

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3311



Introduced by **REP. CAMILLE A. VILLAR**

AN ACT
INSTITUTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, ESTABLISHING INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (CYSNs) IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS DIVISIONS,
PROVIDING FOR STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREOF

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is enunciated in the Philippine Constitution that the State shall give priority to education,¹ that all citizens shall have the right to quality education at all levels, and that appropriate steps should be taken by the government to make such education accessible to all.²

The constitutional guarantee of "accessibility of education" intends for no one to be left behind and thus, it necessarily applies to children and youth with special needs (CYSNs) as well.

And so, in keeping with the said constitutional guarantee, Republic Act (RA) No. 7277, as amended or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability provides that *"The State shall ensure that disabled persons are provided with access to quality education and ample opportunities to develop their skills. It shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all persons with disability."*³ and that *"The State shall establish, maintain and support complete, adequate and integrated system of special education for the visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally*

¹ Article II, Section 17 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

² Article XIV, Section 1 of .

³ Article 12 of RA No. 7277, as amended

*retarded persons and other types of exceptional children in all regions of the country.*⁴

The attached bill, which seeks to establish inclusive education learning resource centers for children and youth with special needs (CYSNs) in all public school divisions nationwide, is intended to give realization to the obligations of the government under the said constitutional guarantee and RA No. 7277, as amended. The bill comprehends the different or unique nature of the needs of CYSNs; and thus, it provides learning strategies and programs that will appropriately educate CYSNs, nurture their potentials, and prepare them well for their adult living, community life and complete integration into society.

Hence, I recommend the early approval of the bill.



CAMILLE A. VILLAR
Representative
Lone District, Las Piñas City

⁴ Article 14 of RA No. 7277, as amended

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

1 Section 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Inclusive Education for
2 Children and Youth with Special Needs Act.”

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The following are hereby declared the policies
4 of the State:

- 5 a) Protect and promote the rights of children and youth with special needs
6 to make quality education accessible to them;
- 7 b) Recognize the vital role of children and youth with special needs in
8 society, consider their needs as integral part of national development
9 strategies, and facilitate their active participation and integration in
10 public, civic and State affairs;
- 11 c) Give full support for their welfare and development to ensure their full
12 integration to society;
- 13 d) Consider the special requirements of disabled persons in the formulation
14 of inclusive educational policies and programs;
- 15 e) Encourage learning institutions to take into account the special needs of
16 disabled persons with respect to the use of school facilities, class

schedules, physical education requirements, and other pertinent considerations;

- f) Support learning institutions, especially higher learning institutions, in providing auxiliary services that will facilitate the learning process for disabled persons, ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- g) Recognize the right of the children and youth with special needs to education on the basis of equal opportunity, in particular, making primary education compulsory and accessible to every children and youth with special needs;
- h) Recognize the right of children and youth with special needs to the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness; and rehabilitation of health; and ensure that no child is deprived of the right of access to such health care and rehabilitation services; and
- i) Ensure that children and youth with special needs belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin shall not be denied the right to education, health treatment, or health rehabilitation in community with other members, to enjoy their own culture, profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.

Sec. 3. *Objectives.* – This Act shall pursue the following objectives:

- a) Provide children and youth with special needs free and appropriate public education and related services in accordance with their needs, and in preparation for adult living and community life;
- b) Provide children and youth with special needs access to general education curriculum through the formal systems and alternative delivery services in education;
- c) Facilitate the inclusion and integration of children and youth with special needs into mainstream education in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Incheon Strategy to Make the Rights Real For Persons With Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific;
- d) Implement inclusive education and establish Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers (IELRC) for inclusion of children and youth with special needs in the educational mainstream in the least restrictive environment;
- e) Ensure that children and youth with special needs fully develop their potential toward self-sufficiency and become fully participative members of society;

