

SENATOR JANSSEN: ...in trying to make this bill just a little bit better. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Janssen. Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I would like to again ask at least one or two questions of Senator McKenzie, if I might.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator McKenzie, will you respond?

SENATOR MCKENZIE: Yes.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Senator McKenzie, I think that all of us here today would agree that the drug and alcohol syndrome is probably going to drive up the number of children who are going to be using the special ed program. Would you agree with that?

SENATOR MCKENZIE: I would.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Okay, the question that I have that I think that I would like to have you address to some degree and that deals with if the number of...if the number of children continues to grow and when the number of dollars continues to diminish, do you think...do you feel that there's a possibility that we will end up mainstreaming a great many more of these children who have less disabilities and then deal more with those who have severe disabilities? Do you think that that is a possibility of the direction this might have to go in order to cap those dollars?

SENATOR MCKENZIE: Senator Vrtiska, actually, one of the reasons the costs have been rising is because we have been mainstreaming those multiply handicapped children into the regular classroom by parents' requests. That has driven the cost instead of reduce the cost of providing special education services. Remember, those...75 percent of the children we're talking about are not severely handicapped. They have speech and language problems and they have mild learning disabilities. The other 25 percent, of that other 25 percent it's really only 2 or 3 percent that have multiple handicaps, who require a lot of, you know, full-time attention and full-time high expense because of medical problems. And I will stop there.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Well, I'm having a little difficulty in