



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6077



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR ACCESSIBLE EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND
INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 12 of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. Further, the State recognizes that it is duty-bound to support the natural and primary right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character.

The State, being a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), recognizes the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child¹.

Thus, this bill seeks to make early identification services for children with special needs (CSN) and provide for timely intervention that is accessible for all

¹ UNCRC Article 23 (2)

those who need to avail of such assistance. This bill also seeks to create a quality-driven children's special needs system with shared accountability among agencies and programs assessments, use outcome indicators and benchmarks to measure progress, and implement a quality data tracking and reporting system.

Early identification of special needs among children is crucial because it allows for timely intervention, which can maximize a child's developmental potential, improve academic and long-term outcomes, and support families. It takes advantage of the brain's high adaptability in early childhood to build a strong foundation for learning, behavior, and health, and can lead to more positive results than delaying intervention.

Finally, we recognize Rep. Ernesto "Ernix" M. Dionisio Jr. of the First District of Manila for filing a similar bill in the Nineteenth Congresses.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



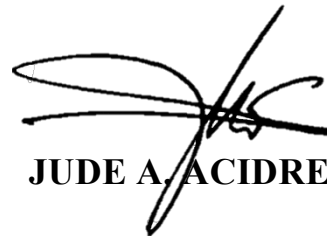
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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Early Identification and Intervention for Children with Special Needs Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby the declared policy of the State to ensure the healthy growth and development of children. Towards this end, the State shall adopt measures to deliver accessible health and social services to children.

SECTION 3. Definition of Children with Special Needs. - Children with special needs refer to those persons eighteen (18) years old and below who are gifted or are fast learners; and those who are disabled, impaired, and handicapped and in need of special education as well as services for rehabilitation. They differ from the average children in mental characteristics, sensory abilities, neuro-muscular or physical characteristics, and social attributes, to such an extent that requires the use of modified school practices or special education services to develop them to maximum capability.

SECTION 4. The Program - The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Health (DOH) shall develop a program providing comprehensive accessible and affordable early identification and intervention services for children with special needs.

SECTION 5. Objectives. - The objective of this program includes but not limited to the following:

- a) To increase awareness, reduce barriers to screening and diagnosis, promote evidence-based interventions for CSNS;
- b) To build a qualified and adequately trained workforce prepared to provide special needs services for children and their families;
- c) To conduct a comprehensive, multi-faceted public awareness campaign 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; and

- d) To create a quality-driven children's special needs system with shared accountability among agencies and programs assessments, use outcome indicators and benchmarks to measure progress, and implements a quality data tracking and reporting system.

SECTION 6. Role of Local Government Units. - 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 special needs children for activities in mainstream society. Local government units shall support existing programs and services catering to special needs children within their jurisdiction and shall conduct an information campaign within their jurisdiction regarding the availability of these programs and services.

SECTION 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations - The DepEd and DOH in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government and in consultation with the relevant private sector, practitioners, and representatives of the academic community shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. Separability Clause. - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 9. Repealing Clause. - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation

contrary to, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,