

Funding for Preschool Special Class in an Integrated Setting Programs



ALTERNATIVE REIMBURSEMENT METHODOLOGY RECOMMENDATION
PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 59 OF THE LAWS OF 2017

PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS

SEPTEMBER 2017

New York State Education Department Early Childhood Programs



Office of Early Learning oversees:

- State-Administered Prekindergarten serving approximately 125,000 children (ages 3 and 4)
- \$820 million in State and federal funding

Office of Special Education oversees:

- \$4410 Preschool Special Education Programs serving approximately 82,000 children (ages 3-5)
- \$1.4 billion in State and County funding

Preschool Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS)

- SCIS programs are approved by the Office of Special Education
- SCIS is a special class consisting of preschool students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of similar individual needs for specially-designed instruction, located in the same physical space as a preschool class of students without disabilities receiving an early childhood education program.
- SCIS providers operate within or collaborate with a State Administered Pre-K, Head Start, or other child care program.
 - 175 approved SCIS providers in New York State (NYS) operate both half-day and full-day programs (21 school districts, 2 BOCES, and the remainder are operated by private entities)
- Approximately \$247 million in reimbursement was claimed for all SCIS programs in 2013-14, serving 13,761 preschool students with disabilities.

SCIS & Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



LRE is both a federal and State requirement, and means that placement of students with disabilities in special classes, separate schools or other removal from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, education cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

- For preschool, §4410(5)(b)(i) of NYS Education Law directs committees on preschool special education to first consider the provision of special education services in a setting which includes age-appropriate peers without disabilities prior to recommending placement in a setting which includes only preschool students with disabilities.
- SCIS is one model from the State's continuum of special education programs that provides preschool students with disabilities with the delivery of specially-designed instruction and related services alongside their peers who do not have disabilities.

Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2017

The Department must:

- Submit a recommendation for an alternative reimbursement methodology to the Division of the Budget no later than April 1, 2018;
- Seek input from impacted stakeholders; and
- Reimburse SCIS programs based on an alternative methodology commencing with the 2018-19 school year.

The Department's Office of Special Education, Office of Early Learning, Rate Setting Unit and State Aid Office are working collaboratively to develop this recommendation, along with impacted stakeholders.

Next Steps – SCIS Methodology

1. Engage stakeholders by conducting meetings on SCIS methodology in September, October, and November. These meetings will explore options for inclusion within the State Administered Pre-K programs, and within other early childhood programs.
2. Ensure that discussions held in these stakeholder meetings are brought into alignment, when appropriate, with discussions held in the Early Childhood Blue Ribbon Committee Meetings.
3. Identify the models and standards for quality inclusive early childhood programs and determine how general education and special education funding could be better structured to appropriately align reimbursement for this purpose.
4. Report back to the Board of Regents in November 2017.