

3, and that is known at the Part H component of PL99-457. They gave the states five years to get their act together, to come up with a plan that would address services for children between birth and 3 years of age. We are now in the fifth year, and it's time to either opt in and get some federal assistance with the program, or to opt out and not be in compliance with the federal guidelines. As Senator Withem mentioned, we have been providing the educational services and many of the requirements of the federal law 99-457, we have already been doing in the State of Nebraska. There are three components that are slightly different, that would require us to do some additional services. One is to look at the child in the context of the family, instead of just focusing on the educational needs, but to recognize that we need to address issues related to family concerns in order to be most effective with our educational programming. The second thing that it requires, that we have not focused on in the State of Nebraska, is interagency coordination. In order to look at the family issues, we're going to have to involve more than the Department of Education, we're going to have to look at other agencies to provide these programs and activities. And so it's going to be essential to have some coordination between those agencies in order to be effective with our efforts with young children. The third component, and probably the most critical one, and the one that does cost the dollars is case management, or service coordination. And this is going to be essential to, again, maximize the effectiveness of the programs that we're providing, to avoid duplication and be most sufficient with the dollars that we do have, and to support the kind of programs that will enable families to stay intact, and to prevent the disintegration of families that often comes with the pressures of having a child with a disability. One of the projects for the last four years was to hire a consultant to look at how we could fund, particularly the issues related to service coordination. And there were several recommendations made. And one was that we would get some funding from the federal government, under the Part H initiatives. But that would not be enough. And the second recommendation was to look at Medicaid dollars, that we would look at those children we are already serving, under the '86 mandate, that are eligible for Medicaid funds, to pay for those support services, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. So we could then free up some state dollars by getting some federal Medicaid dollars, and redirect those dollars into helping to pay for the service coordination, or the case management system.