

## Special Education: Full Funding Needed

(NAPSA)—Every child deserves a free, appropriate public education. That's what Congress decided in 1975 when it passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and one organization is working to make sure that Congress honors its promise to fund that law.

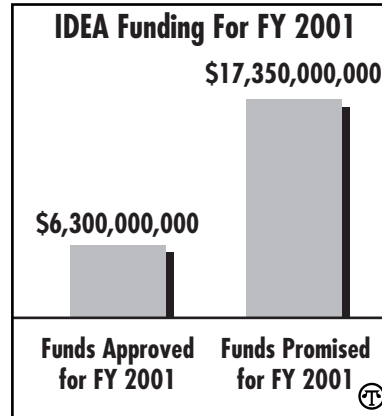
The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is calling on Congress to enact legislation this year that guarantees that the federal government will pay 40 percent of special education costs within six years and that it will make IDEA funding part of its mandatory spending program.

For 25 years, Congress has promised to fully fund IDEA, yet funding is only at 15 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure.

As a result of Congress' failure to live up to its financial obligation, says CEC, local communities and states have been forced to pay the balance of special education costs.

"Without adequate funding for special education, many children are taught by unlicensed professionals who lack the necessary skills to ensure the educational success of children with disabilities," said Deb Ziegler, CEC's executive director of public policy. "Our nation's children with special needs cannot wait any longer for the education they need to succeed in life."

To help achieve this goal, CEC is stepping up its national campaign to alert Congress to the



**Since Congress funds only 15 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure for special education, communities and states have had to pay the difference.**

need for full funding for special education.

The organization is calling on all educators, parents of children with disabilities, and disability and education advocates and organizations to support full funding of IDEA within six years and to lobby Congress on this issue.

CEC is a professional organization for special educators, parents, and related service providers that works to improve the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. Its members represent nearly six million children with disabilities, as well as children with gifts and talents.

For more information, visit [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org).