

1988

A Study to Determine the Attitudes of Parents Toward Clarke Vocational Center Portsmouth, Virginia

Anita L. Riddick
Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ots_masters_projects



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Riddick, Anita L., "A Study to Determine the Attitudes of Parents Toward Clarke Vocational Center Portsmouth, Virginia" (1988). *OTS Master's Level Projects & Papers*. 433.
https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ots_masters_projects/433

This Master's Project is brought to you for free and open access by the STEM Education & Professional Studies at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in OTS Master's Level Projects & Papers by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@odu.edu.

A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE ATTITUDES OF
PARENTS TOWARD CLARKE VOCATIONAL CENTER
PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA

A RESEARCH PAPER
PRESENTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

BY
ANITA L. RIDDICK
AUGUST, 1988

This research paper was prepared by Anita L. Riddick under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in VTE 636, Problems in Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education.

APPROVED BY:



Dr. John M. Ritz
Advisor
Vocational and Technical Education

8-11-88
Date

Dr. Malvern Miller
Graduate Program Director
Vocational and Technical Education

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research study on the attitudes of parents toward having their E.M.R. children enrolled at Clarke Vocational Center would not have been possible without the contributions and support of many. Much credit is due to Dr. John M. Ritz for his supervision, patience, and understanding during the course of this study. Credit is also due to the parents and staff of Clarke Vocational Center.

A special thanks is due to my husband Marvin, and my three girls (Lashanna, Danica, and Kimberly) for their continued support, encouragement, and love during my completion of the masters degree program.

I also want to thank my three study pals, Jane, Velvoria, and Maryland for their support and assistance. A special thanks also to Jane for her warm hospitality and the use of her computer, as well as her daughter, Giovanni, for her support and her assistance with the computer.

Last, and most importantly, I thank God for giving me the knowledge, strength, and endurance to complete this masters program successfully. Without Him I would not have been able to accomplish this task.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
RESEARCH APPROVAL	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	2
RESEARCH GOALS	3
BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE	3
LIMITATIONS	6
ASSUMPTIONS	6
PROCEDURES	7
DEFINITION OF TERMS	7
OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS	9
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	10
FEDERAL LEGISLATION	10
PARENTS: AN INTEGRAL PART OF PLACEMENT PROCESS	11
EDUCATIONAL ATTRIBUTES OF SEGREGATED EDUCATION	13
SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES OF SEGREGATED EDUCATION	16
EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS	18
SOCIAL CONCERNS	19
SUMMARY	20
III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES	21
POPULATION	21
SAMPLE	21

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONT.)

	Page
CHAPTER	
INSTRUMENT	21
ADMINISTRATION	23
TREATMENT OF THE DATA	23
SUMMARY	24
IV. FINDINGS	25
SURVEY RESPONSE	25
DATA ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL CHILDREN	26
DATA ON THE I.E.P. MEETING	28
DATA ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	31
DATA ON SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT	36
DATA ON OPEN ENDED QUESTION	39
SUMMARY	41
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	43
SUMMARY	43
CONCLUSIONS	44
RECOMMENDATIONS	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY	48
APPENDICES	49
A. SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENTS	50
B. COVER LETTER	54
C. FOLLOW UP LETTER	56

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	
QUESTIONS 1 THRU 6	27
2. SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	
QUESTIONS 7 THRU 12	29
3. SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	
QUESTIONS 13 THRU 17.	32
4. SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	
QUESTIONS 18 THRU 22.	35
5. SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	
QUESTIONS 23 THRU 27.	38
6. SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	
QUESTION 28	40

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

To segregate or not to segregate? That is a question posed today that began with the passage of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142). Parents continuously find themselves engaged in the cross-fire of arguments between advocates of segregated education (e.g. center-based education), and those who favor mainstreaming, or integrated education for all Educable Mentally Retarded students.

Public Law 94-142 was signed into law on November 28, 1975. This law brought with its passage an upheaval and revamping of educational programs for the handicapped. Four major purposes of Public Law 94-142 have been identified or addressed: 1) full educational opportunities, 2) procedural safeguards for due process rights of parents and children, 3) appropriate education, and 4) state assistance.

Public Law 94-142 specifically assures that educational placement of handicapped students will be in the "least restrictive environment" (L.R.E.) or setting. L.R.E. may entail integration with non-handicapped students whenever and where ever possible. The L.R.E. may also indicate a preference for segregated education, depending upon the optimal environment and program that will best meet the student's individual needs.

Essentially, this is where the dispute originates. What is the "least restrictive environment" for the E.M.R. student: a center-based school (segregated) or a mainstream situation in a regular school? Recommendations for placement of these students

are made by educators and other professionals. However parents are charged with the responsibility of making the final decision.

This research study examined the attitudes of parents toward having their E.M.R. children enrolled in Clarke Vocational Secondary Center, at a time when the dominant educational placement trend was to mainstream the E.M.R. child into regular schools and programs. Given a choice, why are these parents still opting for the special education center?

The answer to this question will aid in shedding some light on the reasons why the special education center still lives and thrives at a time when many feel the concept should be "dead". In this school year alone, (1987-1988), the number of E.M.R. students being enrolled in the Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center is steadily increasing. The increase is due not only to new admissions to Special Education, but those who are returning from regular schools in the mainstream as well. Those leaving the regular schools are returning to the special education center, to segregated educational placement. The significance of this trend in relation to segregated educational placement will be explored.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine the attitudes of parents toward having their E.M.R. children enrolled at Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center.

RESEARCH GOALS

The Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center is one source of alternative educational placement for the E.M.R. student. This study was undertaken to determine why parents preferred this type of educational setting.

The objectives of this research were:

1. To identify the positive attributes of Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center.
2. To identify why parents enrolled their children at Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Secondary Education Center was established in September of 1969 for the express purpose of providing "alternative comprehensive special education services to secondary age handicapped students" (Secondary Education Center Handbook, 1982, p. 1). The strengths of the centralized model, as presented in the 1982 Handbook were:

1. Centralized services provide a sufficient number of students to span the age range for effective educational programming.
2. Centralized services allow for relevant and flexible curriculum planning, including pre-vocational and vocational experiences.
3. There is increased accountability for student achievement in centralized situations.
4. All specialists, psychologists, visiting teachers, speech and hearing therapists, nurses, etc. are readily available to serve the centralized location.
5. In-service training and staff conferences are facilitated in centralized programs.

6. Centralized services provide for the economical utilization of materials and equipment through sharing.
7. Administration can deal with student and staff problems more effectively in centralized programs.
8. Centralized services have a high community visibility making it easier for the community to relate to the needs of handicapped students.
9. Paradoxically, and of the utmost importance, there is a relief among handicapped students from always feeling or being made to feel different (Secondary Education Center Handbook 1982, p. 1).

