



Save the Children

SOLVE for Children's Rights

ACT! (AMPLIFYING CHILDREN'S VOICES FOR TRANSFORMATION) POLICY GUIDE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RA 11650

Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of the Inclusive Education Act

PREFACE

A series of stakeholder consultations and workshops were conducted over a period of one month from October 20, 2023 to November 22, 2023 in the cities of Parañaque, Pateros and Taguig as part of the co-creation process for the development of the ACT (*Amplifying Children's Voices for Transformation*) local policy guide for the Implementation of Republic Act (RA) 11650. Co-creation refers to “a collaborative approach of creative problem-solving between diverse stakeholders at all stages of an initiative, from the problem identification and solution generation through implementation and evaluation.”¹ This local policy guide was developed using two framework models of co-creation namely, the public health model and the government model.² It is envisioned to facilitate the prioritization of inclusive education by Local Government Units (LGU) in order to ensure and safeguard the rights of children with disabilities and support the Department of Education (DEPED) and its attached agency, the Early Childhood Care and Development Council (ECCDC), in attaining quality education for all. It likewise seeks to inform local officials of how they can promote inclusive education in their respective cities and municipalities beginning with an honest assessment of how far they have gone in promoting inclusion, identifying their best practices, and recognizing where they need to work collectively with different stakeholders across sectors in order to succeed.

Although RA 11650 covers learners with disabilities ages three (3) to 24 years old and infants and toddlers in compliance with the Early Years Act (EYA) of 2013, the main implementing agency is DEPED. Thus, the consultations leaned more towards stakeholders from the basic education unit who are most influenced by the passage of the law with significant administrative and technical implications to learning delivery resulting from a paradigm shift towards inclusive education. This does not in any way undermine the importance of early detection and intervention for children 0-5 years of age (as outlined in the ECCD Council's PEIRREDDEC- *Prevention, Early Identification, Referral and Intervention of Delays, Disorders and Disabilities in Early Childhood*)³, hence the inclusion of representatives from the barangay and community health offices, children with disabilities, parents and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD), as well as the social welfare and development offices, in the consultations. The local policy guide aims to harmonize sectoral programs from early detection all the way to facilitating inclusive education in technical-vocation institutions.

This local policy guide is intended to serve the following purposes: 1) guide the LGU in understanding the important provisions of RA 11650; 2) enumerate the roles of the LGU in its progressive realization of the law; 3) help the LGU appreciate the necessary inter-agency coordination to implement the law; 4) encourage prioritization of inclusive education and the appropriation of funds by the LGU; (5) Promote setting up a mechanism for child protection and social accountability; (6) analyze success factors and pitfalls to avoid in the implementation of RA 11650; and (7) recommend measures of objective evaluation and monitoring of the LGU's capacity to implement the law step-by-step using a decision tree, based on a conceptual model of policy compliance adapted for use at the local level. Ultimately, the guide can help the LGU initiate the development of local ordinances supporting the implementation of RA 11650 in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

¹Vargas, C., Whelan, J., Brimblecombe, J. & Allender, S. (2022). Co-creation, co-design and co-production for public health: A perspective on definitions and distinctions. *Public Health Research & Practice*, 32(2), retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17061/phrp3222211>, 04 Oct 2023.

²Gouillart, F. & Hallett, T. (2015). *Co-creation in government: Stanford Social Innovation Review*. USA: Leland Stanford Jr. University.

³ECCD Council (2021). *Guidebook for ECCD services and providers: Managing zero (0-) to four (4-) year old children with developmental delays and disabilities in early learning programs*. Philippines: Early Childhood Care and Development Council.

ACRONYMS

ACT	Amplifying Children's Voices for Transformation
ALS	Alternative Learning System
BHO/CHO	Barangay Health Office/Community Health Office
BLD	Bureau of Learning Delivery
CDC	Child Development Center
CFS	Child-Find System
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CSWDO	Community Social Welfare and Development Office
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DEPED	Department of Education
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DOF	Department of Finance
DOH	Department of Health
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSL	Filipino Sign Language
IEP	Individualized Educational Plan
JCOC	Joint Congressional Oversight Committee
IACC	Inter-Agency Coordinating Council
ILRC	Inclusive Learning Resource Center
LCPC	Local Council for the Protection of Children
LGU	Local Government Unit
MDT	Multidisciplinary Team
MHO	Municipal Health Office
MSWDO	Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office
NCDA	National Council on Disability Affairs
OPD	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
OT	Occupational Therapy
PDAO	Persons with Disability Affairs Office
PESO	Public Employment Service Office
PSB	Program Support Budget
PT	Physical Therapy
PWD	Persons With Disability
RA	Republic Act
SDO	Schools Division Office
SPED/SNED	Special Education/Special Needs Education
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
UDL	Universal Design for Learning

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The individual interviews with key informants from the Persons with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO), DEPED, Schools Division Office (SDO), Barangay Health Office (BHO) and the Municipal Social Welfare Development Office (MSWDO) revealed varying perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of RA 11650. There were also widely differing levels of awareness on the existence of the law itself, with the health offices at the barangay and city levels having limited knowledge of the law and whether or not its implementation was included in their mandate among other public health concerns. On the other hand, the online Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with representatives from professional associations of the health sector revealed a high level of awareness on RA 11650 and its implications to their supposed contribution in moving it forward. They expressed their concerns regarding barriers facing its implementation and sustainability.

The co-creation workshops conducted with children of varying ages and disabilities from the Ricardo P. Cruz Elementary School in Taguig City showed that the children knew of their rights under the law and were empowered to advocate for themselves. They raised issues that they were against, such as bullying and discrimination in schools, and knew who their allies were in the pursuit of inclusive education, namely different members of the school community. These included the principal, teachers, students, dentist, security guard, and the DEPED-TAPAT (Taguig-Pateros) - SABAC (Student Anti-Bullying Action Center). The second workshop conducted with representatives from Taguig City (PDAO, DEPED, CSWDO, and the Federation of PWDs), highlighted the identification of stakeholders, gaps in the implementation of the law, and their interdependence on each other to fulfill their particular roles. No specific provision in the law was mentioned as a priority, since the discussion revolved around general issues with implementing inclusive education due mainly to attitudinal barriers that promote exclusion rather than inclusion in schools. They suggested ways on how they can possibly contribute to fulfilling the provisions of RA 11650 with the support of their city government.

The series of consultations and workshops with multiple stakeholders revealed discrepancies in awareness of the content, roles and responsibilities related to the implementation of RA 11650. There is a need to look into the actual realization of some provisions of the law since there remain questions on how they can be implemented given the larger problems and issues of teacher attrition, lack of teacher capacitation of receiving teachers, large demands on SNED teachers, shortage of health care professionals, budget constraints, program and process limitations in IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) development and placement decisions. Nonetheless, there is a silver lining reflected in the empowerment of children with disabilities to assert their rights and promote inclusive education by strongly advocating for themselves. The dedication of most of the duty-bearers and stakeholders to do all it takes within their own sphere of influence and to collaborate with others towards a common goal can be viewed as positive, facilitating factors that can bridge policy to practice. The whole-of-community approach can be adopted wherein there is a mobilization of resources across the entire community, a unity of purpose, and a general agreement with the actions being taken.⁴

The local policy guide will be written in two versions, one for use by concerned personnel and offices of LGUs, and a disability- and child-friendly version in workbook format that can be used by children of all abilities and needs. We continue to hope FOR and WITH our learners with disabilities for inclusion to happen wherein every child's right to equitable, quality education is respected and realized. Children are the primary stakeholders in the implementation of RA 11650. Quoting one of the interviewees, - "Bata ang taga-singil!" (The child will hold us accountable!)

