

Indicator 6: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

User Guide for Reporting LRE Data for Preschool Children

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that preschool children with disabilities ages 3 through 5 are educated, to the maximum extent appropriate, in their least restrictive environment (LRE) with nondisabled peers.¹ The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires states to ensure that local educational agencies (LEAs) provide a full continuum of placement options for preschool children with disabilities and that LEAs determine, collect and report Annual Performance Report (APR) Indicator 6 educational environments data for preschool children ages 3–5 (not in kindergarten). In exercising its monitoring responsibilities, the Tennessee Department of Education (department) requires LEAs to report preschool environments data using the Preschool Environments Decision Tree tool within the department's software management system, Tennessee Planning for Unique Learning and Success (TN PULSE).

The purpose of this guide is to provide instructions for determining accurate preschool educational environment classifications and for entering data into the Preschool Environments Decision Tree tool in TN PULSE. This guide also includes resources for LEAs to collect, report, analyze, and use high-quality data to improve LRE outcomes and increase inclusive learning opportunities for young children with disabilities.

Definitions:

Inclusive/Integrated services - special education and related services are provided (embedded) within the general education program (e.g., classroom, playground) with services delivered within the daily routines and activities in which all children in the class participate (e.g., direct instruction, circle time, centers). Inclusion provides equal access to instruction and participation in contextually relevant and rich learning experiences within the environment. See *Integrating Therapy into the Classroom* for examples of inclusive integrated services.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (20 U.S.C. § 1412, 34 C.F.R. § 300.114(5)(A)).

Majority of services – 50 percent or more of special education and related services are integrated within the regular early childhood program (see integrated services definition).

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) – a division of the U.S. Department of Education (USED) that provides oversight and support for entities charged with protecting the educational rights of children with disabilities, ages 3 to 22.

¹ 34 C.F.R. § 300.114; *see also* U.S. Dep't of Educ., Dear Colleague Letter: Updated Dear Colleague Letter on Preschool Least Restrictive Environments (Jan. 9, 2017),

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/idea/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/preschool-lre-dcl-1-10-17.pdf>

Definitions (continued):

Regular early childhood program – (RECP) a program that includes *at least* 50 percent of children *without* IEPs and includes public (LEA) general education preschool classrooms, private preschool classrooms, Head Start, Voluntary Pre-K (VPK), licensed group child development centers, or licensed childcare.

Residential facility – a public or privately operated residential school or residential medical facility where the student resides on an inpatient basis.

Separate school – a school designed specifically for students with disabilities in either a public or private day school setting.

Special education classroom – a classroom that includes *less than* 50 percent children *without* IEPs and may include, but is not limited to, classrooms in general school buildings, trailers/portables, childcare facilities, outpatient hospital facilities, or other community-based settings.

TN PULSE – (Tennessee Planning for Unique Learning and Success)(formerly EdPlan/EasyIEP) – the state-wide software system managed by the department that is used to collect, store, and manage data collection for students with disabilities, ages 3 to 22, as they progress through Part B of the IDEA. All LEAs access and utilize this system to maintain student records.

Indicator 6 – Preschool Environments: LRE measures the percent of preschool children ages 3-5 (not in kindergarten) with an individualized education program (IEP) or Individualized Service Plan (ISP) who are enrolled in one of the following:

