

Individualized Education Plans

Headline

Boys are more than twice as likely as girls to receive special services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In 2003, 9 percent of boys in kindergarten through grade 3 had an IEP compared with 4 percent of girls in the same grades. ([See Figure 1](#))

Importance

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA),¹ are specific education plans for students with disabilities, created with input from teachers, parents, special education teachers, and when appropriate, the students themselves. IEPs contain information such as the student's current performance, annual goals, services that the student receives, needed transition services, and how progress will be measured. Research has shown that IEP documents are related to the quality and quantity of services received by students with disabilities.² Early, accurately targeted interventions will help each student succeed to the best of his or her ability and avoid future problems such as grade retention or academic failure. However, families of more diverse culture and ethnic backgrounds or with low-incomes are less likely to access early intervention services and are less likely to participate in the IEP process.³ Hispanic and Asian children are also underrepresented in special education programs.⁴ Because of this, it is important to make sure that the IEP process is culturally and linguistically sensitive.⁵ The change in legislation in 1997 puts a much bigger emphasis on parental involvement in the IEP process.⁶

An IEP can also serve as an opportunity for a student to acquire knowledge about his or her own disability and can contribute to decisions about their plan. The IDEA legislation requires that children and youth ages 14 and older are asked to participate in any meetings about their IEP.⁷ Research shows that students who play a role in leading their IEP meetings know more about their own disabilities and rights, and may also gain self-esteem.⁸

Trends

Between 2001 and 2003, the percentage of children in kindergarten through third grade receiving special services through an IEP remained relatively constant and was at 7 percent in 2003. ([See Table 1](#))

Of those children with special needs, 28 percent were receiving special services through an IEP in 2003. ([See Table 2](#)) Of those children receiving services through an IEP, nearly three-quarters (72 percent) had some type of speech or language delay. About one-third (31 percent) were diagnosed with ADD or ADHD.⁹

Note: Special needs include those children whose parents were told the child had any of the following disabilities: a specific learning disability, mental retardation, a speech or language delay, a serious emotional disturbance, deafness or another hearing impairment, blindness or another visual impairment, another health impairment lasting 6 months or more, autism, attention deficit disorder (ADD or ADHD), or Pervasive Development Disorder.

Differences by Gender

Boys are more than twice as likely as girls to receive special services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In 2003, 9 percent of boys in kindergarten through grade 3 had an IEP compared with 4 percent of girls in the same grades. ([See Figure 1](#))

Differences by TANF and Food Stamp Receipt

Children in households receiving TANF in the last year are more than twice as likely as children in households which do not receive TANF to have IEPs (14 percent versus 6 percent, respectively). Similar trends can be found by food stamp and Medicaid receipt. However, there are no significant differences by WIC receipt. ([See Figure 2](#))

Differences by Type of School

Kindergartners through third graders attending private church-related schools are much less likely than other students in the same grades to have an IEP. In 2003, 2 percent of kindergartners through third graders in such schools received special services through an IEP, compared with 7 percent of students who attend public school. Children attending other non-church affiliated private schools and children who are home schooled fall in the middle at 6 percent and 5 percent, respectively. ([See Figure 3](#))

Differences by Language Spoken in the Home

Children whose parents both spoke English as their primary language were more likely than other children to receive special services through an IEP. In 2003, 7 percent of kindergartners through third graders whose parents both spoke English as their primary language received special services through an IEP, compared with 2 percent of children with neither parent speaking English and 6 percent of children who had one parent whose main language was not English. ([See Table 1](#))

State and Local Estimates

None available

International Estimates

None available

National Goals

According to the US Department of Education, every child with special education needs must have an Individualized Education Plan. More information is available at:

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>.

Definition

This indicator includes children in Kindergarten through third grade or the equivalent if they are home-schooled etc.

In 2003, parents who said their children received special services, and then answered yes to the question: “Are any of these services provided through an Individualized Education Program or Plan (IEP)?” are included.

Data from 2001 are based on the question: Are any of these services provided through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Education Program or Plan (IEP)?

