children they felt were suitable for mainstreaming. This was a gauge to assess the appropriateness of the different educational systems to children of differing abilities, according to the parents. The study revealed that the majority of parents regarded gifted children or those with mild or moderate learning disabilities to be suitable candidates for mainstreaming. One third of parents indicated that children with mild behaviour disorders or mild physical impairments were also suitable candidates, but few parents expressed support for mainstreaming of children with other special educational needs such as mental retardation, sensory impairments or severe behaviour disorders. Parents probably feel that children with more complicated or severe special educational needs require more attention from teachers than would be available in a mainstream class. Children with no special needs or those with limited special educational needs would be adequately served by a mainstream setting, as they would be more likely to cope with less specialized attention from teachers.

Parents of children without special educational needs are evidently very concerned that children with more severe needs would impair the progress of their children in the class by requiring a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time and skills. Yet this did not impact as negatively on their general attitude as it did for the other categories.

Similar studies have mirrored these findings. Parents have indicated that children without special needs or those with sensory disabilities or chronic medical problems were the most suitable candidates for mainstreaming. Similar attitudes were found in the present study. Children with mild learning disabilities or mild mental retardation were also perceived to be good candidates for mainstreaming, and this has also been the case in the present study. Children with severe mental retardation or behavioural disorders were

perceived to be the worst candidates for mainstreaming (Bailey & Winton, 1989; Cohen, 1996; Green & Stoneman, 1989; Leyser & Gottlieb, 1996).

2. Aim 2

The second aim examined parents' specific concerns about mainstreaming, perceptions of its potential success and recommendations for its implementation. A comparison was made of these attitudes depending on which of the four school types the child was currently attending. These were qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions.

2.1 Section 6

This section looked at parental concerns regarding mainstreaming by means of an open ended question. The main concerns which emerged were that children would not be able to cope with the demands placed on them in a mainstream setting, that teacher's skills were inadequate, classes were too large, standards would drop and children's self-esteem would be affected. Similar concerns are expressed in a wide range of studies (Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994; Hanline & Halvorsen, 1982; Reichart et al, 1989; Shinn & Green, 1995).

With respect to differences regarding these concerns amongst parents of children in the four school systems, the present study showed that overall, parents of children in remedial schools were the most concerned, followed by those in special schools, and regular schools with aid classes. Parents of children in regular schools were the least concerned about these issues. Parents of children in regular schools with aid classes were the most concerned about a potential lowering of educational standards in mainstream schools. Parents of children in special schools probably do not believe that their children will actually be placed in a mainstream environment because of the severity of their disability. For this reason they were not as concerned about mainstreaming as parents of children in remedial schools. On the other hand, children in remedial schools are likely to be placed in the mainstream school and their parents are evidently very worried about this. The aim of the remedial school in the past was to prepare the child for eventual placement in a regular school only once a certain level of ability had been reached. Premature placement is probably perceived to be hazardous for these children. This could

explain why these parents are so concerned about mainstreaming. Parents of children in remedial or special schools appear to be less concerned about a lowering of academic standards, and this might be expected as these parents are probably more concerned about issues related to other skills. Parents of children in regular schools expressed overall concern about mainstreaming, but no single issue was highlighted.

2.2 Section 7

Section 7 examined parental attitudes towards the potential success of mainstreaming. Just more than half of all respondents felt that mainstreaming overall would not be successful, whereas only about 20% of parents felt that mainstreaming would be successful. The remainder did not express an opinion. This did not differ much depending on the type of school which their child attended at the time. The finding implies a lack of confidence in mainstreaming, both with respect to mainstreaming as a concept, and to its implementation. This could reflect inadequate preparation of parents in South Africa by the education authorities for the introduction of mainstreaming.

2.3 Section 8

This section dealt with parental recommendations for the implementation of mainstreaming, in order to assess what role they could possibly have to facilitate the process. Most parents were unsure of what measures would benefit mainstreaming, or did not comment at all. This again underlies the lack of education of parents about mainstreaming in general, and about what their potential role in its implementation could be. Parents of children in special or remedial schools suggested that they should give of their own time to help teachers cope with their children. Others suggested various fund-raising schemes in order to supplement the income of the school to buy the necessary educational equipment. Many parents were not prepared to assist with the implementation of mainstreaming, possibly because they feel alienated from the decision to introduce it in the first place.

