

Measuring Disability in Children

Lessons learned from the Canadian Experience

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How is disability measurement different for children?

- The nature and form of functioning for children is different from that of adults
- It is difficult to separate the expected variation in skills acquisition from disability
- Measurement takes place through the lens of the parent
 - Proxy response
 - Emotional cost of response

Canadian Experience

- Specific disability surveys of children have been done in 1986, 1991, 2001 and 2006 (Participation and Activity Limitation Survey – PALS)
- Estimates disability for children aged 0+
- Uses a 2 step sampling plan
- Answers to disability filter questions from the Census are used to establish a frame for the post-censal PALS surveys

Census Disability Filter Questions

- ⦿ 1. Does have any difficulty hearing, seeing, communicating, walking, climbing stairs, bending, learning or doing any similar activities?
 - 1. Yes, sometimes
 - 2. Yes, often
 - 3. No

- ⦿ 2a. Does a physical condition or mental condition or health problem reduce the amount or the kind of activity that can do at home?
 - 1. Yes, sometimes
 - 2. Yes, often
 - 3. No

- ⦿ 2b. Does a physical condition or mental condition or health problem reduce the amount or the kind of activity that can do at work or at school?
 - 1. Yes, sometimes
 - 2. Yes, often
 - 3. No

- ⦿ 2c. Does a physical condition or mental condition or health problem reduce the amount or the kind of activity that can do in other activities, for example, transportation or leisure?
 - 1. Yes, sometimes
 - 2. Yes, often
 - 3. No

PALS Methodology

- The survey frame includes all persons who say “Yes, sometimes” or “Yes, often” to ANY question
- Sample of 9,000 children with response rate of 79%
- Telephone interview with parent or guardian

Types of disabilities measured

Aged 0 to 4	Aged 5 to 14
Hearing	Hearing
Seeing	Seeing
Chronic health conditions	Chronic health conditions
Delay	Communication
Other	Mobility
	Agility
	Psychological
	Learning
	Developmental disabilities
	Other

Results from PALS 2006

- The overall disability for Canadian children in 2006 was 3.7%
 - Aged 0 to 4: 1.7%
 - Aged 5 to 14: 4.6%
- Most common disabilities for children aged 0 to 4 are chronic health conditions and delay
 - Asthma, severe allergies, ADD/ADHD and autism the most common chronic

Results from PALS 2006 (cont'd)

- For children aged 5 to 14, learning disabilities and chronic health conditions are the most common
 - 3.2% of school aged children report a learning disability – 4.1% of boys and 2.2% of girls
- Multiple disabilities are common. Only 25% of children 5 to 14 with disabilities report only one disability.