- f) Ensure that children and youth with special needs understand, appreciate and respect differences amongst groups and members of society in which they live;
- g) Identify, through a Child Find System, children and youth with special needs ages three (3) to twenty-four (24), and infants and toddlers under the age of three (3), in compliance with Republic Act No. 10410, otherwise known as the "Early Years Act of 2003";
- h) Develop, implement, and review Individualized Education Plan;
- i) Provide parents with information and opportunities to actively participate in the possible school placement options and educational programs for their children and to enable them to make informed choices and decisions;
- j) Enable and empower parents and family members by training and equipping them with capabilities to identify, prevent, refer or intervene with regard to disorders, disabilities and abilities of their children;
- k) Train and equip special education teachers, regular teachers, principals/administrators, non-teaching staff of the school, and caregivers as primary sources of care, development, education and advancement of children and youth with special needs;
- l) Increase school retention and cohort survival of children and youth with special needs;
- m) Create significant and positive changes in community orientation towards disability and the need to provide inclusive education and proper care of children and youth with special needs; and
- n) Regularly consult and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children and youth with special needs, through their representative organizations, in the implementation of this Act and issues relating to it.

Sec. 4. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

a) *Basic education* – refers to a program of instruction intended to meet the basic learning needs which provide the foundation on which subsequent learning can be based. It encompasses early childhood, kindergarten, elementary and secondary education as well as alternative learning systems for out-of-school learners and those with special needs;

b) *Child Find System* – refers to the process of identifying, locating, and evaluating every qualified child or youth with special needs so that the concerned child development teachers/workers who are under the jurisdiction of local government units (LGUs) can notify parents or guardians of those who are not

1 receiving public education services of the right of their children to receive the same
2 and facilitate such children's integration into the school system;

3 c) *Children and youth with special needs* – refer to children and youth who
4 are gifted or talented, or with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental,
5 emotional or behavioral disorders, speech and language disorders, sensory
6 impairments, autism, long term physical or health disabilities, deaf blindness, and
7 multiple handicapping conditions which in interaction with various barriers may
8 hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others
9 and are in need of special education as well as services for rehabilitation. They differ
10 from the average children in neuropsychological characteristics, sensory and
11 cognitive abilities, neuromuscular or physical characteristics, and social attributes to
12 such an extent that the use of modified school practices or special education
13 services are required to develop them to maximum capability;

14 d) *Disability* – refers to 1) long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory
15 impairment that substantially limit one or more physiological or anatomical function of
16 an individual or activities of such individual; 2) limitation or difficulty encountered by
17 an individual in executing a task or action; and 3) a participation restriction or
18 problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life's situations. It does not
19 just entail a health problem but shall reflect the interaction between features of a
20 person's body and features of the society in which he lives as well as the difficulties
21 the person has encountered to remove the environment and social barriers.

22 e) *Inclusive education* – refers to a process of addressing and responding to
23 the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning, cultural
24 activities and community life, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It
25 involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and
26 strategies, anchored on a common vision for all children of the appropriate age
27 range and the conviction that it is the responsibility of the State to educate all
28 children. It focuses on the achievement of high quality education for all learners and
29 the all-encompassing development of more inclusive societies.

30 f) *Individual Education Program (IEP)* – refers to the systematic, purposive
31 and developmental educational programming of curricular and instructional priorities
32 and contents designed to meet a learner's special needs and aimed at ensuring
33 mastery of target skills and behaviors. It specifies the services to be provided and
34 how often; describes the learner's present level of performances and how the
35 learner's disabilities affect academic performances; and specifies accommodations
36 and modifications to be provided to the learner. An IEP must be designed to meet
37 the unique educational needs of a child in the appropriate and least restrictive
38 environment.

