

My name is Diane Bishop. Before moving to Nevada in 2018, I worked with the NYCDOE Office of Early Childhood for 13 years. My role was in promoting best practices for and expansion of Prekindergarten programs within public schools and community-based organizations in Queens and Brooklyn, including 4410 inclusion programs. I've observed, assessed and made recommendations for at least 100 programs.

Recently, it came to my attention that CCSD is set to expand the "ECI model" for prekindergarten that allows for up to 20 children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old, with approximately 40% having IEPs. One teacher. One assistant.

I was told the model was presented to Governor Sandoval, written into the Nevada Administrative Code, and piloted last school year.

The need to serve an expanding population of young children with diverse needs is real. This model is not the solution. Children, families and teaching staff deserve better.

"Data" supposedly informed the approval of this model. Yes, there will be gains over the course of a year of development, some attributable to attendance in a program with aspects of developmentally appropriate practice, but insufficient staff reduces the ability to sufficiently nurture and keep children safe. It limits responsive care and the ability to conduct quality assessment and instruction.

Supportive caregiving practices encourage a child's development. Lower ratios and group sizes for children, especially for programs with children as young as 3 and with diverse needs must be considered.

To ensure safety, deviance from best practices in early childhood can be expected with this model. High teacher turnover can be expected if it goes forward.

My recommendation is to require, without deviation, a third staff person, or do not move forward with this program at all. And if you are going to move ahead with this, do not allow approval of locations that do not have proper accommodations for young children.

The safety of our children is at stake.

Diane A. Bishop

diane.bishop@gmail.com

(646) 321-2077

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