

ESTIMATES OF THE PERCENTAGE OF PART C ELIGIBLE INFANTS AND TODDLERS: EVIDENCE OF A CRISIS

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Issues

- Nationally less than half of the children who are likely to be eligible for Part C services receive early intervention.
- Disparities in who gets Part C services have been identified.
- There is insufficient capacity to serve all children who are likely to be Part C eligible.

Strain at State Level

- ⦿ Part C is currently under such severe strain that discussions about eliminating the program have occurred in 14 states.
- ⦿ Some states have adopted more restrictive eligibility criteria to reduce the number of children who require services.

Part C Eligibility

- ⦿ A developmental delay is any significant lag in a child's development in comparison with typical child development based on norms. Each state is required to establish a definition of eligibility that addresses delays in five developmental domains: motor, communication, cognitive, daily living, and social-emotional.
- ⦿ Established conditions -- diagnoses associated with developmental conditions that confer Part C eligibility.

Why Don't We Know How Many Children Are Part C Eligible?

- Historically the US Department of Education has set the goal for enrollment in Part C services as having as many states as possible serve at least 2 percent of infants and toddlers in the general population at the time of the annual December 1st Part C child count.
- In 2007 Part C early intervention was provided to about 2.5 percent of nation's children.
- There has been an assumption that Part C eligibility is limited to about 2 percent of children under 3 years.

How Many Children in the United States Are Likely to be Part C Eligible?

An Empirical Approach

Estimate rates of developmental delays among children under 3 years of age using developmental data from nationally representative samples.

Empirical Estimates of National Rates of Part C Eligibility

In general population

Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)

- 13% of children are likely to be Part C eligible

In population investigated for maltreatment

National Study of Child and Adolescent Welfare (NSCAW)

- 47% of children are likely to be Part C eligible

Rosenberg S. & Smith E. (2008). Rates of Part C eligibility for young children investigated by child welfare. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 28, 68-74.

Under Enrollment

- Only about 10 percent of presumptively Part C eligible children in the general population received early intervention services.

Rosenberg, S., Zhang, D. & Robinson, C. (2008). Prevalence of developmental delays and participation in early intervention services for young children. *Pediatrics*, 121, e1503–e1509.

- About 17 percent of presumptively eligible maltreated children received Part C services.

Robinson CC, & Rosenberg SA. (2004). Child welfare referrals to Part C. *J Early Intervention*, 26,284–291.

Evidence of Racial Disparities

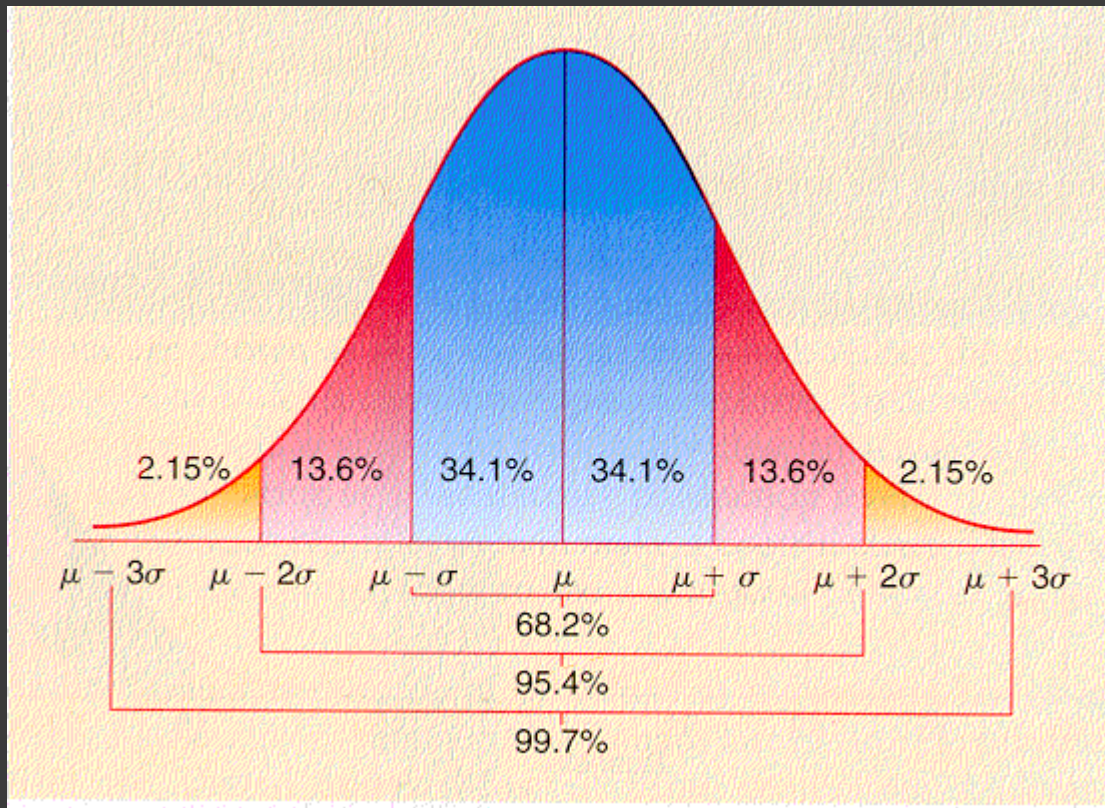
- African-American infants and toddlers are half as likely to receive early intervention as white peers (Rosenberg, Zhang & Robinson, 2008).
- African-American infants with very low birth weights are less likely to be referred to Part C than white infants with very low birth weights (Barfield et al, 2008).

