

FROM: THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE
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FOR RELEASE AFTER 8 P.M. FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 1968

HAYS, Kans., March 8 -- Congressman Bob Dole today said education for retarded and gifted children is a local and state responsibility requiring federal support.

Speaking at the state convention of the Council for Exceptional Children here, Dole said, "The final aim of all programs and services for these youth is that the individual receive the help he needs at the time and place he needs it."

"Shaping and implementing the programs and tailoring them to the individual," the Kansas Congressman said, "can best be handled at the local and state levels by the people who are directly concerned."

The federal role, he explained, is to stimulate state and local activity, provide support for research and facilities and help train teachers and other personnel.

Dole added, "If special education is to succeed, we must ease the already pressing demand on the public schools just to provide personnel and services for the so-called normal children."

Dole said the challenge to the local, state and federal governments is "to accelerate our programs and projects and develop new ones so that the educational needs of all children -- no matter the ability or disability -- can be met."

"But in our urgency," he cautioned, "we must not forget our purpose is still individual opportunity -- identifying the child who needs special services, referring him for special help and then providing the unique education he needs."