From 1969 to 1980, the Secondary Education Center served basically E.M.R. students. Since 1981, the program has been expanded further, to include Learning Disabled, Trainable Mentally Retarded, and Emotionally Disturbed students, ranging in age from 13-21 years. The basic structure of the program exists today, as it did since its originality. However, the program is presently housed at Clarke Vocational Center and has evolved into Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center. Students are enrolled at Clarke only when it is determined that the program meets the individual needs in the "least restrictive" environment.

The academic program at the Center is designed to include social and personal adjustment skills, pre-vocational academics, and the development of useful vocational skills. These skills are developed and enhanced through special education programs, education for employment programs, and vocational work-study programs. The individual needs of each student in relation to these areas are addressed in the student's I.E.P.

Yearly, parents are charged with the responsibility of deciding "appropriate placement" for their E.M.R. children.

These parents must decide if their E.M.R. children should remain at the Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center or be mainstreamed into a program at their regular zoned high school. In order to arrive at a decision, the positive aspects of the center and the effectiveness of the program in meeting individual needs must be considered. Parents must also consider if the program has been implemented in the L.R.E.

Although the dominant trend today is to mainstream whenever possible, there have been some serious contradictions on this concept. One of these is that:

Although many advocates of mainstreaming maintain that E.M.R. children learn more in regular classes than self-contained classes, the research on self-concept has been controversial. Studies have shown that the self-esteem of slower students can be higher in more restricted, homogenous classes than in more heterogeneous classes where the student can't compete and is aware of the struggles to do so (Schanzer, 1981, p. 32).

It appears that parents of E.M.R. students at Clarke prefer that their children remain at the center and receive education in a segregated setting. Similarly, Schanzer (1981) stated that:

Many parents claimed that their E.M.R. children were being ridiculed in the mainstreamed classes and were failing their subjects. As a result, many of these parents requested that their children return to special education classes, or segregated classes (p. 32).

Schanzer (1981) further discovered that parents of E.M.R. children preferred segregated classes because "class size was limited, students received more attention, and distractions were fewer" (p.32).

Since parents continue to enroll their E.M.R. children at Clarke, this is a clear indication that there is a preference

among these parents for segregated educational setting.

Consequently, parents of these children perceive that this is the "least restrictive environment" for their children. If educators and other professionals are to continue to provide and improve "appropriate education" for students, the following need to be addressed:

1. What are the positive attributes offered through the program provided by Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center?
2. What are the reasons that parents enroll their children in the program provided by Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center?

LIMITATIONS

This study was based on the following limitations:

1. The research was limited to the Clarke Vocational Secondary Center in Portsmouth, Virginia.
2. The research, conducted by a questionnaire, had been given to parents having E.M.R. children, aged 14-18, enrolled at the Clarke Center.
3. The research was limited to E.M.R. students aged 14-18.

ASSUMPTIONS

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. All parents involved in the survey comprehend that the special education center is an alternative placement for E.M.R. students.
2. The parents understand the services provided by Clarke.

PROCEDURES

The data was collected by a survey administered to the parents of one classroom of E.M.R. students at Clarke. The survey was placed in school envelopes and taken home to parents by their children.

The data provided information in reference to parental identification of positive attributes in relation to the center and identification of reasons why parents enrolled their children at Clarke Vocational Center. As a result of these findings, conclusions were drawn that would further enhance the effectiveness of the program provided by Clarke.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The terms used in this study were defined as follows:

1. Educable Mentally Retarded- one whose I.Q. ranges from 50-79 and because of "subnormal" mental development is unable to profit from an educational program planned for the "norm".
2. E.M.R.- Educable Mentally Retarded
3. Handicapped - Students who are mentally retarded, physically handicapped, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, speech impaired, hearing impaired, multiple handicapped, visually impaired, or otherwise handicapped as defined by Public Law 94-142.
4. Mainstream- integrating special education students with

"normal" students for educational purposes.

5. Individualized Education Plan- a plan of action and statement of goals for the special education child, developed by the school in conjunction with the child's parents. This plan depicts needed special educational services that are appropriate for the child.
6. I.E.P.- Individualized Education Plan
7. Least Restrictive Environment- refers to law (P.L. 94-142) that to the maximum extent, appropriate handicapped children will be educated with non-handicapped peers. However, if it can be demonstrated that contact with non-handicapped peers is not "appropriate" for child, alternative placement (e.g. special schools, or classes) would be desirable.
8. L.R.E.- Least Restrictive Environment
9. Segregated Placement- Educational setting with other handicapped peers
10. Special Education- education prepared for those who cannot benefit from a program or curriculum planned for the "norm".
11. Special Education Center- a segregated alternative placement for the education of the handicapped.
12. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142)- law insures that all handicapped have available to them a free appropriate public education which included special education and related services to meet their unique needs.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The availability of alternative educational placement for the education of E.M.R. students was established in response to The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142). Parents must now decide between segregated or integrated educational placement for their children. The dominant trend today is to integrate E.M.R. students into regular schools and classes whenever possible. However, some parents of E.M.R. children prefer enrolling their children in segregated educational placements, such as Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center. These parents feel that their children's needs can be best met by such a placement.

An investigation was needed in order to assess and determine the positive attributes of the program provided by the center. Further, the reasons why parents enrolled their E.M.R. children at Clarke Vocational Center also needed to be determined and examined.

The second chapter included information involving parental opinions as to the positive attributes offered by segregated school or classes for E.M.R. children. Also included in this chapter was a discussion of parental concerns with the concept of segregated education. Following this was an explanation of how the research was conducted and the methods and procedures followed. The last two chapters presented the data as well as a summary, conclusions, and recommendations that would further improve the educational program at Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The problem of this study was to determine the attitudes of parents toward having their educable mentally retarded children enrolled in Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center. This chapter contained a brief history of legislation dealing with placement of E.M.R. students, parental involvement in the placement process, and attributes, as well as concerns with segregated education as seen through the eyes of parents of E.M.R. children. A summary is also included.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION- P.L. 94-142

Special education for educable mentally retarded students is an educational service that has been in existence for many years. However, for a number of years that education has had the same connotation as its name, being "special", virtually disconnected from "normal" education. Then P.L. 94-142 was born and brought with it an upheaval of special education as it was known at that time.

Like it or not, P.L. 94-142 is with us and is here to stay. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act has possibly been one of the major reforms affecting education in many years. This legislation (P.L. 94-142) mandated that all handicapped students be educated in the least restrictive environment. Depending on the individual, least restrictive environment can be construed to be anything from instruction in the mainstreamed classroom to education received in a self-contained special education class or center to institutionalization (Bell, 1978, p. 58).

For the E.M.R. students it essentially meant a shift from a segregated school setting, that houses only mentally retarded students, to an integrated setting which typically is a regular non-handicapped public school.

Many educators, administrators, parents, etc. viewed P.L. 94-142 as a long-overdue regulation or "bill of rights" for the handicapped. This "bill of rights" involved not only the handicapped children but their parents as well, with parents becoming an integral part of the placement process. P.L. 94-142 also mandated that local school districts devise, implement, and evaluate an individualized education plan (I.E.P.) for each handicapped student who attended school in the district. The I.E.P. should be formulated by a representative of the school district, the teacher, the parent or guardian, and whenever possible, the student.

