

THAILAND

Summary of Provision of Special Education in Case of Recurrent Disability for Children Having Sight, Hearing and Learning Problems in Thailand

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Introduction

Thailand is governed by democracy and ruled by the King with location on the Indo-Chinese peninsula in the south-east of Asia, with an entire area of 513,142 square kilometers, with a population of 63,000,000 and with Buddhism as the national religion. The Thai government has paid attention to the provision of education for all citizens in accordance with the Constitution specifying in the Act of National Primary Education, B.E. 2523 that all children reaching the age of 7 must be compulsory educated. Disabled children are exempt if their parents have continually applied to the schools for permission. Afterwards, the Constitution, B.E. 2540 and the Act of National Education, B.E. 2542 specify that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to be basically and well educated free of charge for at least twelve years. Those having physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, communication and learning problems or those being deformed or disabled those being unable to rely on themselves, being in nobody's care or being inferior must have special rights and opportunities to be basically educated free of charge from birth or from discovery of disability and to be entitled to educational facilities, media, services and other aids according to such criteria and methods as specified in the ministerial regulations.

To develop students having special demands in the educational year 1997-2002

The Office of National Primary Education Board has provided special education for the students having special demands to be educated together with normal students in primary schools since 1986 and has continually developed it until now as follows:

1. Laws and policies related to the provision of special education
2. Provision of special education and results
3. Problems and obstacles

1. Laws and policies related to the provision of special education

1.1 Constitution, B.E. 2540

Section 43 specifies that “all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to be basically and well educated free of charge for at least twelve years”.

Section 55 specifies that “the deformed or disabled citizens are entitled to public facilities and aids”.

Section 80 specifies that “the Government must protect and develop children and youth, promote equally of women and men, and help the old, the poor, the deformed or disabled and the inferior for good quality of life and self-reliance”.

1.2 Act of National Education, B.E. 2542

Section 9(3) specifies the standards of education and provides the system of quality guarantee for all levels and types of education.

Section 10 specifies that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to be basically and well educated free of charge for at least twelve years. Those having special abilities must be suitably educated according to their abilities.

Section 12 specifies that the Government, private sections and local administration units as well as individuals, families, communities, professional units, religious institutes, business places and other social institutes may provide basic education according to the ministerial regulations.

Section 13 specifies that fathers, mothers or parents are entitled to these incentives.

- (1) To be supported by the Government to look after and educate their children or dependants.
- (2) To be financially supported by the Government to lawfully provide basic education for their children or dependants.
- (3) To be lawfully granted tax and reduction or exemption for educational expenses.

Section 22 specifies that all students must be deemed able to learn and develop themselves.

1.3 Ministerial regulations

By virtue of the provision in the third paragraph of Section 10 and Section 74 of the Act

of National Education, B.E. 2542, the Minister of Education issued the ministerial regulations specifying criteria and methods for the disabled to be entitled educational facilities, media, services and other aids.

1.4 Policies of the Ministry of Education

The Cabinet passed a resolutions on February 16, 1999 by announcing “the year 1999 as the year of the disabled’s education” and adopting a policy that “all of the disabled needing education must be educated”.

In 2000, the Ministry of Education adopted a policy that “all of the disabled must be educated and their quality of life must be developed for developing themselves and the society”.

Development of education for the disabled in the next 5 years (2002-2006) must be emphasized to

1. Make all of the disabled be basically educated for at least twelve years.
2. Develop teachers and personnel related to the provision of education for the disabled.
3. Develop educational courses, innovations, media and technologies suitably and accordingly to the need of each type of the disabled for them to learn continually and to the utmost extent.
4. Persuade families, communities, private sections and local administration units to jointly provide education for the disabled.
5. Make schools or administrative units guarantee quality of the disabled’s education.
6. Enable the disabled to earn their living and rely on themselves
7. Provide a complete system of management.

From such policies, the Ministry of Education then set up these 3 operational strategies.

1st Strategy: To increase efficiency and thoroughness of the provision of educational services for disabled

In summary, it is to make schools admit all of the disabled children, set up school networks, provide various educational services according to the levels and types of disability and the disabled’s environment, persuade other provincial schools to join the networks of 42 special schools in 35 province, provide a system of transfer services so that the disabled can get educational services thoroughly and conveniently, provide a centre pf itinerating teachers, support home schools and publicize activities and jobs of the disabled through various media.

