

The background of the slide features dark silhouettes of several individuals, likely students or staff, engaged in reading or study. The silhouettes are layered, with some appearing more prominent than others, creating a sense of depth and activity. The overall color palette is dark, with the silhouettes in shades of blue and black against a slightly lighter, dark blue background.

MAINE DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION

# Owners and Directors of Licensed Child Care Programs October 2025

**Presented by:** Office of Special Services & Inclusive Education



# Learning Objectives



- ✓ Review of Legislation
- ✓ Transition Teams
- ✓ Transition Planning
- ✓ Cohort 1 & 2
- ✓ Planning for Cohort 3
- ✓ Three Star
- ✓ MRTQ
- ✓ District Boundaries
- ✓ How ECE Programs Can Connect



# Legislation PL 2023, Chapter 643, Part W

*LD 345: An Act to Transition the Responsibility for Child Find Activities and for Ensuring a Free, Appropriate Public Education for Eligible Children from the Child Development Services to School Administrative Units*

*LD 2214: An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024, and June 30, 2025*

**LD 2214 became Public Law 2023, Chapter 643, Part W**



# Elements of the Law— Transition to FAPE in SAUs

- Responsibility for child find and free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for 3-, 4- and 5-year-old pre-K students with IEPs will transition to school administrative units (SAU) by July 1, 2028.
- SAUs may provide services directly or may contract with public or private providers to support services; the SAUs may also access their CDS Regional Site or other regional supports to provide services.
- Maine DOE will review each SAU's readiness plan before the Commissioner of Education approves the SAU to assume the child find and FAPE responsibilities.



# Elements of the Law—Funding

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## Funding

- "The funding may not be appropriated or allocated through general purpose aid for local schools and must be provided at 100% state share."
- The Maine DOE will implement a funding formula to fully fund SAUs for the assumption of responsibility for child find activities and for ensuring FAPE for eligible children.
- Funding also includes high-cost in- and out-of-district costs, similar to what is in place for K-12 students.
- Additional grant funding is available to SAUs assuming these responsibilities fall, 2024 (ESSER ARP funding)
- \$4 million – Revolving Renovation Fund
- Continuing Pathways certification initiative (282B)

# Elements of the Law—CDS

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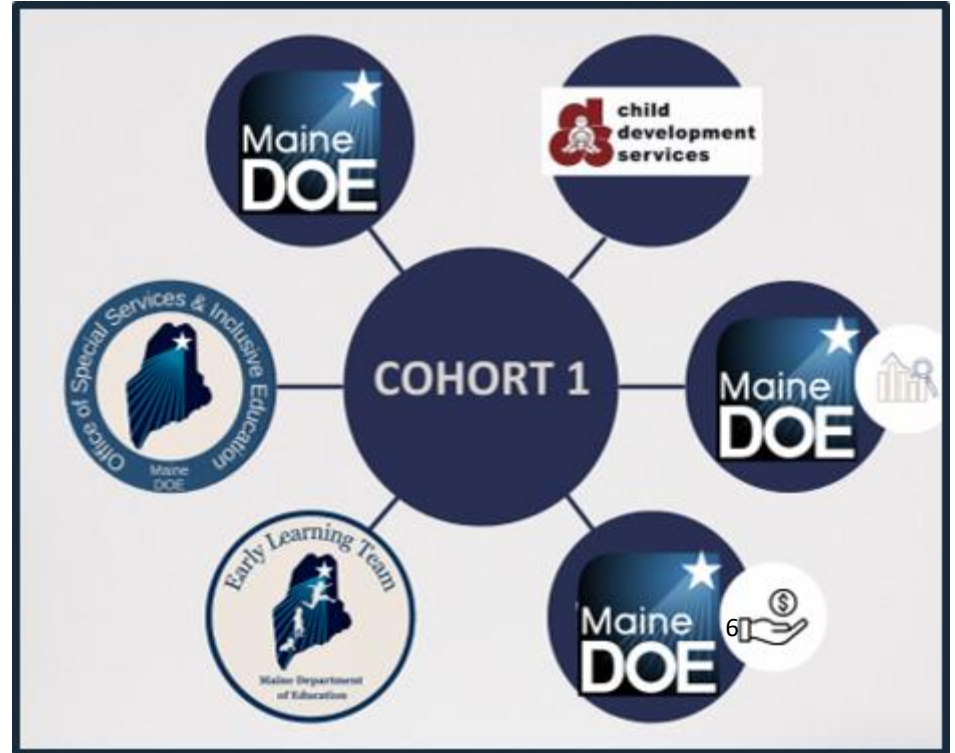
## CDS