2. General Implications of the Findings

The following implications were derived from this study: South African parents have an overall neutral or negative attitude towards mainstreaming. They view the social and academic effects of mainstreaming with trepidation. Without parental support, mainstreaming is less likely to succeed as an improved educational approach, and these findings are grounds for concern. The study implies that South African parents view mainstreaming differently from their counterparts in the USA where mainstreaming is a *fait-accompli*. Parents in the USA are generally more favourable towards mainstreaming. This could reflect basic differences in how South African parents feel about decisions concerning the education of their children, as in the past they were accustomed to a subservient role, where experts and specialists were expected to make most of the decisions. South African parents are therefore not accustomed to having a direct role in deciding on suitable educational measures for their children, and they could be inadequately informed about the potential advantages of mainstreaming. There is also the issue of mainstreaming being very new and untried in South Africa.

The study also implies that although general attitudes towards mainstreaming are neutral or negative, there are differences in these views depending on what type of school the child currently attends. Parents of children in regular schools or regular schools with aid classes view mainstreaming least negatively. This implies that parents of children with more severe special educational needs are concerned that mainstreaming will not benefit their children.

The following implications are derived from the qualitative data: gifted children or those with mild to moderate learning disabilities are the most suitable candidates for mainstreaming, while children with severe mental retardation, sensory impairments or severe behaviour disorders are the least likely to benefit from it. This implies that parents do not hold the view of many educators and researchers that mainstreaming specifically benefits children with more severe disabilities.

These data also showed that most parents feel that teachers are inadequately trained to cope with the demands of the mainstream setting. This implies that they feel the

educational authorities have not provided sufficient preparation of teachers, and in-service training would be essential. The findings of the study also suggest that most parents feel that mainstreaming would not be successful if implemented now, because of concerns related to children's ability to cope academically and emotionally, inadequate teacher skills, large classes and the likely drop perceived in standards. Parents are also not clear on their own possible role in mainstreaming, and how they could help in its successful implementation. This implies a lack of knowledge about mainstreaming and inadequate provision of information to the parents by educational authorities.

3. Shortcomings and Limitations of the Research

This is a pilot study which attempts for the first time to assess parental attitudes toward mainstreaming in South Africa. The sampling procedure restricted the respondents to four schools in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. In addition the sample size was small and not ethnically diverse. The sample was largely limited to whites, who live in different areas to blacks who make up the majority of the population. For these reasons, generalization to the broader community is limited.

A Cronbach alpha coefficient for the questionnaire overall was 0,83. This implies an adequate measure of internal reliability. However, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for certain sections of the questionnaire was substantially lower, indicating a lesser degree of internal reliability but nevertheless adequate. This applied to subscales which measured perceptions of the academic and social aspects of mainstreaming (therefore only an overall attitude to these issues could be assessed). This also applied to subscales which measured parental attitudes towards the ability of teachers to cope in the mainstream setting.

The scope of the questionnaire was very broad and, because of this, certain important details could not be adequately interpreted. A shorter questionnaire would also have been less straining for the parents to complete, leading to a better response rate. The respondents may have found the language in the questionnaire too technical, especially because English was not always their home language.

Finally, it was intended to compare parental attitudes according to whether their children had special educational needs or not. Although these comparisons could be extrapolated at times from the type of school which the children attended, this was not always possible: regular schools, and regular schools with aid classes may have had children with special educational needs in them, but they were not specifically identified in the questionnaire. Therefore a thorough comparison between attitudes of parents of children with and without special educational needs was not made.

4. Suggestions for Future Research

A study of parental attitudes across all ethnic groups, and in different regions of the country is warranted, with which the findings of the present study can be compared. Also this will improve the generalizability of common findings.