⁴ Plodinec, M. J., Edwards, W. & White, R. (2014). Applications of a "Whole Community" framework for enhancing community or campus resilience. *Science Direct - Procedia Economics and Finance* (18), 9-16. Retrieved from <https://pdf.sciencedirectassets.com/282136/1-s2.0, 5 February 2024>.

INTRODUCTION

The policy guide will introduce local officials and other stakeholders to basic information on RA 11650 (signed last March 11, 2022), namely the 4Ws - *what, who, where and why* based on its stated provisions. A common understanding of the law would be an ideal starting point to enforce it locally and promote its successful implementation. Once more informed about RA 11650, a reality check can be done by local officials in order to determine their current status in terms of compliance to the law, including facilitators and barriers to implementation, the roles each office or agency plays to contribute to realizing this law, and the mechanisms that they have in place to move it forward. This may include replicating the multisectoral structure prescribed by the law at the local level. The last section looks further into supporting the capacity of LGUs, including the participation of the Local School Boards, DEPED SDO, and the Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCPC) to implement RA 11650 and realize its objectives by drafting local policies and ordinances towards this end.

1 - THE 4 Ws OF RA 11650

WHAT IS RA 11650?

It is an act instituting a policy of inclusion and services for **LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES** in support of **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**, establishing **INCLUSIVE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS OF LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES** in **ALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, MUNICIPALITIES** and **CITIES**, providing for standards, appropriating funds therefor, and for other purposes.

➤ 13 Objectives of RA 11650

1. **Free and appropriate public early and basic education including support and related services** based on their needs, and in preparation for independent living and community life;
2. Access to the **general education system** through **formal** school systems, including **alternative delivery** modes;
3. Establish and maintain **Inclusive Learning Resource Centers** in support of their inclusion in the general education system, particularly to the formal school system as provided in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP);
4. Develop their full potential towards **self-sufficiency** and become fully participative members of society;
5. Create significant and **positive changes in community orientation** towards disability;
6. Further develop a system for **identification, referral and intervention** for learners with disability;
7. Identify through a **Child Find System** learners with disabilities ages three (3) to twenty-four (24), and infants and toddlers under the age of three (3);
8. Institutionalize the development, implementation and review of the **Individualized Educational Plan**;

What is an IEP?

It is the systematic, purposive and developmental educational programming of curricular and instructional priorities and contents. This includes the services, duration and frequency, and level of performance of the learner, specifying accommodations and modifications. A copy is given to parents, subject to an annual review.

9. Provide **parents or guardians** with information and opportunities to actively participate in the determination of educational placement options and programs to enable them to make informed choices and decisions;
10. Enable and empower all teachers, including those with disabilities... with capabilities for the **detection, referral or introduction of interventions**;
11. **Train and equip** all teachers, including child development teachers and workers, **principals, administrators, non-teaching staff** of the school, sign language interpreters, parents, guardians and care providers as partners;
12. Increase **school retention** and **cohort survival**; and
13. Establish an effective **consultative mechanism that will actively involve learners with disabilities**, when appropriate, **and their respective organizations** in the implementation of this Act and in resolving issues relating to it.

➤ How is INCLUSIVE EDUCATION defined?



The process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners by moving towards the end-goal of full participation, presence and achievement in learning cultures and communities.

This involves accommodations, modifications, adaptation and individualization in content, approaches, structures and strategies.

“

*All learners, regardless of their background and abilities, are given an equal chance to play, learn and interact together in the same learning environment and the community. Every learner is **VALUED, SUPPORTED, and GIVEN ACCESS** to equal opportunities and learning experiences.*

According to RA 11650, **No learner shall be denied admission on the basis of disability.**

➤ What are the other important provisions that are included in RA 11650?



Sec. 17 LEARNER INFORMATION SYSTEM

- The DEPED, through its Information and Communications Technology Service, shall maintain and regularly update a secure Learner Information System (LIS) containing relevant disaggregated data of learners with disabilities.
- This should be linked to the CFS of the LGUs, the ECCDC, and to the information systems of other implementing partner agencies, ensuring compliance with the provisions of RA 10173⁵, or the “Data Privacy Act of 2012”.



Sec. 18 CONTINUING RESEARCH

- To identify and design strategies and programs that shall meet the diverse needs of learners with disabilities. It shall also be used to develop instructional techniques and materials for use by the ILRCs towards improving the acquisition of skills by learners with disabilities for their transition to independent living, technical vocational training or competitive skills development.



Sec. 19 LEARNER ASSISTANCE

- The DEPED, DSWD, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), NCDA and the LGUs shall develop programs to support the financial, education and accessibility needs of all learners with disabilities, particularly the economically disadvantaged learners with disabilities, as envisioned in RA 8425⁶, otherwise known as the “Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act” and RA 6728⁷, otherwise known as the “Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act” based on eligibility criteria.



Sec. 20 SPORTS, RECREATION AND ARTISTIC OPPORTUNITIES

- The DEPED shall establish opportunities for the safe, wholesome, interactive individual, as well as group sports, recreations, artistic, and social activities of learners with disabilities, optimal use of leisure hours and advancement of physical, mental, social and cultural development.



Sec. 22. FAMILY MEMBERS, GUARDIANS AND CARE PROVIDERS' EDUCATION AND ROLES

- Formal trainings, orientations and counseling programs shall be developed and initiated by the DEPED, and implemented in coordination with the LGUs, DSWD, ECCD Council and the private sector.
- They shall be apprised of procedural safeguards and processes to resolve disputes and complaints to protect the educational rights of learners.



Sec. 23. INCENTIVES FOR PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

- Partnerships between the government and the private sector shall be encouraged. Any donation in favor of the DEPED for the provision of educational assistance, facilities, materials, and other support and services shall be entitled to the benefits and incentives under RA 8525⁸, otherwise known as the “Adopt-A-School Act of 1998”, allowing for additional deduction from the gross income equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of such expenses.

⁵ <https://privacy.gov.ph/data-privacy-act>

⁶ <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/2/4057>

⁷ <https://www.officalgazette.gov.ph/1989/06/10/republic-act-no-6728-2>

⁸ <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/2/3691>

WHO IS IT FOR AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING RA 11650?

RA 11650 was created to safeguard the rights of **LEARNERS with DISABILITIES** who are defined as -

Learners in the general early and basic education system who require additional support and related services and adoptive pedagogic method due to their long- or short-term physical, mental or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation.



The **WHOLE-OF-COMMUNITY APPROACH** shall be adopted in the general education classroom to facilitate **COLLABORATIVE ACTION** and foster involvement and participation. This entails the mobilization of resources across the community with unity of purpose, that is to implement RA 11650.

➤ What are the functions and responsibilities of the LGU?

1. Partner with public or private volunteers and local or international private organizations for technical guidance and information, dissemination campaigns and funding support to augment the funding for the services pertaining to RA 11650;
2. Participate in all the efforts concerning inclusion of learners with disabilities in the general education system, health services, transport services, and other social and welfare services;
3. Adopt measures to raise awareness in the community;
4. Enact appropriate ordinances to implement the LGU's role; and
5. Coordinate and share the responsibility with national government agencies and other stakeholders for the implementation, regulation, enforcement and monitoring of the provisions of RA 11650 within their territorial jurisdiction, including CFS.
 - The Local School Boards shall be authorized to set aside a portion of the **Special Education Fund** to supplement the funds of the DEPED and other implementing partner agencies.
 - The Local School Boards shall be authorized to set aside a portion of the **Special Education Fund** to supplement the funds of the DEPED and other implementing partner agencies to include, but not limited, to any of the following:
 - a. Provision of sites, buildings or centers where there are no existing school facilities;
 - b. Provision of assistive devices, instructional materials and teachers' training;
 - c. Delivery of health and nutrition services and interventions, and educational assessment program for learners with disabilities that shall be initiated by DOH and DEPED respectively; and
 - d. Provision of trainings on livelihood and entrepreneurial skills in coordination with DOLE and TESDA.