- Over the next 4 years, transition of CDS regional sites to regional support and service hubs aligned with the superintendent regions.
- The CDS System will have minimum service offerings and guiding principles for the regional support and service hubs
- Each CDS regional hub may appoint a parental advisory committee to seek input and feedback on the implementation of child find activities and provision of FAPE.
- The CDS System is responsible for due process and for paying 100% of the costs for compensatory services for children who have been underserved through the Child Development Services System.

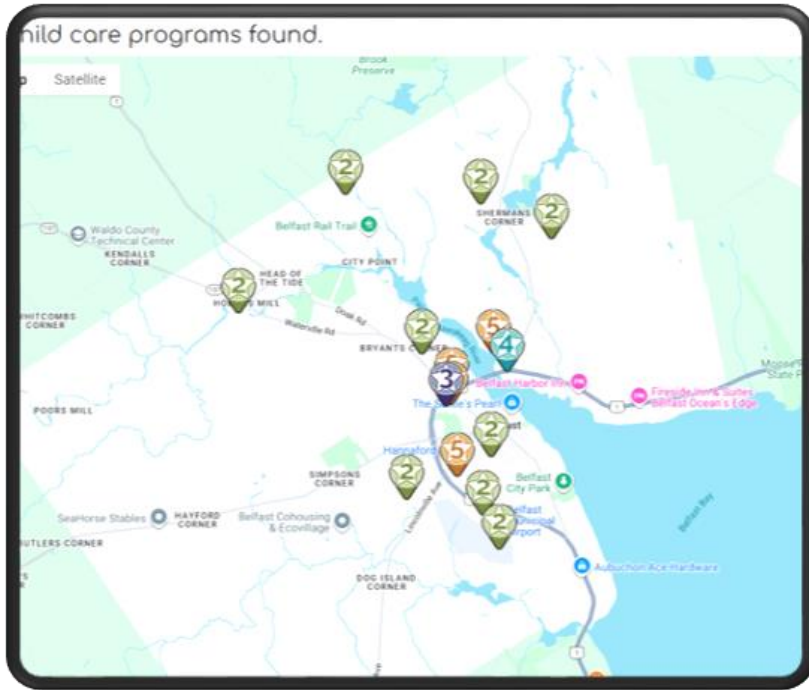


# Implementation Teams

- Commissioner's Office
- Data
- Fiscal
- OSSIE
- CDS Team members
- Early Learning
- Certification (HEES)
- School Facilities



# Cross-Agency & Partnership Work



- Regular meetings with members of the Preschool Development Grant
  - Identifying licensed providers
- Cross Agency Team focused on supporting the mixed delivery system
- Continued collaboration with Office of MaineCare Services (OMS)

# CDS Service and Support Hubs

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- CDS Sites continue to provide services to children in their regions.
- MOUs are developed with each Cohort SAU.
  - Detail Service and Supports
  - Monthly meeting
  - Individualized for each SAU
- Service and Support Hub
  - Preschool Programming
  - Related Services
  - Itinerant 282B services
  - Case Management
  - Professional Development