The study should also be repeated once a group of parents have been sufficiently informed about mainstreaming so that this bias would be eliminated. A similar study could also be repeated once mainstreaming has been implemented to see if attitudes have changed. Attention should be focused on why parents react negatively to mainstreaming in general, and how these perceptions can be changed. Research involving the children themselves is crucial to highlight the effects of mainstreaming on children with a broad range of abilities. If results of these studies are favourable, parents can be reassured that their children would not be disadvantaged. It would be interesting to note whether parental attitudes to mainstreaming can impact positively or negatively on a child's experience at school.

5. Summary and Conclusion

Education in South Africa is moving towards a new and integrated dispensation where children of differing ability are taught together. This is an extension of the policy to abolish racial discrimination in education. The new dispensation embraces mainstreaming as a fundamental concept.

In the past, certain children with special educational needs were either taught in special classes at regular schools or in remedial or special schools. Unfortunately most children with special educational needs were neglected, as they were black and not part of the privileged classes.

Providing for children with special educational needs in the regular school setting is considered by most educational authorities to be beneficial to both children with and without special educational needs. This applies to the educational experience in general, and to the academic and social benefits in particular.

It is important to know how parents feel about this new concept, as their involvement is central to the success of mainstreaming. For this reason, a study was undertaken of parental attitudes towards various aspects of mainstreaming. Parents enrolled in the study had children who were currently in a variety of different school types. The study involved a 5-part questionnaire which included multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The aims of the study were to assess overall parental attitudes towards mainstreaming and to identify whether these attitudes differed depending on what type of school the child currently attended; to identify what type of child the parents felt would benefit most from mainstreaming and to identify specific concerns of parents regarding mainstreaming, and how they could contribute to its implementation.

The results showed a generally neutral or negative attitude towards mainstreaming. There were differences between parental attitudes depending on the type of school which the child attended at that time. Parents of children in regular schools or regular schools with aid classes were less opposed to mainstreaming than their counterparts who had children in special or remedial schools. Parents felt that gifted children or those with mild to moderate learning disabilities were the most suitable candidates for mainstreaming, while children with severe mental retardation, sensory impairments or behaviour disorders were least suitable for mainstreaming.

The major concerns about mainstreaming expressed by parents in the open-ended question related to the following points: whether children of varying ability will cope with the social and academic demands placed on them, the ability of teachers to meet the needs of children, the large size of the classes, and the perceived drop in standards which would occur. Just over half the parents felt that mainstreaming would be unsuccessful, with only 20% predicting that mainstreaming would be a success. Parents were unclear as to how they could help in the implementation of mainstreaming, and relatively few were prepared to give of their own time for this.

In conclusion this study shows an overall neutral or negative attitude towards mainstreaming by parents of children in a range of different school types. Parents do not appear to have confidence in this new educational system, especially with regard to children with special educational needs. Several major concerns related to mainstreaming were identified, and these need to be addressed. Parents also need to be more fully informed about mainstreaming so that they can judge for themselves whether they prefer mainstreaming to other educational approaches.

References

Bailey, D.B. & Winton, P.J. (1987). Stability and change in parent's expectations about mainstreaming. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 7(1), 73-88.

Berryman, J.D. (1989). Attitudes of the public toward educational mainstreaming. Remedial and Special Education, 10(4), 44-49.

Bunch, G. (1991). Full inclusion: Parent and educator objective for student with challenging needs. Developmental Disabilities Bulletin, 19(1), 80-101.

Burden, A. (1995). Inclusion as an educational approach in assisting people with disabilities. Educare, 24(2), 44-56.

Butler, C. (1996). Mainstreaming experience in the United States: is it the appropriate educational placement for every disabled child. Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology, 38, 861-866.

Cohen, S.B. (1986). Parent's attributions of exceptionality: Social distancing effects on the mainstreamed classroom. Remedial and Special Education, 7(4), 48-53.

Choles, G.M. (1997) Attitudes of South African teacher educators in relation to mainstreaming pupils with special educational needs. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

Christie, C.D. (1998) Attitudes of professional at schools towards mainstreaming children with special educational needs. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.

Diamond, K.E. & LeFurgy, W.G. (1994). Attitudes of parents of preschool children toward integration. Early Education and Development, 5(1), 69-77.

Donald, D.R. (1993) Reconceptualising the nature and the extent of special educational need in South Africa. Perspectives in Education, 14 (2), 139-156.