Data Source

Child Trends’ original analyses of data from the National Household Education Survey

Raw Data Source

National Household Education Survey

<http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/>

Next Update

Unknown

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. (2000). “A Guide To Individualized Education Program.” Accessed August 23, 2005. Available at:

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>

² Test, David W., Mason, Christine, Hughes, Carolyn, et al. (2004). “Student Involvement in Individualized Education Program Meetings.” *Exceptional Children* 70(4): 391-412.

³ Zhang, Chun, and Bennett, Tess. (2003). “Facilitating the Meaningful Participation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families in the IFSP and IEP Process.” *Focus on Autism & Other Developmental Disabilities*, 18(1).

⁴ Takanishi, R. (2004). Leveling the playing field: Supporting immigrant children from birth to eight. *The Future of Children*, 14. Available at http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/Vol_14_No2_no_photos.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

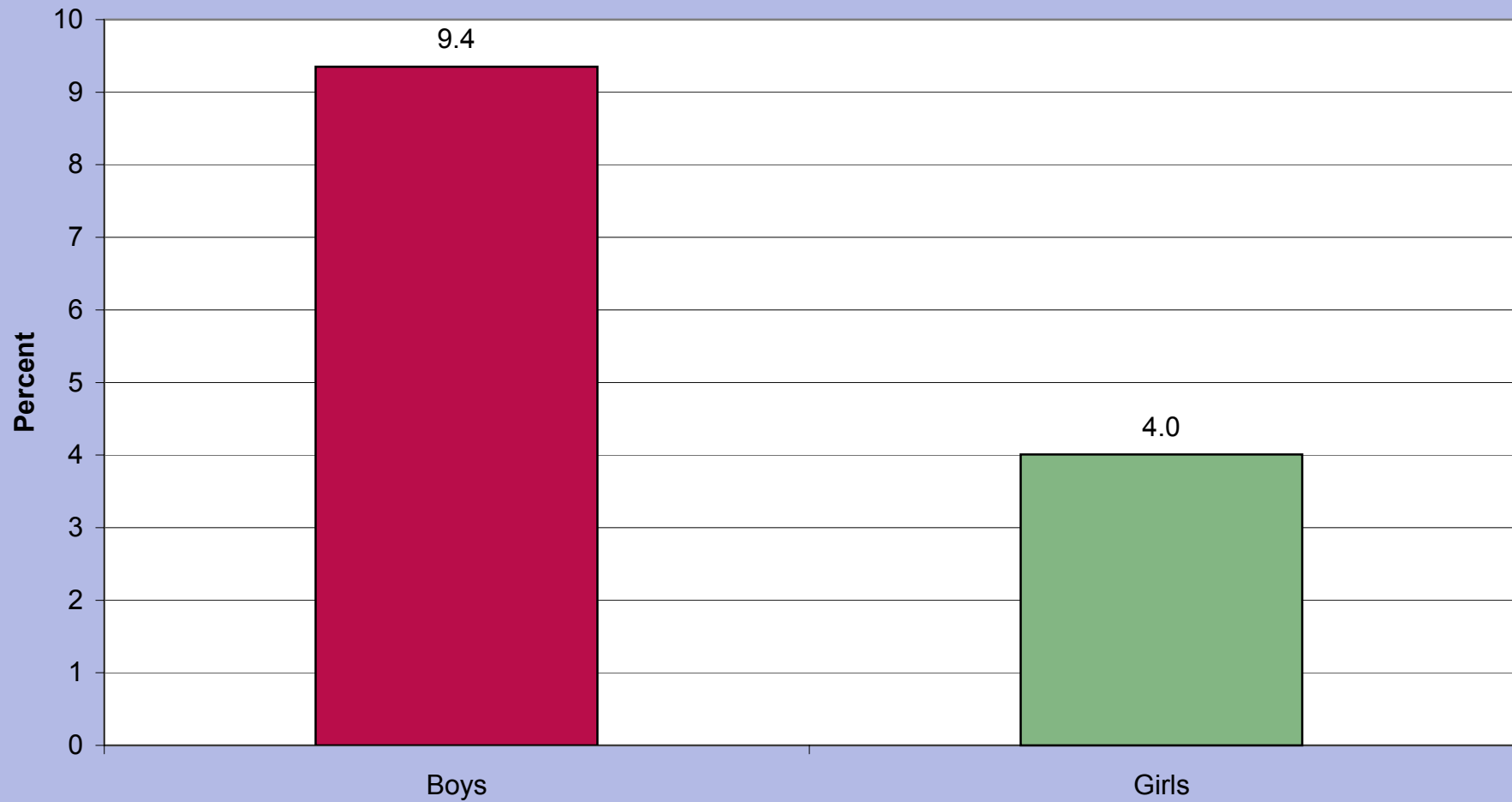
⁶ Sopko, K. (2003) “The IEP: A synthesis of current literature since 1997.” Prepared for Project FORUM, National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE): Alexandria, VA.

