

BOOK REVIEWS

SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS, ADVOCATES, AND EDUCATORS. By Steven S. Goldberg. New York: Plenum Press, 1982. xi + 229 pages. IBN #0-306-408-48-1. \$24.50.

Reviewed by Frank J. Menolascino, MD

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Reading this excellently written book made this reviewer reflect back to the early 1970s when members of the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens (PARC) brought suit against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to establish the right of their sons and daughters to have an appropriate public education — like any other child in the state. Using the documented findings of a pervasive handicap and the allied fact that the retarded historically have suffered harm from having received no services — guidelines from key Civil Rights legislation — the PARC won a benchmark case concerning the rights of all handicapped children. As Goldberg notes, this benchmark case became the basis for P.L. 94-142: The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These two key federal guidelines deserve the richly informative discussion in Chapters Two and Three by Goldberg. The vicissitudes commonly encountered in the implementation of these two key federal guidelines by parents, advocates, psychiatrists, psychologists, and educators at the community “frontlines” are directly addressed in Chapters Three and Four, replete with excellent practical advice and suggestions for special education Due Process hearings and placement decisions. The last chapter is a succinct review of the major issues that comprise today’s caselaw in this highly specialized area of special education law. It is a literal gold mine of the latest legal positions and professional postures in this area. Five extensive appendices list the entirety of the federal acts and their allied regulations — thus providing a concise resource of major national laws.

Beyond the groups to which the author has aimed this book (psychiatrists, special educators, pediatricians, school administrators, educational and clinical psychologists), I would suggest that his fellow attorneys also should be included. For example, in my own state there are currently twenty-eight cases being litigated on this topic — and the attorneys (on both sides) would, in my professional opinion, greatly profit from the experiences and guidelines provided by Goldberg.

This timely, helpful, and very well-written book will provide the psychiatrist an excellent and authoritative reference on this rapidly expanding interface between educational, behavioral, and legal issues. I highly recommend it. □