# Cohort 1



## Preschool Cohort I

CDS  
Aroostook

RSU 29

CDS  
Downeast

Calais

School  
Union #103  
Jonesport, Beals

CDS  
Midcoast

AOS 98  
Boothbay,  
Boothbay Harbor

AOS 93  
Great Salt Bay

RSU 13

St. George

CDS  
Opportunities

Andover  
Schools

CDS  
Two Rivers

MSAD 4  
RSU 80

RSU 68

SAD 12

Veazie  
School  
Department

RSU 19

CDS  
York

Kittery School  
Department

York

RSU 35



# Cohort 2 2025-2026

Aroostook

RSU 50

Down East

Blue Hill  
Union # 93

Brooksville  
Union # 93

Castine  
Union # 93

Dedham  
AOS 47

Hancock

Lamoine

Orrington  
AOS 47

Penobscot  
Union # 93

Surry  
Union # 93

Midcoast

Edgecomb  
AOS 98

Georgetown  
AOS 98

④ RSU 1

④ RSU 71

Southport  
AOS 98

Wiscasset

Western

Auburn

④ RSU 4

RSU 17

RSU 52

RSU 56

Kennebec

RSU 54

RSU 83

Richmond

④ RSU 12

Cumberland

④ RSU 15

RSU 72

RSU 75

Penquis

Airline  
Community  
School  
AOS 47

Brewer

Greenbush

MSAD 41

RSU 26

York

④ RSU 21

④ Saco

# Cohort 3 & 4

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## Cohort 3:

Currently 70+ SAU's

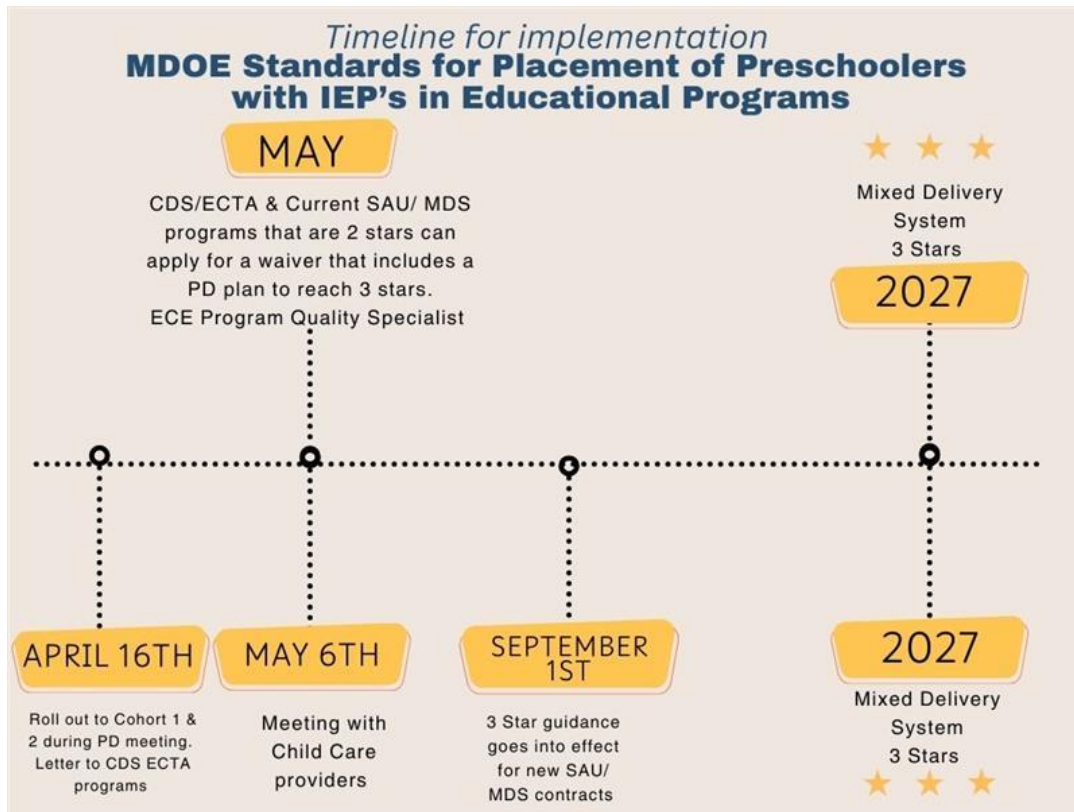
↑ Interest in 4-year-olds only year 1

## Cohort 4:

Will have to assume responsibility  
for 3–5-year-olds



# MDOE Standards for Placement of Preschoolers with IEPs in Educational Programs





# Maine Roads to Quality

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[mrtq.org](http://mrtq.org)