The I.E.P. also indicated the educational services that were provided for the child and specifically stated the child's present as well as anticipated levels of educational performance, dates of commencement, duration of services to be provided, and methods of evaluating whether or not those levels of performance, had, in fact, been achieved (Bell, 1978, p. 58).

PARENTS: AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PLACEMENT DECISION

Over the last decade, there has been a revolution in special education. The placement of E.M.R. students has continuously been grossly debated and remains a controversial issue today. With the passage of P.L. 94-142 parents have established that their children have a right to a free public education. Further,

parents have given up their former passive roles, and taken on active ones in regard to such areas as evaluation, placement, and programming. Thus, parents have become actively involved in the form and focus of education for their children.

There has been a growing emphasis on educating E.M.R. children to the maximum extent possible with non-handicapped children, a concept called mainstreaming. This educational strategy arose partly in response to satisfy mandates of P.L. 94-142 and the provision for providing the L.R.E. for handicapped individuals.

In order to ensure that the mandates for LRE are satisfied, many people have moved handicapped individuals from one environment to another along a continuum of restrictiveness from:

- a) institutions, b) to segregated facilities,
- c) to segregated classrooms in regular public schools, d) to resource rooms to which students with handicaps come for part of the day, and finally, e) to fully mainstreamed classrooms in which students stay all day with non-handicapped peers (Repp, Barton, Brulle, 1986, p. 56).

Even though mainstreaming of E.M.R. children has been promoted, tooted, and encouraged by legislators, parents, etc., the concept of segregated education still lives and thrives. Parents have become actively involved in determining placement for their children in the last decade. Inasmuch as mainstreaming of E.M.R. students has been the dominant trend, it appears that parents have attempted to send a message. That message has been thundered loud and clear and should not be ignored. That message indicated that not all parents favored or desired mainstreaming for their E.M.R. children. Further, that message sent by parents indicated that in their opinions and judgements, L.R.E. for the education of their

children did not always mean a mainstreamed situation with non-handicapped peers. The message also indicated that some parents believed strongly that segregated schools or classes best served and met the needs of their children.

EDUCATIONAL ATTRIBUTES OF SEGREGATED EDUCATION

Those parents who demonstrated a preference for segregated classes for their E.M.R. children have done so partly because they felt that the centralized model provided specific program strengths. Some of these parents at one time had their children enrolled in mainstreamed situations. These parents found that their children were not experiencing success in the mainstream and opted to have their children returned to segregated education.

Parents of E.M.R. children interviewed in Portsmouth in 1982 cited that they had chosen the centralized model or segregated education for a multitude of reasons. These included:

1. Centralized services provide a sufficient number of students to span the age range for effective educational programming.
2. Centralized services allow for relevant and flexible curriculum planning, including pre-vocational and vocational experiences.
3. There is increased accountability for student achievement in centralized situations.
4. All specialists, psychologists, visiting teachers, speech and hearing therapists, nurses, etc., are readily available to serve the centralized location.
5. In-service training and staff conferences are facilitated in centralized programs.

6. Centralized services provide for the economical utilization of materials and equipment through sharing.
7. Administration can deal with student and staff problems more effectively in centralized programs (Sec. Ed. Center Handbook, 1982, p. 1).

Likewise, Shanley (1986, p. 109) cited that special provisions and greater specialist expertise, including teachers, speech therapists, physiotherapists, and psychologists were more likely to be available in special schools and centers. Similarly, in another study 78 percent of the parents surveyed felt that their E.M.R. children were receiving good education in special or segregated classes (Brantlinger, 1987, p. 96). Further, these parents indicated that special education provided beneficial experiences such as a chance to learn and an opportunity to get help or get ahead.

Many parents generally felt that E.M.R. children in mainstreamed classes were simply neglected by teachers. They expressed the belief that teachers tended to spend an insufficient amount of time with children having learning problems. However, parents were impressed with the amount of time and energy devoted to their children in segregated classes.

One parent recalls an experience with her E.M.R. child in the regular classroom. She remembers how her child's grades and skills deteriorated after being placed in a mainstreamed classroom. After visiting the child's school, the parent was told by the classroom teacher that she had a lot of children and didn't have the time to devote to one child (Brantlinger, 1987, p. 97).

As a result, the parent transferred her child back to segregated education where she knew class size was limited and much smaller and her child would receive the individual help and attention she

so desperately needed. Synonymous with these findings, in a situation reported by another researcher, (Schanzer, 1981, p. 32), parents claimed that their children were failing subjects in the mainstream and as a result returned their E.M.R. children to special education classes, where class size was limited, where children received more individual attention, and where distractions were fewer.

Parents also believed that the special class or center allowed for and accommodated for individual differences. They believed that in the segregated classes, attempts were made to reorganize the physical and social space of classrooms in ways that permitted children with special needs to exist together in the same environment. They viewed the special class as a community that reinforced cooperation and the children supported each other's efforts to complete their respective, but not necessarily identical tasks (Wang, Reynolds, and Walberg, 1986, p. 28). A similar parental view was expressed by another researcher (Pekarsky, 1981, p. 329).

Whereas in the mainstreamed classroom everyone except the special child was typically involved in the same task and judged by the same standard of success, in the segregated classroom, each child may be involved in a different task, one particularly suited to his/her particular needs and aptitudes.

Further, parents expressed the concern that in the mainstream their children tended to experience embarrassment or frustration because their assignments were usually different from those planned for the "norm", and as a result, they stuck out like a sore thumb. Such was not true in special classes because tasks were individual, based on the student's needs and abilities. Also, parents felt that teachers of special

classes selected subject matter that was tailored and suited to the individual needs of their children and standards of success were different, depending upon the individual child. In essence, the programs offered by centralized models focus on individualization.

Parents were also cognizant that their E.M.R. children would more likely receive immediate reinforcement for attempting and completing tasks in a segregated setting. Because of small class size, teachers had more time for individual students. Parents saw positive reinforcers as one of the dominant influences in helping to promote successful accomplishment of tasks. Segregated education for E.M.R. students has been described in a very unique way through the following image.

The centralized education model is like a jazz band; a variety of instruments playing at different tempos and in seeming independence of each other blend together to form a coherent musical experience that allows for improvisation (Pekarsky, 1981, p. 328).

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES THROUGH SEGRGATED EDUCATION

Parents felt that social integration and acceptance were essential if E.M.R. students were to meet with success in a mainstreamed situation. Parents reported psychological harm to their children caused by such things as being seen "slow" or "stupid" by their regular peers. As a result of such behaviors, some parents felt that social adjustment in a more restrictive environment such as a center or segregated class would be more suitable and appropriate for their E.M.R. children.