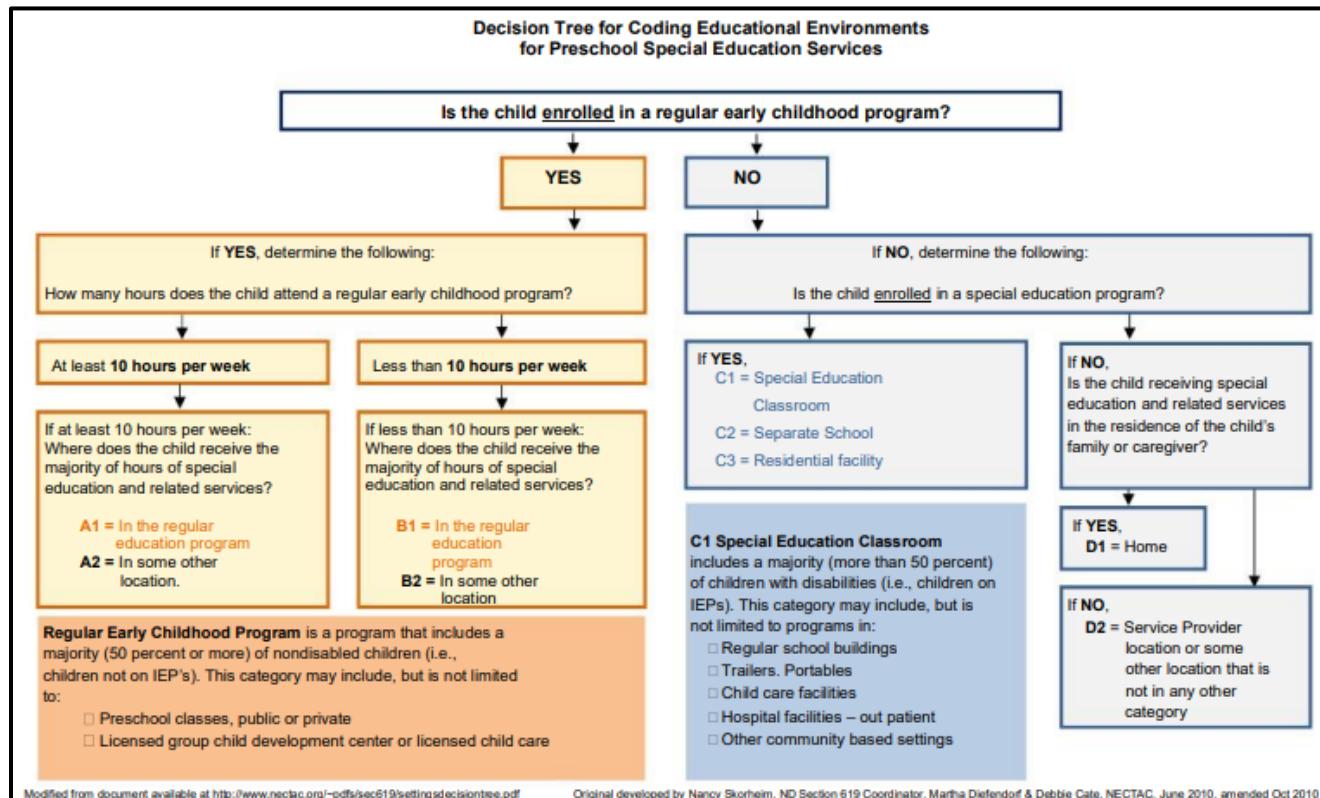
- (6a) regular early childhood program and receiving the majority (i.e., 50 percent or more) of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program;
- (6b) separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility; *or*
- (6c) are receiving special education and related services in the home.

For Indicator 6 purposes, TN PULSE does not generate the child's Indicator 6 LRE data from information included in the child's IEP or ISP. The data source for measuring the percent of preschool children who are enrolled in **and receiving the majority of services in** a general education setting (or 6A data) is derived from each LEA's December 1 – *IDEA Child Count* (formerly Table 1 and 3) report generated in TN PULSE. The *IDEA Child Count* report captures and categorizes that data by placement (environment) and by the age of the child. To meet Indicator 6 requirements, LEA staff must determine and enter the child's accurate educational placement data in the preschool section of the child's record in TN PULSE.