Gauteng Department of Education, (Gauteng Task team for LSEN), (1996). Discussion Document: Inclusion. Proposal for RDP funding: Project Headstart. Transformation of society via the inclusion and infusion of learners with special educational needs in the education system.

Giagreco, M.F., Edelman, S. & Cloninger, C. (1993). My child with severe disabilities: What parents of nondisabled children think about full inclusion. Developmental disabilities Bulletin, 21(1), 77-91.

Green, A.L. & Stoneman, Z. (1989). Attitudes of mothers and fathers of nonhandicapped children. Journal of Early Intervention, 13(4), 292-304.

Green, S.K. & Shinn, M.R. (1994). Parents attitudes about special education and reintegration: What is the role of student outcomes? Exceptional Children, 61(3), 261-281.

Hanline, M.F. & Halvorsen, A. (1989) Parent perception of the integration transition process: Overcoming artificial barriers. Exceptional Children, 55(6), 487-492.

Hayes, K. & Gunn, P. (1988). Attitudes of parents and teachers toward mainstreaming. The Exceptional Child, 35(1), 31-38.

Leyser, Y. & Gottlieb, J. (1996). Reactions of parents of nondisabled children to mainstreaming over time: Implications for education practitioners. International Journal of Special Education, 11(1), 72-87.

Lowenbraun, S., Madge, S. & Affleck, J. (1990). Parental satisfaction with integrated class placements of special education and general Education students. Remedial and Special Education, 11(4), 37-40.

Manning, D. (1987) Parents and mainstreaming. Volta Review, 89 (5), 119 – 130.

Mc Kinney, J.D. & Hocutt, A.M (1982). Public school involvement of parents of learning disabled children and average achievers. Exceptional Education Quarterly, 3(2), 64-73.

Mlynek, S., Hannah, M.E. & Hamlin, M.A. (1982). Mainstreaming: Parental perceptions. Psychology in the Schools, 19, 342-359.

Myles, B.S. & Simpson, R.L. (1990). Mainstreaming modification preferences of parents of elementary-age children with learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 23(4), 234 –239.

Naidoo, V., Burden, A., Topham, P. & Singh, S. (1996). Discussion Document Inclusion: A policy for meeting the needs of learners with special education needs and context, issues and conditions for an implementation plan. Gauteng Department of education And Culture, pages1-24.

Osborne, A.G. & Dimattia P. (1994). The IDEA's restrictive environment Mandate: Legal implications. Exceptional Children, 61(1), 6-14.

Paul, J.L & Simeonsson, R.J. (1993). Children with Special Needs. Florida: Harcourt. Brace Jovanvich.

Peck, C.A., Carlson,P. & Helmstetter E. (1992). Parent and teacher perceptions of outcomes for typically developing children enrolled in integrated early childhood programs: A statewide survey. Journal of Early Intervention, 16(1), 53-63.

Reichart, D.C.; Lynch, E.C.; Anderson, B.C.; Svobodny, L.A.; Di Cola, J.M.,& Mercury, M.G. (1989). Parental perspectives on integrated opportunities for children with handicaps and children without handicaps. Journal of Early Intervention, 13(1), 6 -13.

Roberts, R. & Mather, N. (1995). The return of students with learning disabilities to the regular classroom: A sellout. Learning Disabilities Research & Practice,10(1), 46-58

Ryndak, D.L.; Downing, J.E.; Morrison, A.P. & Williams, L. J. (1996). Parent's perceptions on educational settings and services for children with moderate or severe disabilities. Remedial and Special Education, 17(2), 107-119.

Shinn, M.R.; Habedank, L. & Baker, S. (1993). Reintegration as part of a problem-solving delivery service. Exceptionality, 4(4), 245-251.

Simpson, R.L. & Myles, B.S. (1989). Parent's mainstreaming modification preferences for children with educable mental handicaps, behavioural disorders and learning disabilities. Psychology in the Schools, 26, 292-301.

Skuy, M. & Partington, H. (1990) Special Education in South Africa. International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 37(2), 149-157

Soodak, L.C. & Erwin, E.J. (1995) Parents, professionals and inclusive education: A call for collaboration. Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 6(3), 257-276.