⁷ Test, David W., Mason, Christine, Hughes, Carolyn, et al. (2004). “Student Involvement in Individualized Education Program Meetings.” *Exceptional Children*, 70(4):391-412.

⁸ Mason, Christine Y., McGahee-Kovac, Marcy, & Johnson, Lora. “How to Help Students Lead Their IEP Meetings.” *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Jan/Feb2004, 36 (3): 18-24.

⁹ Child Trends original analyses of data from the National Household Education Survey.

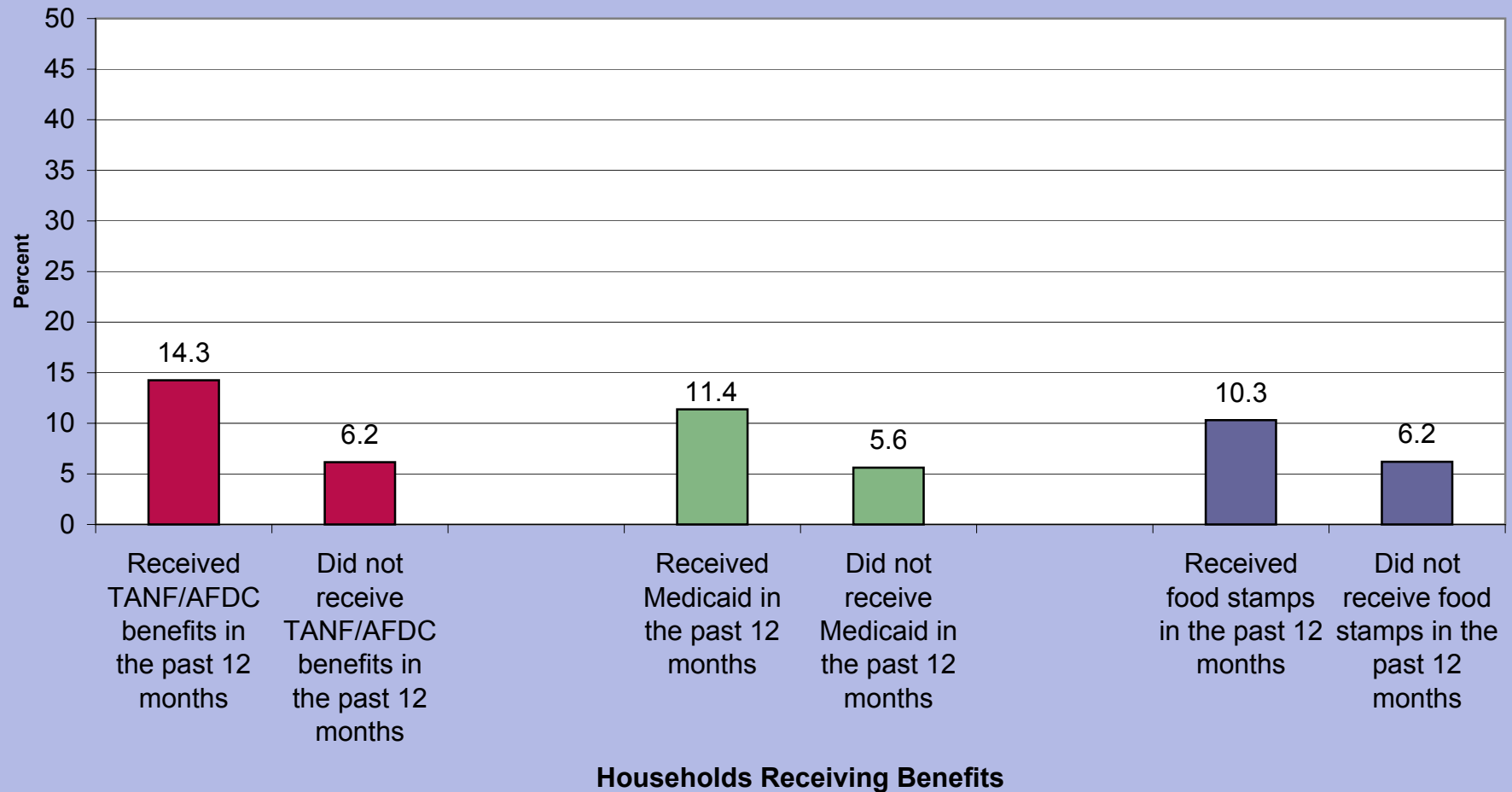
Figure 1 **Percent of Children in Kindergarten through Grade 3 Receiving Special Services through an Individualized Education Plan, by Gender, 2003**



