



like it takes the better part of the year to get things running smoothly, and just when it's going well, the school year is over. As the

The data were based on a total of 384 individuals (26 parents and 358 professional staff) who served as the educational

feel like we are starting all over again from square one.”

The authors explored this concern by asking the research questions, Who is on the educational team? To what extent does team membership change from year to year? and What is the nature of that change? By answering these basic questions, they hoped to ascertain the extent to which parents' concerns were accurate. The findings highlight some important, if not surprising, information and suggest implications for practice and future research.

four school years from 1994–95 to 1997–98. The teams ranged from 5 to 15 members, and the average team size was 9.63 ( $SD = 2.14$ ). Research sites were selected on the basis of their participation in a federally funded research project to study educational supports for students with deaf-blindness in general education classes. Most of the data (93%;  $n = 67$  “student school years”) was based on the students' placement in general education classes, and the remaining 7% ( $n = 5$  student school years) was based on their placement in spe-

by-item analysis for each child to determine the percentage and nature of the change in team membership annually from fall to fall (1994-95 to 1995-96, 1995-96 to 1996-97, and 1996-97 to 1997-98), over a two-year period (1994-95 to 1996-97), and over a three-year period (1994-95 to 1997-98). This analysis was done by comparing two different years of Team Membership forms for a student and recording a plus (+) for each person who was listed for both years and a minus (-) for each person who was listed for only one of the two years. The per-

*Table 1*

**Team members, by role (N = 384).**

Role	<i>n</i>
General education teachers	71
Paraprofessionals	60
Special educators	39
Communication specialists (such as speech-language therapists)	38
Physical therapists	28
Parents	26
Occupational therapists	23
Vision specialists	19
Administrators	18
Deaf-blind specialists	14
Nurses	13
Hearing specialists	8
School-family-community specialists	8
Adapted physical education teachers	7

**Table 2**  
**Percentage of change in team membership.**

Year	<i>n</i> of cases	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1994-95 to 1995-96	18	53.68	25.07
1995-96 to 1996-97	18	59.91	19.22
1996-97 to 1997-98	18	52.69	18.30
Year-to-year average	18	55.42	13.60
1994-95 to 1996-97	18	73.31	15.60
1994-95 to 1997-98	18	78.41	14.67

**Discussion**

The data clearly document that the stu-

patterns of change were not examined. Possible reasons for such changes may include intraschool decisions, such as

array of educational team members from year to year and that, with the exception of parents, there was limited constancy of team membership over the two- to three-year period. These data should be considered in light of the small sample that was obtainable because relatively few students with deaf-blindness and multiple disabilities are educated in general education

changes in placements or school staff assignments. These changes may also stem from decisions by agencies or individuals who are not school employees who are contracted to provide services.

Many people may find it intuitively problematic for the students in this study to have experienced so much turnover in team membership, yet the nature of that impact is

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dents with disabilities, their families, and service providers?

Possibly the most compelling and obvious finding is that the only constant members of the teams in all cases were the

member? Does team membership mean that all team members are involved in all decision making and implementation? Does every member need to be at every meeting? Is it helpful to have teams that are so big? If

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parents. This simple and undeniable reality should serve to remind professionals that although they are interchangeable, in most cases, family members remain constant and will be there for the students when professionals are not. Despite efforts to be more family centered, the authors believe that professionals in the field have not used a sufficient level of family-centered and family-supportive approaches.

To improve education for students with

the size of teams is limited, how can the necessary expertise be ensured?

One approach to addressing these questions is for people who are involved in the education of a student to be designated core team members, extended team members, or situational resources (Giangreco, 1996a, 1996b). Core team members would include a small set of people who are frequently involved in the student's educational program (such as the classroom teacher, spe-

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help focus and clarify roles and expectations, and use resources more effectively.

Given an average of just under 10 members per team, it is clear that human resources are being provided, but the ques-

gize a group, and can provide opportunities for students to encounter new people who may end up playing important roles in their lives. However, problems can occur when the changes are so extensive or random that