The **barangays** shall coordinate with the PDAO for the assistance they may provide for learners with disabilities and their families or care providers. They may seek assistance for the ILRC in their area to facilitate the proper training of barangay help desk personnel and ensure that necessary information and materials on RA 11650 and related laws are provided.

Although the lead implementing agency is **DEPED**, the whole-of-community approach calls for the support of other government agencies such as the DOH collaborating with the National Nutrition Council and the ECCDC, DSWD, DPWH, DOLE, TESDA, PESO and the DILG. These are the duty-bearers tasked to establish mechanisms in order to successfully implement RA 11650. The table below summarizes the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies of government in the implementation of RA 11650.

DUTY BEARERS	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN IMPLEMENTING RA 11650
CHED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a scholarship program for in-service teachers on special needs / inclusive education; • Support the continuing education of DEPED personnel; and • Ensure that at least one (1) teacher education institution from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao shall be established as a Center of Excellence in Special Needs Education;
DEPED - BLD (Bureau of Learning Delivery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the lead agency, shall ensure that learners with disabilities are guaranteed their right of access to free public early and basic education services; • Coordinate with national government agencies and offices as implementing partner agencies; • Lead in the formulation and adoption of a national policy on inclusive education and prepare and update a multi-year roadmap, supported by annual work and financial plans; • Participate in developing and implementing an efficient Child-Find System (CFS) • Formulate and implement policies and standards for the use of learning delivery modalities for learners with disabilities; • Supervise, monitor, evaluate and assess schools and ILRCs, including the assessment for the need of additional ILRCs in school districts • Maintain a system for identification, referral and intervention for learners with disabilities in coordination with ECCDC and other stakeholders; • Develop the IEP framework and guidelines for preparation, and evaluate fundamental changes in educational practice and design for the inclusion of learners with disabilities in the general education system; • Maintain and regularly update a secure Learner Information System (LIS) containing relevant disaggregated data of learners with disabilities, linked to the CFS of the LGU and the ECCDC; • Undertake continuous research to identify the needs of learners with disabilities; • Develop trainings and counseling programs for parents, other family members, guardians and care providers of learners with disabilities;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire ILRC personnel including the multidisciplinary team, mobile and para-teachers; • Develop a scholarship program for in-service teachers on special needs / inclusive education; • Develop programs to support the financial, educational and accessibility needs of all learners with disabilities, particularly the economically-disadvantaged; and • Submit the funding requirements for the multi-year roadmap to DBM.
DILG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgate the policies and guidelines relevant to the implementation of RA 11650 by the LGUs.
DOH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide learners with disabilities with healthcare services such as mental health services, health plans, oral health care, and health information and education; • Coordinate with the ILRC for the services of Barangay Health Care Workers; • Collaborate with the National Nutrition Council and the ECCDC in the provision of inclusive health and nutrition services; and • Hire additional personnel and support staff for the ILRC.
DOLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with DEPED in developing a training program for the transition from school to work and provide to the ILRC current market analysis and job coaching sessions for PWDs before and during their employment; • Provision of trainings on livelihood and entrepreneurial skills; • Facilitate job placements of learners with disabilities; • Lead the promotion of learners with disabilities among public and private institutions, disseminate materials and conduct information campaigns on effective practices in working with and training learners with disabilities; and • Develop programs to support the financial, educational and accessibility needs of all learners with disabilities, particularly the economically-disadvantaged.
DPWH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribe the proper indoor and outdoor set-up of the ILRC and ensure that all are built and maintained in accordance with BP 344, or the Accessibility Law, and universal design.
DSWD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the effective management and provision of social and welfare services, including auxiliary social services for learners with disabilities; • Develop programs to support the financial, educational and accessibility needs of all learners with disabilities, particularly the economically-disadvantaged; • Develop trainings and counseling programs for parents, other family members, guardians and care providers of learners with disabilities; and • Hire additional personnel and support staff for the ILRC.

ECCDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in developing and implementing an efficient Child-Find System (CFS); • Maintain a system for identification, referral and intervention for learners with disabilities in coordination with ECCDC and other stakeholders; • Develop trainings and counseling programs for parents, other family members, guardians and care providers of learners with disabilities; and • Collaborate with the DOH and the National Nutrition Council in the provision of inclusive health and nutrition services.
PDAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the implementation of programs and services of PWDs; and • Enjoin the participation of DPOs in the implementation of RA 11650.
PESO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct employability enhancement seminars, provide pre-employment counseling and orientation, and offer programs and activities on employment assistance; • Lead the promotion of learners with disabilities among public and private institutions, disseminate materials and conduct information campaigns on effective practices in working with and training learners with disabilities; and • Facilitate job placements of learners with disabilities.
PRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a separate filed of specialization on special needs education and inclusive education, incorporated in the Licensure Exams for Teachers (LET)
TESDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical and vocational training, livelihood and entrepreneurial skills to learners with disabilities; • Lead the promotion of learners with disabilities among public and private institutions, disseminate materials and conduct information campaigns on effective practices in working with and training learners with disabilities; • Facilitate job placements of learners with disabilities; and • Support the continuing education of DEPED personnel.

The *whole-of-community* approach emphasizes the establishment of collaborative mechanisms across agencies and sectors with unity of purpose towards the efficient and effective implementation of RA 11650. Facilitating inclusion necessitates a strategic response to promote the active participation of children, parents and OPDs beginning with early detection through the CFS, a referral system for early intervention through health services and access to ECCD, accessing free and appropriate basic education, and transitioning to inclusive employment. This can only be done through the consolidated and harmonized multisectoral efforts of the whole community.

WHERE SHOULD RA 11650 BE IMPLEMENTED?

- Child Development Centers (CDCs) - for children below 5 years old
- Public and Private Schools under DEPED – for basic education
 - Kinder, Elementary and Secondary Education
 - Alternative Learning Systems (ALS)
- Technical and Vocations Institutions under TESDA
- Higher Learning Institutions under CHED

WHY SHOULD RA 11650 BE PRIORITIZED?

It is the policy of the state to **PROTECT** and **PROMOTE** the right of **ALL** citizens to **QUALITY EDUCATION** at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education **ACCESSIBLE TO ALL**, based on **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**.

- ▶ Learners with Disabilities
- ▶ Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (indigenous origins)



*No learner with disability is deprived of the **RIGHT OF ACCESS** to an inclusive, equitable and quality education, and promote lifelong opportunities for them. This also includes access to health care and rehabilitation services.*

The State recognizes the vital role of learners with disabilities in society as an integral part of national development strategies. It shall accordingly guarantee their **SOCIAL PROTECTION**, and facilitate their active participation and inclusion in public, civic and State affairs.


2 - ESTABLISHING INCLUSIVE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS (ILRC)

WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER (ILRC)?

A physical or virtual center that provides support and related services to teaching and learning, using appropriate, accessible, disability-, linguistically-, culturally- and gender-sensitive instructional learning materials ... with support and related services from medical, health and allied professionals.

➤ 9 Main Functions of the ILRC

1. Implement the **Child-Find System (CFS)** to ensure that all learners with disabilities who are receiving early and basic education services are identified, located and evaluated, and facilitate their inclusion in the general education system;
2. Utilize the expertise of a **multidisciplinary team** to conduct educational assessments and diagnoses of learners with disabilities, to identify specific areas of concern and determine appropriate services and placement options for the preparation of their IEPs;
3. Spearhead the preparation, implementation and review of the **IEP**;
4. Provide **appropriate support and related services**, including school-based trainings to learners with disabilities ... for their inclusion in the general education system;



Provisions include, but are not limited to, linguistic solutions, speech-language pathology & audiology, interpreting, intervenor services, psychological services, PT, OT, recreation, social services, school health, counseling, orientation & mobility, medical & transport services.

