

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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(EMERGENCY)
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 2106

S. P. 684

In Senate, January 25, 1978

Filed by the Joint Standing Committee on Education under Joint Rule 17,
pursuant to Senate Paper 528.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-EIGHT

**AN ACT Concerning Pilot Projects for more Effective and Efficient Delivery of
Services to Preschool Handicapped Children.**

Emergency preamble. Whereas, Acts of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, sufficient time is needed to accomplish the preparatory work necessary to select pilot projects prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

Sec. 1. Definitions. As used in this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following words shall have the following meanings.

1. Handicapped child. "Handicapped child" means any child who requires special services in the area of vision, audition, speech, language, cerebral or perceptual functions, physical mobility functions, behavior, mental development or maturation, or multiples of these functions.

2. **Preschool handicapped child.** "Preschool handicapped child" means any handicapped child who has reached the age of 3 and who has not yet reached the age of 5, or whose 5th birthday falls after October 15th and has not yet reached the age of 6.

Sec. 2. Purpose. It is the purpose of this legislation to stimulate through the activities of pilot projects a more effective and efficient delivery of services to preschool handicapped children by:

1. **Coordination.** Coordinating existing programs presently provided for these children by the Departments of Human Services, Mental Health and Corrections, Educational and Cultural Services and other public and private agencies;

2. **Delivery.** Delivering services only to meet identified unmet needs; and

3. **Future recommendations.** Using results of these pilot projects to determine the best direction for future recommendations to serve this population of children.

Sec. 3. Interdepartmental cooperation. The Commissioners of the Departments of Human Services, Educational and Cultural Services and Mental Health and Corrections shall establish an interdepartmental coordinating committee for preschool handicapped children.

1. **Membership.** Each commissioner shall appoint at least one representative from their department to serve on this committee. Additional members representing the public sector shall be appointed by the 3 commissioners.

2. **Responsibilities.** It shall be the responsibility of this committee, under the direction of the 3 commissioners, to select pilot projects and monitor the progress of these pilot projects. It shall also be the responsibility of this committee to develop a plan, using the results of the pilot project, for effective delivery of services to preschool handicapped children.

3. **Staff.** The 3 commissioners shall jointly appoint an interdepartmental coordinator for preschool handicapped children to serve as staff to the committee.

Sec. 4. Pilot projects. Through a competitive grant process the committee shall select pilot sites designed to demonstrate the effective delivery of services to preschool handicapped children by coordinating existing programs, where possible, and establishing a mechanism for ongoing coordination of programs for preschool handicapped children at a local or regional level, including local educational agencies, community mental health centers, regional mental retardation services, regional human service programs and other public and private agencies as appropriate. Each pilot project shall establish a method to identify unserved and underserved preschool handicapped children and develop services for those children.

Sec. 5. Evaluation. Continuous evaluation of the pilot projects shall be required and shall be an integral part of each pilot. The committee shall determine the expected outcome goals of the pilot process and shall cause to be developed an evaluation design to determine the success of the pilots.

The 3 commissioners shall present to the Legislature an interim report prior to December 15, 1979, and a final report prior to December 15, 1980. These reports shall provide an assessment of the planning efforts of the state level. In addition, these reports shall also contain any recommendations, including legislation, deemed necessary for the continuation or expansion of these pilot projects.

Sec. 6. Appropriation. The following funds shall be appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Act:

	1978-79
EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES,	
DEPARTMENT OF	
All Other	\$150,000

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this Act shall take effect when approved.

STATEMENT OF FACT

There is an undisputed need to serve handicapped children as early in life as possible. The pilot phase will determine the structure to most effectively serve these children while making the most efficient use of existing resources. It is the intent of this legislation that as many pilot projects be approved as is possible within the limits of the appropriation.