In studies conducted by Goldberg, slow students demonstrated higher self-esteem in classes where the range of abilities was narrow but lower where the range of abilities was broad (Schanzer, 1981, p. 32). Some parents of E.M.R. children cited examples of how their children were ridiculed and suffered in mainstreamed classes. Parents recalled situations wherein degrading tricks were played on their children and they had no friends to relate to. They reported incidences wherein their children were constantly being picked on because of their differences. These children had virtually no social life. These parents felt that their children were constantly under pressure, fearful, anxious, and depressed.

Parents believed that these same children were readily accepted by their peers in the segregated setting. Their peers did not see their individual differences as weird or strange. Parents saw tension and anxiety subside. Children talked about friends and experiences with friends and maintained some semblance of a social life. Parents felt that their children received a more secure, hassle-free time in special classes and as a result progressed more rapidly. (Brantlinger, 1987, p. 99). In general, parents saw the segregated classroom as an environment that accommodated and respected the diverse needs and behavioral styles of E.M.R. children.

Parents have also experienced social attributes through center placement in relation to themselves.

Parents indicated that within segregated programs for their children they felt more comfortable because they were with parents of other handicapped children. They also felt that they were not only identified with parents of handicapped children but also shared the same interests and concerns

(Horne, 1985, p. 215).

EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS

As well as identifying attributes of center based education for their E.M.R. children, parents have also identified a number of educational concerns. Some parents of E.M.R. children indicated that they were concerned about their children not being adequately challenged and skills not being advanced in the segregated setting. It is essential that the special education teacher not set into motion the self-fulfilling prophecy of expecting less from students assigned to low groups and then treated accordingly (Schanzer, 1981, p. 32). Likewise, Brantlinger (1987, p. 97) reported parents complained that children were learning the same old things in the special classes and made students feel dumb.

Some parents also felt that because their children were thought to be different and low achievers, that they were not receiving materials that may be costly or expensive. They also felt that facilities were less than those at the regular schools. Parents also expressed concern about having children travel to the centralized model dally. They felt that the children were spending too much time traveling and bypassing zoned schools. Parents felt that by the time students arrived they were already distracted or fatigued which would negatively influence learning.

SOCIAL CONCERNS

Parents have expressed a variety of concerns for their E.M.R. children in relation to segregated settings. The most prevalent social concern in regards to the segregated setting was the possibility of the child being stigmatized. The social implication of attending a special school may result in the child being stigmatized (Shanley, 1986, p. 108).

Some parents also felt that by their children being segregated they would not have the opportunity to grow and adjust to the expectations and demands of "normal" society. They felt that the special class somewhat represented an "artificial" social setting that does not exist in the real world.

Role models and peers were also a concern expressed by some parents. Some felt that the segregated setting greatly limited the E.M.R. child's opportunity to have normal role models and peers, as well as the chance to be molded to the norm through the existence of peer pressure (Pekarsky, 1981, p. 322). A number of parents were also concerned that their children would be influenced by being with other E.M.R. children who demonstrated undesirable behaviors. These parents were fearful that their children would begin to imitate those undesirable behaviors exhibited by other E.M.R. children. Further, some parents even felt that their children's safety may be endangered by being in the environment with a heavy concentration of other handicapped children.

SUMMARY

Whereas in the last decade parents have become more actively involved in the education of their E.M.R. children, placement of these children has become an important issue. Most parents now work closely with teachers and other educational staff in deciding appropriate placement. At a time when mainstreaming has become the preferred placement, some parents are continuing to place their E.M.R. children in segregated educational settings. Even though some parents have educational and social concerns in relation to these segregated settings, it is evident that in the minds of these parents, the social and educational attributes outweigh the concerns. It is also evident that parents have varied reasons for enrolling their E.M.R. children in segregated settings.

In the next chapter, the methods and procedures used to determine parents' attitudes toward the center concept will be discussed. The explanation of how the research was conducted as well as the methods and procedures for collecting data will be addressed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter explained the methods and procedures that were used in conducting the survey. It included the population, the sample, the administration of the survey, the treatment of the data, and a summary.

POPULATION

In the 1987-1988 school year Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center provided services to a total of fifty-eight E.M.R. children. These children comprised four classes. One parent had three E.M.R. children enrolled at Clarke and another parent had two E.M.R. children enrolled. Thus, the population consisted of a total of fifty-five parents.

SAMPLE

Although the population consisted of fifty-five parents, a sample of eighteen parents, or thirty-three percent was chosen as subjects for the survey. The researcher felt that a clear representation of parental attitudes toward the center could be determined by randomly surveying eighteen parents of E.M.R. students.

INSTRUMENT

A survey was developed containing twenty eight questions divided

into five parts. These parts included information on procedures utilized prior to special education placement, parental involvement in the placement process and I.E.P. development, educational issues, social adjustment, and an open-form question determining the reasons why parents enrolled their children at Clarke Vocational Center.

The first section dealt with the mandates of P.L. 94-142 in reference to testing children before they are identified as handicapped and begin to receive special education services. This section was composed of six closed-form questions that determined how closely the mandates of P.L. 94-142 were being adhered to in relation to parental rights in the testing and identification process.

The second section dealt with parental involvement in I.E.P. development and the placement process. Using closed-form questions the parents were given questions that helped to determine the extent to which they were involved in the development of the I.E.P. and the placement process.

The third section dealt with the educational programs that the students were receiving at the center. The parents were asked questions concerning the type of educational services that were being provided, as well as the appropriateness of these services.

Questions that pertained to social adjustment at the center comprised the fourth section of the survey. Closed-form questions were used to assess the degree of adjustment of E.M.R. children at Clarke. These questions helped to determine whether or not parents believed that a more restrictive environment contributed to the overall well-being of their children and helped in developing a more positive self-concept.

The last section of the survey related to reasons that parents chose the center as an alternative placement. The question used open-form technique to determine the reasons why parents chose Clarke Vocational Center as an alternative placement. A copy of the survey is found in Appendix A.

ADMINISTRATION

The researcher arranged a conference with the principal of Clarke Vocational Center, Mr. William Saunders, to discuss the purpose of the research paper, as well as to get permission to administer the surveys to the parents. A copy of the survey was also presented to the principal and discussed at this time. Permission was granted to conduct the survey.

The survey was then sent home to the parents by their children in school self-addressed envelopes. The cover letter, Appendix B, explained the purpose of the survey and encouraged the parents to respond promptly.

A follow-up letter, Appendix C, requesting the parents' urgent responses was sent out two weeks later. A second copy of the survey accompanied this letter.

TREATMENT OF THE DATA

After the surveys were returned the information or data was analyzed. Responses were tabulated, reviewed, and assembled into table form. The tables provided a break-down of responses and were accompanied by narratives of each question.

The number and percentage of yes/no answers for each item in Parts I and II of the survey were tabulated. Parts III and IV of the

survey consisted of fifteen items. A Likert scale was used in analyzing these items. The number and percentage of keyed responses for the open-ended question in Part V of the survey was also computed.