5. Provide and facilitate **consultative mechanisms, counseling, technical assistance and training** to general basic education teachers, administrators, CDC child development workers and teachers..;
6. Provide and ensure the availability of appropriate teaching and **instructional materials**;

Refers to textbooks in Braille, large-type, audio, digital or FSL materials, augmentative and alternative instructional materials

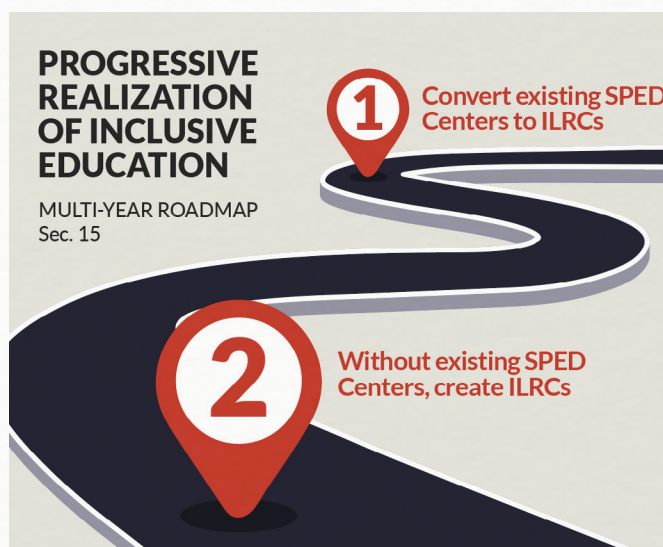
7. Establish a **referral system** that shall provide and organize multidisciplinary services... to mobilize community resources;
8. Monitor and ensure that learners with disabilities receive the appropriate services needed, including, but not limited to **FSL interpreting**; and
9. Deliver services under the ILRC's **alternative educational programs, early intervention program, and transition program**, among others.

WHERE SHOULD THE ILRC BE LOCATED?

The DEPED, in collaboration with the LGU, shall initially establish and maintain at least one (1) ILRC in all cities and municipalities. All existing SPED Centers shall be converted to and renamed as “Inclusive Learning Resource Center”.

LGUs may establish satellite ILRCs in schools, the operations and maintenance of which shall be included in the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Private early or basic education schools may likewise establish additional facilities needed for the education of learners with disabilities in coordination with ILRCs within their cities and municipalities.



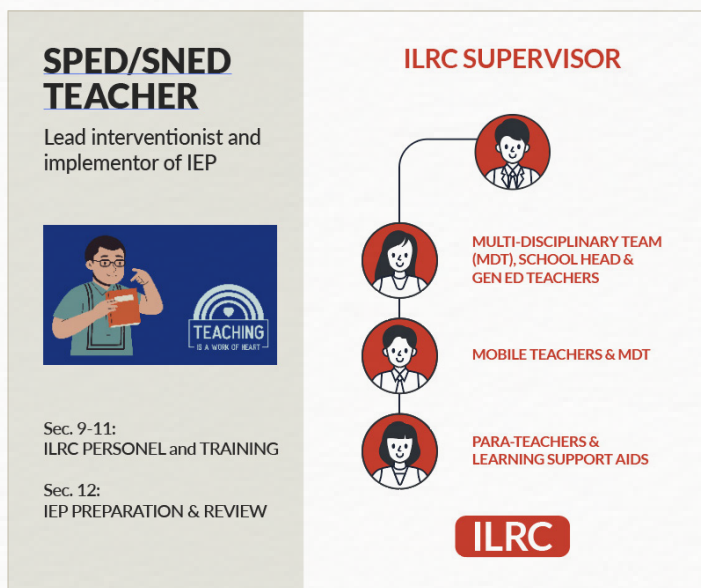
- These should comply with the requirements of Batas Pambansa Blg. 344, otherwise known as the “Accessibility Law”⁹ and adopt the Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- The DEPED shall provide the **minimum standards for compliance** to be considered an ILRC and provide non-monetary incentives, such as a **seal of excellence** awards scheme to LGUs and schools.

⁹ NCDA (2008). *Batas Pambansa Blg. 344 (Accessibility Law) and its Original and Amended Implementing Rules and Regulations*. Philippines: National Council on Disability Affairs.

WHO ARE THE PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHING AN ILRC?

At least one (1) mobile multidisciplinary team (MDT) in every municipality and city, or school district with an existing ILRC, shall be organized.

- The DEPED shall hire the necessary personnel and support staff, including qualified PWDs, to operate, administer and oversee the ILRC. Shown below is the composition of the ILRC.



- Mobile Teachers
 - Special needs teachers or those trained by DEPED on special needs education
 - will assist in the CFS and determine appropriate learning modalities
 - will share responsibility with the MDT for planning & scheduling, and assisting isolated or remote schools, and perform other related functions
- Para-Teachers
 - hired and assigned to areas where there is a shortage or absence of a special needs teacher

The **multidisciplinary team** shall be composed of any, or all of the following professionals and specialists, as may be necessary:

- Educational Psychologist
- Guidance Counselor
- Psychometrician
- Developmental Pediatrician
- Psychiatrist
- Physical Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech and Language Therapist / Speech Correction Teacher
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Reading Specialist
- Specialist for Braille and other augmentative and alternative modes of communication
- FSL Specialist
- FSL Interpreter
- Sign Communication or Visual Specialist
- Special Needs Teacher (*lead interventionist and implementor of the IEP*).

The School Head and the General Education Teachers are likewise members of the MDT.

DEPED

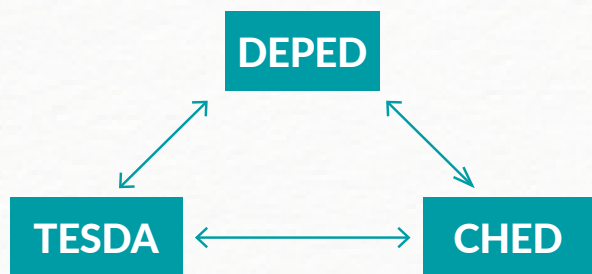
DOH

DSWD

may hire other necessary personnel and support staff for the ILRC.

- The salary grades, remuneration, benefits and incentives of the ILRC personnel shall be in accordance with the *Revised Compensation and Position Classification System*¹⁰ and other civil service rules and regulations.

¹⁰ <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Manual-on-PCC-Chapter-3.pdf>



These three (3) agencies should develop a scholarship program for in-service teachers who shall take courses or the required master's degree units on special needs education, inclusive education, or other related courses. They shall be required to fulfill an obligation to RETURN SERVICE in the DEPED.

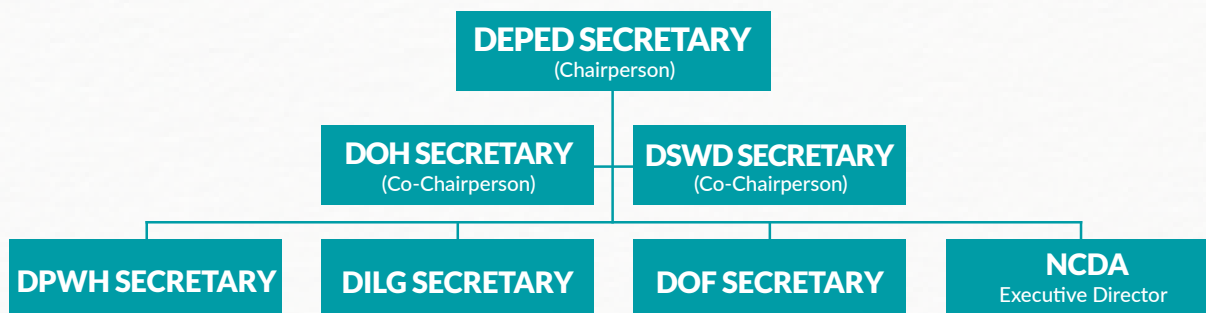
These agencies shall closely coordinate and effectively implement programs necessary to support the continuing education of DEPED personnel including a unified system for ladderized education. This includes relevant partners in the government, academe and the private sector to develop and conduct appropriate training programs, advanced seminars and workshops on disability for all in-service teachers.