39 g) *Learning Resource Center* – refers to a teaching/learning support system
40 for students, teachers, school personnel and other education stakeholders of
41 children and youth with special needs. It includes appropriate, accessible, disability-,
42 cultural-, and gender-sensitive instructional learning materials, tools, devices,

gadgets, equipment to facilitate and enhance learning assessment tools and instruments to evaluate developmental domains and specific areas of concern necessary in determining appropriate services and placement decisions; medical, health and allied professionals for care, rehabilitation and development of learners.

h) *Least restrictive environment (LRE)* – refers to the situation where a learner, who has a disability, is accorded the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate. The children and youth with special needs should have access to the general education curriculum, or any other program that non-disabled peers are able to access. The children and youth with special needs shall be provided with supplementary aids and services necessary to achieve educational goals if placed in a setting with non-disabled peers, and shall receive an appropriate version of educational and social benefits which non-disabled students routinely receive in school.

i) *Private sector participation* – refers to all forms of indispensable, substantial and meaningful participation of private individuals, partnerships, groups or entities, disabled people's organizations, community-based organizations or non-government organizations, and business and industry groups in the delivery of educational and rehabilitative services for children and youth with special needs.

j) *Special Education (SPED)* – refers to the customized instructional program/service designed to meet the unique needs of individual children and youth with special needs, which may necessitate the use of supplementary aids and services and teaching strategies in classroom and non-academic settings and includes instructions on physical and vocational education, social skills development and travel training. It is geared towards their integration into mainstream education and to prepare them as independent and functioning members of society

k) *Special Instructional Materials* – refers to textbooks in Braille, large type, audio, digital or any other medium or apparatus that convey information to a student or otherwise contributes to the learning process.

l) *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)* – refers to a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice established by Department of Education (DepEd) that:

- (1) Provides flexibility in the way information is presented, in the way students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the way students are engaged; and
- (2) Reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports mental and physical challenges and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who have limited English proficiency.

1 It also refers to a set of principles that guides the design of inclusive
2 classroom instruction and accessible course materials. The three principles of UDL
3 are:

- 4 (1) Recognition – refers to multiple methods of representation that give
5 learners a variety of ways to acquire information and build
6 knowledge;
- 7 (2) Strategic Learning – refers to multiple means of student action and
8 expression that provide learners alternative modes for
9 demonstrating what they have learned; and
- 10 (3) Affective Learning – refers to multiple modes of student
11 engagement that tap into learner's interests, challenge them
12 appropriately and motivate them to learn.

13 *Sec. 5. Establishment of Inclusive Education Learning Resource Centers. –*
14 All public schools divisions of the DepEd shall establish an Inclusive Education
15 Learning Resource Center, hereinafter referred to as the Center, for children and
16 youth with special needs, where there are no existing Centers; Provided, That all
17 Centers shall comply with the Universal Design for Learning as defined under
18 Section 4, subparagraph (I) of this Act: Provided, further That, all Centers and
19 facilities for children and youth with special needs shall also be compliant with the
20 requirements of Batas Pambansa Bilang 344, otherwise known as the "Accessibility
21 Law".

22 *Sec. 6. Functions of the Center. –* The Center shall function as a learning
23 resource center that shall assist in promoting inclusive education and in capacitating
24 regular schools to effectively handle the needs of children and youth with special
25 needs. It shall:

26 a) Assess children and youth with special needs to identify specify
27 developmental areas of concern and determine appropriate services and grade
28 placement options;

29 b) Support children with disabilities and special needs in such a manner that
30 they could be integrated/included in regular schools in the least restrictive
31 environment;

32 c) Conduct school-based training of children and youth with special needs;

33 d) Produce appropriate teaching materials for children and youth with special
34 needs;

35 e) Provide training to regular teachers, administrators, non-teaching
36 personnel and parents on inclusive education;

1 f) Monitor case management of children and youth with special needs within
2 the division;

3 g) Ensure that the children and youth with special needs within the division
4 shall receive the appropriate services needed;

5 h) Implement the programs of the Center such as individualized education,
6 transition program, alternative educational programs and early intervention program;