SUMMARY

Eighteen of the fifty-five parents that had E.M.R. children enrolled in Clarke Vocational Center were selected as the sample in this research study. The survey contained thirty questions that gathered information that was needed for this study. The subjects were given two weeks to respond to the survey. The data was then tabulated and evaluated. In the following chapter the findings resulting from this data will be addressed.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center was established as an alternative placement for handicapped students. The center provides educational and vocational services that are designed to meet the needs of each student involved. The problem of this study was to determine the attitudes of parents toward having their E.M.R. children enrolled in Clarke.

This was accomplished by surveying a sample of eighteen parents who had E.M.R. children enrolled at the center. The data received from these surveys was presented in this chapter.

SURVEY RESPONSE

Eighteen surveys were sent to a random selection of parents having E.M.R. children enrolled at Clarke Secondary Education Center. Sixteen parents responded to the initial survey. Two weeks later, a follow up survey was sent to the two parents who had not responded. These parents were encouraged to participate and were reminded of the importance of their input. The final two parents responded immediately, bringing the total to eighteen responses, or one hundred percent of the random sample group. All data and results in the following sections were computed based on the total (18) responses that were returned.

DATA ON THE IDENTIFICATION
OF SPECIAL CHILDREN

Part One dealt with the identification of special children. The participants were asked to respond to each question by checking yes or no. The number and percentage of parents responding to each question was tabulated. The number and percentage of yes and no answers for each question was also computed.

Question one asked if parents gave written permission for their children to be tested to receive special education services. A total of eighteen (18) parents responded to this question resulting in a response percentage of 100. All parents (18) answered yes to the question, indicating a 100 percent yes response (see Table 1).

Question two asked if someone explained to the parents why the testing was needed. One hundred percent (18) of the parents responded to this question. Ninety-four percent (17) of the parents answered this question affirmatively. Six percent (1) of the parents responded to this question with the answer no (see Table 1).

The third question asked the parents if they received a written listing of their rights. One hundred percent of the parents (18) responded to this question. Ninety-four percent (17) of the parents answered this question yes while only six percent (1) of the parents answered no (see Table 1).

The fourth question asked the parents if someone explained their rights to them. One hundred percent (18) of the parents

TABLE 1
STATEMENT
ATTITUDES OF PARENTS TOWARD HAVING THEIR
E.M.R. CHILDREN ENROLLED AT CLARKE
QUESTIONS 1 THRU 6

Item No.	Item	Response	% of Total	Yes	%	No	%
1	Did you give written permission for your child to be tested to receive special education services?	18	100	18	100	0	0
2	Did someone explain why the testing was needed?	18	100	17	94	1	6
3	Did you receive a written listing of your rights?	18	100	17	94	1	6
4	Did someone explain these rights to you?	18	100	15	83	3	17
5	Were you told that the testing would be at no cost to you?	17	94	17	100	0	0
6	If you disagreed with the results, did you understand that you might request that someone else test your child?	17	94	17	100	0	0

responded to this question. Eighty-three percent (15) of the parents responded yes to this question. However, seventeen percent (3) of the parents responded no to this particular question (see Table 1).

Question five asked parents if they were told that testing would be of no cost to them. Ninety-four percent (17) of the parents answered the question. All parents who responded (17) answered yes to this question, indicating a one hundred percent yes response (see Table 1).

The final question (number 6) in Part One of the survey asked parents if there was disagreement with the results, did they understand that they might request that someone else test their children. Ninety-four percent of parents (17) responded to this question. One hundred percent (17) of parents responding answered yes to this question (see Table 1).

DATA ON THE I.E.P. MEETING

The next six questions (Part Two) of the survey dealt with the I.E.P. meeting. The parents were asked to answer each question by checking yes or no. The number and percentage of parents responding, as well as the number and percentage of yes and no answers for each question was tabulated and computed.

Question seven asked parents if they were invited to a meeting to plan an I.E.P. for their children. A total of one hundred percent (18) of parents responded to the question. All parents answered this question yes, resulting in a yes tabulation of

TABLE 2
STATEMENT
ATTITUDES OF PARENTS TOWARD HAVING THEIR
E.M.R. CHILDREN ENROLLED AT CLARKE
QUESTIONS 7 THRU 12

Item No.	Item	Response	% of Total	Yes	%	No	%
7	Were you invited to a meeting to plan an I.E.P. for your child?	18	100	18	100	0	0
8	Were you invited to this meeting in time to make arrangements to attend?	18	100	17	94	1	6
9	Did you attend this meeting?	18	100	15	83	3	17
10	Were alternative placements explained to you at the I.E.P. meeting?	18	100	15	83	3	17
11	Did you make the final decision to have your child enrolled at Clarke Vocational Training Center?	18	100	17	94	1	6
12	Were you given a copy of the I.E.P.?	18	100	17	94	1	6

eighteen or one hundred percent (see Table 2).

Question eight asked if parents were given ample time to arrange to attend the I.E.P. meeting. One hundred percent (18) of parents responded to this question. Ninety-four percent (17) of the parents answered yes. Only six percent (1) of the parents felt that he/she did not have ample time to make arrangements to attend the I.E.P. meeting (see Table 2).

Question nine dealt with whether or not parents attended the I.E.P. meeting. One hundred percent (18) of the parents answered this question. A total of eighty-three percent (15) of the parents responded yes. Seventeen percent (3) of the parents responded no, indicating that they did not attend the I.E.P. meeting.

The tenth question asked parents if alternative placements were discussed with them at the I.E.P. meeting. One hundred percent (18) of the parents responded to this particular question. Again, eighty-three percent (15) of the parents answered yes, while seventeen percent (3) of the parents answered no, indicating that alternative placements were not discussed with them (see Table 2).

The eleventh question concentrated on whether or not parents made the final decision to have their children enrolled in Clarke. One hundred percent (18) of the parents responded to this particular question. An overwhelming majority, ninety-four percent (17) of the parents answered yes, and made the final decision to have their children placed at Clarke. However, six percent (1) of the parents answered no to this question (see Table 2)

The final question in this part was number 12. It focused

on whether or not parents were given copies of the I.E.P. All parents surveyed, one hundred percent (18) responded to this question. Again, ninety-four percent (17) of the parents responded yes while only six percent (1) of the parents answered that he/she did not receive a copy of the I.E.P. (see Table 2).

DATA ON EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Part III of the survey focused on educational services provided by the center. This section was composed of ten questions (numbers 13 - 22) based on a Likert type scale (5 point scale). Participants were asked to answer items on a continuum of responses ranging from strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD). The number and percentage of the various responses to each item was then tabulated. A value scale of 1 - 5 was also utilized, with 5 being Strongly Agree (SA), 4 Agree (A), 3 Undecided (UD), 2 Disagree (D), and 1 Strongly Disagree (SD). Implementing this value scale, a mean was also computed for each item.

Question thirteen asked parents if their children were receiving services outlined in the I.E.P. One hundred percent (18) of the parents responded to the question. Forty-four percent (8) of the participants answered strongly agree. Fifty-six percent (10) of the parents responded agree to this same question. The mean for this particular question was computed as 4.4 indicating the mean response was above the agree indicator (see Table 3).