At least one (1) **teacher education institution** from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, and in Metro Manila, Metro Cebu and Metro Davao shall be established as a *Center of Excellence in Special Needs Education*.

The DEPED shall coordinate with CHED to ensure the supply of qualified professionals. In coordination with DBM and the Civil Service Commission, it shall ensure that the necessary changes or adjustments in the plantilla items are reflected in the *Revised Compensation and Position Classification System*.

THE INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES (IACC)

- for purposes of policy integration, harmonization, and coordination of functions
- shall be composed of the following officials or their duly authorized representatives, up to the level of Assistant Secretary or its equivalent:



➤ 8 Functions of the IACC

1. Ensure that all government and private organizations involved are effectively implementing RA 11650 by conducting a quarterly assessment on the performance of their respective roles and responsibilities;
2. Ensure the formulation of a national policy on inclusive education;
3. Ensure the preparation and regularly review a multi-year roadmap, supported by annual work and financial plans, for the effective implementation of the act;
4. Develop policy guidelines and effective mechanisms to ensure the implementation of existing laws for learners with disabilities;

5. Create appropriate and coordinated programs in health and related physiological and psychological health services, multidisciplinary domains, transportation and access for learners with disabilities;
6. Act as catalyst of change and source of information for all learners;
7. Constitute and authorize groups of experts to conduct an annual audit to determine the compliance of the ILRCs on their operations; and
8. Coordinate with the Bureau of Learning Delivery (BLD) and the LGUs to ensure the establishment of ILRCs.

The IACC shall convene once every quarter. The Council Chairperson may call a special meeting whenever necessary; provided, that members are notified in writing at least three (3) days prior to the said meeting.

HOW WILL RA 11650 BE REALIZED?

The **multi-year roadmap** shall be crafted to ensure the timely compliance and progressive realization of inclusive education. It shall provide yearly targets for the following, such as, but not limited to the –

- Conversion of existing SPED Centers to ILRCs, giving priority to those handling the most number of learners with disabilities;
- Creation of ILRCs in cities and municipalities without existing SPED Centers, as resources may allow;
- Creation of plantilla positions for ILRC personnel and staff, with consideration for career progression; and
- Creation of plantilla positions for teaching and non-teaching personnel.

*The **multi-year roadmap** serves as a guide to government agencies and private stakeholders for the optimal realization of the objectives of RA 11650. It shall be part of and aligned with the basic education roadmap, as formulated by the DEPED. IT shall likewise contain the **policy, practices, gaps and challenges** affecting the early and basic education of learners with disabilities, set **detailed targets and outcomes** for a **minimum period of five (5) years**, and provide the public and private stakeholders **specific actions or interventions** including **implementation and monitoring strategies** and **annual budgetary requirements**. It shall be subjected to a periodic review and updating to determine its implementation status and ensure sustainability.*

- A period of not more than five (5) years shall be given for all public and private basic educational institutions to comply with its provisions and requirements. Cities and municipalities may share one (1) ILRC, as may be necessary.

The **Bureau of Learning Delivery (BLD)** of the DEPED shall implement the provisions of RA 11650. It shall:

1. Serve as the **Secretariat of the IACC** for purposes of coordinating the functions and meetings of the IACC;
2. **Coordinate with other national government agencies** and offices as implementing partner agencies through an effective mechanism for the proper implementation and enforcement of this Act and other existing laws for learners with disabilities;

3. In consultation with the Advisory Committee on the Education of Learners with Disabilities, other implementing partner agencies and stakeholders, formulate and adopt a **national policy on inclusive education**, and prepare and regularly update a **multi-year roadmap**, supported by **annual work and financial plans**;
4. Participate in the development and implementation of an efficient and effective **CFS** in collaboration with the LGUs, the ILRCs, the ECCD Council and OPDs;
5. Formulate and implement policies and standards for the use of **learning delivery modalities**, including the **training on distance education** of their general education teachers, special needs teachers, para-teachers, and other persons as may be qualified by the DEPED to teach learners with disabilities;
6. Supervise, monitor, evaluate and assess the **compliance, operations and performance of the schools and ILRCs** and their personnel, including the assessment for the need of additional ILRCs in schools districts and submit reports thereon to the IACC;
7. Maintain a system for **identification, referral, and intervention** for learners with disabilities, initiated by the DEPED in coordination with the ECCD Council and other relevant stakeholders;
8. In coordination with a multidisciplinary team and the Advisory Committee, develop the **IEP framework and guidelines** for its preparation, and evaluate fundamental changes both in educational practice and the design of educational services for inclusion of learner with disabilities in the general education system; and
9. Perform such other necessary functions that the Secretary and the IACC may assign for the effective and efficient implementation of RA 11650.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION OF LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

- composed of representatives from various disabilities sectors and a representative from the academe
- shall directly coordinate and collaborate with the Secretary

➤ 7 Functions of the Advisory Committee

1. Represent learners with disabilities and their respective organizations, and participate in consultative meetings of the DEPED and other OPDs in the formulation of policies, plans and strategies, educational programs, rules and regulations, guidelines, or regulatory changes;
2. Conduct research and policy studies on inclusive education and other matters related to it;
3. Participate in crafting, amending, evaluating, or updating the roadmap;
4. Subject to compliance with RA 10173 or the “Data Privacy Act” of 2012, gather consolidate, or interpret relevant data on the education of learners with disabilities and prepare the necessary report for the Secretary;
5. For purposes of assessment, monitor the delivery of services;
6. Review existing and recommend new legislation; and
7. Perform other similar functions as may be necessary.

The Advisory Committee is independent from the DEPED and its members shall not be entitled to any compensation in the performance of their functions.

➤ Additional provisions included in RA 11650



Sec. 25 PROTECTION OF LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

- The Secretary shall issue policies and guidelines for implementation at all governance levels of the DEPED to protect the learner with disabilities within the ILRC and school premises against neglect, abuse, cruelty or exploitation, bullying, discrimination, and other acts for conditions prejudicial to their physical and psychosocial well-being and development.



Sec. 26 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

- The DEPED shall establish and maintain procedures to ensure that learners with disabilities and their parents or guardians are guaranteed procedural safeguards for the enforcement and protection of their rights, including the provision of free and appropriate public education. This includes the right to be informed in their mother tongue, be served written notice on matters affecting the education of their children, the right to confidentiality, the right to examine all related records, and to participate in meetings with respect to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, and provision of education programs to learners with disabilities.
- The DEPED shall ensure the speedy and timely administrative resolution of complaints which shall be promptly acted upon and resolved not later than thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the complaint.



Sec. 27 PUBLIC INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

- A nationwide information dissemination campaign shall be intensified and jointly conducted by the DEPED and the Philippine Information Agency. All materials shall be in accessible formats which include, but not limited to, Braille, large-print format, electronic, non-print or multi-media format.



Sec. 28 ADMINISTRATIVE SANCTIONS

- The DEPED and other implementing agencies shall ensure compliance with the provisions of this Act. Failure to comply shall be dealt with administratively.

