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 the 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 in EasyIEP.

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 EasyIEP. 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:**
>
> **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 3–22 as they progress through IDEA Part B. All LEAs access and utilize this system to maintain student records.
>
> **Integrated/embedded services** – special education and related services are provided within the regular 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., circle time, centers).
>
> **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).
>
> **Regular early childhood program** – a program that includes *at least* 50 percent of children *without* Individualized Education Program (IEPs) and includes Head Start, public or private preschool classes, 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 regular school buildings, trailers/portables, childcare facilities, outpatient hospital facilities, or other community-based settings.
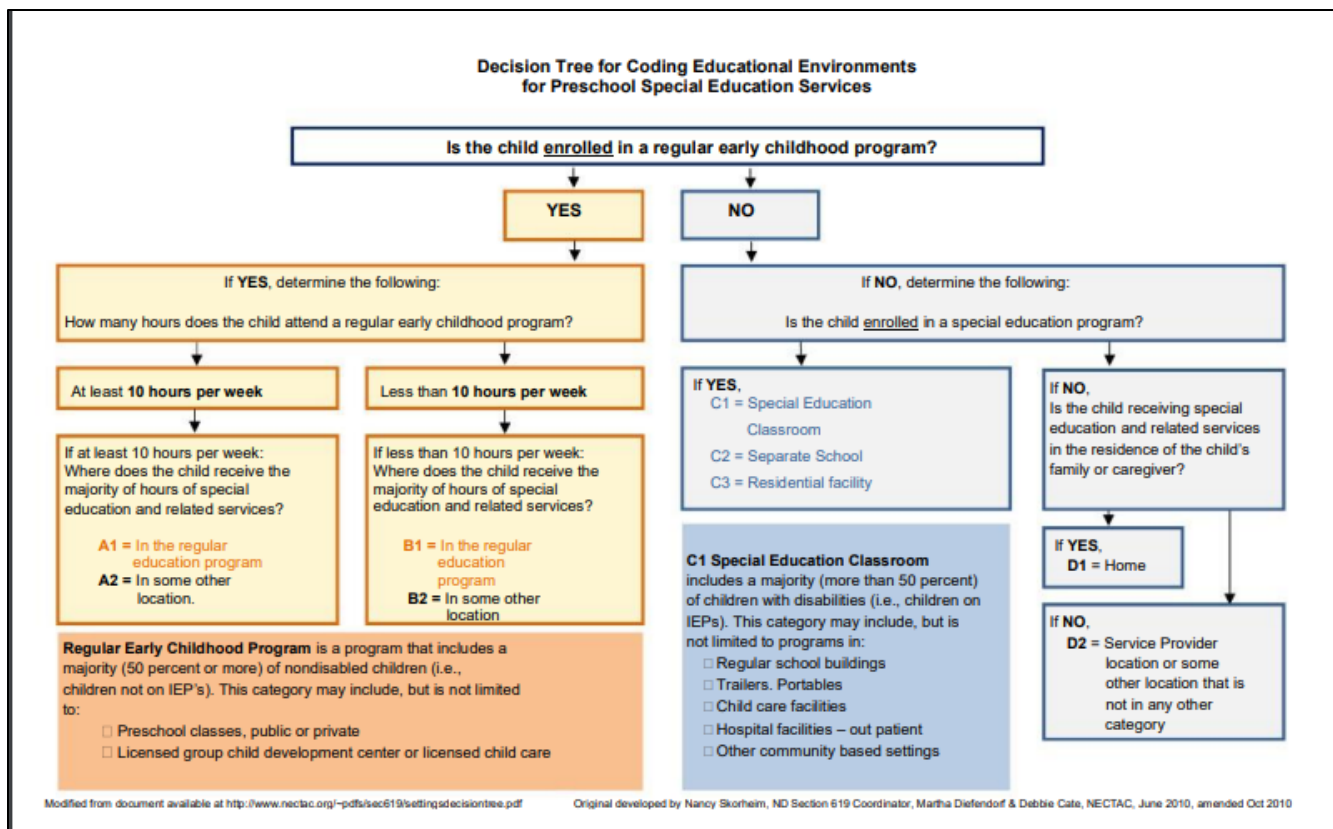
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[1] 34 C.F.R. § 300.114; *see also* U.S. Dep't of Educ., Dear Colleague Letter: Updated Dear Colleague Letter on Preschool Least Restrictive Environments (Jan. 9, 2017), https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/idea/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/preschool-lre-dcl-1-10-17.pdf

