

## Introduction

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is continuing its campaign to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. The Guaranteed Full Funding for IDEA campaign calls on the 110th Congress and the Administration to pay its full share of the cost of educating children with disabilities by passing appropriations legislation this year that guarantees full funding for IDEA within eight years, or no later than FY 2016. For FY 2009, CEC is advocating a total federal annual appropriation for IDEA of \$16.24 billion, which includes increased appropriations for the IDEA Part B Grants to States Program and Preschool Grants Program, as well as the Part C Infants and Toddlers Program and Part D support programs.

## Background

When Congress originally enacted P.L. 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, in 1975, Congress authorized the federal government to pay 40 percent of each state's "excess cost" of educating children with disabilities. That amount – commonly referred to as the "IDEA full funding" amount – is calculated by taking 40 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure (APPE) multiplied by the number of children with disabilities served under IDEA in each state.

When P.L. 94-142 was enacted, Congress adopted a full funding formula that phased-in funding increases for IDEA over a period of 5 years, intending to reach full funding by FY 1981, with local communities and states providing the balance of funding. Over the years, while the law itself continues to work and children are being educated, the intended federal/state/local cost-sharing partnership has not been realized because Congress never lived up to its financial obligation. As a result, local communities and states have been forced to pay a higher proportion of the special education costs. But ultimately, children and families are the ones who are being shortchanged.

Children and families are shortchanged when over 50,000 teachers without appropriate licenses teach students with disabilities each year because funds are not available to recruit and train qualified teachers. They are shortchanged when research-based educational practices are not available in schools as a result of over 18 years of stagnant federal funding for educational research. And they are shortchanged when adequate funds are not available to provide developmentally appropriate early intervention services to eligible infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities.

## Details of the Guaranteed Full Funding for IDEA Campaign

For 33 years Congress has promised to fully fund IDEA, **yet funding is only at 17.2 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure for FY 2008**. Based on funding levels appropriated by Congress during the past 33 years, IDEA will not reach full funding until almost the middle of the twenty first century. **School children cannot wait another 33 years**. Congress should fulfill its promise; IDEA funding should be mandatory.

## How Does CEC's Campaign Address the Problem?

First, CEC calls on Congress and the Administration to increase federal spending over the next eight years. Funding for IDEA would be moved out of the discretionary budget and into mandatory spending, which would guarantee increased federal funding. In order to reach full funding of the Part B State and Local Grant Program within eight years, CEC calls on the Congress and the Administration to appropriate funds for IDEA.

- FY 2009: \$12.47 billion
- FY 2010: \$14.20 billion
- FY 2011: \$16.16 billion
- FY 2012: \$18.41 billion
- FY 2013: \$20.96 billion
- FY 2014: \$23.87 billion
- FY 2015: \$27.18 billion
- FY 2016: \$30.96 billion- Full funding for Part B is reached

Second, CEC calls on Congress and the Administration to secure increased funds to promote personnel preparation, research, and other national activities that will improve educational results for children and youth with disabilities, as well as provide additional funding for preschool grants and the early intervention program for

infants and toddlers. Specifically, CEC calls on Congress and the Administration to enact legislation this year to guarantee the following appropriations levels for FY 2009:

- *\$944 million* for Part B Section 619 preschool grants.
- *\$770 million* for the Part C Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Program.
- *\$1.06 billion* for Part D program supports.

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