

Students with Disabilities Enrollment, Ages 6-21, 2008-09

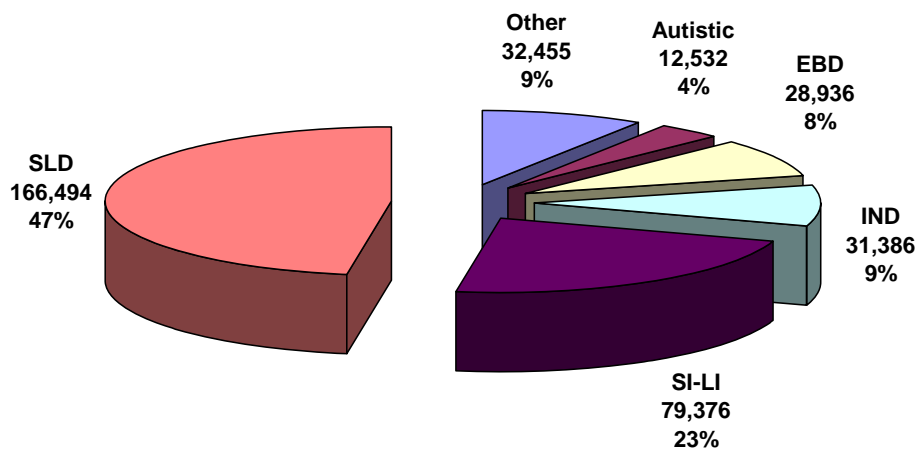
Background

- As required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Florida Department of Education reports annually to the federal government the number of students with disabilities served in Florida school districts. Since 2006-07, the data are reported as of October (survey 2).
- Students identified as specific learning disabled (SLD), speech or language impaired (S/L), intellectually disabled (IND), and emotional/behavioral disabled (EBD) represent the majority of students served under IDEA.
- For the purposes of this brief, Florida students identified as autism spectrum disordered, traumatic brain injured, deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, orthopedically impaired, dual sensory impaired, hospital/homebound, or other health impaired are included in the "other" category.

2008-09 Enrollment

- In October 2008, there were 351,179 students ages 6-21 served under IDEA, Part B representing approximately 14% of the total public school membership.
- Figure 1 displays the number of students with disabilities reported by Florida in the 2007-08 school year. Forty-seven percent of the students with disabilities were identified as specific learning disabled (SLD), 23% were identified as speech or language impaired (SI/LI), 9% were identified as intellectually disabled (IND), 8% were identified as emotional/behavioral disabled (EBD), 4% were identified with autism spectrum disorders and 9% were in other categories.

Figure 1: IDEA Child Count
Ages 6-21

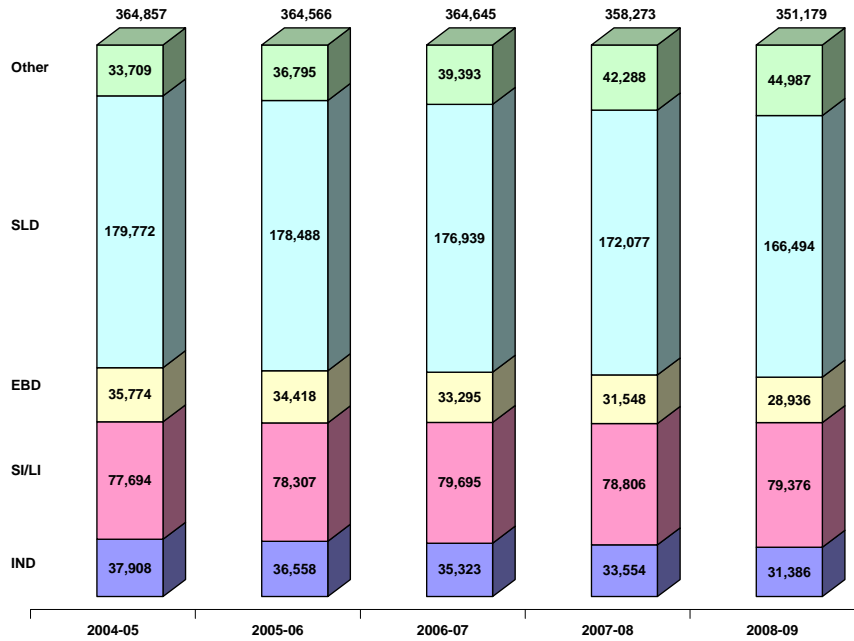


Source: Survey 2, October 2008

Longitudinal Trends

- Figure 2 displays child count data reported over the last five years. Students identified as SLD have consistently represented the largest portion of the disabled population, followed by students identified as speech or language impaired.
- Over the five-year period, there has been a decline in the number of students identified as SLD, EBD, and IND. The "other" category has shown steady growth due to growth in autism spectrum disorders and other health impaired. The number of students identified as SI/LI, which has been growing, declined in the 2007-08 school year followed by an increase in 2008-09. The total disabled population has been in decline since 2006-07.

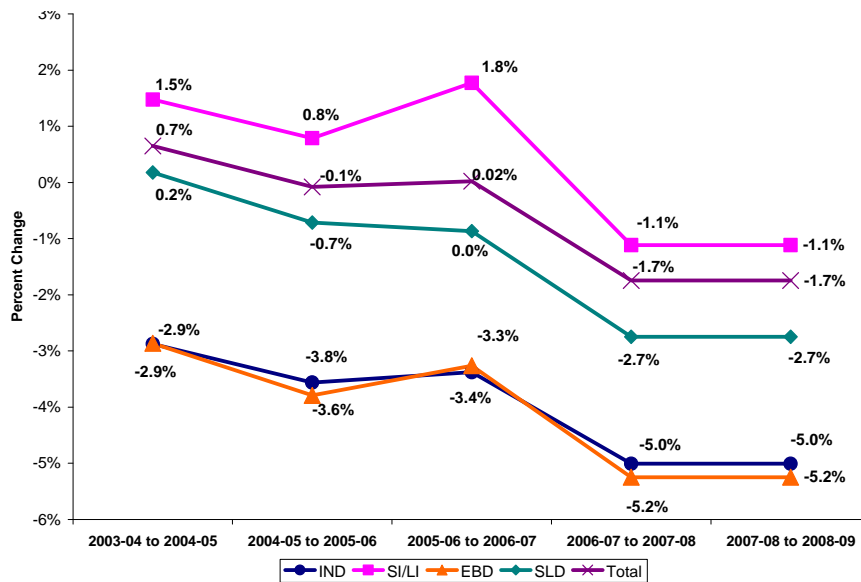
Figure 2: Longitudinal Analysis of IDEA Child Count
2004-05 through 2008-09



Source: Survey 9, December 2004 and 2005; Survey 2, October 2006-2008

- Figure 3 displays the percent change in the child count beginning with the 2004-05 school year through 2008-09 for each of the four major disability categories and for all disabilities ages 6-21 (Total). In 2008-09, all of the major disability categories as well as the total disabled population ages 6-21 declined.
- Since 2004-05, the growth rate for the total disabled population ages 6-21 in Florida has slowed. The total disabled population ages 6-21 declined 2.0% for 2008-09 as compared to 2007-08.

Figure 3: Percentage of Change in Child Count
2003-04 through 2008-09



Source: Survey 9, December 2003-2005; Survey 2, October 2006-2008