

MAINE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION

# Child Development Services (CDS)

**Presented by:** Office of Special Services & Inclusive Education (OSSIE)



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OSSIE/ CDS

## Leads for Pre K Transition



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## OSSIE/ CDS Leads for Pre K Transition



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### Continued **CDS**

The number of children qualifying for pre-K special education has outpaced availability of services for over three decades. The COVID Pandemic exacerbated the challenges with the closure of 40% of private childcare settings in Maine between 2020-2021. Investments made by state government has had an impact in supporting the growth of the childcare sector in the last few years.

Maine DOE's Office of Student Services and Inclusive Education (OSSIE) has worked to establish partnerships between CDS and more than 60 public school districts across the state to meet the growing needs. The children with special education needs attending public Pre-K programs in their local communities now represent approximately 20 percent of Pre-K students and the schools are reporting positive outcomes. Currently state laws require the funding for these services to flow through the CDS agency, and CDS then procures the contracts with the local public schools.



## CDS Initiatives since 2021

- An increase in funding from \$700,000 to \$3.5 million to fund positions and services to directly support CDS children in public schools.
- Opening 13 CDS-run preschool classrooms throughout the state to expand services for children.
- \$1.5 million in ARP grant funding to certify CDS staff as Early Special Education Teachers with 30-40 staff expected to obtain this certification.
- \$1.75 million in preschool expansion ARP grant funding for CDS in SAUs.
- Providing professional development and training to CDS staff to improve their understanding of special education laws.
- Increasing CDS staff salaries and benefits.
- Engaging multiple stakeholder groups to inform recommendations for CDS.
- Continual collaboration with DOE’s Early Learning Team to support CDS in the provision of special education services as preschool expands in the Maine.
- Providing recommendations to the Legislature for long-term solutions to CDS.
- Introduced bills in 2022 and 2024
- Initiating partnerships between CDS and more than 60 local public schools to expand special education services provided by SAUs for these children, more than doubling the number from the 2018-2019 school year.



**CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**



**EARLY INTERVENTION FOR ME**  
A Brighter Start, Birth to Three

## Legislative Initiative

PL 643, Part W, the supplemental budget, includes language a law that would, over a period of four years, shift the responsibility of providing a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) from Child Development Services (CDS) to school administrative units (SAUs). The law states that SAUs may provide special education services directly or through contracts to preschool children aged 3 to under 6 years. The first year is the 2024-2025 school year and is considered the pilot year for early-adopting schools.





## What's in the bill? What's new?

- Transition of FAPE and Child Find to SAUs by 2028
- Funding formula to support 100% of special education costs
- Maine DOE must approve an SAU's readiness plan before the SAU is approved to assume FAPE
- Transition of CDS regional sites to regional support and service hubs
- Special Revolving Renovation Fund
- Extended Part C Eligibility
- Eligibility Criteria Part C



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## What about 3-year-olds?

- 3-year-old children with IEPs will be funded through a new Pre-K funding formula
- Technical Assistance will be provided to support mixed delivery systems of support
- 3-year-old children will be added to Preschool statute



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