7 i) Establish a referral system that shall provide and develop multidisciplinary
8 services such as healthcare delivery systems and other child and youth support
9 systems to address the challenges and difficulties of the families of children and
10 youth with special needs and stimulate community resources which shall promote
11 and foster systems integration within education;

12 j) Provide access to auxiliary aids and services that are basically non-
13 educational but which enhance the education process for children and youth with
14 special needs. These aids and services may include:

15 (1) Language and speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical and
16 physiotherapy, among other modes of therapy, through multi-
17 disciplinary specialist team;

18 (2) Quality reading or other effective methods of delivering reading
19 materials to individuals with visual impairments;

20 (3) Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices;

21 (4) Appropriate classroom accommodation;

22 (5) Other similar services and actions or all types of aids and services
23 that facilitate the learning process; and

24 (6) Assistance in the transfer or admission of qualified children and
25 youth with special needs to post-secondary or tertiary education
26 institutions.

27 *Sec. 7. Partnership Mechanism.* – The DepEd and the concerned agencies
28 may coordinate and enter into cooperative agreement, arrangement or contract with
29 other government agencies, private non-profit agencies, institutions or organizations
30 duly accredited or recognized by the government agencies, civil society, business
31 and industrial sector, and other concerned sectors in the furtherance of the
32 provisions of this Act: Provided, That the DepEd shall coordinate with the
33 Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development
34 (DSWD), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Commission on
35 Higher Education (CHED) and the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) for
36 the establishment or creation of Centers on the implementation of programs such as
37 the following:

- a) Technical assistance to teachers who are preparing to serve or are serving in the Centers;
 - b) Training of professional or related services personnel, including all regular teachers;
 - c) Replication of successful innovative approaches in providing educational or related services to CYSNs;
 - d) Facilitation of parental involvement in the education of their children and youth with special needs;
 - e) Diagnosis and educational evaluation of children and youth with special needs;
 - f) Consultative, counseling and training services for the families of children and youth with special needs;
 - g) Familiarization of the municipality or city being served by an Inclusive Education Learning Resource Center with the problems and potentials of children and youth; and
 - h) Entering into agreements with medical and allied medical professional groups.
- Centers created under this Section shall remain part of the DepEd System.

Sec. 8. Responsibilities of Agencies. – In conformity with their respective charters and mandates, government agencies shall define and delineate their respective areas of responsibility with respect to the implementation of this Act. These areas shall be subject to periodic re-assessment of the Inter-Agency Coordinating Council on Inclusive Education (IACCIE), as provided in Sec. 9 of this Act, whenever necessary.

For purposes of this Act, the different agencies shall have the following roles:

- a) Department of Education (DepEd) – The DepEd shall be the lead government agency responsible for the implementation of this Act to ensure inter-agency coordination and integration of services among school systems, early intervention programs, mainstreaming of children and youth with special needs in the regular classroom set-up, concerned welfare agencies, children and youth with special needs availability of access and classification of developmental domains and establishment of a referral system and redress mechanism for parents and guardians.
- b) Department of Health (DOH) – The DOH shall make available health care services for children and youth with special healthcare needs, child mental health service providers, health plans, oral health providers, family-to-family health information and education, advocacy organizations and other community organizations serving children and youth with special needs and their families. Due

1 to the importance of integrating primary care with mental health services, the DOH
2 shall collaborate with the National Nutrition Council (NNC) and the Early Childhood
3 Care and Development Council (ECCD) in the provision of inclusive health and
4 nutrition services for the implementation of this Act.

5 c) Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) – The DSWD
6 shall be responsible for the effective management and provision of social and
7 welfare services for poor and deserving children and youth with special needs based
8 on their assessed needs, subject to guidelines it shall prescribe.

9 d) Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) – The DPWH shall
10 prescribe the proper physical set-up of the Centers and shall build and maintain
11 roads that shall ensure accessibility to children and youth with special needs.

12 e) Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) – The DILG shall
13 promulgate the policies and guidelines relevant to the implementation of this Act by
14 the local government units.

