

about how to do this referral and service coordination. This would give us an opportunity to try out these ideas and see what works and doesn't work and come a little bit closer to a final plan for a statewide program. What has happened the last four years is that the Nebraska Interagency Coordinating Council has looked at a whole bunch of policy issues about how to address the mandates in 99-457 and most importantly to come up with some interagency agreements. When I first looked at this group four years ago I would not have thought they ever come to any kind of agreement and there are those that I'm sure still doubt whether or not the state agencies can work together, but we've seen quite an evolution over the last four years and we have a group of people who have worked very hard and stay true to the idea of trying to come up with the best kind of program for children and their families and are ready to do interagency coordination. In addition to the state level interagency coordination, we have 29 interagency planning teams throughout the entire State of Nebraska. Every part of Nebraska is represented through an interagency planning team and they, too, have been trying to work out ways to share information between agencies and to do child find and to identify the resources within their community and to focus on strategies for supporting families and just doing good networking and that will enable them to provide better programs for our children and families. We're not proposing that we do this simply because the federal government is saying we should do it, but because in many ways it's right. It not only maximizes the effectiveness of the programs that we already have in place, but it also addresses the issue of being efficient with our tax dollars.

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: One of the primary thrusts of this program is family focus. We are learning that we cannot just look at the child and pay attention to the child's educational needs. We could provide all kinds of educational services for that child, but if the family doesn't know where the next meal is going to come from or they are afraid that they are going to lose their home or the marriage is falling apart due to the trauma of the child with a disability, no matter what we do in terms of educational services for the child, they will have little or no effect if the family is falling apart and unable to work on whatever we recommend in terms of enhancing their development. So it's a powerful concept to think about looking at the family as a whole rather than trying to just look at the