

teachers and especially medical doctors who tell parents that children with a mental handicap are sub-human.

## **THE CASE AGAINST "SPECIAL ED"**

We believe that special education should be challenged. It is a faulty system based on a series of myths and failed models. And it is a menace to our children.

### ***Different Needs***

One myth is that some pupils are so different from others that they must be dealt with through a separate sub-system of the education system. This myth, of course, belongs to a norm-referenced and system-centred education system. Special education serves to segregate some pupils so the rest of the class will be roughly at the same level and can be taught as a group, not as individual students with different needs. However, special education does not allow for the fact that segregated pupils are not at the same level; they have different needs and cannot be taught *en masse*. The knowledge and experience that does exist in special education could be better used to help regular teachers in regular classes teach exceptional pupils. We found many researchers who now question the value and usefulness of special education, confirming our belief that its theoretical justifications are without foundation.

Pupils are not better served in segregated settings. Our son learned skills in many non-segregated settings — at the YMCA, volleyball camp, minor soccer, various jobs, and at home — only at school did people feel he had to be segregated with "others like him".

Despite the change in attitudes, special education still has many defenders and it provides many jobs. The faculties of education at our universities are one of its major defenders. In our province, proponents of special education in universities simply deny that all children can be included in regular