[mrtq.contact@maine.edu](mailto:mrtq.contact@maine.edu) or 888-900-0055

[lee.lingelbach@maine.edu](mailto:lee.lingelbach@maine.edu) Technical  
Assistance Manager



# Child Care Providers as Essential Partners in Child Find and FAPE

Child Find during the transition:

- The CDS referral number and online form remain in place.
- The referral destination is based on where the child resides.
  - Cohort 1 & Cohort 2 SAU's are accepting referrals

What can childcare programs continue to do?:

- Monitor developmental milestones and behaviors in daily care.
- Document and discuss concerns with families.
- Collaborate with CDS and SAUs to make timely referrals and support evaluations.
- Coordinate with service providers who may now be employed by the SAU.



# Serving ECSE Students Within and Beyond SAU Boundaries

## Serving ECSE students – District Boundary

- 1.SAU's are responsible for ECSE for children who reside within their SAU boundary.
  - Attend the SAU Pre-K programs
  - Attend a collaborative program in the SAU community
- 2.SAU's are not responsible for ECSE when children
  - Attend a program out of state
  - Attend a program out of the SAU boundary *and* there is programming available in the SAU.
- 3.For SAU's that do not have programming/ space within their Pre-K programs nor any collaborative programs in the SAU community, the resident SAU would do the following:

*There are multiple options:*

- Superintendent's agreement with the SAU where student is in a program
- Develop partnerships with the childcare/ preschool program where the child attends
- Provide telehealth in the childcare/preschool program where the child attends
- Offer that the child participate in drop-in services already provided in the SAU
- If the IEP agrees, the child can access services at the service provider location
- Or another solution that is specific to your area

*The Department will support the provision of services if there are challenges or questions with these options.*





# Partnering for FAPE in Maine's Mixed Delivery System

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## Maine's Transition:

- ECSE services are shifting from CDS to SAUs for children ages 3–5
- This impacts how FAPE is delivered, increasing collaboration across settings.

## Your Role in the Mixed Delivery System:

- Be an active participant in transition planning meetings with CDS, SAUs, and families.
- Share developmental insights to inform Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Support implementation of IEP strategies within your childcare environment.
- Communicate regularly with SAU service providers (e.g., therapists, special educators).

# How Child Care Programs Can Connect

## Why:

- Supports inclusive education within natural environments.
- Strengthens community partnerships and continuity of services.
- Enhances access to high-quality care and education for all children.

## What:

- Express interest in serving as a placement site for preschoolers receiving ECSE services.
- Highlight your program's inclusive practices, staff qualifications, and environment.
- Offer opportunities for SAU staff (e.g., therapists, educators) to visit your site.
- Offer to schedule or collaborate in joint professional development or planning meetings.
- Explore pilot or partnership opportunities during Maine's transition from CDS to SAUs.



# How Child Care Programs Can Connect Cont.

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## Who:

- For Cohort 1 or Cohort 2: Reach out to your local SAU's Director of Special Education, Superintendent or Early Childhood Coordinator.
- For CDS: Reach out to Jackie Hersom at [Jacquelyn.N.Hersom@maine.gov](mailto:Jacquelyn.N.Hersom@maine.gov)
- For exploring options to be a collaborative partner for Pre-K programming: Michelle Belanger [Michelle.Belanger@maine.gov](mailto:Michelle.Belanger@maine.gov)
- For questions regarding the transition of FAPE and Child Find: Sandy Flacke [j.sandy.flacke@maine.gov](mailto:j.sandy.flacke@maine.gov)

# Questions?





Contact information:  
[Megan.welter@maine.gov](mailto:Megan.welter@maine.gov)  
[Erin.Frazier@maine.gov](mailto:Erin.Frazier@maine.gov)  
[J.sandy.flacke@maine.gov](mailto:J.sandy.flacke@maine.gov)

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