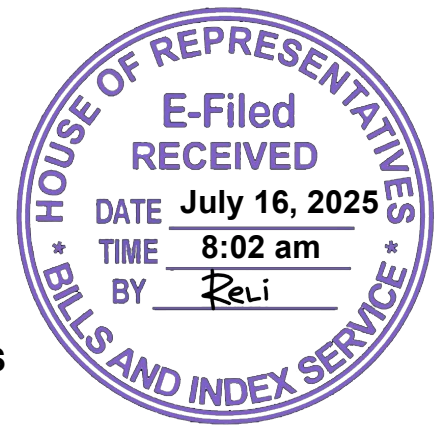


TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE BILL No. 1960

Introduced by **REP. CLAUDINE DIANA D. BAUTISTA-LIM**

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE EARLY
DETECTION AND TIMELY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL
NEEDS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Children's primary years are essential. These years define children's survival and success in life, as well as lay the foundations for their learning and holistic development. It is in these years that children develop the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional abilities that will help them thrive¹ and become able members of society.

Children with special needs are particularly in need of immediate curative interventions. Early detection and timely intervention are critical in lessening the effects of their condition. With such intervention, developmental delays are immediately addressed in the hopes that these children may no longer need therapy or may just require minimal rehabilitative assistance later on, which will eventually improve their overall quality of life. A study has reported that children who were assessed and given remedial services at a younger age were better able to cope with disability and had better prognosis than those who received help later.²

While early intervention programs for children with special needs have been proven to be highly effective, several challenges hamper their implementation. Among the significant challenges identified were geographic accessibility, prohibitive costs, and limited availability of specialized professionals, among others.

Poverty-stricken families with special needs children often forego recommended health services due to economic limitations. *"Children from low-income families, rural areas, and marginalized communities are less likely to have access to high-quality early intervention services. This lack of access can exacerbate existing*

¹ <https://specialeducationnotes.co.in/IDDPAPER1UNIT4>

² Unit 4: Early Identification and Intervention

developmental delays and widen the achievement gap between children with special needs and their typically developing peers. Moreover, even when services are available, there may be long wait times or limited availability of specialized professionals, further delaying critical early intervention.”³

If children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families are not provided with timely and appropriate early intervention, support and protection, their difficulties can become more severe leading to lifetime consequences, increased poverty and profound exclusion.⁴

To give hope for a better future for children with special needs and their families, this measure mandates the provision of special needs centers in all local government units. This is to encourage families to have their children with special needs evaluated so that critical interventions are administered at the earliest possible time.

In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


REP. CLAUDINE DIANA D. BAUTISTA-LIM
DUMPER PTDA Party-list

³ Pérez, Dr. M., & Ríos, N. (n.d.). The Effectiveness of Early Intervention Programs for Children with Special Needs. *International Journal of Literacy and Education* 2024. <https://www.educationjournal.info/article/206/4-2-8-410.pdf>

⁴ Unit 4: Early Identification and Intervention

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NEEDS

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Early Detection and Intervention Services for Children with Special Needs Act.”

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all its citizens at affordable cost. Towards this end, the State shall support and empower children with special needs and their families by giving them better lifelong outcomes through accessible and affordable early detection and intervention services.

Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

- (a) *Special Needs* refers to a variety of conditions, difficulties, and impairments, including but not limited to chronic and terminal illnesses, physical impairments, behavioral, cognitive, or psychiatric issues, and learning disability that causes an individual to require additional or specialized services or accommodations such as education or recreation. A child with special needs may have a life-threatening condition or may have severe learning disabilities.
- (b) *Intervention* refers to a range of services, educational methods and positive behavioral support strategies designed to improve the condition of children with developmental delays, disabilities or special needs.

Sec. 4. *Early Detection and Timely Intervention Services.* – The Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Social

Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall undertake to develop a program providing for comprehensive accessible and affordable early detection and timely intervention services for children with special needs. The objectives of this program include, but not limited to, the following:

- a) To enhance the development of children with special needs, improve their long-term outcomes, and support their families in managing the challenges associated with raising children with special needs;
- b) To increase awareness, reduce barriers to screening and diagnosis, and promote evidence-based interventions for children with special needs or other developmental disabilities;
- c) To build a qualified and adequately trained workforce prepared to provide special needs services for children and their families;
- d) To conduct a comprehensive, multi-faceted public awareness campaign in order to educate families, the general public, and other key audiences about the benefits of children's social and emotional development, and how to access services;
- e) To create a quality-driven children's special needs system with shared accountability among agencies and programs that conducts continuous needs assessments, uses outcome indicators and benchmarks to measure progress, and implements a quality data tracking and reporting system.

Sec. 5. Special Needs Centers. – All local government units shall endeavor to establish special needs centers offering early intervention and transition programs and shall provide programs and services that will prepare children with special needs on activities in mainstream society.

As far as feasible and practicable, intervention and allied medical services shall be offered free of charge, including, but not limited to, occupational or physical therapy, speech therapy, counselling, social enhancement activities and other programs to address the skills or behavioral concerns of children with special needs.

Sec. 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The DepEd, and the DOH, in coordination with DSWD and DILG, and in consultation with relevant private sector practitioners and representatives of the academic and health community, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules regulations to carry out the effective implementation of this Act, within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

Sec. 7. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations or funds of the implementing agencies and concerned local government units.

Sec. 8. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is held invalid, the other provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, order, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Sec. 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,