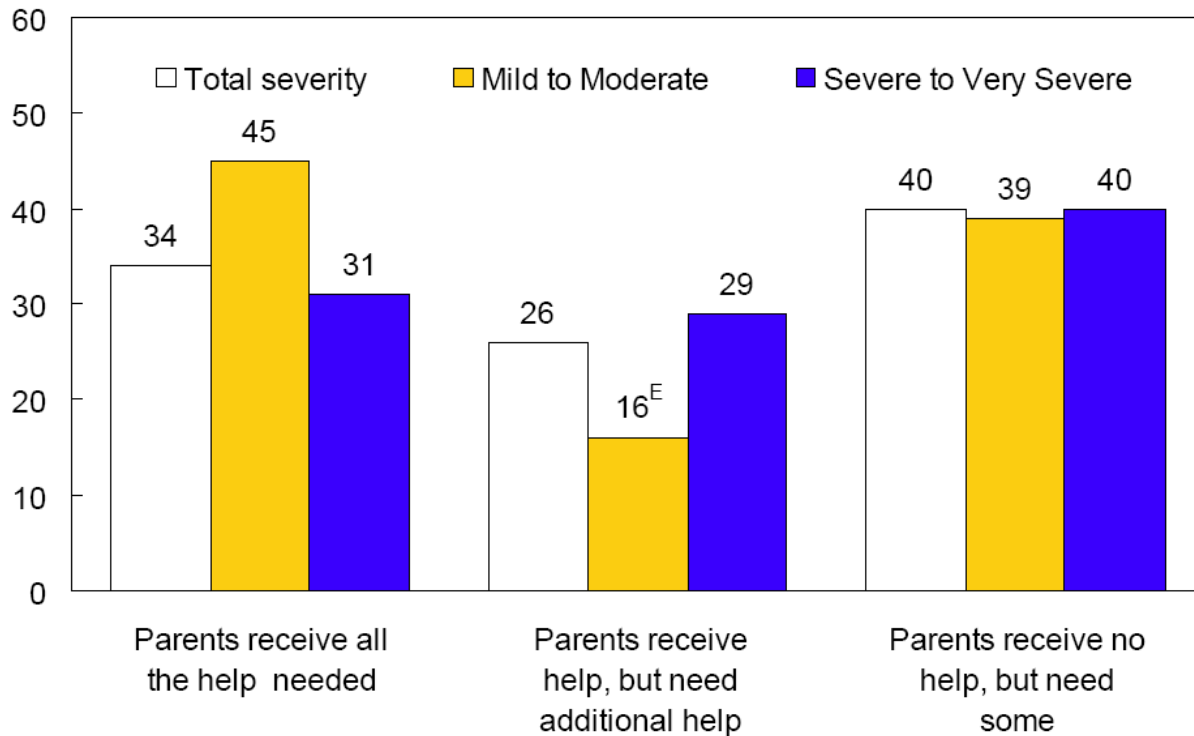
Impact on the Family

- Parents of 84,000 children, 54% of those with disabilities, reported that their child's condition had an impact on their family's employment situation.
- Mothers most often (71% of cases) were affected

Impact on the Family

Children with severe to very severe disabilities are likely to have parents with unmet needs for help with housework, family responsibilities, and time off for personal activities

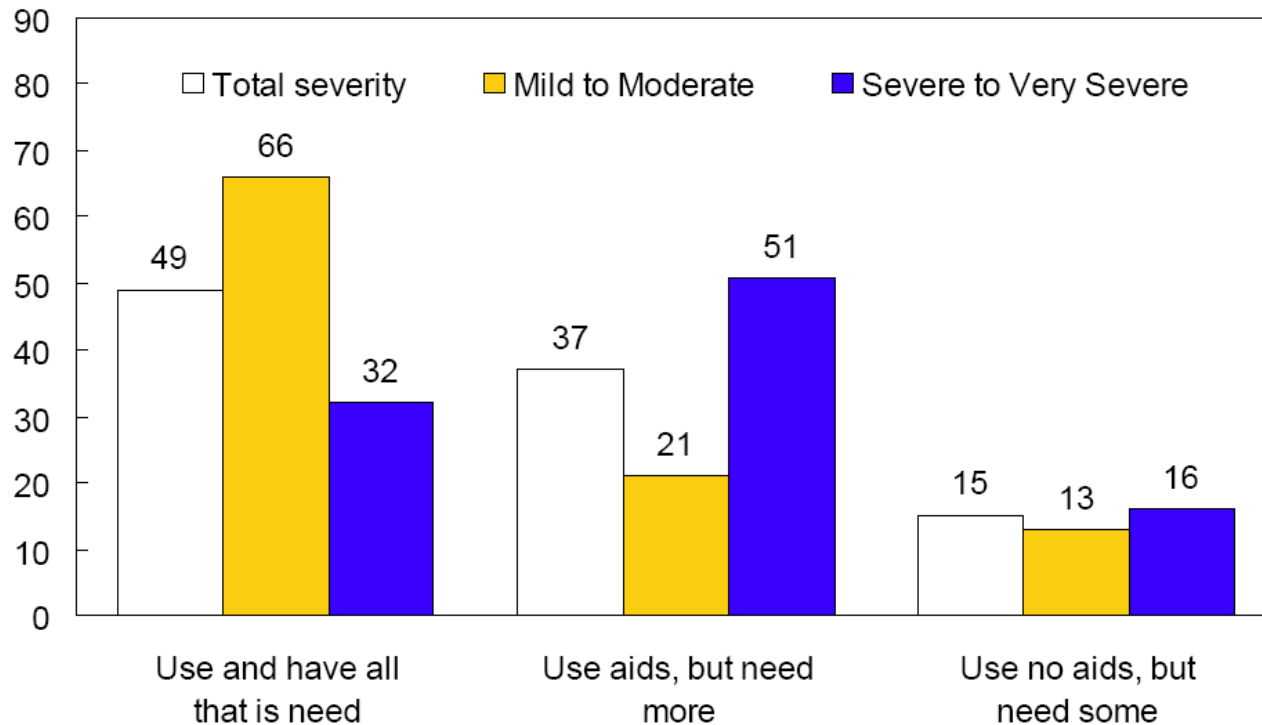
% of children whose parents require help



