SPECIAL CLASS INTEGRATED SETTING PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK STATE

Survey of 4410 Providers
101 Survey 4410 Provider Responses
92 Private Entity, 6 School Districts, 3 BOCES

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Providers were asked whether they operate or collaborate with an Early Childhood Program

69 providers that responded *operate both* early childhood program components:

- 42 operate SCIS and State Administered Pre-K
- 43 operate SCIS and Day Care
- 13 operate SCIS and Early Head Start/Head Start

29 providers that responded *collaborate with a separate entity* for the early childhood program component:

- 17 collaborate with a State Administered Pre-K
- 14 collaborate with a Day Care program
- 13 collaborate with Early Head Start/Head Start
Applicable challenges to operating a SCIS program from survey list provided:

- Student Ratio Restrictions: 45
- Lack of Space: 26
- Two Teacher Requirement: 56
- 16 Child Minimum: 48
- Staff Shortage: 69
- Difficulty in Finding Collaborator: 32
- Parent Reservations: 56
- Multiple Oversight Agencies: 67
- Blended Funding Complicated: 64
- Reimbursement Rate: 79

Survey of 4410 Providers - September 2017
Challenges maintaining enrollment of typically developing children at a level of at least 50% of the total classroom enrollment

46 of the 69 providers operating both classroom components reported enrollment challenges

9 of the 29 providers collaborating with a separate entity reported enrollment challenges

Reasons given for enrollment challenges were similar among both groups:

- As State Administered Pre-K increases, demand for other early childhood education decreases
- Parents cannot afford “tuition” or private pay and seek tuition-free programs
- Parents prefer to enroll children in:
  - a State Administered Pre-K closer to home or in a community school building
  - a program with fewer student needs (so that their child gets more attention)
  - a program where student behavioral incidents are less frequent
- Parents need wraparound or aftercare services not currently offered by our program
- No summer UPK, lower summer enrollment due to vacation and summer schedules
- No transportation for general education program

Survey of 4410 Providers - September 2017
Success maintaining enrollment of typically developing children at a level of at least 50% of the total classroom enrollment

- 23 of the 69 providers operating both classroom components did NOT find challenges maintaining enrollment of typically developing children
- 17 of the 29 providers collaborating with a separate entity did NOT find challenges maintaining enrollment
- Reasons given for enrollment success were similar among both groups:
  - A State-Administered Pre-K or Head Start grant/collaboration generates sufficient enrollment numbers
  - Day care programs are in demand in the area
  - Day care program offers rates lower than area competitors
  - Collaborating day care enrolls infant/toddlers who stay with the program
  - Having certified teachers is attractive to parents seeking an early childhood program
  - Ambitiously advertising and responding to community need results in enrollment

Survey of 4410 Providers - September 2017
Challenges or Barriers to Collaboration

- Of 90 responses, 69 identified challenges or barriers operating a SCIS program with a collaborative partner.

- Challenges noted:
  - Lack of interest or availability among early childhood programs in the area
  - Collaborating partners seek to avoid students with significant behavior needs
  - Collaborating partners are concerned about potential budget impact
  - Collaborating partners expect full enrollment as soon as possible and are not willing or able to hold seats for special education students who may be placed later in the year
  - Conflicting regulatory requirements, program requirements, and/or philosophies
  - Finding time for planning and collaboration by staff from both programs
  - Collaborative fee too expensive

Survey of 4410 Providers - September 2017
Collaborative Opportunities with State Administered Pre-K

- Are there sufficient opportunities to collaborate with a State Administered Pre-K program in your area?
  - 85 providers responded:
    - 43 answered YES
    - 42 answered NO

- The impact of State Administered Pre-K on inclusive preschool opportunities were described as follows:
  - State Administered Pre-K is helping to meet inclusion objectives where it is available
  - Training and professional development provided by the school district has improved the quality of collaborating SCIS partners
  - Inclusion opportunities are declining where State Administered Pre-K is not partnering with SCIS
  - State Administered Pre-K is contributing to teacher recruitment and retention issues for SCIS programs

Survey of 4410 Providers - September 2017
Best practices that contribute to the quality of SCIS programs:

▪ Employing qualified staff (including dually certified teachers)
▪ Providing professional development, ongoing staff training/workshops
▪ Ensuring appropriate supervisory support
▪ Active collaboration between special education and general education program components utilizing:
  • Team communication
  • Scheduled planning time
  • Modified curriculum
▪ Opportunities for meaningful parent engagement including:
  • Parent training/workshops
  • Organized events for parents and children
  • Open door policy
The most challenging regulatory issue(s) facing SCIS programs:

- Multiple oversight agencies (OCFS, DOHMH, Office of Special Education, State Administered Pre-K, Head Start) and conflicting regulations (instructional time, nap, meals, etc.)
- Requirement of two certified teachers in a SCIS classroom
- Lack of flexibility in certification requirements for SCIS teachers
- Difficulty in achieving and maintaining the appropriate student classroom ratios of at least 50% of the total enrollment be typically developing students
- Students receiving related services only counted as preschool students with a disability
- Inconsistent county contract language, documentation and billing requirements
- Cumbersome and lengthy process for obtaining approval of programmatic changes and determination of Regional Need
What should SED know when developing its recommendation to improve preschool integrated opportunities?

- Increase funding/tuition rates to reflect actual operating costs
- Create a single funding stream to reimburse both special education and early childhood program components
- Provide consistency among the oversight agencies’ regulatory requirements
- Provide more flexible SCIS classroom ratios
- Collaboration is needed between OSE, OEL and stakeholders during the decision making process
- Staff shortage needs to be addressed
- Profile of a SCIS student has changed
- High level of training is needed in behavior management
- Active parent involvement is important
- Evaluate a more efficient approval process for program modifications

Survey of 4410 Providers - September 2017