15 f) Local Government Units (LGUs) – The LGUs shall allocate a portion of
16 their Special Education Fund (SEF) for the following:

- 17 (1) Provision of sites, buildings or centers where there are no existing
18 school facilities that may be used for the special education of
19 children and youth with special needs as well as the establishment
20 of Child Development Centers (CDCs) pursuant to Sec. 11 hereof;
- 21 (2) Identification, coordination and partnership with public or private
22 volunteers and private organizations, national or international, duly
23 recognized and accredited by appropriate government office, for
24 information dissemination campaigns and funding support to
25 augment the funding for Inclusive Education programs and
26 activities;
- 27 (3) Provide assistive devices, instructional materials and teacher's
28 training provisions;
- 29 (4) Provision of funds for the delivery of health and nutrition services
30 and interventions, educational assessment program for children
31 and youth with special needs in their respective localities that would
32 be initiated by the DOH and DepEd, respectively;
- 33 (5) Participate in all efforts concerning integration of children and youth
34 with special needs to regular schools, health services, transport
35 services and other social and welfare services;
- 36 (6) Develop government and community awareness and
37 responsiveness to the needs of children and youth with special
38 needs;

- (7) Provide a means for redress in case parents are not amenable to educational program for children and youth with special needs under the jurisdiction of the Local School Boards;
- (8) Coordinate with other agencies in ensuring the proper implementation of the provisions of this Act within their territorial jurisdiction, including the child find and referral system; and
- (9) Enact appropriate ordinances to implement the LGUs role in this Act.

Sec. 9. *Inter-Agency Coordinating Council on Inclusive Education (IACCIE)*. – For purposes of policy integration, harmonization and coordination of functions, there is hereby created an Inter-Agency Coordinating Council on Inclusive Education (IACCIE), which shall be attached to the DepEd and which shall be composed of the following officials or their duly authorized representatives, up to the level of Assistant Secretary or its equivalent:

- 1) Secretary of the DepEd, as Chairperson;
- 2) Secretary of DOH as Co-Chairperson;
- 3) Secretary of DSWD as Co-Chairperson;
- 4) Secretary of Department of Finance (DOF)
- 5) Secretary of DPWH
- 6) Secretary of DILG
- 7) Secretary of Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
- 8) Director General of Technical Education and Skills Development Administration (TESDA)
- 9) Commissioner of Commission on Higher Education (CHED)

The IACCIE shall perform the following functions:

- a) Develop and set criteria on Individual Educational Programs. It shall evaluate fundamental changes both in educational practice and in the design of educational services for inclusion of children and youth with special needs in regular schools. Inclusive Education involves changes in philosophy, curriculum, teaching strategy and structural organization;
- b) Implement appropriate and coordinated programs in health and related physiological and psychological health services, multidisciplinary domains, transportation and accessibility for children and youth with special needs;
- c) Acts as catalyst of change and source of information for the benefit of both regular students and children and youth with special needs;
- d) Constitute and authorize a multidisciplinary body to conduct an annual audit to determine the compliance of the Centers on its operations;

1 e) Document, monitor and assess the performances of the Centers and their
2 personnel;

3 f) Coordinate and disseminate information with partner agencies or local
4 government units.

5 Sec. 10. *The IACCIE Technical Working Committee.* – The IACCIE shall be
6 supported by a Technical Working Committee (TWC) which shall be composed of
7 representatives from the following agencies and institutions:

- 8 1) Bureau of Curriculum Development of the DepEd;
- 9 2) Early Childhood Care and Development Council (ECCD);
- 10 3) National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA);
- 11 4) Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC);
- 12 5) National Nutrition Council (NNC) of the DOH
- 13 6) Local Government Units – League of Provinces, Cities or Municipalities;
- 14 7) Health organizations, such as Philhealth and other healthcare services
15 of the DOH;
- 16 8) Civil society organizations on persons with disability and indigenous
17 peoples' concerns; and
- 18 9) Academe.