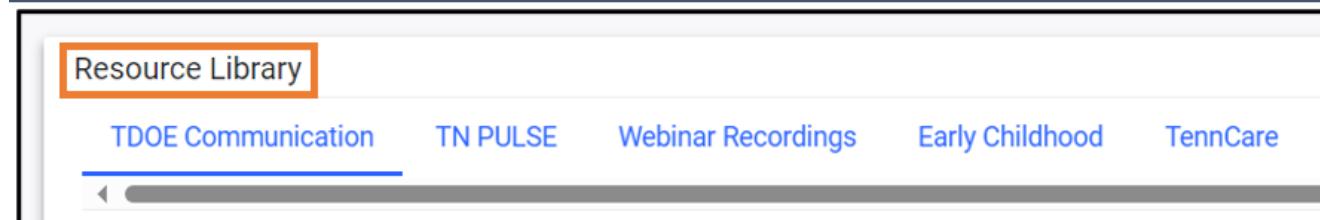
To determine and enter accurate placement data, using the *Decision Tree for Coding Preschool Educational Environments* as a guide, the IEP team responds to a series of questions within TN PULSE based on the child's placement determination and information from the family. Upon finishing the questionnaire in TN PULSE, the child's LRE placement is categorized for data collection purposes (e.g., A1: enrolled in and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program; C1: enrolled in a special education classroom).

Important Reminder: During all initial IEP meetings for preschool children, ages three through five (not in kindergarten), preschool LRE data must be entered in TN PULSE to document the child's initial placement. In addition, any time the IEP team determines a change of placement for a preschool child with disabilities, the child's preschool LRE data must be updated in TN PULSE to reflect the new placement decisions. Also, a detailed PWN must be uploaded to TN PULSE to document the IEP team's LRE placement decisions.

The *Decision Tree for Coding Educational Environments* (image below) is located in the Resource Library within the Early Childhood tab of the TN PULSE home page. Detailed instructions for access are shown below. Also, a printable version of the decision tree is located [here](#). It is recommended that LEA staff who are unfamiliar with the decision tree review the Indicator 6: Preschool LRE Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for additional guidance on the requirements of preschool LRE and Indicator 6 data collection.



For accessing the Educational Environments Decision Tree in TN PULSE, please navigate to the main page of TN PULSE and scroll down to the Resource Library section.



Next, click on the Early Childhood tab and scroll down to the Early Childhood Educational Environments Decision Tree document.

Resource Library

General Files TDOE Communication TN PULSE Webinar Recordings **Early Childhood** 504 TDOE IEP Monitoring

[Indicator_6_Preschool_LRE_Data_Collection_User_Guide_2022_12_28.pdf](#)

[Indicator_6_Preschool_LRE_FAQ_2022_12_28.pdf](#)

[Preschool_LRE_Data_Collection_Worksheet_2022_12_29_fillable.pdf](#)

[Preschool_LRE_Inclusive_Classroom_Models_2022_12_29.pdf](#)

[Early_Childhood_Educational_Environments_Decision_Tree__Updated_August_2022.pdf](#)

[Guidance_Early_Childhood_Event_Dates_032718.docx](#)

Steps for entering early childhood environment (preschool LRE) data into TN PULSE

1. After opening the child's TN PULSE record, click "Student Info" and scroll down to access "Preschool" in the drop-down menu.

TN | PULSE

STUDENTS ▾ SCHOOL SYSTEM ▾ RESTRAINT/ISOLATION TRACKER MY ACCOUNT ▾

STUDENT INFO ▾ DOCUMENTS ELIGIBILITY IEP PROCESS

2. Next, click on the "Preschool LRE" tab.

Transition Early Childhood Outcomes **Preschool LRE**

A regular preschool program includes at least 50% typically developing children (children without IEPs)

Includes	Does not include
Public or private preschool classes	Babysitters
Licensed child care centers	Neighbors
Licensed family and group child care homes	Relative
Head Start	Home
Before and after school programs	Mother's Day Out

ENTER ED ENVIRONMENT DATA

VIEW CURRENT/PREVIOUS PLACEMENT

3. Next, click "Enter Ed Environment Data."

Transition Early Childhood Outcomes Preschool LRE

A regular preschool program includes at least 50% typically developing children (children without IEPs)

Includes	Does not include
Public or private preschool classes	Babysitters
Licensed child care centers	Neighbors
Licensed family and group child care homes	Relative
Head Start	Home
Before and after school programs	Mother's Day Out

ENTER ED ENVIRONMENT DATA

VIEW CURRENT/PREVIOUS PLACEMENT

4. The first decision tree question will populate: *“Is the student enrolled in a regular preschool program?”* Choose “yes” or “no” based on the definition of a regular preschool program and the examples listed.