Impact on the Family

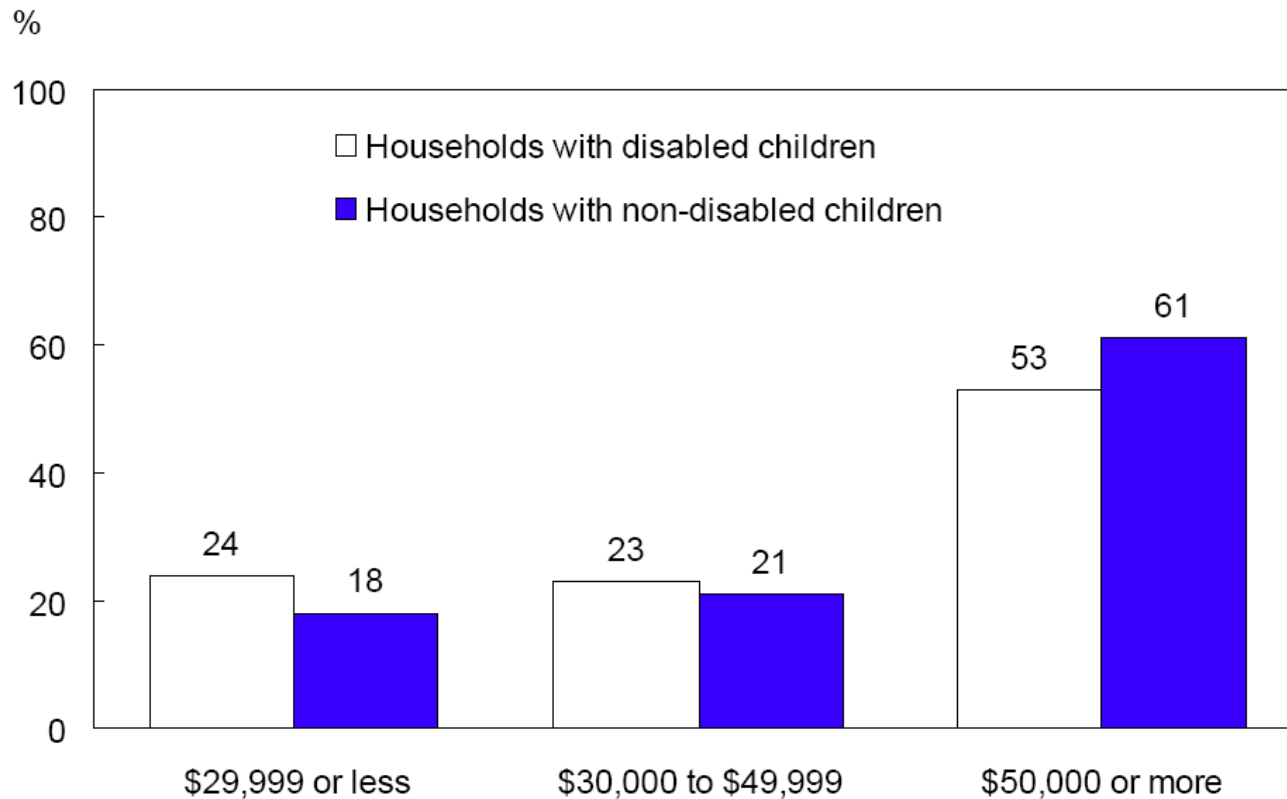
Children with severe to very severe disabilities are likely not to have all the specialized aids that they need