Question fourteen asked if specialists, psychologists, nurses,

TABLE 3
ATTITUDES OF PARENTS TOWARD HAVING THEIR
E.M.R. CHILDREN ENROLLED AT CLARKE

QUESTION 13 THRU 17

Item No.	Item	Response	% of Total	Emphasis of Response										Mean
				SA	%	A	%	UD	%	D	%	SD	%	
13	My child is receiving services outlined in his/her I.E.P.	18	100	8	44	10	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.44
14	Specialists, psychologists, nurses, speech and hearing therapists, etc., are readily available to serve my child's needs.	15	83	7	47	7	47	1	6	0	0	0	0	4.4
15	My child is receiving vocational training designed to prepare him/her for the job market.	18	100	6	33	8	44	1	6	3	17	0	0	4.18
16	My child is receiving physical education designed to meet his/her individual needs.	18	100	7	39	9	50	2	11	0	0	0	0	4.28
17	My child is receiving academic instruction designed to meet his/her individual needs.	18	100	6	33	12	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.33

Value Scale - Strongly Agree (SA) - 5 Agree (A) - 4 Undecided (UD) - 3 Disagree (D) - 2
Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1

speech and hearing therapists, etc. were readily available to serve the needs of the children. Eighty-three percent (15) of the parents responded to the question. Forty-seven percent (7) of the parents strongly agreed with this item, forty-seven percent (7) agreed, and six percent (1) was undecided. The mean for this item was 4.4 indicating the average response was above the agree level (see Table 3).

The next item was number fifteen. This item asked parents if students were receiving vocational training designed to prepare them for the job market. One hundred percent (18) of the parents responded to this item. Thirty-three percent (6) of the parents strongly agreed, forty-four percent (8) of the parents agreed, six percent (1) of the parents was undecided, and seventeen percent (3) of the parents disagreed. The mean for this item was 4.28, indicating the average response was a little above the agree indicator (see Table 3).

Item sixteen pertained to whether or not students were receiving physical education designed to meet individual needs. Again, one hundred percent (18) of the participants responded to the item. Thirty-three percent (6) of the parents answered strongly agree and sixty-seven percent (12) of the parents answered agree. The computed mean was 4.28, indicating a mean response over the agree indicator (see Table 3).

Item seventeen asked if students were receiving academic instruction designed to meet individual needs. One hundred percent (18) of the parents responded. Thirty-three percent (6) of the parents responded strongly agree and sixty-seven percent (12)

of the parents responded agree. The mean value was 4.33, indicating a mean response above the agree level (see Table 3).

Item eighteen asked parents if classes were small enough such that children received the needed individual attention. Ninety-four percent (17) of the parents responded to the item. Of the seventeen parents responding, thirty-five percent (6) of the parents answered strongly agree. Forty-seven percent (8) of the parents responded agree to this same item. Six percent (1) of the parents was undecided about this particular item. Further, twelve percent (2) of the parents disagreed with this item. The mean for this item was 4.06, indicating a mean response just above the agree indicator (see Table 4).

Item nineteen asked if teachers were interested in helping children progress. Eighty-nine percent (16) of the parents responded to this item. Sixty-nine percent (1) of the parents strongly agreed with this item and thirty-one percent (5) of the parents agreed. The mean for this item was 4.81 approaching the strongly agree indicator (see Table 4).

The next item was number twenty. This item asked if children were being adequately challenged and skills were being developed. Ninety-four percent (17) of the parents responded to this item. Twenty-nine percent (5) of the parents strongly agreed, fifty-nine percent (10) of the parents agreed, six percent (1) of the parents felt undecided, and six percent (1) of the parents disagreed. The mean for this item was 4.12, yielding an average response slightly above the agree level (see Table 4).

Item twenty-one referred to whether or not parents were kept

TABLE 4
ATTITUDES OF PARENTS TOWARD HAVING THEIR
E.M.R. CHILDREN ENROLLED AT CLARKE
QUESTION 18 THRU 22

Item No.	Item	Response	% of Total	Emphasis of Response										Mean
				SA	%	A	%	UD	%	D	%	SD	%	
18	My child's class is small enough such that he/she receives the needed individual attention.	17	94	6	35	8	47	1	6	0	12	0	0	4.06
19	My child's teacher appears to be interested in helping my child progress.	16	89	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.81
20	My child is being adequately challenged and skills are being developed.	17	94	5	29	10	59	1	6	1	6	0	0	4.12
21	I am kept informed of my child's progress.	17	94	11	65	6	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.65
22	I am generally pleased with the educational services my child is receiving at the center.	17	94	7	41	9	53	0	0	1	6	0	0	4.29

informed of progress by children. Seventeen of the eighteen parents responded to the item, yielding a response rate of ninety-four percent. Of the seventeen parents responding sixty-five percent (11) of the parents answered strongly agree and thirty-five percent (6) of the parents answered agree. The computed mean was 4.65, indicating a mean response approaching the strongly agree indicator (see Table 4).

The final item in Part II was number twenty-two. This item asked if parents were pleased with the educational services their children were receiving. Again, ninety-four percent (17) of the participants answered the question. Forty-one percent (7) of the parents responded strongly agree, fifty-three percent (9) of the parents responded agree, and six percent (1) of the parents responded disagree. The mean value was 4.29, slightly above the agree indicator (see Table 4).

DATA ON SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Part IV of the survey concentrated on social adjustment of students enrolled at the center. This section consisted of five items (numbers 23 - 27). A Likert type scale was used, with respondents requested to respond to each item on a continuum of responses ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD). The number and percentages of the various responses to each item was tabulated. A value scale of 1 - 5 was used with 5 being Strongly Agree (SA), 4 Agree (A), 3 Undecided (UD), 2 Disagree (D), and 1 Strongly Disagree (SD). Utilizing this value scale, a mean was

was also computed for each item.

Item twenty-three refers to acceptance of students by peers at the center. One hundred percent (18) of the parents answered this item. Seventeen percent (3) of the parents strongly agreed that their children were accepted by peers. Sixty-seven percent (12) of the parents agreed that their children were accepted by peers. Six percent (1) of the parents was undecided about this item. Ten percent (2) of the parents disagreed that their children were accepted by peers. The mean was 3.89 approaching the agree indicator (see Table 5).

Item twenty-four asked parents if their children had positive experiences with peers at the center. One hundred percent (18) of the parents responded to the item. Seventeen percent (3) of the parents strongly agreed, sixty-seven percent (12) of the parents agreed, six percent (1) of the parents was undecided, six percent (1) of the parents strongly disagreed, and six percent (1) of the parents disagreed. The mean response was 3.83 approaching the agree indicator.