Note: Consider any regular early childhood program the child is enrolled in during or outside of the school day. It is important to ask the parent about all the early childhood programs their child may be enrolled in during the school week. For more information, see question #18 in this FAQ document.

A regular preschool program includes at least 50% typically developing children (children without IEPs)

Includes	Does not include
Public or private preschool classes	Babysitters
Licensed child care centers	Neighbors
Licensed family and group child care homes	Relative
Head Start	Home
Before and after school programs	Mother's Day Out

Is the student enrolled in a regular preschool program?

A. If the child is enrolled in a regular early childhood program, select “Yes.”

A regular preschool program includes at least 50% typically developing children (children without IEPs)

Includes	Does not include
Public or private preschool classes	Babysitters
Licensed child care centers	Neighbors
Licensed family and group child care homes	Relative
Head Start	Home
Before and after school programs	Mother's Day Out

Is the student enrolled in a regular preschool program?

- Use the drop-down menu to select how many hours per week the child is enrolled in an LEA-provided regular early childhood program and how many hours enrolled in a parent-provided program. A parent-provided program is a program that the parent pays for such as an after-school program. Note: select “none” when appropriate. A response is required for each category.

Number of LEA-provided regular early childhood program hours per week: <input type="button" value=""/>	Number of parent-provided regular early childhood program hours per week: <input type="button" value=""/>
Location of services: <input type="button" value="Select -"/>	Enter Name of Program Here: <input type="text"/>
If location not listed, enter location name here: <input type="text"/>	

- Select from the drop-down menu the program name (e.g., Brown Elementary) or provide the name of the program.

Number of LEA-provided regular early childhood program hours per week: <input type="button" value=""/>	Number of parent-provided regular early childhood program hours per week: <input type="button" value=""/>
Location of services: <input type="button" value="Select -"/>	Enter Name of Program Here: <input type="text"/>
If location not listed, enter location name here: <input type="text"/>	

- Next, answer the question “Where does the student receive the majority of special education and/or related services?”

Note: “Majority” is defined as 50 percent or more. Services received in the “regular education program” include services provided within typical daily activities alongside classroom peers (e.g., circle time, centers, library) and settings (e.g., pre-K classroom, playground, cafeteria). “Outside of the regular education program” means the child is removed (e.g., pull-out, special education classroom, therapy room) from typical daily activities and settings. Providing intervention in an area of the regular classroom removed from peers is considered “outside of the regular education program.”

Where does the student receive the majority of special education and/or related services?

Regular Education Program Outside of the Regular Education Program

- Once you have answered the majority of services question, click “Save and Continue.”

Number of LEA-provided regular early childhood program hours per week: Number of parent-provided regular early childhood program hours per week:

Location of services: Enter Name of Program Here:

Where does the student receive the majority of special education and/or related services? Regular Education Program Outside of the Regular Education Program

Placement decision:

VIEW CURRENT/PREVIOUS PLACEMENT

CLEAR ALL **CANCEL**

SAVE AND CONTINUE

- TN PULSE will open the “confirm early childhood placement event” page and show the information entered and the placement classification (e.g., A1, B1, A2, B2) and description. If the placement category is correct, click “Confirm Placement.”

Where does the student receive the majority of special education and/or related services? Regular Education Program

Placement decision: A1

Note:
A1: This student will be classified as attending Regular Education >10 hours per week with services delivered in Regular Education program.
If you think that this is an incorrect categorization, please click Back to return to the previous page.

BACK **CONFIRM PLACEMENT**

Note: If all required information has *not* been provided, an error message will appear. Data entry has not been completed until you have confirmed the placement category and TN PULSE has returned to the “enter educational environment data” page.