A **Joint Congressional Oversight Committee (JCOC) on Inclusive Education** will be created to oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation of RA 11650. It shall be composed of:

- Five (5) members of the Senate
- Five (5) members of the House of Representatives

To assist the JCOC to evaluate the implementation of the ACT, the DEPED in partnership with LGUs, other relevant agencies and the private sector, shall conduct a mandatory annual review. It shall establish an evaluation system to assess the impact of RA 11650 and the progress of learners with disabilities.

➤ Program Support Budget (PSB) / Appropriations

The DEPED shall submit the funding requirements, with its corresponding annual targets for the implementation of the roadmap, to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and other concerned agencies for the determination of appropriate budgetary allocation and inclusion under the yearly national expenditure program of the government.



Sec. 30 PROGRAM SUPPORT BUDGET (PSB)

- This should be included as a line item in the General Appropriations of the DEPED to guarantee the implementation of the provisions of RA 11650, including the following:
 - a. Implementation of the CFS;
 - b. Hiring of specialists for the diagnosis and assessment of learners with disabilities and the prescription of appropriate intervention;
 - c. Defray expenses in the delivery of related services, such as transportation and various development, corrective and other support services; and
 - d. Purchase of assistive devices, equipment, learning materials and other needed resources to deliver services effectively.



Sec. 31 APPROPRIATIONS

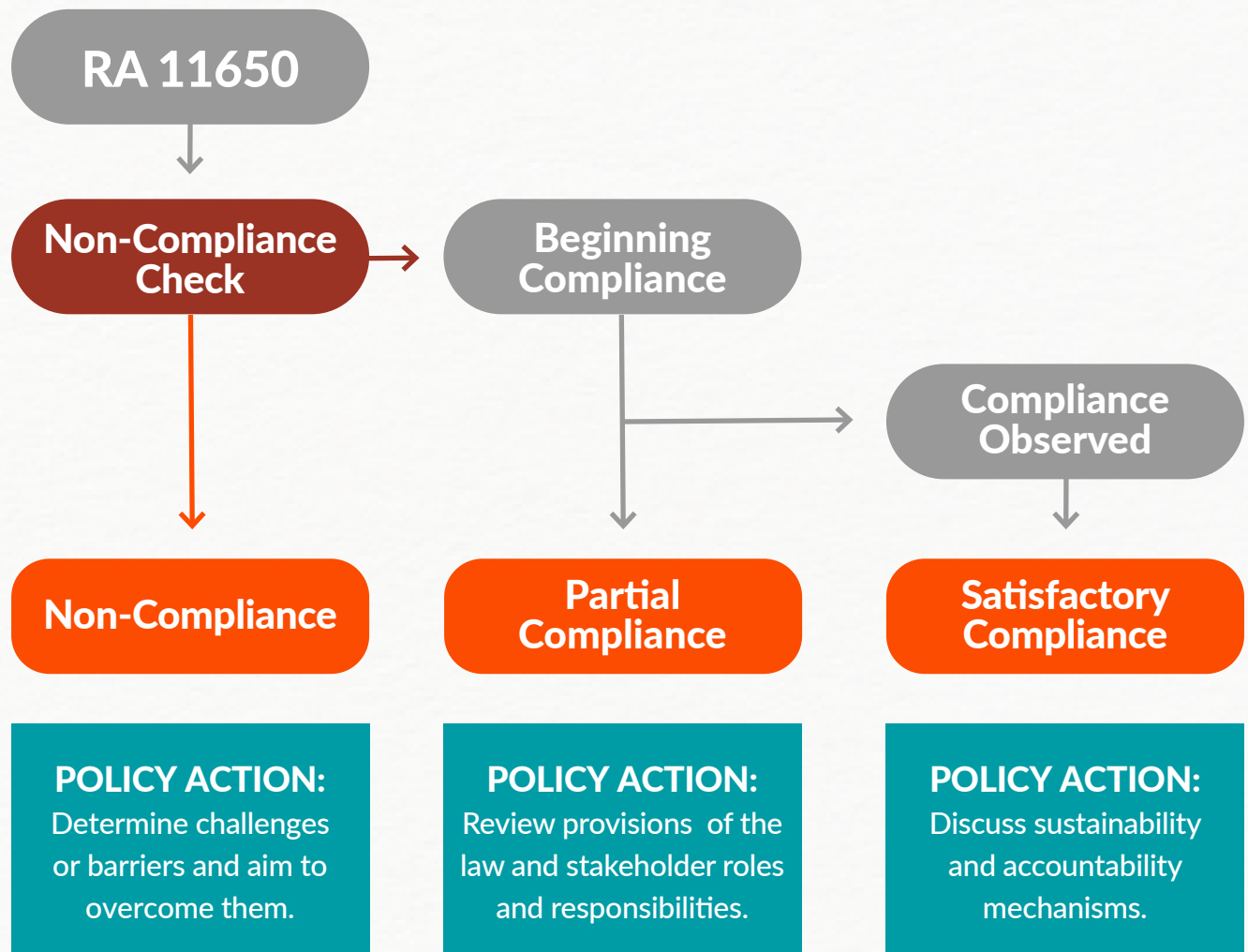
- The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current appropriations of the DEPED, DOH, DSWD, DPWH and other implementing partner agencies. The amount shall be included in their respective budgetary allocations as separate line items in the annual General Appropriations Act.



3 – LGU POLICY COMPLIANCE CHECK

DECISION TREE OF LGU POLICY COMPLIANCE TO RA 11650

To determine a level of compliance, objective answers to precise questions are needed. Transparency is a prerequisite to objectivity.¹¹ Illusions of compliance are bound to fail the intended beneficiaries of the policy; in this case, learners with disabilities, their families and carers. All stakeholders should be able to objectively assess their LGU status in terms of their compliance to RA 11650 using the following decision tree, and know how best to take action –







What follows is a *Checklist for Policy Action* that may help LGUs assess whether or not they are non compliant, partially compliant, or satisfactorily compliant to the provisions of RA 11650. The salient features of the law are embedded in this 33-Point Checklist for LGUs and other stakeholders. The checklist is aligned with the Child-Friendly Local Government Audit (CFLGA), a mandatory audit system to ensure the progressive realization of children’s rights to survival, development, protection and participation.¹²

¹¹ Doret, D. (2020). A decision tree to objectively determine policy compliance. ISACA Journal, Vol. 3. Retrieved from <https://www.isaca.org/resources/isaca-journal/issues/2020/volume-3/a-decision-tree-to-objectively-determine-policy-compliance>, 3 January 2024.

¹² https://www.dilg.gov.ph/PDF_File/issuances/joint_circulars/dilg-joincircular-2019828_9aac03106e.pdf

33-POINT CHECKLIST FOR POLICY ACTION: RA 11650

POLICY ACTIONS	Non-Compliance	Partial Compliance	Satisfactory Compliance
 Do all learners with disabilities in your LGU -			
1. Receive free and appropriate public early and basic education?			
2. Receive age-appropriate support and related services based on their needs and in preparation for independent living and community life?			
3. Have access to the general education system through formal school systems, including alternative delivery modes?			
4. Have opportunities to develop their full potential towards self-sufficiency and fully participate as members of society?			
5. Receive adequate protection against neglect, abuse, cruelty or exploitation, bullying and discrimination?			
6. Have PWD IDs and are accorded its benefits and privileges?			
7. Have access to healthcare services, including immunizations and therapy services, as needed?			
 Do parents (or guardians) of learners with disabilities-			
8. Have access to information about their children as to their rights, privileges and benefits?			
9. Have access to information about programs and services that would benefit their children?			
10. Have access to formal trainings, orientations and capacity-building to optimize their children's potentials?			
11. Have opportunities to actively participate in determining educational placement options and programs for their children?			
12. Receive speedy and timely resolution of their complaints?			
13. Have access to psychosocial support (e.g. counseling)?			
14. Receive financial support/subsidy?			
 Are teachers, child development and health workers in your LGU -			
15. Enabled and empowered to detect learners with disabilities, conduct referrals and introduce learners to needed interventions?			
16. Provided with appropriate teaching and instructional materials, according to their students' needs (e.g. braille materials for VI)?			
 Does the LGU, in collaboration with DEPED and other partner agencies, -			
17. Have a database of learners with disabilities containing disaggregated data of learner profiles, medical and academic records, and services needed and received?			
18. Have at least one (1) Inclusive Learning Resource Center (ILRC) or SPED Center that can be converted to an ILRC?			
19. Create awareness programs to promote positive changes in community orientation towards disability?			
20. Have a system for the identification (CFS) and referral of learners with disabilities from 0 - 24 years old?			
21. Have intervention and empowerment programs for learners with disabilities?			

