

**§3571. Prevention of developmental disabilities**

**1. Prevention of developmental disabilities; Department of Health and Human Services.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall serve as the principal agency for the primary prevention of developmental disabilities in the State and shall provide services for pregnant women and new mothers to minimize the likelihood of their having a developmentally disabled child. In particular, the department shall conduct professional education to assure that the best available prevention techniques are utilized by health care professionals in the State and shall assure that access to prenatal services exists for all women of childbearing age in the State.

[PL 1985, c. 484 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 689, Pt. B, §6 (REV).]

**2. Counseling and support services; Department of Health and Human Services.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall institute programs of family counseling and support services for families with children who are developmentally disabled aged 0 to 5 years. The purpose of these counseling and support services must be to increase the family's understanding of the child's special needs and to enhance family members' abilities to cope with the physical and emotional strains experienced by families with disabled children.

[PL 2021, c. 348, §29 (AMD).]

**3. Preschool coordination projects; Department of Education.** The Department of Education through the preschool coordination projects shall ensure the provision of comprehensive developmental services, including physical therapy, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy to preschool children who are disabled or delayed. To the maximum extent possible, these programs must make use of existing 3rd party payors and coordinate services with local resources. In instances where needed services are not available, the department shall use authorized funds to enable preschool coordination projects to work with local providers, including public and private agencies and school units to develop new or expand existing service to meet these needs.

In addition, the Department of Education shall ensure that comprehensive health educational programs are available in state schools and that teacher training programs in the State include preparation in conduct of health educational programs.

[PL 2021, c. 348, §30 (AMD).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 1985, c. 484 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 700, §A81 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 560, §K82 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 560, §K83 (AFF). PL 2001, c. 354, §3 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 689, §B6 (REV). PL 2021, c. 348, §§29, 30 (AMD).

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