

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The New York State Education Department's Office of Special Education, Office of Early Learning, Rate Setting Unit and State Aid Office are conducting a comprehensive review of applicable laws, rules, and regulations to identify how the existing Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS) program requirements could be amended to increase the number of high-quality inclusive early childhood program opportunities in New York State. This framework will serve as a basis to establish a reimbursement recommendation aligned with desired program objectives and expectations. Therefore, rather than being limited by the current program requirements, it is important that the questions for discussion be considered from the perspective of defining new quality standards that may be successfully implemented by inclusive early childhood programs.

CLASS SIZE & STUDENT RATIOS

1. What are the configurations/models for maximum class size and numbers of students with disabilities to students without disabilities that best support a high-quality inclusive early childhood programs for all children?
2. How can the principle of natural proportions guide the design of inclusive early childhood programs? "Natural proportions" is the inclusion of children with disabilities in proportion to their presence in the general population. Application of this principle does not anticipate or permit imposing caps or quotas on the number of children with disabilities in a program or not individualizing services for children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

STAFFING STANDARDS FOR A HIGH QUALITY EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM

1. To support desired class size and student ratios, what staffing positions are necessary to operate inclusive early childhood programs?
 - How to determine the number of instructional staff (teachers and supplementary school personnel) needed in each classroom under various inclusion models?
 - How may co-teaching, consultant teacher services (both direct and indirect), or coaching methods work in an inclusion model?
 - How to determine the number of related service providers to serve each classroom under various inclusion models?
 - What support positions are needed to perform coordination, supervisory, or director functions?

Regulatory Requirements & Program Staffing Models for Inclusion

Wednesday, September 13 & Thursday, September 14, 2017

2. How should time be allocated for coordination and collaboration between the professionals including administrators, general education and special education instructional staff and related service providers?
 - What is needed for active collaboration across all levels and how can it be achieved?
 - How should staff time expectations be coordinated to accommodate scheduled time for team meetings, child study, lesson/activities planning, parent/family communication, professional development, and attendance at Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) meetings?
3. What are professional development expectations that could best support strong competencies in culturally and linguistically responsive practices, universal design for learning and positive attitudes and beliefs about inclusion and disability awareness to foster the development of all children?
 - How could professional development resources be used to expand access to this type of training and coaching?
4. What opportunities exist for programs with dedicated professional development funds, such as public school districts and Head Start programs, to ensure professional development in inclusive early childhood programming is not only available to their own staff, but is also open to local early childhood partners from child care and family child care settings?

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. Are there changes to existing program quality requirements (e.g., curriculum, classroom set up/learning centers, materials) that would better serve the objectives of inclusive early childhood programs?

FACILITY QUALITY

1. Are there changes to existing program facility requirements (e.g., size of classrooms, health and safety requirements, location of classrooms within the building/facility and community) that would better serve the objectives of inclusive early childhood programs?

STATUTORY & REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

1. What solutions to statutory or regulatory requirements have not yet been discussed that should be considered to better support inclusive early childhood programs?