The next item was number twenty-five. The question asked if parents thought their children were an integral part of extra curriculum activities at the center. One hundred percent (18) of the parents answered the question. Twenty-seven percent (5) of the parents answered strongly agree, sixty-one percent (11) of the parents answered agree, six percent (1) of the parents answered undecided, and six percent (1) of the parents answered

TABLE 5
ATTITUDES OF PARENTS TOWARD HAVING THEIR
E.M.R. CHILDREN ENROLLED AT CLARKE

QUESTION 23 THRU 27

Item No.	Item	Response	% of Total	Emphasis of Response										Mean
				SA	%	A	%	UD	%	D	%	SD	%	
23	It appears that my child is accepted by his/her peers at the center.	18	100	3	17	12	67	1	6	2	10	0	0	3.89
24	My child has positive experiences with peers at the center.	18	100	3	17	12	67	1	6	1	6	1	6	3.83
25	My child is an integral part of extra curriculum activities at the center.	18	100	5	27	11	61	1	6	0	0	1	6	4.06
26	My child appears to feel comfortable with his environment at the center.	18	100	7	39	8	44	1	6	2	11	0	0	4.11
27	Generally, my child has a positive self-image.	18	100	6	33	9	50	2	11	1	6	0	0	4.11

strongly disagree. The mean value was 4.06, only slightly above the agree indicator (see Table 5).

Item twenty-six asked parents if their children appeared to feel comfortable with the environment at the center. One hundred percent (18) of the participants responded to this item. Thirty-nine percent (7) of the parents indicated strongly agree, forty-four percent (8) of the parents agreed, six percent (1) of the parents was undecided, and eleven percent (2) of the parents disagreed. The mean response was 4.11, slightly above the agree level (see Table 5).

The final item in this section was item twenty-seven. One hundred percent (18) of the parents responded to this item. Thirty-three percent (6) of the parents responded strongly agree. Fifty percent (9) of the parents responded agree. Eleven percent (2) of the parents were undecided as to this item. Six percent (1) of the parents disagreed, indicating that his/her child did not have a positive self-image. The indicated mean response was 4.11, slightly above the agree indicator (see Table 5).

DATA ON OPEN ENDED QUESTION

Part V consisted of one open ended question, number twenty-eight. The question asked parents to explain why they enrolled their children at Clarke Secondary Education Center. One hundred percent (18) of the parents responded. Eleven percent (2) of the parents stated that they enrolled their children at Clarke such that the children could learn life or survival skills. Parents felt that these survival skills would help their children to live semi-

TABLE 6
KEYED RESPONSES TO OPEN ENDED QUESTION

QUESTION		
Why did you enroll your child at S. H. Clarke Vocational Training Center?		
KEYED RESPONSES	NUMBER	PERCENT
To learn life (survival) skills	2	11
To receive vocational (work) training	8	44
Individualized Instruction	5	28
Teachers' concern in helping students	2	11
Other Recommendations	1	6

*100 percent (18) of the parents responded to this question.

independent or independent lives after graduation from Clarke. Forty-four percent (8) of the parents stated that they enrolled their children at Clarke such that they could receive work training in the various trade areas (Clarke presently has seven vocational areas). Parents felt that with these experiences and training, after graduation their children would be prepared to either receive further training or enter the job market. Twenty-eight percent (5) of the parents enrolled their children at Clarke because they strongly felt that their children would receive needed individualized instruction. Parents further felt that this instruction would be designed to meet the individual needs of their children. These parents felt that the individual needs of their children could not be met in a mainstreamed situation. Eleven percent (2) of the parents indicated that they enrolled their children at Clarke because they felt that the teachers there were genuinely concerned and interested in helping their children. They observed that the teachers worked very closely with the students and were impressed by this factor. Finally six percent (1) of the parents indicated that she enrolled her child at Clarke because of recommendations by other parents who had children enrolled at Clarke.

SUMMARY

Eighteen parents responded to the survey providing a total of one hundred percent response. Data was presented that provided information on the attitudes of parents toward having their children enrolled at Clarke. The responses indicated by parents

were helpful in identifying the positive attributes of Clarke, as well as identifying the reasons why parents enrolled their children at Clarke. The next chapter provided a summary of this research. Conclusions that were drawn from the information presented in this chapter followed the summary. The last section consisted of recommendations made by the researcher.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contained a summary which included the research problem, an overview of Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center (Clarke VTC), an abbreviated description of the survey, and information on the responses received. The conclusions were based on the data received and focused on the parental attitudes toward Clarke. Finally, recommendations were made by the researcher and discussed.

SUMMARY

The problem of this study was to determine the attitudes of parents toward having their E.M.R. children enrolled at Clarke. This study determined the positive attributes of Clarke and identified reasons why parents enrolled their children at this center.

The Secondary Education Center had its beginning in 1969. In 1986 Secondary Education Center merged with Clarke and has evolved into Clarke Vocational Secondary Education Center or as some refer to it, Clarke Vocational Training Center. Since its beginning the center has served as an alternative placement for handicapped children. Students are enrolled at Clarke only when it is determined that the program offered there meets the individual needs in the "least restrictive" environment. In the 1987 - 1988 school year, the center provided services to approximately one

hundred forty handicapped students. Fifty-eight of these were E.M.R. students.

A combination closed-form and open-form survey was sent to eighteen parents (thirty-three percent) of E.M.R. children on May 16, 1988. Eighty-nine percent (16) of the parents responded before the May 27 deadline. On May 31, 1988 a follow-up survey was sent to the two parents who had not responded. These two parents responded immediately, yielding a one hundred percent return of surveys.

After the return of all surveys the data was tabulated. The number and percentage of yes/no responses for each item in Parts I and II were tabulated. The number and percentage of varied responses (SA - SD) for each item were also tabulated. A mean was also calculated for these items. Part V consisted of one open-form question and yielded additional information that further assisted in comprehending parental attitudes toward Clarke.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data presented in Chapter IV, this study has revealed several significant findings.

1. There is a definite need for Clarke to continue as an alternative placement for E.M.R. students. The positive attributes of Clarke as identified through survey responses included the following:
 - A. In most cases, parents having E.M.R. children at Clarke were informed of their rights in regards to testing and identification of special needs children.
 - B. Teachers at Clarke adhered to the mandates of P.L. 94-142 by promoting parental involvement in the I.E.P.

and placement process.

- C. Students received educational instruction and services designed to meet their individual needs.
 - D. In most cases, Clarke has provided a positive social environment for its E.M.R. students.
2. Through survey responses parents revealed that the major reasons they enrolled their children at Clarke included the following:
- A. Enrollment at Clarke allowed students an opportunity to receive vocational training for the job market.
 - B. Enrollment at Clarke afforded students the opportunity to receive individualized instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information gathered from the surveys and the conclusions drawn, the researcher has made the following recommendations.

- 1. All parents should be familiar with their rights in regards to testing and the I.E.P. process.
 - A. It is essential that all professional staff involved explain reasons for testing and testing procedures to parents prior to children being tested. Parents should also receive a written listing of their rights.
 - B. Teachers at Clarke should ensure that all parents of handicapped children receive a handbook of parental rights published by Portsmouth Public Schools. Parents should be encouraged to inquire about any items discussed that they do not comprehend.
 - C. Parents need to be cognizant that Portsmouth has a Parent Center and organization that focuses on parental rights of those having handicapped children. Parents may be made aware of these services through the school's newsletter or through school functions or groups (e. g. the PTA).
 - D. In-service programs should be offered for parents emphasizing parental rights and participation in the I.E.P. process.