B. If the child is not enrolled in a regular early childhood program, select "No."

A regular preschool program includes at least 50% typically developing children (children without IEPs)

Includes

Public or private preschool classes
Licensed child care centers
Licensed family and group child care homes
Head Start
Before and after school programs

Does not include

Babysitters
Neighbors
Relative
Home
Mother's Day Out

Is the student enrolled in a regular preschool program?

No

- If you answer "No" to the enrollment question, the following question will appear: "*Is the student enrolled in a special education program (e.g., special education classroom, separate school, or residential facility)?*"

Is the student enrolled in a special education program? (e.g., special education classroom, separate school, or residential facility.)

Yes

- If you answer "Yes" to the special education program enrollment question, you will be asked to select which of the three settings the child is enrolled in (i.e., a special education classroom, separate school, or residential facility). If the child is enrolled in a special education classroom, select the location of the program from the drop-down menu or provide the name. If the student is enrolled in a separate school or residential facility provide that name. Click "Save and Continue."

Note: None of these settings can be the correct categorization if the child is *also* enrolled in a regular preschool program. A special education classroom is defined as a classroom that includes more than 50 percent of children with disabilities (i.e., children with IEPs).

Is the student enrolled in a special education program? (e.g., special education classroom, separate school, or residential facility.)

Yes

Special Education Classroom
 Separate School
 Residential Facility

Test School

Placement decision:

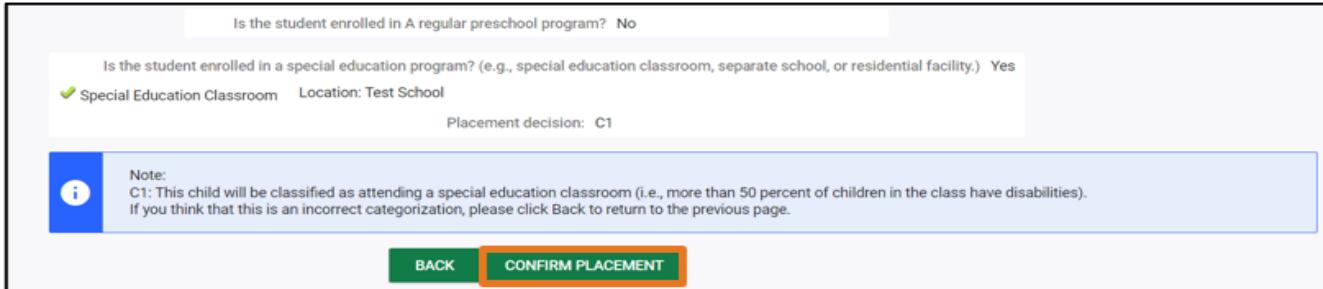
VIEW CURRENT/PREVIOUS PLACEMENT

CLEAR ALL

CANCEL

SAVE AND CONTINUE

- Next, TN PULSE will open the “confirm placement” event page and show the information entered and the placement category (e.g., C1, C2, C3) and description. If the placement category is listed correctly, click “Confirm Placement.”



Is the student enrolled in a regular preschool program? No

Is the student enrolled in a special education program? (e.g., special education classroom, separate school, or residential facility.) Yes

