Changing Educational Attainment and Enrolment Patterns among Youth with Disabilities 1999-2006

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Data Sources/Assumptions

Sources
- Data come from the cross-sectional versions of the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) for the years 1999 through 2006 and the Participation and Activities Limitation Surveys (PALS) of 2001 and 2006

Assumptions
- Inferences regarding differences and changes regarding proportions are made using a confidence level of 95% unless otherwise stated
Definitions/Terms

- **People with disabilities:** those who report or are reported to have:
  - difficulties with daily living activities, or
  - a physical or mental condition or health problem which reduces the kind or amount of activities they could do
- **Youth:** persons between the ages of 15 and 29
- **Not attending school:** not at an educational institution on a full or combination of full/part-time basis during the past year
- **Highest Level of Educational Attainment:**
  - Less than High School – Less than a high school diploma including those who have never attended school;
  - High School – A high school diploma only;
  - Post-secondary Diploma or Certificate – Post-secondary accreditation other than a university degree; and
  - Degree: A university degree (includes those with post-graduate training)

*The target population, unless otherwise stated are youth with disabilities not attending school*
Provisos

- Applying the SLID methodology results in a disability rate approximately twenty-five percent higher than in the Participation and Activity Limitations Survey
  - tend to be people with milder conditions
- Inconsistencies in questions regarding educational attainment; timing of full/part-time enrollment limit usefulness of PALS
- Changes in identification of social context related to the naming and identification of certain conditions as disabilities (primarily related to learning)
  - has resulted in sharp increases in self-identification as “having a disability” in this age group
  - estimating and including the effects of these changes through shift and share analysis results in some tempering of the changes described in this paper
Context

- Historically, young people with disabilities have been significantly less likely to complete high school.
- Among those who have moved on to post-secondary schooling, successful completion rates have also lagged.
- Overall this population has also been much less likely to successfully find employment.
  - Using standard “shift and share” analysis techniques, it is estimated that approximately 40% of the difference in employment rates between young people with and without disabilities can be attributed to differences in success in obtaining secondary/post-secondary accreditation.
- Lower levels of education success have contributed to:
  - Slightly higher unemployment rates among young people with disabilities in comparison to other youth.
  - Much higher rates of young people with disabilities who have given up searching and are “Not in the Labour Force.”
Recently, there have been increasing rates of success in completing secondary and post-secondary schooling

Between 1999 and 2006:
- The proportion of youth with disabilities leaving high school without a diploma fell and the proportion with post-secondary accreditation rose.
- Both of these trends were in line with the population of youth without disabilities, but were more pronounced.
- A significant narrowing of the gap between these two populations.

**Specifically:**
- The % of youth with disabilities who had left school without at least post-secondary accreditation dropped by 3 percentage points: from 25.2% to 22.2%.
  - The % of those without disabilities who dropped out before finishing high school moved downwards to a lesser degree—by 1.2 percentage points from 17.4% to 16.2%.
- 38.1% of youth with disabilities had post-secondary certification in 2006—up 7.8 percentage points from 30.3% in 1999.
  - The % of youth without disabilities with post-secondary accreditation rose 5.1 percentage points from 43.0% to 48.1% during the same period.
Gender a strong influence on drop in proportion of youth with disabilities leaving school without graduating from high school

- Young women with and without a disability much more likely to complete high school than their male counterparts
- However, between 1999 and 2006, the proportion of both young men and women with disabilities not in school dropped each by an estimated average of 1% annually
- In contrast, very little change for youth without disabilities, irrespective gender
Small changes in the drop-out rate for teens with disabilities

- 84.0% of teens with disabilities remained in school through the age of 19—below the 87.5% of teens without disabilities in 2006
  - This gap has narrowed slightly—by just over 1 percentage point since 1999
- Lower proportion of dropouts reflects higher high school graduation rates among those remaining in school
- At the same time, in 2006, teens with disabilities were substantially more likely than in 1999 to go on to post-secondary schooling and were then much more likely to successfully complete their post-secondary program
Strong gender-related differences in changes in the likelihood of completing post-secondary schooling

- Young women more likely to successfully complete post-secondary schooling than men
  - both for those with and those without disabilities
- However, between 1999 and 2006, young men with disabilities began to “catch up”
  - % who had received post-secondary certificates and diplomas increased by an astonishing average rate of over 2 percentage points per year between 1999 and 2006

Proportion of Youth Not in School with Post-Secondary Accreditation by Gender and Disability Status 1999-2006
Gender related differences in types of post-secondary schooling

Young Men:
- By 2006, the likelihood of receiving post-secondary certificates and diplomas (graduation from community college, CEGEP, apprenticeship programs) was approximately the same for young men with and without disabilities
  - Increase of an estimated average of 2 percentage points per year
  - Very little change in successful completion of university degrees

![Proportion of Male Population Not in School with College Diploma or Certificate by Disability Status, 1999-2006](image)
Gender related differences in types of post-secondary schooling (continued)

Young Women:
- Among women with disabilities, there were substantial increases in completion of university degrees
  - a small shift away from certificate/diploma programs and towards university degree programs
  - the proportion of young women with disabilities 15-29 with university degrees rose by an average of 1.2% annually
    - almost doubled between 1999 and 2006—rising from close to 8% to 15%.
- still young women with disabilities remained about a quarter less likely than those without a disability to have a degree
Gender related differences post-secondary program choices result in little increase in school attendance for men aged 20-24

- Strong growth among men with disabilities has occurred in diploma and certificate programs which tend to be shorter and which often involve on-the-job training

- On the other hand, women with disabilities now more likely to follow university degree programs.
  - The only group to show a substantial jump in attendance, increasing by a very substantial 1.1 percentage points annually

In Addition: Low male attendance also indirect effect of increasing resource based and construction employment:

- Men in these industries particularly likely to experience workplace accidents
  - Workers’ Compensation data indicate that the likelihood of injury on the job is high among youth in jobs requiring a high school diploma or less
Reflecting post-secondary graduation levels and the economic boom, employment levels of youth with disabilities have increased substantially

- By 2007, close to 80% employment rate for youth 20-29
  - Rates increased at a higher rate than for youth without disabilities
  - Narrowing the gap by 2 percentage points for those 20-29

- However, gap in employment levels for those 16-19 widened
  - Increased demand for “able bodied” with high school or trades training in resource based industries of the west
Average earnings increased for youth with disabilities increased more quickly than among other youth

- Gap in employment earnings narrowed by 19% or $435/year in constant dollars
- Almost fully explained by changes in educational attainment plus higher participation rates
  - Worrying: No significant change in income differences by level of educational attainment

Annual Earnings, 1999-2006 in Constant 2006 Dollars by Disability Status
Implications

- More youth with disabilities are successfully remaining in school to the point where they receive post-secondary accreditation
- Youth with disabilities who complete post-secondary schooling are much more likely to find and keep employment
  - Employment rates for university degree graduates 25-29 were only 6 percentage points between others of the same age and accreditation in 2007
  - Unemployment rates for this population were approximately 5%.

The Message

*Accommodation in schools has likely been resulting in a substantially increasing number of successes among young people with disabilities in both completing post-secondary schooling and in finding work*
Next Steps

- Changes in the education-transition to work trajectories of youth with and without disabilities are to be analyzed using SLID longitudinal wages beginning in 1999, 2002 and 2005
  - Better capacity “matching” of outcomes
  - Examination of post-school job search experiences
  - Differentiation of those with new, episodic and long-term disabilities