2nd Strategy: To elevate quality of the disabled's education

In summary, it is to set up minimum rules and standards of schools by sufficiently providing personnel, budget and equipment, provide supplementary education for all of the disabled, develop rules, standards and indications of the education quality according to the system of quality guarantee, do workshop research on the provision of education for the disabled, produce, develop and publicize various media, facilities and services, arrange the system of services and thoroughly spread media to schools, communities and the disabled.

3rd Strategy: To increase efficiency of the management system

In summary, it is to survey, find and arrange the system of the disabled's database, arrange the system of educational service provision for the disabled, provide structures supporting roles and duties in the provision of education for the disabled, adjust regulations to creation and development of the information-technology centre about the disabled, mobilize both public and private sections to jointly provide education for the disabled and use the special education centres as technical centres.

1.5 Policies of the Office of National Primary Education Board

The Office of National Primary Education Board has provided special education for the students having special demands to be educated together with normal students since 1986, and has set up policies of education-quality guarantee as well as important activities of the educational year 2003 for the students having special demands that "one of special schools in each group must be improved".

In summary, the Office of National Primary Education Board has set up obvious policies in the educational year 1997-2002 to develop the human resources systematically and variously with the Government's support for spreading quality of the management and provision of special education which supports co-learning.

2. Provision of special education and results

The provision of special education for the students having special demands in the educational year 1997-2002 has 3 forms which are to create educational opportunities, to promote and develop quality of special education, and to research and assess quality of special education.

To develop students having special demands in the educational year 2003-2012

The trend of future development was set in these 2 forms.

1st Form: To study the essence about trends of special education provision which can be found from both Thai and foreign sources.

2nd Form: To interview high executives in the Ministry of Education, experts, parents and local personnel about former success of the special education provision, problems, obstacles and trends of future policies and practice.

Concepts from study of foreign data about trends of special education provision are as follows:

1. Future provision of special education for the students having special demands: They must be educated according to their differences and the inclusion of learning can then well support their rights.

2. Purpose of the special education provision for the students having special demands: They must be developed physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and humanly with holistic education so that they can learn what they want and can study variously and actually in the natural environment.

3. Teachers as key factors of the special education provision: Teachers must have positive attitudes towards the students having special demands because their attitudes affect the students' learning in classes and their own teaching skills.

4. Future provision of educational activities: The holistic education as well as new teaching methods or styles which are consistent with the nature and safety the students' demands can be suitably applied. For example, co-teaching can develop the students technically and socially.

Description of special education provision in the future

1. The Government should provide special education so that the students having special demands can be educated together with normal students at all levels.
2. The Government should support the provision of special education so that more

- students having special demands can be educated together with normal students.
3. The government should support the provision of special education so that the students having special demands can be educated together with normal students and they can jointly use resources.
 4. Special education should be provided on the basis of “education for the populace” concept.

Required qualities of students having special demands

- Physical development: those having good health, physical development, eagerness, self-confidence and ability to do their daily tasks
- Social development: those having responsibility for themselves and the society, disciplines, self-adjustment to the environment, respect for freedom of themselves and others and leadership.
- Intellectual development: those being able to develop their potential for living in the society

To set up rules and standards of educational courses

Teachers can variously choose educational activities and courses according to the students' problems.

To develop related teachers and personnel

Special education personnel will be deemed more important in the future as key factors.

Roles of communities in the provision of special education

Communities will jointly and increasingly provide special education by using their resources according to the social and living conditions and by promoting the children's learning from their environment.

Roles of fathers, mothers and parents

Fathers, mothers and parents will help the schools develop the special education by continually studying and following the behavior of their children and by properly looking after them.

The children having recurrent disability being learning, hearing and sight problems have been provided with such education as mentioned in the policies above so that they can develop, help and adjust themselves to the environment.

There were 8,659 students having recurrent disability in co-learning schools in the educational year 2002.

How to standardize the students' quality

Good students having recurrent disability should be suitably developed according to the individual education plan (IEP). These 3 basic skills must be developed according to the essence of educational courses during such period as fixed in the individual education plan (IEP).

1. Self-help
2. Society and living
3. Occupation

3 basic skills being use of big muscles, use of small muscles, learning & imagination, communication, society self-help, behavior & emotions and problems solving should be also promoted.

Help is not enough although the disabled have been widely provided with education and knowledge. These are unsolved problems of the disabled in Thailand.

1. They still need knowledge, understanding and proper treatment.
2. They lack perfect communication and social skills.
3. Public facilities are not enough.
4. They need suitable occupations.