19 The TWC shall provide groundwork technical support to the IACCIE on its
20 activities to capture varied clientele scope and needs, mainstream programs, and
21 reach grassroots levels. Representatives of civil society organizations and the
22 academe shall be nominated through a process designed by the IACCIE.

23 Sec. 11. *Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Child Development*
24 *Centers.* – Child Development Centers (CDCs) specially designed for pre-school
25 children and their parents where early identification of disabilities and/or special
26 needs and introductory educational and intervention programs will be administered,
27 and development of future multi-disciplinary child development centers shall be
28 established near all schools or within existing Inclusive Education Learning Resource
29 Centers. As far as practicable, the use of CDCs and facilities shall be maximized.

30 The ECCD Council shall coordinate with the DepEd, DSWD, DOH, LGUs and
31 other agencies to provide the necessary programs and support for children with
32 special needs under five (5) years old.

33 Sec. 12. *Hiring of Personnel and Staff.* – In addition to teachers and licensed
34 social workers who have knowledge, skills and special training in handling cases of
35 children and youth with special needs and to ensure the effective implementation of
36 this Act, the DepEd, DOH, and DSWD may hire the necessary personnel and
37 support staff to operate, administer and oversee the Center.

1 Sec. 13. *Remuneration, Benefits and Incentives for Inclusive Education*
2 *Learning Personnel and Staff.* – The salary grades of Special Education (SPED)
3 teachers and Program Directors managing the Centers shall be in accordance with
4 the Revised Compensation and Position Classification System and other civil service
5 rules and regulations.

6 The DepEd shall enhance the access of teachers/instructors to specialized
7 and continuing training and education and ensure that the Centers shall endeavor to
8 attract the best available teaching staff and talents through adequate remuneration,
9 benefits, scholarship and training grants, teacher exchange programs, incentives
10 and allowances and other means of securing their job satisfaction and tenure in their
11 respective posts. A similar program shall be designed for support personnel to
12 include interpreters, psychologists, social workers and health service
13 professionals/workers involved in the education, health and rehabilitation of children
14 with special needs.

15 The DepEd shall identify at least one (1) leading institution or university in
16 Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and in Metro Manila, Metro Cebu and Metro Davao
17 whose faculty is considered or regarded as highly competent in the area of special
18 education and where a uniform or standardized curriculum for any post-graduate
19 education program shall be designed to benefit SPED teachers and other personnel
20 of the centers. The manner of selection of such institution shall be provided under
21 the rules and regulations to be formulated to implement the provision of this Act.

22 Sec. 14. *In-Service Training of Teachers, Administrators, Non-Teaching*
23 *Personnel.* – To enhance the inclusive education program, the DepEd shall
24 coordinate with the appropriate national government agencies to offer basic and
25 advanced seminars on disability awareness and inclusive education for the
26 concerned education stakeholders.

27 The appropriate and necessary trainings, seminars and other opportunities for
28 upgrading the performance of DepEd teachers implementing the inclusive education
29 curriculum shall be conducted and evaluated by the National Educators' Academy of
30 the Philippines.

31 Sec. 15. *Continuing Research to Identify the Needs of Children and Youth*
32 *with Special Needs.* – The DepEd, by itself or in coordination with organizations or
33 institutions, shall undertake continuing research to identify and design programs that
34 shall meet the full range of needs of children and youth with special needs: Provided,
35 That such continuing research shall also be used to develop instructional techniques
36 for use by the Centers towards improving the acquisition of skills by the children and
37 youth with special needs necessary for their transition to independent living,
38 vocational training or competitive skill development: Provided, further, That such
39 continuing research shall be used by the DepEd in designing holistic programs for all

1 schools and all Inclusive Education Resource Learning Centers to enhance the
2 potential of the children and youth to participate and be integrated into community
3 life.