- E. Teachers should ensure that ample time is given each parent to arrange to attend the I.E.P. meeting. They should also make several attempts to meet with parents. If all else fails, teachers should ensure that parents receive a copy of the I.E.P. In these cases, the I.E.P. may be sent via certified mail.
2. Clarke needs to continue to provide and expand the educational services offered. On-going evaluation and assessment of educational services should be implemented in order to ensure that services are meeting the individual needs of the students involved.
 3. Professional personnel need to spend more time ensuring that students can make the transition from the social environment at Clarke to a "regular" social environment.
 4. Clarke VTC should continue to offer vocational training designed to prepare students for the job market and life skills that help to prepare students for independent or semi-independent living.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Belli, Kathleen, "Should Handicapped Students Be Mainstreamed?", Journal of Business Education. HELDREFF Publications, Washington, D.C., Volume 54, pp. 58-60, November, 1978.
- Brantlinger, Ellen, Anderson, "Making Decisions About Special Education Placement: Do Low-Income Parents Have The Information They Need?", Journal of Learning Disabilities. Professional Press Inc., Chicago, Illinois, Volume 20, pp. 94-101, Feb., 1987.
- Horne, Marcia, D., Attitudes Toward Handicapped Students. Erlbaum, Hillsdale, N.J., 1985.
- Pekarsky, Daniel, "Normalcy, Exceptionality, and Mainstreaming." Journal of Education. Boston University School of Education, Boston, Ma., Volume 163, pp. 320-34, Fall, 1981.
- Repp A., Barton, L., and Brulle, A., "Assessing a Least Restrictive Education Through Social Comparison", Education and Training of Mentally Retarded. Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, Va., Volume 21, pp; 56-61, March, 1986.
- Schanzer, Sharon, Stern, "When Can We Justify Mainstreaming?", Principal. National Association of Elementary School Principals, Alexandria, Va., Volume 61, pp. 31-2, November, 1981.
- Secondary Education Center Handbook. Portsmouth Public Schools, Portsmouth, Va., 1982.
- Shanley, Eamon, Mental Handicap: A Handbook of Care. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, New York, 1986.
- Wang, Margaret, C., Reynolds, Maynard, C., and Walberg, Herbert, J., "Rethinking Special Education", Educational Leadership. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Va., Volume 44, pp. 26-31, September, 1986.

APPENDICES

	Page
A. SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	51
B. COVER LETTER	54
C. FOLLOW UP LETTER	56

APPENDIX A

SURVEY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENTS

The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes of parents toward having their children enrolled at S. H. Clarke Vocational Training Center.

Part I: IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL CHILDREN

Please answer each question by checking your desired response:

- | | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Did you give written permission for your child to be tested to receive special education services? | — | — |
| 2. Did someone explain why the testing was needed? | — | — |
| 3. Did you receive a written listing of your rights? | — | — |
| 4. Did someone explain these rights to you? | — | — |
| 5. Were you told that the testing would be at no cost to you? | — | — |
| 6. If you disagreed with the results, did you understand that you might request that someone else test your child? | — | — |

Part II: INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (I.E.P. MEETING)

Answer each question by checking your desired response:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7. Were you invited to a meeting to plan an I.E.P. for your child? | — | — |
| 8. Were you invited to this meeting in time to make arrangements to attend? | — | — |
| 9. Did you attend this meeting? | — | — |
| 10. Were alternative placements explained to you at the I.E.P. meeting? | — | — |
| 11. Did you make the final decision to have your child enrolled at Clarke Vocational Training Center? | — | — |
| 12. Were you given a copy of the I.E.P.? | — | — |

Part III: EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Circle your desired response for each question.
Choices include: Strongly disagree (SD), Disagree (D),
Undecided (UD), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

13. My child is receiving services outlined in his/her I.E.P. (SD D UD A SA)
14. Specialists, psychologists, nurses, speech and hearing thearpists, etc., are readily available to serve my child's needs. (SD D UD A SA)
15. My child is receiving vocational training designed to prepare him/her for the job market. (SD D UD A SA)
16. My child is receiving physical education designed to meet his/her individual needs. (SD D UD A SA)
17. My child is receiving academic instruction designed to meet his/her needs. (SD D UD A SA)
18. My child's class is small enough such that he/she receives the needed individual attention.
(SD D UD A SA)
19. My child's teacher appears to be interested in helping my child progress. (SD D UD A SA)
20. My child is being adequately challenged and skills are being developed. (SD D UD A SA)
21. I am kept informed of my child's progress.
(SA D UD A SA)
22. I am generally pleased with the educational services my child is receiving at the center.
(SD D UD A SA)

Part IV: SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Circle your desired response for each question.
Choices include: Strongly disagree (SD), Disgree (D),
Undecided (UD), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

23. It appears that my child is accepted by his peers at the center. (SD D UD A SA)
24. My child has positive experiences with peers at the center. (SD D UD A SA)
25. My child is an integral part of extra curriculum activities at the center. (SD D UD A SA)

26. My child appears to feel comfortable with his environment at the center. (SD D UD A SA)
27. Generally, my child has a positive self-image.
(SD D UD A SA)

Part V: PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTION WITH AN EXPLANATION.

1. Why did you enroll your child at S. H. Clarke Vocational Training Center?

APPENDIX B

Portsmouth Public Schools
CLARKE VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER
2801 Turnpike Road
Portsmouth, Virginia 23707

55

May 16, 1988

Dear Parents:

Clarke Vocational Training Center has been established as an alternative placement to provide educational and vocational experiences for your child. I am currently conducting a survey in order to complete requirements for my Master's Degree in Vocational Education. The data from this survey will be utilized in determining the attitudes of parents toward having their children enrolled at Clarke VTC.

I would like to ask for a few minutes of your time to fill out the attached survey. Please read each question carefully and indicate your response. After you have completed the survey, please return it promptly to Mrs. Anita Riddick at Clarke VTC. The deadline is May 27, 1988.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Anita L. Riddick

APPENDIX C

Portsmouth Public Schools
CLARKE VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER
2801 Turnpike Road
Portsmouth, Virginia 23707

57

May 31, 1988

Dear Parents:

Your help is urgently needed to determine the attitudes of parents toward having their children enrolled at S. H. Clarke Vocational Training Center. Your assistance in completing this survey is essential in helping to determine parental attitudes toward these severices. As of today's date, I have not received your response.

Please take a few minutes to complete the attached survey. Read each question carefully and indicate your response. After you have completed the survey, please return it promptly to Mrs. Anita Riddick at Clarke VTC. The deadline is June 14, 1988.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Anita L. Riddick