

Insights

A TIMELINE OF KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES



- 1817 Rev. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet becomes principal of the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons, the first residential school in the United States.
- 1829 Samuel Gridley Howe establishes the New England Asylum for the Blind.
- 1834 Louis Braille publishes the Braille code.
- 1839 First teacher training program opens in Massachusetts.
- 1848 Howe establishes the Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth.
- 1848 Dorothea Lynde Dix calls attention to the shocking conditions of American asylums and prisons.
- 1869 First public school class for children with hearing impairments opens in Boston.
- 1876 Edouard Seguin helps organize the first professional association concerned with intellectual disability, a predecessor of today's American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.
- 1897 National Education Association establishes a section for teachers of children with disabilities.
- 1898 Elizabeth Farrell, later to become the first president of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), begins a program for "backwards" or "slow learning" children in New York City.
- 1904 Vineland Training School in New Jersey inaugurates training programs for teachers of students with intellectual disability.
- 1916 Lewis Terman publishes the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales.
- 1920 Teachers College, Columbia University, begins a training program for teachers of pupils who are gifted.
- 1922 Organization that later would become the CEC is founded in New York City.
- 1928 Seeing Eye dogs for individuals with blindness are introduced in the United States.
- 1936 First compulsory law for testing the hearing of school-age children is enacted in New York.
- 1949 United Cerebral Palsy association is founded.
- 1950 National Association for Retarded Children is founded (known today as The Arc of the United States or simply The Arc).
- 1953 National Association for Gifted Children is founded.
- 1963 Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (forerunner of Learning Disabilities Association of America) is organized.
- 1972 Wolf Wolfensberger introduces the concept of normalization, initially coined by Bengt Nirje of Sweden, to the United States.
- 1973 PL 93-112, the Rehabilitation Act, is enacted; Section 504 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
- 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) is passed; landmark legislation ensures, among other provisions, a free appropriate public education for all children with disabilities.
- 1986 Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments (PL 99-457) are enacted; mandate a special education for preschoolers with disabilities and incentives for providing early intervention services to infants and toddlers.
- 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (PL 101-336) becomes law; prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.
- 1990 PL 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (commonly known as IDEA), is passed; among other provisions, emphasizes transition planning for adolescents with disabilities.