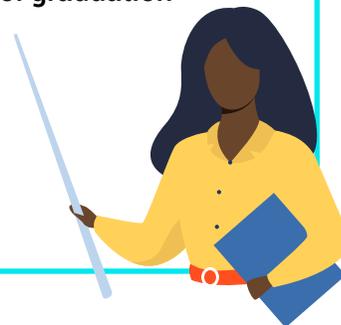


Overview

Not too long ago, students with disabilities were not guaranteed the right to attend public schools. Today, students with disabilities are in every public school and in most classrooms across the country. The majority of students with disabilities spend most of their time (more than 80% of the day) in general education classrooms. This is because Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the 1970s to provide a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities. The law requires school districts to find students in need of special education and provide them with the services and supports they need at no cost to their parents. When Congress passed IDEA, they promised to cover 40% of the extra cost of special education. Unfortunately, Congress has never come close to fulfilling that promise.

FAST FACTS

- IDEA serves more than 7 million students from birth through high school graduation (or age 21).¹
- The number of students with disabilities served under IDEA has increased by 25% in the past two decades.
- The federal government is only covering 14% of the additional cost of special education services. It initially promised to cover 40%.

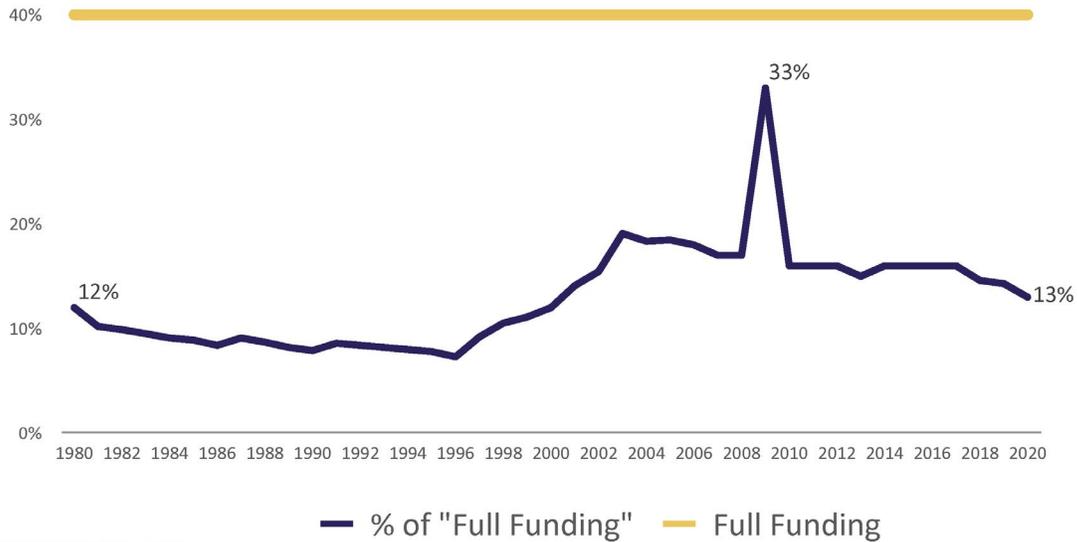


NCLD believes:

1. Public funds should be used for public schools.
2. Students with disabilities must have access to high-quality teaching and opportunities for learning no matter the cost of those services.
3. Congress must uphold its promise of covering 40% of the extra cost of special education services.
4. To recruit and retain qualified teachers, there must be additional funding to increase teacher salaries, decrease class sizes, and update classroom resources.

Special Education: Federal Share Falling Further Below “Full Funding”

Federal “Full Funding” covers 40% of excess cost of educating children with disabilities



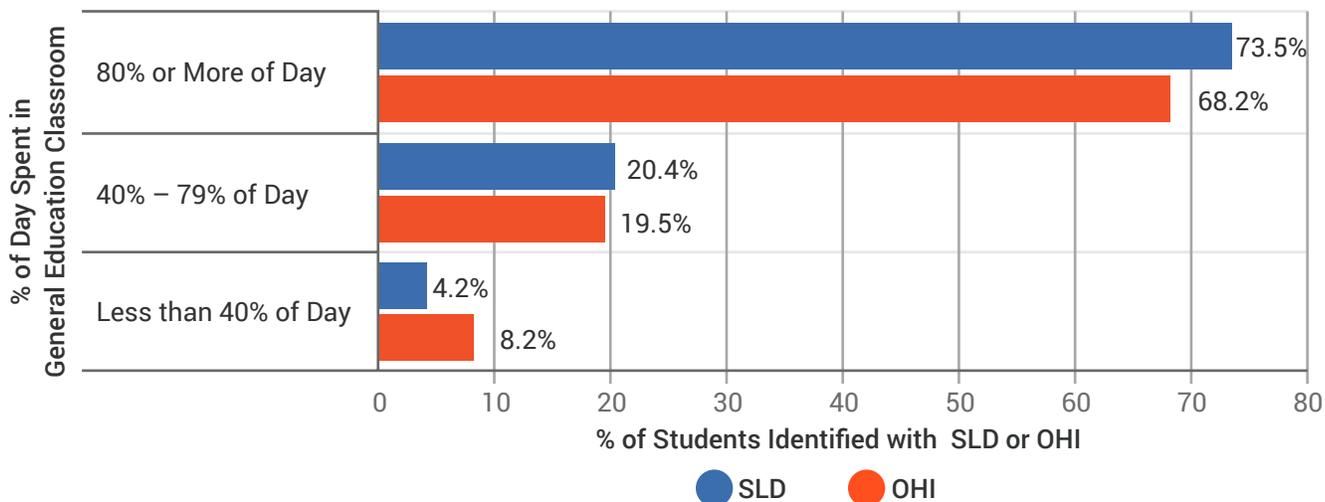
Source: CRS and ED funding history

1/30/20

To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the necessary resources, NCLD advocates for:

- Using the IDEA Full Funding Act to gradually increase federal funds for IDEA over 10 years to fund 40% of the additional costs for special education services (as Congress originally promised).
- Prohibiting any IDEA funds from being used in a private school voucher or voucher-like scheme.

Inclusion in General Education Classrooms in 2019–2020



Students with disabilities are general education students *first* and also have other intersectional identities. As such, they benefit from federal funding through a variety of programs that focus on meeting the needs of general education students, English learners, unhoused students, and migrant students. In addition to advocating for full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, NCLD advocates for increasing funding for other education and research programs. This includes Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which supports schools serving high populations of students impacted by poverty; Title II of ESSA, which provides funding to support educators; Title III, which provides funding for the instruction of English learners; and Title IV, which provides funding for programs that (a) promote student safety and health, (b) provide students with a well-rounded education, and (c) increase the effective use of technology. In addition, NCLD advocates for increasing funding for federal research to improve the identification and support of students with disabilities.



1 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database, retrieved February 20, 2020, from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bcc>



1220 L Street, NW Ste. 100 Box #168 Washington, DC 20005
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