% of children requiring specialized aids



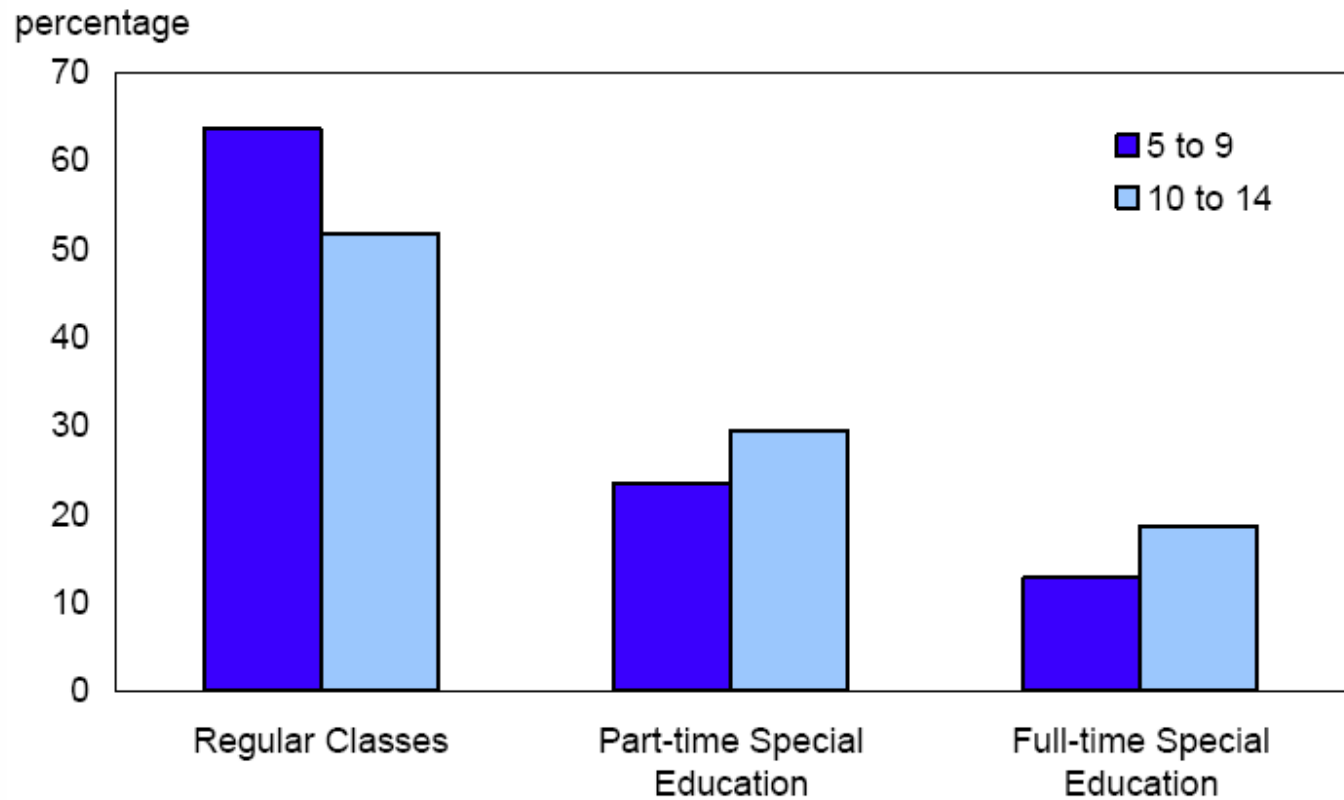
Impact on the Family

Households with disabled children have lower household income than households with non-disabled children