The A.N.C. Policy Framework Discussion Document for Education and Training (January 1994)

Turnbull, A.P; Winton, P.J; Blacher, J. & Salkin, N. (1982). Mainstreaming in the kindergarten classroom. Perspectives of parents of handicapped and nonhandicappedchildren. Journal of the Division of Early Childhood, 6, 14-20.

Turnbull. A.P. & Turnbull, H. R. (1990). Families, professionals, and exceptionality: A special partnership. Columbus, Oh: Merrill.

Wigle, S.E. & Wilcox, D.J. (1996). Inclusion. Remedial and Special Education, 17(5), 323-328.

Wilgosh, L (1994). Parent's view on inclusive education for young people with disabilities. Developmental Disability Bulletin, 22(2), 29-36.

APPENDIX 1: MEAN SCORES OF THE 33 ITEMS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Item	MS Error	MS Effect	F	Mean 1	Mean 2	Mean 3	Mean 4	1-2	1-3	1-4	2-3	2-4	2-5
1	**5,64**	**1,49**	**3,77**	**3,69**		**3,30**	**3,62**				*		
2	3,79	1,58	2,39	2,77	2,57	2,24	2,57						
3	4,45	1,49	2,99	2,87	2,81	3,35	3,13						
4	15,22	1,42	10,69	3,31	2,78	2,23	2,31		*	*			
5	1,70	1,45	1,17	2,77	2,49	2,41	2,40						
6	**3,85**	**0,59**	**6,55**	**4,23**	**4,33**	**4,75**	**4,53**		*		*		
7	11,40	1,21	9,41	2,32	2,12	2,12	1,44		*		*		
8	**0,62**	**1,23**	**0,5**	**3,79**	**3,84**	**3,84**	**3,70**						
9	**0,48**	**1,64**	**0,2**	**3,04**	**3,18**	**3,18**	**3,12**						
10	2,13	1,37	1,55	2,21	2,25	2,25	1,89						
11	6,54	1,56	4,18	3,06	3,08	3,08	2,45		*		*		
12	**2,10**	**1,00**	**2,10**	**3,50**	**3,76**	**3,76**	**3,35**						
13	**3,32**	**1,14**	**2,90**	**3,67**	**3,90**	**3,90**	**4,15**						
14	**4,18**	**0,42**	**9,87**	**4,27**	**4,35**	**4,35**	**4,75**		*	*	*	*	
15	4,96	1,02	4,88	2,44	2,14	2,14	1,83		*	*			
16	3,87	0,86	4,51	2,08	1,55	1,55	1,50		*				
17	**5,48**	**1,22**	**4,50**	**3,98**	**3,94**	**3,94**	**3,45**		*				
18	6,20	1,40	4,44	3,08	2,49	2,49	2,46		*	*			
19	6,62	1,17	5,67	2,24	2,22	2,22	1,74		*				
20	**2,57**	**1,33**	**2,27**	**3,94**	**3,80**	**3,80**	**3,52**						
21	1,69	1,07	1,57	2,77	2,67	2,67	2,44						
22	**3,66**	**1,36**	**2,68**	**3,35**	**3,55**	**3,55**	**3,87**						
23	5,26	1,22	4,30	3,08	2,94	2,94	2,50		*				
24	**1,36**	**0,76**	**1,78**	**3,92**	**4,02**	**4,02**	**4,24**						
25	**2,80**	**1,42**	**2,68**	**3,59**	**3,55**	**3,55**	**3,18**						
26	1,28	0,95	1,35	2,05	2,02	2,02	1,76						
27	0,49	1,23	0,40	3,02	2,88	2,88	2,94						
28	2,79	1,21	2,31	3,31	3,29	3,29	2,89						
29	1,28	1,21	1,05	2,81	2,73	2,73	2,56						
30	1,96	1,25	1,60	3,14	3,08	2,88	2,71						
31	1,03	1,25	0,83	2,75	2,55	2,45	2,71						
32	4,48	1,81	2,47	3,35	3,08	2,78	2,52						
33	2,62	1,23	2,13	3,02	2,94	2,65	2,58						

Items consistanly positive on all four groups appear in bold face type.