Source: Child Trends' original analysis of data from the National Household Education Survey

Figure 2

Percentage of Children in Kindergarten through Grade 3 Receiving Special Services through an Individualized Education Plan, by Benefits, 2003

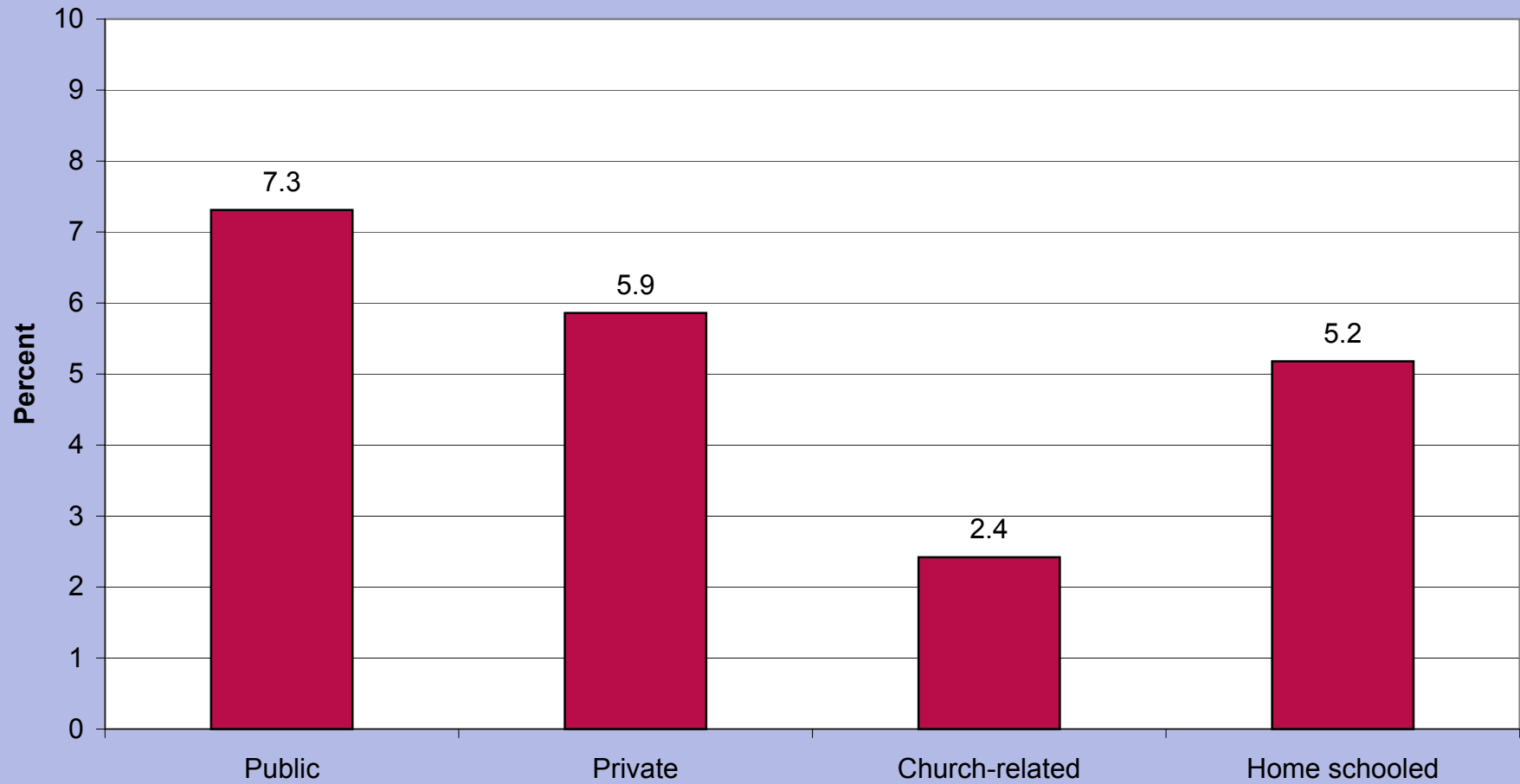


Source: Child Trends' original analysis of data from the National Household Education Survey



Figure 3

Percent of Kindergartners through Third Graders Receiving Special Services through an Individualized Education Plan, by Type of School, 2003



Source: Child Trends' original analysis of data from the National Household Education Survey

Table 2
 Among Children with Special Needs,* percentage of Children in
 Grades K through 3 Receiving Special Services through an
 Individualized Education Plan, 2003

Total	28.0
Gender	
Male	32.4
Female	21.0
Race/Ethnicity	
Non-Hispanic white	28.8
Non-Hispanic black	27.1
Hispanic	25.6
Asian or Pacific Islander	24.4
Other	29.8
Parental Education	
Less than a high school degree	22.1
High school degree/equivalent	27.0
Some college/technical vocational degree	29.4
Bachelor's degree or more	28.9
Immigrant Status	
Native born with native born parents	28.8
Native born with a foreign born parent	23.0
Foreign born	19.3
Primary Language Spoken in the Home	
Both parents' main language is English	28.9
One parent's main language is not English	35.1
Neither parent's main language is English	13.1
Poverty level	
Household income at or below poverty line	29.7