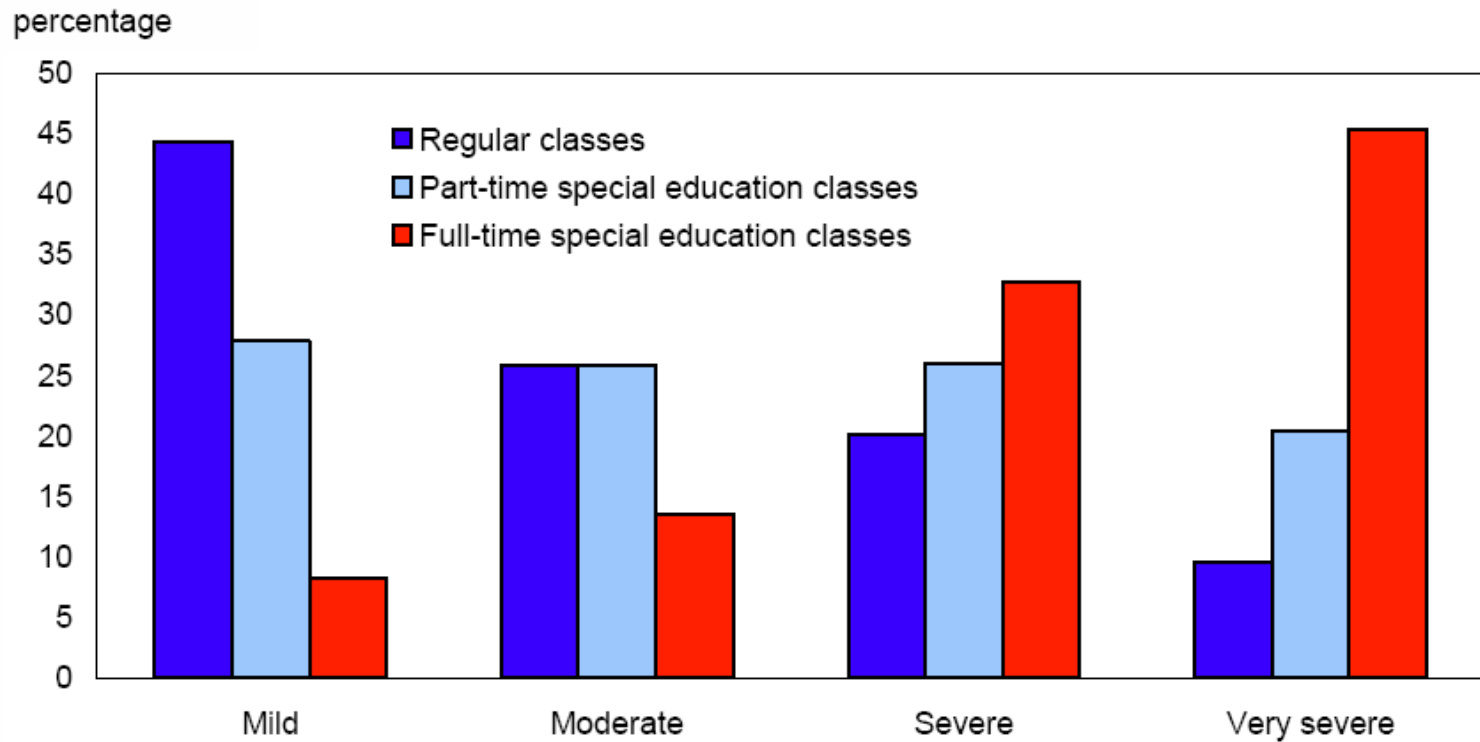
Education

Type of education received for children with disabilities aged 5 to 14, by age group, 2006



Education

Proportions of children with disabilities aged 5 to 14, by type of education and severity, 2006



Limitations Encountered

Limitations to participation for children with disabilities aged 5 to 14, by disability, 2006

Limitation type	Physical education	Playing with others	School outings	Classroom participation
	percentage			
Hearing	44.4	45.2	25.1	30.7
Seeing	55.8	52.7	29.1	44.9
Communication	50.2	58.2	31.2	50.7
Mobility	82.1	69.1	51.4	42.2
Agility	65.6	64.8	38.6	48.3
Learning	43.5	47.1	26.4	42.1
Chronic	59.1	55.4	32.3	41.0
Developmental	58.4	65.6	36.7	58.2
Psychological	53.3	63.6	36.4	55.2
Other	26.1 ^E	15.3 ^E	F	F

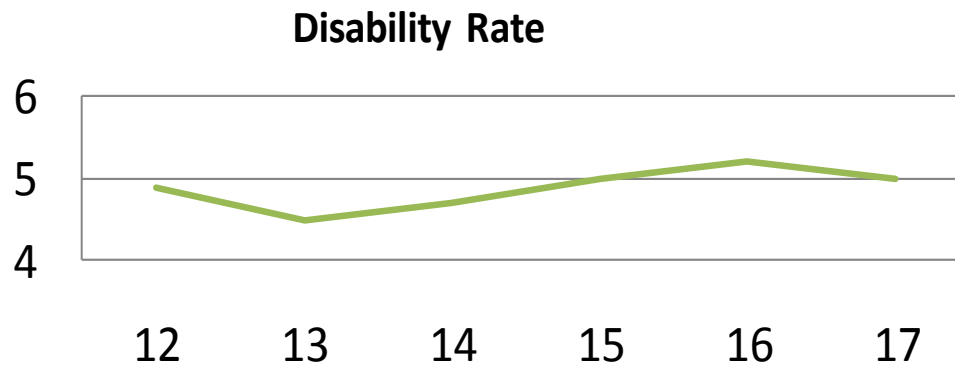
Note: coefficient of variation of estimate between 16.6% and 33.3%.

Source: Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006*.

Concerns with Proxy Response

- Measurement until age 15 is through the lens of a parent.
- After age 15, the interview is with the adolescent but the disability rates are quite consistent.

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Problems encountered in Canadian PALS Survey

- Disability rates for children are low.
- Rate of false positive responses to Census filter questions is very high in comparison to adults
 - About 20% for adults and 50% for children
- Small sample size for survey makes the results less useful.

Plans for the Future

- Planning is underway for 2011 survey
- Some redesign of the children's survey to reflect the ICF-CY
- Discussion about the need to redevelop the Census filter questions on disability

..... *but*

- No clear solutions to these problems