

Albany County Department of Children Youth and Families
Justification and Backup Material for
Contractual Agreements between Albany County and Various Center Based
Providers for Preschool Children with Special Needs

The New York State Education Law (Section 4410) requires that the State Education Department meet the physical and educational needs of children with disabilities.

Under this law, municipalities are required to provide an approved preschool special education program for children age three to five who have been evaluated and determined by the Board of Education to have a disabling condition. Albany County contracts with service providers who have been approved by the Board of Education as having an appropriate, structured program capable of offering preschool education to children with disabilities. These providers deliver therapy as prescribed by individual education plans (IEPs) which are developed by school district-based Committees on Preschool Special Education (CPSE).

The Department for Children, Youth and Families is requesting authorization to enter into a contractual agreement with those providers contained on the attached list for the term of July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027. The Department is seeking authorization from the County Executive and the Contract Administration Board for those vendors with contractual amounts that fall within their request parameters.

The rates for these providers are set by New York State based on an entity's certified financial report. These interim rates are not available to either the vendor or the County until the early fall of a given year and may change an additional two times before being officially reconciled. The contract amounts for the 2026-2027 contract year assumes an increase of five (5) percent which will hopefully offset any rate increase or changes in utilization. However, in no instance will the County pay more than the State approved and authorized rate for a provider.

New York State reimburses Albany County 55% for costs incurred in the delivery of these services after backing out Medicaid reimbursement for the related services component (i.e. physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy) of center-based programs.

A child with special needs may be placed in an integrated class that contains children with and/or without other children with special needs. A Special Education Teacher and assistants are involved with the children throughout their educational program as well as a regular preschool or daycare teacher. A child may also be placed in a special class in which there are no more than twelve (12) children, all of whom have special needs.

The Special Education teacher works directly with the child, the child's family and the child's regular teacher to help adapt an educational program to the child's needs. Some children in this model also receive related services therapies.