APPENDIX 2: PARENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PARENTS ATTITUDES TOWARD SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF PUPILS

This questionnaire asks for your opinion on a number of issues relating to **special educational needs.** Please read the definitions below prior to completing the questionnaire.

N.B. THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS ANONYMOUS

DEFINITIONS

A. **MAINSTREAMING** refers to the placement of pupils with special educational needs (including disabled learners) within the regular classroom where possible /desirable.

B. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS** arise out of children having difficulties, for a range of reasons, in coping with a regular curriculum. This includes a number of different categories, including those listed below.

1. **LEARNING DISABILITIES** may be placed on a continuum, according to their causation, as follows

a. **Learning disabilities that are believed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction.** This refers to a group of disorders which are shown by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are inborn (**intrinsic**) and are believed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction.

b. **Learning disabilities related to sociocultural/ sociopolitical deprivation.** This refers to difficulties in learning which are **extrinsic.** I.e. they are related to sociocultural deprivation or other environmental conditions which result in general academic difficulties.

c. **Learning disabilities that are interactive.** This refers to difficulties in learning caused by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors

2. **HEARING IMPAIRMENTS** are hearing disabilities, whether permanent or changing, which negatively affects the child's educational performance. This term includes deafness.

3. **VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS** are visual disabilities which, even with correction, negatively affects the child's educational performance. This term includes both partially seeing and blind children.

4. **COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENTS** refers to speech that is difficult to understand or interferes with the message the speaker is attempting to deliver.

5. **MILD MENTAL RETARDATION** refers to children with impaired intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour, which, with appropriate educational opportunities, can learn basic academic skills.

6. **GIFTED CHILDREN are** those pupils, identified by professionally qualified persons, who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance in any of the following areas (singly or in combination): general intellectual ability; specific academic aptitude; creative or productive thinking; leadership ability; visual or performing arts; psychomotor ability.

7. **PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS** are disorders that interfere with an individual's mobility, motor co-ordination, general muscle ability, ability to maintain posture or balance to the extent that they inhibit learning or social development.

8. **BEHAVIOUR DISORDERS** refer to behaviour within the educational setting that reveals the child has difficulties with his relationships with others. The child's academic achievement may be impaired due to an inability to learn, utilising the present teaching techniques. The child's current behaviour is shown either as an extreme or persistent failure to adapt and function intellectually, emotionally or socially at a level corresponding to his or her chronological age.

SECTION ONE

In the following questions, please mark the appropriate box with an X

1. Please specify what type of school your child attends:

Regular school	
Regular School with Aid Class	
Remedial School	
Special School	

2. How many children do you have? _____

3. Please specify the following information:

Age of child	Educational Standard	Regular School	Regular School with Aid class	Remedial School	Special School

4. Does your child have access to:

	Full Time	Part Time
Clinical Psychologist		
Educational Psychologist		
Nurses		
Occupational Therapists		
Othodidactitians		
Physiotherapists		
Remedial Teacher/Therapists		
Social Workers		
Speech Therapists		
Teachers		

Does your child's school have access to other support services? Please specify.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION TWO

In the following questions, please mark the appropriate box with an X

1. Please indicate where you are:

Male	
Female	

2. How old are you?

20 – 25		35 – 39	
26 – 29		40 – 49	
30 - 34		50 – 59	
35 – 39		60 +	

3. What is your home language?

Afrikaans		IsiZulu		Setwsana	
English		Sesotho		Tshivenda	
IsiNdebele		Seswati		Xitsonga	
Isi Xhosa		Sesotho sa Lebowa		Other	

If you have more than one home language, please specify.

