

Albany County Department of Children Youth and Families
Justification and Backup Material for Contract Authorization with
Spotted Zebra Learning Center for the Preschool
Related Services Program

The Commissioner of the Department for Children, Youth and Families is requesting authorization for Albany County to enter into agreements with Spotted Zebra Learning Center for the term July 01, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

Spotted Zebra Learning Center is the only agency this year to meet the threshold for Legislative authorization with payments for 2024 in the amount of \$162,773.00

The State Education Law requires the State Education Department (SED) to meet the physical and educational needs of children with disabilities. The Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) of many special education children prescribe instruction by Special Education Itinerant Teachers, as well as Related Services, such as Speech Pathology, Physical or Occupational therapies, to name a few, to help them attain their educational goals. Municipalities contract with private service providers to obtain Related Services, in which the providers deliver in 30-60 minute sessions.

This option provides a child with the services of one or more therapists to meet his/her special needs. The therapist works with the child a specified number of times each week, and also interacts with the family and the staff of any typical program the child might attend. The therapy(ies) can be provided at any site, including the child's home, decided at the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) meeting.

The rates for providers are set by New York State. Albany County is reimbursed 59.5% by the State for costs incurred in the delivery of these services, after backing out Medicaid reimbursements. The contract amount for the 2025-2026 contract year assumes an increase of five (5) percent, to approximately \$170,911.65, which will hopefully offset any rate increase or changes in utilization.