Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – Part B Section 619
Preschool Program

PURPOSE

The Preschool Grants Program (also known as Section 619) is intended to help states ensure that all preschool-aged children (3-5 years of age) with disabilities receive special education and related services. In 1986, before this program existed, only half of the states provided services to preschoolers with disabilities. Since 1987, however, when this expanded program began operating, the number of children served has increased from 265,000 to an estimated 710,400 in fiscal year 2011.

WHO RECEIVES FUNDING

State education agencies (SEAs) receive this funding, and through them, local education agencies (LEAs) and educational service agencies are eligible for grants under this program.

ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED

Funds are used to provide the full range and variety of appropriate preschool special education and related services to children with disabilities 3 through 5 years of age.

FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

Over the last two decades, the enrollment of preschool children with disabilities receiving services provided by IDEA has grown by over 420,000 or 60%, while federal funding has only increased by 25%, without taking into account inflation. Over the last decade alone, funding has decreased by over $15 million. In 1992, the federal government spent $803 dollars per child by 2010 it was only spending $527 dollars per child, a decrease of 34%. While ARRA infused a substantial and needed amount into this program, without a sustained commitment to funding, children will fail to receive appropriate services especially in these difficult economic times. Thus, the reality is that when federal funding fails to keep pace with program growth, children, families, schools and states bear a disproportionate share of the financial burden.

Decreasing Commitment: Decline in IDEA Preschool Funding

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Connecticut State Profile

How Many Children in Connecticut Receive Preschool Services?

In 2008, 7,911 Connecticut children ages 3-5 received preschool services.

What was the federal IDEA Part B Section 619 allocation awarded to Connecticut in 2010? What was the ARRA appropriation?

In 2010, Connecticut received $4,827,207 for IDEA Part B Section 619; and in 2009 Connecticut received $5,089,013 for Part B Section 619 under ARRA.

How is Connecticut’s IDEA preschool program administered?

The early childhood unit special education administers preschool special education.

How is Connecticut’s IDEA preschool program involved in comprehensive services for all young children and their families?

Connecticut’s program is involved in collaboration through the state’s early intervention system; state-funded Pre-K initiative called “school readiness”; collaboration with child care; family resource centers; Head Start; collaboration with state child welfare/child protection agency; training/TA initiatives with other state partners; collaborative training/conferences with state agency partners.

What training opportunities are provided for preschool personnel that support inclusive settings?

List is not all-inclusive: intensive on-site professional development on (1) Pre-K RtI (Recognition and Response) and (2) PBS initiative on building on-site EC behavioral teams; professional development on LRE, inclusion, serving children with ASD in inclusive settings; using coaching models and embedding instruction into EC program; state project on supporting NAEYC accreditation with training and TA.

Has Connecticut developed preschool policies to enhance parent involvement?

Yes, Connecticut has developed preschool specific policies and strategies to enhance the involvement of parents.

How does Connecticut work with federally funded parent information centers?

Connecticut state educational agency works with parent information centers through special projects, technical assistance, joint conferences, as well as other services.

Does Connecticut have early learning standards/guidelines?

Yes, Connecticut has early learning standards/guidelines that apply to all children ages 3 through 5.

Does Connecticut have a pre-kindergarten program?

Yes, Connecticut has the following general education pre-kindergarten programs: state funded Pre-K for at risk; Title I Pre-K; locally funded Pre-K; and state Head Start.

Source: National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center http://www.nectac.org/~pdfs/pubs/q1-44.pdf