

Overview of Prek Special Education Services
Program Quality Workgroup
R.Webb 4/15/24

Act 166:

- Did not include Special Education considerations.
- Includes that if a program meets the SU's requirements and AOE prequalification the \$ follows the child regardless of where in the state they attend.
- Special Education funding is local tax money and IDEA-B federal funding, but SU is based to distribute not the same amounts across all districts in the state like UPK/Act 166 funding.
- Act 166 is funded through the state education fund
- When there are concerns about a child's development the SU is required to screen, determine if an evaluation is necessary, and to develop an IEP if eligible. Services are based on the SU recommendation for the needs of a child. Often this leads to SUs not providing services outside of district lines.
- Leads families to need to choose childcare vs special education services.

Act 76:

Based on Act 166 so Special education services are not embedded in the law.

Same issues apply as under Act 166. Much of this below is from conversations with the UPK coordinators last week and what we hear from others (SU and community/private programs) in the field.

additional considerations:

- Where to serve 3 year olds? Will community/private programs which currently do receive services still be able to keep this model due to the number of students? Where is the least restrictive environment? What is a Free and Appropriate Education?
- Will elimination of funding for 3s impact SU/SD choice to offer in district programs leading to 3 year olds needing a model different from in-district (level of service? funding? space if need all 4s? Inclusion model?)
- What about children who are 3 who might not meet special education requirements, but who have a level of need where a community program doesn't have the resources to support them?
- 3 year olds at risk are often served in public programs now and/or private programs who have relationships with public programs/staff. Would those community/private public/school based relationships be as strong?
- What about 3s who have higher special education needs than can be provided in community programs due to the level of need, services available?

Considerations:

- Funding models
- Capacity building for private programs for special education, inclusion, suspension/expulsion– how do we as a system provide an inclusionary program/system that supports all student needs?