4 Sec. 16. *Student Assistance.* – The DepEd, DSWD, DOLE, NCDA and the
5 LGUs shall develop programs to support the financial and educational needs of the
6 marginalized or disadvantaged children and youth with special needs, as defined in
7 Republic Act No. 8425, known as the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act. The
8 benefits accorded by Republic Act No. 8545, otherwise known as the “Government
9 Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE) Act” shall
10 likewise be extended to qualified children and youth with special needs in the
11 secondary levels.

12 Sec. 17. *Recreational and Artistic Opportunities.* – The DepEd shall establish
13 opportunities for the safe, wholesome, interactive individual as well as group
14 recreation and social activities of children and youth with special needs, optimal use
15 of their leisure hours and advancement of their physical, mental, social and cultural
16 development.

17 Sec. 18. *Special Instructional Materials.* – Publishers shall grant the DepEd
18 the authority to transcribe adopted instructional materials into accessible format,
19 without penalty or payment of royalty, in accordance with Republic Act No. 8293,
20 otherwise known as the “Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines”: Provided,
21 That, publishers of a newly adopted instructional material shall provide, not later than
22 the second working day after the adoption of a textbook title by the DepEd, the digital
23 copy as specified by the DepEd for the purpose of producing accessible versions of
24 the textbooks for students with reading disabilities. The accessible versions may be
25 produced by the DepEd or by non-profit accessible book producers which may be
26 copied and distributed upon request by a Schools Division for instructional purposes.

27 Copies of these instructional materials shall be furnished without cost either to
28 the children and youth with special needs or their teachers in charge.

29 Sec. 19. *Family Members, Guardians, Caregivers and Day Care Workers*
30 *Education.* – A formal training and counseling program for family members,
31 guardians, caregivers and day care workers of children and youth with special needs
32 shall be developed jointly by the DepEd, DSWD, LGUs, ECCD Council, disabled
33 people’s organizations, parent-support organizations, health professional
34 organizations, healthcare services, non-government organizations and civil society
35 organizations to provide them with a working knowledge of special education and an
36 understanding of the physical and mental needs of children and youth with special
37 needs; and set their important role as educators, so as to maximize their knowledge
38 and skills to fully participate in developing the potentials of children and youth with
39 special needs.

1 *Sec. 20. Incentives for Private Sector Participation.* – Partnerships between
2 the government and private institutions catering to the needs of children and youth
3 with special needs shall be encouraged. Private entities which team up with the
4 DepEd or provide the necessary educational assistance and service of children and
5 youth with special needs enrolled in public schools shall be entitled to the benefits
6 and incentives provided under R.A. No. 8525, otherwise known as the Adopt-a-
7 School Act and its implementing *rules and regulations*.

8 *Sec. 21. Public Information, Education and Communication.* – A nationwide
9 information dissemination campaign on the prevention, early identification and the
10 strategic intervention programs for children and youth with special needs shall be
11 intensified. This shall be the joint responsibility of the Philippine Information Agency
12 (PIA), CWC, NCDA and the DepEd. Likewise, the DepEd, in collaboration with the
13 DOH, DOLE, CHED, TESDA and DILG shall disseminate materials and information
14 concerning effective practices in working with, training and education of children and
15 youth with special needs.

16 *Sec. 22. Appropriations.* – The Secretaries of the DepEd, DOH and DSWD
17 shall immediately include their respective Departments' programs the
18 implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual
19 General Appropriations Act.

20 *Sec. 23. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within one hundred twenty
21 (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretaries of the DepEd, the DOH and
22 the DSWD, in coordination with the heads of other concerned agencies, shall
23 promulgate and issue the necessary guidelines for the effective implementation of
24 this Act. The implementing rules and regulations issued pursuant to this section shall
25 take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of
26 general circulation.

27 *Sec. 24. Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is
28 declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provisions
29 hereof not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

30 *Sec. 25. Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
31 executive order, letter of instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent or contrary to the
32 provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

33 *Sec. 26. Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following
34 its complete publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

35 Approved,