✓ Special Education Classroom Location: Test School

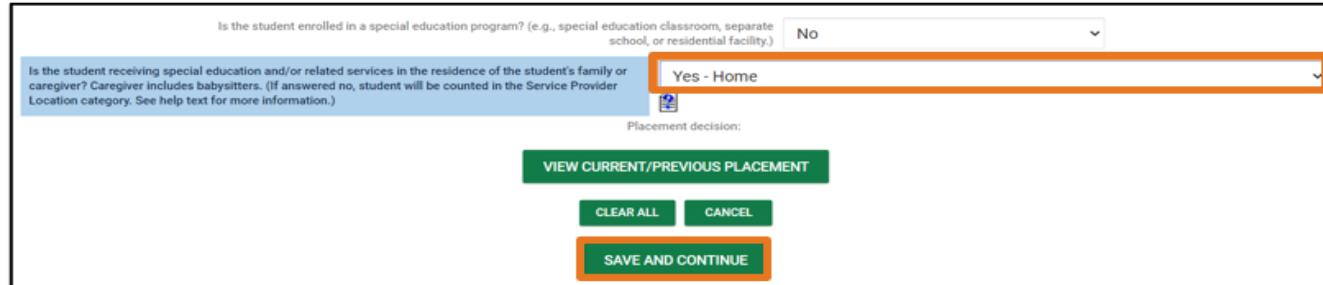
Placement decision: C1

Note:
C1: This child will be classified as attending a special education classroom (i.e., more than 50 percent of children in the class have disabilities). If you think that this is an incorrect categorization, please click Back to return to the previous page.

BACK **CONFIRM PLACEMENT**

Note: If all required information has *not* been provided, an error message will appear. Data entry has not been completed until you have confirmed the placement category and TN PULSE has returned to the “enter educational environment data” page.

- If you answer “no” to the question “*Is the student enrolled in a special education program?*,” you will be asked if the child receives special education or related services in the residence of the child’s family or caregiver. Caregivers include babysitters. If you answer “yes” indicating that services are being provided in the home, click “Save and Continue” and then “Confirm Placement.”



Is the student enrolled in a special education program? (e.g., special education classroom, separate school, or residential facility.) No

Is the student receiving special education and/or related services in the residence of the student's family or caregiver? Caregiver includes babysitters. (If answered no, student will be counted in the Service Provider Location category. See help text for more information.) Yes - Home

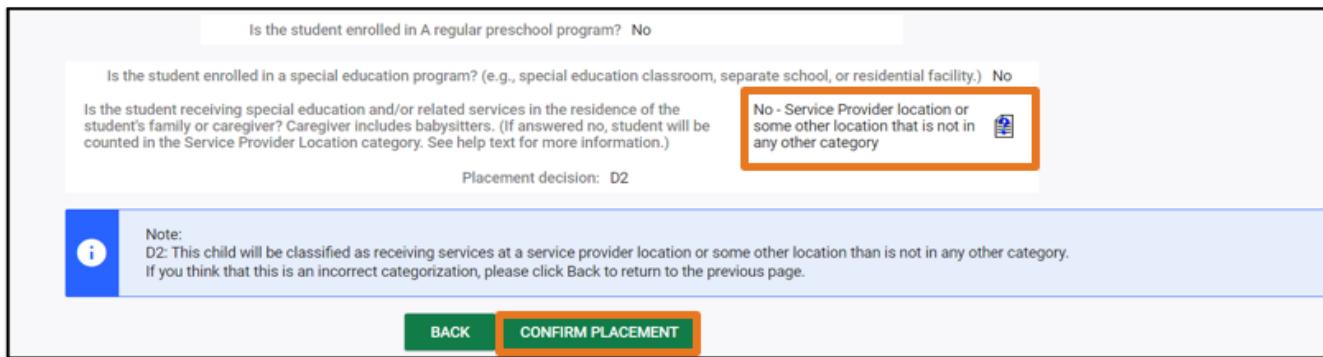
Placement decision:

VIEW CURRENT/PREVIOUS PLACEMENT

CLEAR ALL **CANCEL**

SAVE AND CONTINUE

- If the child does *not* receive services in the home, the child’s placement category will be “*service provider location or some other location that is not in any other category*” (e.g., drop-in services). If this category is correct, click “Confirm Placement.”



