



Summary

Concern for the needs of disabled individuals surfaced during the renaissance; however, social reforms directed toward improving the quality of life for the disabled did not begin until the nineteenth century. World War I and II provided the impetus to develop rehabilitation programs to improve the function of disabled persons. Focus on upgrading the opportunities for mentally retarded individuals became a reality in the 1960s. A national effort to provide school and community services for all differently abled person began with the rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. These two pieces of legislation mandate appropriate physical education programs and opportunities to participate in intramurals and interscholastic sports for differently abled citizens of school age. Physical education for the differently abled is a comprehensive service delivery system designed to identify problems of children in physical and motor fitness, fundamental motor patterns and skills, and sport skills and games. Services include assessment, individualized education programming, and coordination of activities with related resources and services. These services may be delivered by specialists who possess skills to conduct instruction for the differently abled in regular or differently abled only classes. Special physical education may serve both differently abled and normal children. Specially designed physical education also may occur in any setting on the least restrictive alternative continuum.