4. Please specify the following in full:

a. Highest level attained at school_____

b. Highest post matric qualification e.g. NTC1, Diploma, Degree_____

c. Please specify your occupation_____

d. Please specify your partner's occupation_____

SECTION THREE

Some statements regarding education are given below.
Please indicate whether you

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Unsure U	Agree A	Strongly Agree SA

Please mark the appropriate column with an X

		SD	D	U	A	SA
1	All children have special educational needs.					
2	I believe my child would benefit by being placed in a class of children with both special and ordinary needs.					
3	Approaches that are used in teaching pupils with special educational needs can be good to use with all children.					
4	Moat learning disabilities in South Africa are caused by sociopolitical deprivation.					
5	As far as possible, children with special educational needs should be included in a mainstream class.					
6	Children with special educational needs will receive the special attention that they need only if they are placed in a class of about fifteen children or less.					
7	Teachers who have not received special training will nevertheless have the skills to cope with teaching in a class of children with both special and ordinary needs.					
8	Including children with special educational needs in the mainstream classes will result in lowering of the present standards of education.					
9	Educational programmes or courses need to be changed to give all children a chance to succeed in mainstream classes					
10	It is possible to meet the needs of all the children in a class in which there are children with both special and ordinary needs.					
11	Integrating children with both special educational and ordinary needs will reduce the negative attitudes towards the children with special educational needs.					
12	Children with mild disabilities could be mainstreamed.					
13	It is better to teach children with special educational needs in separate, specialized schools.					

		SD	D	U	A	SA
14	Meeting special educational needs should receive lots of attention when the changes are introduced to South Africa's educational system					
15	Children with special educational needs will be able to reach their full learning capacity in a mainstream class.					
16	Children with **severe** disabilities could be mainstreamed.					
17	Teaching a mainstream class involves more work than teaching a regular class.					
18	Most parents will support the mainstreaming of children with special educational needs.					
19	Teachers of classes of children with mixed abilities will be able to give each child adequate encouragement.					
20	Including children with special educational needs in a mainstream class could prevent gifted children from achieving their full academic potential.					
21	Most parents of children **without** special educational needs will learn to accept the mainstreaming of children with special educational needs.					
22	Learning disabled children in mainstream classes should receive remedial education during school hours.					
23	Most parents of children **with** special educational needs would be in favour of mainstreaming their children.					
24	Teaching children with learning disabilities is too difficult for the regular/ ordinary teacher.					
25	Mainstream teachers will cope with teaching learning disabled children if there are efficient support services readily available to assist them. (E.g. psychologist, remedial, speech, occupational therapists.)					
26	Teachers of classes of children with mixed ability will be able to give each child adequate attention.					
27	Mainstreaming children will be socially beneficial to children **without** special educational needs.					
28	The availability of teacher aids (assistant teachers) will make the mainstreaming more successful.					
29	Mainstreaming children will be academically beneficial to children **without** special educational needs.					
30	Mainstreaming children will be **socially** beneficial to children **with** special educational needs.					
31	Mainstreaming children will be **academically** beneficial to children **with** special educational needs.					
32	Children with special educational needs in a mainstream class should receive remedial education after school.					
33	Mainstreaming children with special educational needs will better equip them for adult life.					

SECTION FOUR

Please indicate with an X who of the following categories of pupils could be included in mainstream education? I.e. in the regular classroom

Mild/ Moderate learning disability	
Severe learning disability	
Hard of hearing	
Hearing impaired (deaf)	
Visually impaired (blind)	
Partially sighted	
Communication impaired	
Mild/ moderate mentally retarded	
Severe mentally retarded	
Physically impaired	
Mild behaviour disordered	
Severe behaviour disordered	
Gifted child	
None of these	

Please indicate with an X who of the following categories of pupils could be included in the regular school but not the regular class? I.e. Remedial/ Special class.

Mild/ Moderate learning disability	
Severe learning disability	
Hard of hearing	
Hearing impaired (deaf)	
Visually impaired (blind)	
Partially sighted	
Communication impaired	
Mild/ moderate mentally retarded	
Severe mentally retarded	
Physically impaired	
Mild behaviour disordered	
Severe behaviour disordered	
Gifted child	
None of these	

SECTION FIVE

Please answer any or all the following questions, if you wish:

1. **What are your concerns, as a parent, regarding the mainstreaming of all children?**

2. **How successful do you believe mainstreaming will be?**

3. **How do you perceive your role in assisting the implementation on mainstreaming?**

Author Glassman J
Name of thesis Parental Attitudes Towards Mainstreaming/Inclusion Of Children With Special Educational Needs In Regular Classrooms And Schools Glassman J 1999

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg Library website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the Library website.