Barfield WD, Clements KM, Lee KG, Kotelchuck M, Wilber M, Wise PH. (2008) Using linked data to assess patterns of early intervention (EI) referral among very low birth weight infants. *Matern Child Health J.* 12(1):24–33.

Theoretical Estimate of Eligibility Rates Based on Five Developmental Domains

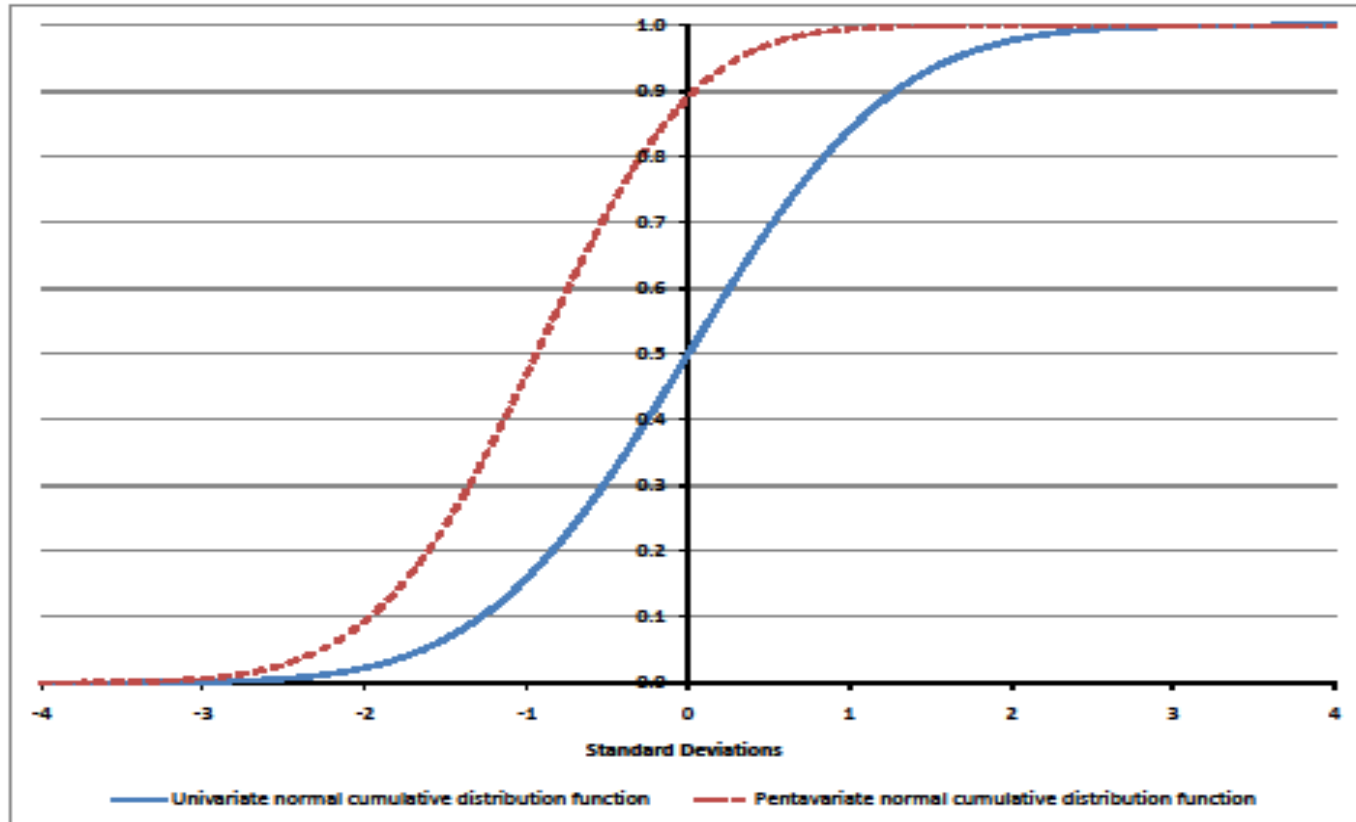
- Five developmental domains must be considered when determining a child's eligibility for Part C services.
- It is possible to compute an estimate of the probability of a child meeting eligibility criteria on any one of the five developmental domains mathematically.

Standard deviations are used to establish eligibility



Standard deviations used in eligibility definitions assume a normal curve.

Proportion of Population Falling under a Univariate Normal Distribution and a Pentavariate Normal Distribution



Proportion of Population Meeting Eligibility Criteria Using a Pentavariate Normal Distribution

Standard deviations below the mean	Percent below the selected standard deviation score
1.0	47%
1.5	24%
2.0	9%

Part C in Crisis

- ⦿ There is a substantial discrepancy between the number of children likely to be Part C eligible and policy expectations regarding the number of children states are expected to serve.
- ⦿ However at current levels of funding Part C programs are at capacity.

Restricting Enrollment

- ⦿ Several states have narrowed their eligibility criteria.
- ⦿ However restricting enrollment won't eliminate the discrepancy between the number of children served and the number who are likely to be eligible.
- ⦿ Even the adoption of the fairly restrictive -2 SD eligibility criterion makes 9 percent of the nation's infants and toddlers eligible for Part C early intervention.

Need for Action

As a field we must address the fact that many more children are likely to be Part C eligible than has been anticipated by current policy.

Research

- ⦿ Studies are needed to identify the components of Part C that are most effective in promoting children's development.
- ⦿ There is an urgent need for studies of Part C expenditures at the state, local and national levels.

For additional information:

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