

ASSEMBLY, No. 901

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 1996 SESSION

By Assemblyman ROCCO

1 AN ACT concerning educational programs in special needs school
2 districts and supplementing chapter 44 of Title 18A of the New
3 Jersey Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Disadvantaged
9 Child Development Act."

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11 2. The Legislature finds and declares that:

12 a. A child's development starts before the age of five years when
13 the child traditionally enters school;

14 b. Early childhood education will enrich the life experience of
15 young children, identify developmental problems and reduce the need
16 for remediation;

17 c. Many children who live in poverty are malnourished, lack
18 adequate health care and experience a stressful home environment
19 which may cause them to enter school at serious risk of educational
20 and social failure; and

21 d. Many parents residing in socioeconomically disadvantaged
22 school districts cannot afford preschool programs and are unable to
23 enroll their child in federal programs due to lack of availability.

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25 3. a. Each special needs district shall establish full day
26 kindergarten and early childhood programs and make them available
27 to all children in the district beginning in the 1994-95 school year and
28 shall insure that approved early childhood programs are available to all
29 children in the district beginning in the 1995-96 school year or upon
30 the availability of suitable facilities, whichever is earlier. The early
31 childhood programs shall be available to all four year old children and
32 to three year old children when developmentally appropriate. The
33 programs shall be based on a developmentally appropriate and
34 integrated curriculum which promotes the physical, emotional, social,
35 and cognitive areas of a child's development.

- 1 b. By February 1, 1994 and every February 1 thereafter, each
2 special needs district shall prepare a plan to provide full day
3 kindergarten and early childhood programs, as appropriate, pursuant
4 to this section for the coming school year and submit the plan to the
5 Commissioner of Education for approval. The plan shall be prepared
6 in consultation with parents, teachers and community leaders and shall:
- 7 (1) address the full day child care needs of the child's working
8 parents through before and after school programs;
 - 9 (2) be tailored to each child's needs and developmental readiness;
 - 10 (3) provide for the identification and remediation of developmental
11 delays which could adversely effect future school performance;
 - 12 (4) encourage parents and members of the community to volunteer
13 their time and services in operating the programs;
 - 14 (5) provide full day nutritional programs;
 - 15 (6) provide an information and referral service for health and social
16 services for the child or the child's family
 - 17 (7) provide a parent education component in order to encourage
18 parents to read to their children, to take a more active role in the
19 education of their children at home and at school, and to enhance the
20 intellectual, physical, social and emotional development of their
21 children;
 - 22 (8) utilize existing governmental and community resources and
23 facilities and seek private foundation and business involvement;
 - 24 (9) provide for a continuity of services to at-risk and
25 developmentally delayed children as they move into the primary
26 grades.
- 27 c. The Department of Education shall provide guidance and
28 technical assistance to local school districts in developing the plans
29 required under this section.
- 30 d. If the district is unable to provide full day kindergarten or early
31 childhood programs because of the unavailability of suitable facilities,
32 the plan shall indicate what steps are being taken by the district to
33 address this issue and an approximate date when suitable facilities will
34 be available and the Commissioner of Education may authorize the
35 district to delay implementation of the programs as specified in the
36 plan .
- 37
- 38 4. The school district shall provide transportation when necessary
39 to children participating in a preschool program pursuant to section 3
40 of P.L. , c. (C.)(now pending before the Legislature as this bill)
41 who do not otherwise qualify for transportation and shall receive
42 transportation aid pursuant to section 16 of P.L.1990, c.52
43 (C.18A:7D-18).
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- 45 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This bill requires the special needs school districts to provide full day kindergarten programs beginning in the 1994-95 school year. The bill also requires these districts to provide preschool programs beginning in the 1995-96 school year or upon the availability of facilities, whichever is earlier. The preschool program must be offered to all four year old children and to three year old children when developmentally appropriate.

Each special needs district must prepare a plan in consultation with teachers, parents and community leaders detailing the programs to be provided and submit the plan to the Commissioner of Education for approval. The Department of Education is directed to provide guidance and assistance to the special needs districts in developing the plan.

The plan to provide full day kindergarten and preschool programs must address the day care needs of working parents, provide for the identification and remediation of developmental problems, provide for parental education classes, provide a health and social services referral service, encourage volunteers to participate in the program and utilize existing governmental and community resources.

The plan must also detail the steps being taken by the district to find suitable facilities for prekindergarten programs.

The bill also requires the school district to provide transportation when necessary to preschoolers who do not otherwise qualify for State mandated transportation for which the district will be eligible to receive State transportation aid.

Requires special needs districts to provide full day kindergarten and preschool programs.