Is the student enrolled in A regular preschool program? No

Is the student enrolled in a special education program? (e.g., special education classroom, separate school, or residential facility.) No

Is the student receiving special education and/or related services in the residence of the student's family or caregiver? Caregiver includes babysitters. (If answered no, student will be counted in the Service Provider Location category. See help text for more information.) No - Service Provider location or some other location that is not in any other category

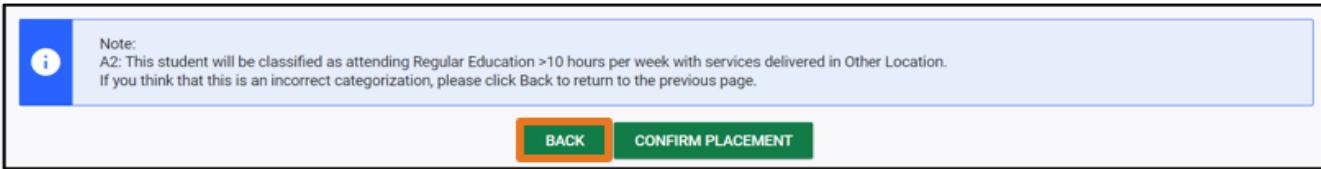
Placement decision: D2

Note:
D2: This child will be classified as receiving services at a service provider location or some other location than is not in any other category. If you think that this is an incorrect categorization, please click Back to return to the previous page.

BACK **CONFIRM PLACEMENT**

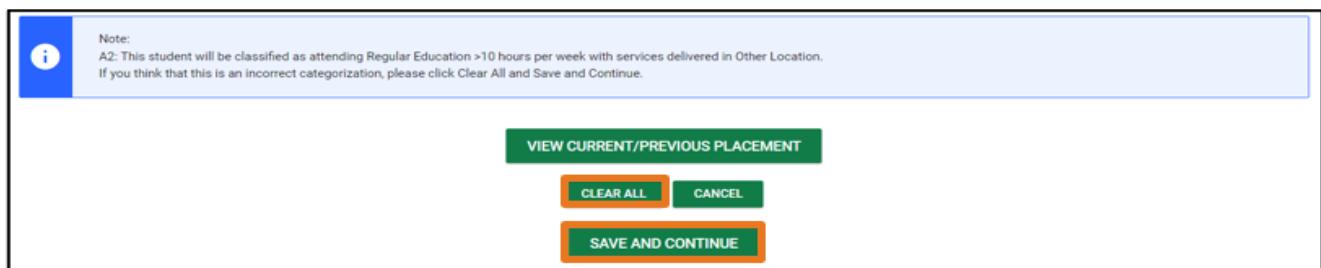
Note: If the student is enrolled in a regular preschool program or in a special education program, neither D1 nor D2 is the appropriate educational environment.

- If incorrect information has been entered, use the "Back" button to return to the previous screen. To reenter correction information, select "Clear All" and then "Save and Continue" to return to the "Enter Ed Environment Data" screen.



Note:
A2: This student will be classified as attending Regular Education >10 hours per week with services delivered in Other Location.
If you think that this is an incorrect categorization, please click Back to return to the previous page.

BACK **CONFIRM PLACEMENT**



Note:
A2: This student will be classified as attending Regular Education >10 hours per week with services delivered in Other Location.
If you think that this is an incorrect categorization, please click Clear All and Save and Continue.

VIEW CURRENT/PREVIOUS PLACEMENT

CLEAR ALL **CANCEL**

SAVE AND CONTINUE

Note: If all required information has *not* been provided, an error message will appear. Data entry has not been completed until you have confirmed the placement category and TN PULSE has returned to the "enter educational environment data" page.

Contact Information

Early Childhood Special Education |
TDOE.EarlyLearning@tn.gov

IDEA Data Team |

IDEA.Data.Support@tn.gov

Additional Indicator 6 Resources

- [AnLar – Tennessee's Technical Assistance Network \(TN-TAN\)](#)
- [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\): Inclusion](#)
- [Early Childhood Special Education \(ECSE\) webpage](#)
- [Indicator 6: Preschool LRE \(Federal Programs Institute Presentation\)](#)
- [Annual Performance Report Local Determinations Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [Annual Performance Report Local Determinations Process Guide](#)
- [APR Indicator 6 Preschool LRE Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Preschool LRE Inclusive Classroom Models](#)
- [Indicator 6: Preschool LRE Data Collection Worksheet \(companion to this User Guide\)](#)
- [IDEA Data Center \(IDC\) Preschool Environments Toolkit](#)