Household income above poverty line	27.5
WIC benefits	
Received WIC benefits in the past 12 months	27.3
Did not receive WIC benefits in the past 12 months	28.1
TANF/AFDC benefits	
Received TANF/AFDC benefits in the past 12 months	42.5
Did not receive TANF/AFDC benefits in the past 12 months	26.3
Medicaid Receipt	
Received Medicaid in the past 12 month	34.1
Did not receive Medicaid in the past 12 month	25.7
Food Stamp Receipt	
Received food stamps in the past 12 months	31.2
Did not receive food stamps in the past 12 months	27.3
Urbanicity	
Urban, inside urbanized area	28.2
Urban, outside urbanized area	27.7
Rural	27.4
Region	
Northeast	29.5
Midwest	31.7
South	25.5
West	26.5
Neighborhood Poverty (of those under 18)	
Less than 5 percent	32.5
5 to 9 percent	27.6
10 to 19 percent	19.8
20 percent and more	23.5
Type of School	
Public	29.4
Private	22.9
Church-related	12.9
Home schooled	28.8
Grade level	
K through 1	28.6
2 through 3	27.5

*Special needs include those children whose were told the child had any of the following disabilities: a specific learning disability, mental retardation, a speech or language delay, a serious emotional disturbance, deafness or another hearing impairment, blindness or another visual impairment, another health impairment lasting 6 months or more, autism, attention deficit disorder (ADD or ADHD), or Pervasive Developmental Disorder.

Source: Child Trends' original analyses of National Household Education Survey data.