

Personal, Family, and
Curriculum Variables Among High School Dropouts with
Mild Disabilities

By

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(Abstract)

The purpose of this study was to examine personal, family, and curriculum variables among high school dropouts with mild disabilities. The review of research literature on dropouts from general and special education assisted in the selection of the variables.

The outcome variable (high school dropouts with mild disabilities) and the relationship to the following variables: **personal** (age, attendance, gender, and ethnicity); **family** (parents' economic level, parents' educational level, and one vs. two-parent households) and **curriculum** (academic credits, vocational credits, support credits, and work experience credits) were examined. The research examined the relationship of selected variables to dropouts.

Dropout status among students with mild disabilities was found to be 29 percent. When age was examined, increased age was weakly associated with a higher likelihood of becoming a dropout. Increased absenteeism was moderately associated with a higher likelihood of dropping out. However, the strength of the relationship between gender and the drop out status was not significant across any of the three categories of mild disabilities.

The analysis of ethnicity found that African-Americans with learning disabilities were more likely to drop out. In addition, the drop out rates for Caucasian youth were statistically significantly lower than drop out rates for other groups. Higher economic level was associated with a lower likelihood of dropping out. Increased educational level and households with two parents were also associated with a lower likelihood of dropping out among students with learning disabilities or mental retardation.

The higher the number of credits, the lower the likelihood of dropping out. Dropouts took fewer credits which is not surprising since dropouts by nature have fewer credits.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CRS.....	Chilton Research Services
ED.....	Emotional Disturbance
ETS.....	Educational Testing Service
FERPA.....	Family Rights & Privacy Act
GED.....	General Equivalency Diploma
IDEA.....	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP.....	Individual Education Program
JTPA.....	Job Training Partnership Act
LD.....	Learning Disability
LEA.....	Local Education Agency
MDS.....	Mild Disability Study
MR.....	Mental Retardation
NCES.....	National Center for Education Statistics
NLS.....	National Longitudinal Survey
NLTS.....	National Longitudinal Transition Study

OSEP.....	Office of Special Education Programs
QED.....	Quality Education Data
SES.....	Socio Economic Status
SOP.....	State Operated Programs
STWOA.....	School-to-work Opportunities Act