

Looney, Ita, 1978, *The Special Educational Needs of Children with Down Syndrome During their Primary School Years*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This study is an effort to identify the special educational needs of children with Down Syndrome in the Primary School, embracing pupils in Special Schools, Special Classes and Mainstream. Its further objective is to explore the current level of provision to meet these needs.

Down Syndrome is the most common form of mental handicap in Ireland, affecting over three thousand five hundred people here. The scope of the study is confined as the target population would, at any specific time, be less than 0.2% of Primary School pupils in the Republic of Ireland.

Chapter One examines the concept of “special educational needs” in its historical perspective. Chapter Two is a brief review of the literature on mental handicap / retardation and on Down Syndrome as a specific disability.

Chapter Three deals with the special educational needs of pupils with Down Syndrome in Primary School. Chapter Four investigates the current provision for meeting these needs.

Chapter Five concludes that the family has a key role in identifying and responding to needs. The task of the formal educator is basic and empowering the input of the family. Some of the benefits and costs of the integration of children with Down Syndrome into mainstream education are outlined. Finally recommendations are made with regard to possible initiatives and areas of further research.

The methodology employed takes the form of two small-scale surveys, one on a pilot basis, to assess the special educational needs and how these are currently being provided for by the united efforts of family, school and community.