22. Train and equip teachers, child development workers, principals, non-teaching staff, barangay personnel, and other stakeholders in the implementation of RA 11650?			
23. Institutionalize the development, implementation and review of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for children in early and basic education?			
24. Have a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) to conduct educational assessment and determine appropriate services and placement options for learners with disabilities?			
25. Have plantilla positions for ILRC personnel and staff?			
26. Ensure school retention and cohort survival of learners with disabilities?			
27. Have an effective consultative mechanism involving learners with disabilities and their respective organizations (OPDs) in the implementation of RA 11650 and resolving issues related to it?			
28. Partner with private or public, local or international organizations, for technical guidance and information, dissemination campaigns and funding support pertaining to the implementation of RA 11650?			
29. Promote inclusion in health, transport, social and welfare services of learners with disabilities?			
30. Provide inclusive play spaces and barrier-free access to the community through its compliance with BP 344 (Accessibility Law)?			
31. Enact appropriate ordinances to implement RA 11650?			
32. Coordinate and share the responsibility with national government agencies and other stakeholders for the implementation, regulation, enforcement and monitoring of RA 11650?			
33. (For the LGU only) Set aside a portion of the Special Education Fund to supplement the funds of the DEPED and other implementing partner agencies?			
TOTAL COMPLIANCE SCORE			No. of ✓ 33 *100 =
COMPLIANCE PERCENTAGE			_____%

This can serve as a baseline evaluation for LGUs on the gaps that have to be overcome in order to implement RA 11650 in their respective cities and municipalities. Due to prior policy issuances supporting the inclusion of PWDs, most LGUs have already taken steps towards this end. However, we are still a long way off from fulfilling the provisions of RA 11650. This local policy guide hopes to provide a starting point for LGUs and other stakeholders for prioritizing the inclusion of learners with disabilities in schools and communities, and ensuring their active participation as valued members of our society.

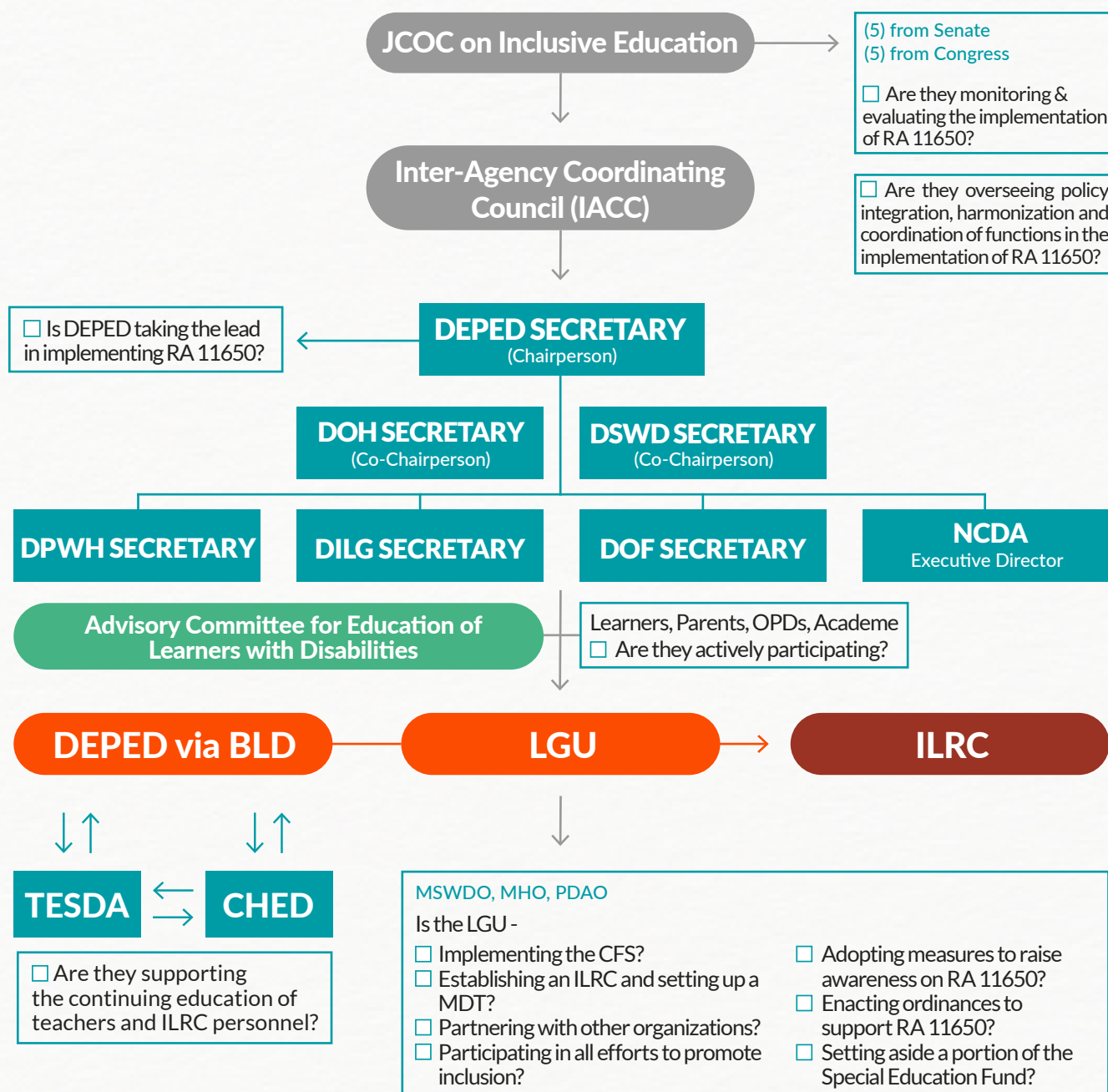
4 – MOVING FORWARD: POLICY ACTIONS

LGUs can learn from the experiences of other municipalities in the initiatives they have undertaken to implement the provisions of RA 11650, even in the absence of its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). By identifying success factors and pitfalls from these experiences, they can strategically plot out feasible and sustainable policy actions. Drawing from the co-creation process we embarked on prior to developing this policy guide, the table below shows common success factors and pitfalls of LGUs that can inform different stakeholders of how they can possibly operationalize the implementation of RA 11650.

	SUCCESS FACTORS	PITFALLS TO AVOID
DATA	Availability of Disaggregated Disability Data	Absence or Lack of Disability Data (underrepresentation of PWDs)
DISABILITY SENSITIVITY/AWARENESS	High	Low
FUNDING PRIORITIZATION	High	Low
INVOLVEMENT	Multistakeholder Participation (PWD, families, schools, OPD, LGU)	Individual Agency / Sector Focus
PROGRAM FOCUS	Harmonization across Ages and Sectors (ECCD, DOH, DEPED, LGU)	Dissonance in Programming
ROLE CLARITY	High	Low
STAKEHOLDER EMPOWERMENT	High	Low
TECHNICAL and HUMAN RESOURCES	Available	Not Available / Limited Availability

LGUs can objectively evaluate whether they possess the success factors that can help propel their initiatives towards policy action, or if they are leaning more towards the pitfalls that are meant to be avoided. They must aim to strengthen the factors leading to the successful implementation of RA 11650 and work on the pitfalls preventing them from complying with its provisions.

