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## Editor's Note

On March 12, 1999, the Department of Education released the Regulations for the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97). Fortunately, it is easy to access information about IDEA '97 and the new Regulations because the field of special education is keeping up with the cyberspace revolution in communication. It took over one year to write the Regulations but just minutes to put in up in cyberspace.

The Regulations can be viewed through <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA>. Another extremely useful and well-designed new web site about IDEA '97 and the accompanying Regulations was developed by the Council for Exceptional Children, with support from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. This web address is: <http://www.ideapractices.org>. The mission of this web site is to assist teachers, school administrators, and related services personnel in implementing recent changes in the nation's primary special education law, IDEA '97, PL 105-17. The partners for this web site are ILIAD (IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators Partnership) and ASPIRE (Association of Services Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education). The convenient hyperlinks in this web site are:

idealaw (IDEA '97, the new Regulations and U.S. Department of Education updates;

ideacentral (calendar of events, monthly news briefs, on line features;

ideaquests (Q and A about the regulations, effective practices and ideas that work)

ideapartners (Over 30 prominent education organizations)

ideadepot (new and useful resources)

ideaworks (case studies from schools programs implementing promising practices)

idealinks. (Links to the outstanding IDEA-related web sites)

Check out one of the IDEA 1997 websites. Teachers, parents, administrators, related professionals, and others interested in special education will find them to be very useful and informative places to find current information and answers to questions.

This issue of *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal* includes important new information about learning disabilities.

The timely article, *Approaching the Millennium for Students with Disabilities: Implementing IDEA '97 and Its Accompanying Regulations* is written by Beverley H. Johns. She provides a brief review of the key features of IDEA 1997 and the new Regulations to implement this law.

*Revisiting Families of Children with Learning Disabilities*, by Barbara Keogh focuses on children with learning disabilities in the context of family. Three levels of approaches for describing and understanding families include: structural components, family climates, and family daily routines. The article also presents implications for intervention planning.

*Improving the Writing Skills of Students with Learning Disabilities: Are Word Processors with Spelling and Grammar Checkers Useful?* is authored by Rena B. Lewis, Tarmarah H. Ashton, Bonnie Haapa, Candace L. Kieley, and Carl Fielden. The authors conducted a large-scale study of the effects of two technology-based editing and revision tools, spelling and grammar checkers. Students in three technology groups wrote with different configurations of a word processor with both a spelling and grammar checker. The authors include recommendations for the selection and use of spelling and grammar checking tools.

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*Technology the Lab School Way: A Multisensory Empowering Experience for Students with Severe Learning Disabilities and ADHD*, by Sally L. Smith and Sarah E. Irvine, describes how computers allow students with learning disabilities to engage in active learning. Teaching approaches using the computer and specific software are matched with characteristics of learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

*Gender Bias and Learning Disabilities: School-age and Long-term Consequences for Females* is authored by Glenn Young, H. Jessica Kim, and Paul Gerber, who report that gender bias in the field of learning disabilities puts females at a distinct disadvantage during their school-age years and after they leave school. The cumulative effects of gender bias contribute to an assortment of problems in adulthood that extend beyond the issues of learning disabilities and into broader social issues including poverty.

*Concrete to Semiconcrete to Abstract Instruction* is written by LuAnn Jordan, M. David Miller, and Cecil D. Mercer. They studied the retention of Fraction Concepts and Skills using concrete to semiconcrete to abstract instruction, and they found that students improved significantly in each of three posttest measures.

*Breaking Down Barriers—Building Strong Foundations: Parents and Teachers of Exceptional Students Working Together* was written by Cathleen G. Spinelli. The article provides guidelines to foster positive teacher-parent relationships. It discusses how parent-teacher relationships are affected by current laws and by policy issues promoted by professional education organizations. It also reviews methods of constructive communication to foster interaction between parents and teachers.

*The Changing Face of Early Childhood Assessment: DIAL-3* was written by Carol Mardell-Czudnowski and Dorothea S. Goldenberg. The authors describe the development of DIAL-3, a screening instrument to assess developmental skills that are the foundation for academic learning. The test now extends to the age range from 3-0 through 6-11. The administration and scoring of some items were simplified to increase inter-rater reliability and shorten the testing time.

We hope that you will find the topics covered in this issue of *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal* interesting and helpful.

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Editor-in-Chief