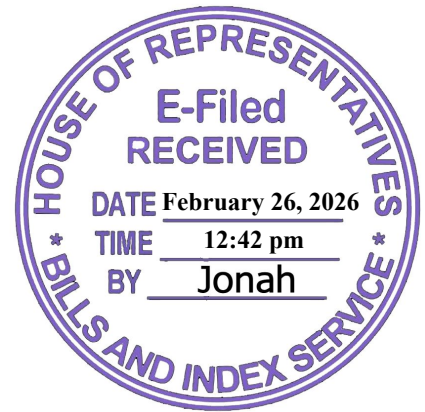


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8106



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON “COCO” M. YAP

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING ACCESSIBLE EARLY IDENTIFICATION, REFERRAL, AND
INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHER
SPECIAL NEEDS, INSTITUTIONALIZING THE CHILD FIND SYSTEM IN LOCAL
SERVICE DELIVERY, AND PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION, COORDINATION,
AND APPROPRIATIONS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The early years of a child’s life are critical. When delays in speech, movement, learning, or behavior are not detected early, they can lead to lasting difficulties in school, health, and daily life. But when children are screened early and given the right support, they are more likely to develop well, be ready for kindergarten, and live more independent and healthy lives. Early action also reduces stress on families and lowers long-term costs for government services.

Our laws already recognize this need. Existing policies require the government to find children with special needs early and provide timely assessment, referral, and intervention through coordinated health and education services. However, many families still face confusion and delays. Parents often do not know where to go for screening, referrals between health centers and schools are weak, and services are uneven, especially in poor and remote communities. As a result, many children are identified too late, when help is already more difficult and costly.

This bill turns existing commitments into real, working systems at the community level. It sets up a clear and child-friendly pathway for early screening, assessment, intervention, and smooth transition to kindergarten, with shared responsibility

among education, health, and local government agencies. By strengthening coordination and making services easier to access, the measure ensures that no child is overlooked during these crucial early years. Investing early in children with special needs is fair, practical, and essential to building an inclusive and caring society.

In view of the foregoing, **ug sa ngalan sa SERBISYONG TINUORAY**, the undersigned respectfully requests the immediate passage of this measure.


CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP
Representative, Second District of Southern Leyte

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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 Childhood Special Needs Screening and Intervention Act.*”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is the policy of the State to ensure the healthy growth and development of children, promote inclusive development and education, and ensure that children with disabilities and other special needs are **identified early, assessed properly**, and provided **timely interventions and transition services** through accessible, coordinated, and community-based mechanisms.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. — For purposes of this Act:

- (a) “**Children with Disabilities / Learners with Disabilities**” shall refer to children covered by the inclusive education framework and related laws, and shall include children with developmental delays and disabilities requiring early identification, intervention, and transition support.

- (b) **“Children with Special Needs”** refers to children eighteen (18) years old and below who, due to disability, developmental delay, or other conditions that require additional support, need early identification, assessment, intervention, and transition services; Provided, that this term shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with inclusive education and ECCD standards.
- (c) **“Child Find System (CFS)”** refers to the coordinated mechanism for identification, location, evaluation, referral, and facilitation of access to appropriate services for children with disabilities and other special needs, including those not yet in school.
- (d) **“Early Intervention Program”** refers to educational, therapeutic, medical, nutritional, or family support services designed to reduce the effects of disabilities or prevent the occurrence of learning and development problems for children from birth to five (5) years, consistent with existing law.
- (e) **“Transition Program”** refers to a coordinated set of activities to support movement from early childhood and school into post-school activities including vocational training and integrated employment, consistent with existing law.
- (f) **“Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC)”** refers to the service hub established under existing law that delivers free support and related services, multidisciplinary assessments, referral systems, and IEP support for learners with disabilities.

SECTION 4. Strengthened Early Identification and Intervention Program. — The Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Health (DOH), and the ECCD Council, in coordination with local government units (LGUs), shall strengthen and operationalize a national program providing **comprehensive, accessible, and affordable** early identification, referral, intervention, and transition services for children with disabilities and other special needs.

For children **below five (5) years old**, the program shall be implemented through and consistent with the ECCD System.

For children **five (5) years old and above**, the program shall be implemented in coordination with DepEd and the ILRC service delivery system under inclusive education law.

SECTION 5. Objectives. — The Program shall have the following objectives:

- (a) To increase public awareness and reduce barriers to early screening, assessment, diagnosis, referral, and evidence-based interventions;
- (b) To build and sustain a qualified workforce and service network capable of delivering multidisciplinary services;
- (c) To develop and implement a continuous public information campaign on early childhood development, disability inclusion, and service access;
- (d) To establish a quality assurance and shared accountability system, including outcome indicators and data tracking consistent with privacy and child protection standards; and
- (e) To strengthen coordinated transition planning for children with disabilities and other special needs, including transition to school, community participation, and, where appropriate, vocational pathways.

SECTION 6. Service Delivery Mechanism; Role of ILRCs and Local Pathways. —

- (a) **ILRC as Hub for Assessment and Referral.** Consistent with existing law, the ILRC shall serve as the primary hub in each city/municipality/school district for education-related assessment, IEP-related functions, referrals, and support services for learners with disabilities.
- (b) **LGU Service Pathway.** Each LGU shall establish and publish a local **Child Find and Early Intervention Pathway** specifying: (i) where and how children may be screened; (ii) referral points to ILRCs, DOH facilities, and accredited providers; (iii) turnaround timelines for assessment and referrals; and (iv) available support services.
- (c) **No Duplication of Centers.** LGUs may establish special needs centers or support units, but such shall be designed to complement—not duplicate or conflict with—the ILRC functions under existing law.

SECTION 7. Inter-Agency Coordination and Implementation. —

- (a) The DepEd bureau responsible for learning delivery shall coordinate with implementing partner agencies through an effective mechanism for implementation and enforcement of laws for learners with disabilities.
- (b) The DOH shall ensure linkage of the Program to health screening, developmental surveillance, diagnostics, habilitation/rehabilitation services, and appropriate referral networks.
- (c) Coordination with LGUs shall include training, technical assistance, and shared monitoring tools.

SECTION 8. Appropriations. —

- (a) A dedicated budget line item shall be included in the annual appropriations of DepEd and other implementing partner agencies for the delivery of services, including assessment and diagnosis, transportation and support services, and assistive devices and learning materials, consistent with existing inclusive education budgeting.
- (b) The amount necessary for initial implementation shall be charged against existing appropriations of DepEd, DOH, and other partner agencies, and thereafter included as separate line items in the annual General Appropriations Act, consistent with existing law.

SECTION 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within ninety (90) days from effectivity, the DepEd, DOH, and the ECCD Council, in coordination with the DILG and LGUs and in consultation with relevant private sector stakeholders and organizations of persons with disabilities, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to carry out this Act, harmonized with existing inclusive education and ECCD regulations.

SECTION 10. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 11. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, orders, issuances or portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,