The following **ACCOUNTABILITY CHECKS** among the different stakeholders, considering their important roles in the implementation of RA 11650, can help facilitate policy action involving multiple actors that are responsible for realizing inclusive education consistent with the stipulations of the law:

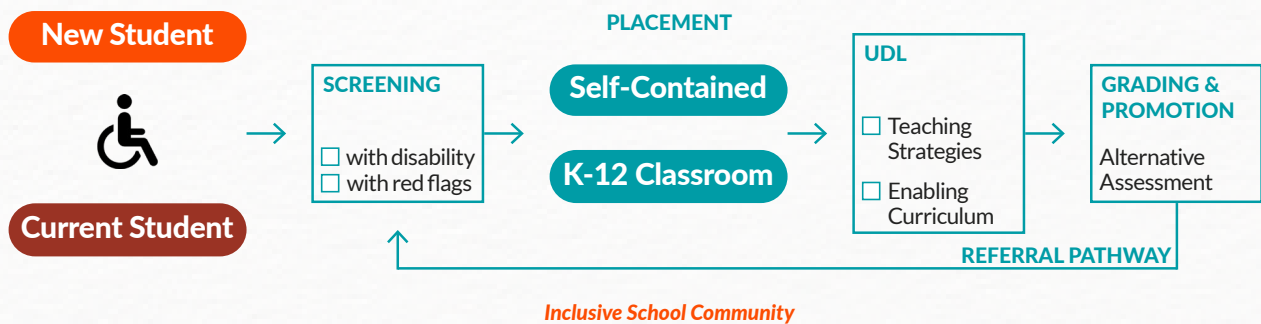


Inclusive education has been officially adopted by DEPED since 1997.¹³ Fast forward to 25 years, there remain to be critical gaps in its implementation¹⁴ and a persistent need for teacher professional development focusing on the promotion of inclusive values and effective teaching practices.

In 2021, Save the Children Philippines, in partnership with DEPED and with the support of the Australian Government, published I TEACH ALL: An Inclusive Teachers' Guide for Teaching Learners with Disability based on a large-scale study of 60 DEPED pilot schools in Regions V, VI, VIII and X. It was intended to be a quick reference for teachers handling learners with disabilities to help them find the answers to common questions about inclusive education in the context of the Philippine Educational System. The guide presented a "wheel-through" of the inclusive education process aligned with existing DEPED memos from the time the learner is screened to be at-risk or is identified as having a disability until he is referred for intervention. Over time, the goal is to move all children to the general education classroom and establish an ILRC which can help support the learning and behavioral needs of students requiring additional assistance to succeed in an inclusive classroom.

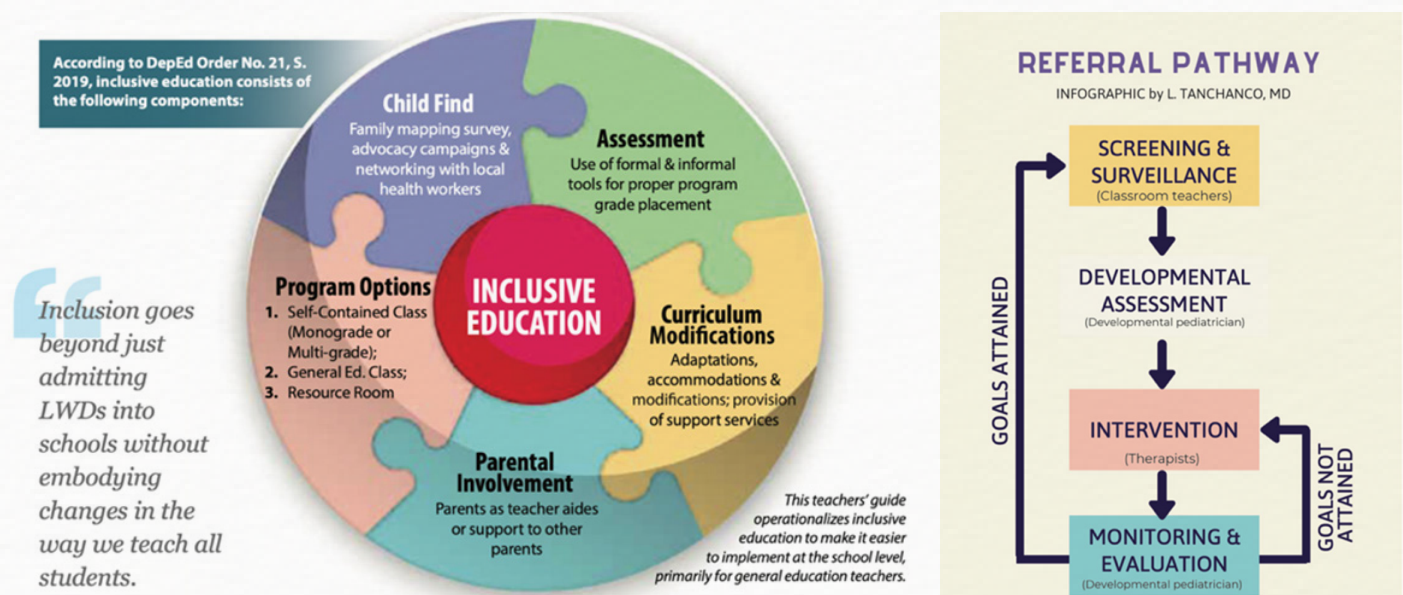
¹³ Inciong, T. & Quijano, Y. (2004). Inclusion of Children with Disabilities: The Philippines Experience. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 24 (2), 173-191, DOI: 10.1080/02188791.2004.10600208.

¹⁴ Caballa, G. (2020). Situational Analysis of Learners with Disabilities and Teacher Capacity in the time of COVID-19 under the Sustaining Education Reform Gains (SERG) Project. Philippines: Save the Children Philippines in collaboration with DepEd and with support from the Australian Government.



- Caballa (2021)

Part of the basis of this model is a DEPED memo on the *Policy Guidelines* on the K to 12 Basic Education Program.¹⁵ The figure below demonstrates the different components of inclusive education from the *Child Find System* to being referred for Intervention Program Options.



The diagram to the right illustrates the referral pathway that learners at-risk of developmental delay or disability should undergo from the time they are screened by classroom teachers. This requires capacity-building for receiving teachers to be able to detect red flags of delay or disability. They are then referred to a Developmental Pediatrician who is ideally part of the child's MDT under RA 11650. The child then goes through appropriate interventions and support services, as provided in the law, then progress is monitored and evaluated by the different members of the MDT. Findings would eventually be reflected in the learner's IEP.

For more detailed information, refer to the teacher professional development resources published by Save the Children Philippines (2021) under the Sustaining Education Reform Gains (SERG) Project.

Safeguarding the rights of children with disabilities can only be achieved when everyone involved in the implementation of RA 11650 assumes a shared accountability for every learner with a disability. Children with disabilities are the main stakeholders in this endeavor and deserve to be regarded as valuable and able in every way. If given the chance, they can overcome disabling environments and complex obstacles to the fulfillment of their aspirations. They can contribute to nation-building along with the rest of society and break down the barriers that have long held them back from showing their true potential and worth. Let us work collectively for and with children, especially those who are most vulnerable and likely to be left behind.

¹⁵ https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/DO_s2019_021.pdf

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ACT! (AMPLIFYING CHILDREN'S VOICES FOR TRANSFORMATION)

POLICY GUIDE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RA 11650

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