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Indicator 6 – Preschool Environments: LRE measures the percent of preschool children ages 3-5 (not in kindergarten) with an IEP who are enrolled in <u>one</u> 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; <u>*or*</u>
- (6c) are receiving special education and related services in the home.

A decision tree is used to provide a structure for collecting Indicator 6 data. Classifying each student's preschool LRE requires answering a set of questions that replicate a process established by the federally funded Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA). ECTA developed a "decision tree" that the department adapted for EasyIEP to report Indicator 6: Preschool LRE data to OSEP. At the end of a series of Yes/No questions, the educational environment will be categorized for the student and stored in EasyIEP. The early childhood environment data (on the EasyIEP early childhood tab) ***must be completed at <u>each</u> IEP meeting for preschool children whose age at the start date of the IEP or the date of the addendum is between age three and the day before the child's sixth birthday.***

Decision Tree for Coding Educational Environments for Preschool Special Education Services

Is the child <u>enrolled</u> in a regular early childhood program?

YES — If **YES**, determine the following: How many hours does the child attend a regular early childhood program?

At least **10 hours per week** — If at least 10 hours per week: Where does the child receive the majority of hours of special education and related services?
A1 = In the regular education program
A2 = In some other location.

Less than **10 hours per week** — If less than 10 hours per week: Where does the child receive the majority of hours of special education and related services?
B1 = In the regular education program
B2 = In some other location

Regular Early Childhood Program is a program that includes a majority (50 percent or more) of nondisabled children (i.e., children not on IEP's). This category may include, but is not limited to:
☐ Preschool classes, public or private
☐ Licensed group child development center or licensed child care

NO — If **NO**, determine the following: Is the child <u>enrolled</u> in a special education program?

If **YES**,
C1 = Special Education Classroom
C2 = Separate School
C3 = Residential facility

C1 Special Education Classroom includes a majority (more than 50 percent) of children with disabilities (i.e., children on IEPs). This category may include, but is not limited to programs in:
☐ Regular school buildings
☐ Trailers. Portables
☐ Child care facilities
☐ Hospital facilities – out patient
☐ Other community based settings

If **NO**, Is the child receiving special education and related services in the residence of the child's family or caregiver?

If **YES**, **D1** = Home

If **NO**, **D2** = Service Provider location or some other location that is not in any other category

Modified from document available at http://www.nectac.org/~pdfs/sec619/settingsdecisiontree.pdf   Original developed by Nancy Skorheim, ND Section 619 Coordinator, Martha Diefendorf & Debbie Cate, NECTAC, June 2010, amended Oct 2010

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The Preschool Environments Decision Tree is located on the Early Childhood tab of the documents section on the main page of EasyIEP. Detailed instructions for access are shown below. Also, it is recommended that LEA staff who are unfamiliar with the decision tree review the Indicator 6: Preschool LRE Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document and watch the Indicator 6 Data Collection Training Webinar for more information.

> **Note:** Early childhood environments data must be completed at **each** IEP meeting for a preschool child who is age 3 through 5 (not in Kindergarten).

Steps for entering early childhood environment data within EasyIEP

1. After opening the child's EasyIEP record, click "Early Childhood" to access the early childhood environments page.
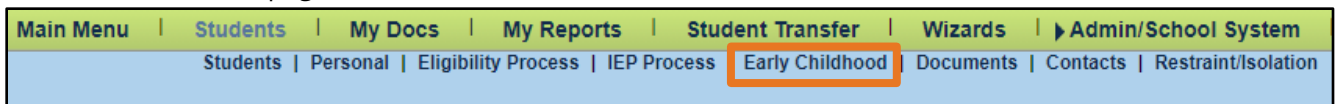
2. Next, click "*Enter Ed Environment Data*."
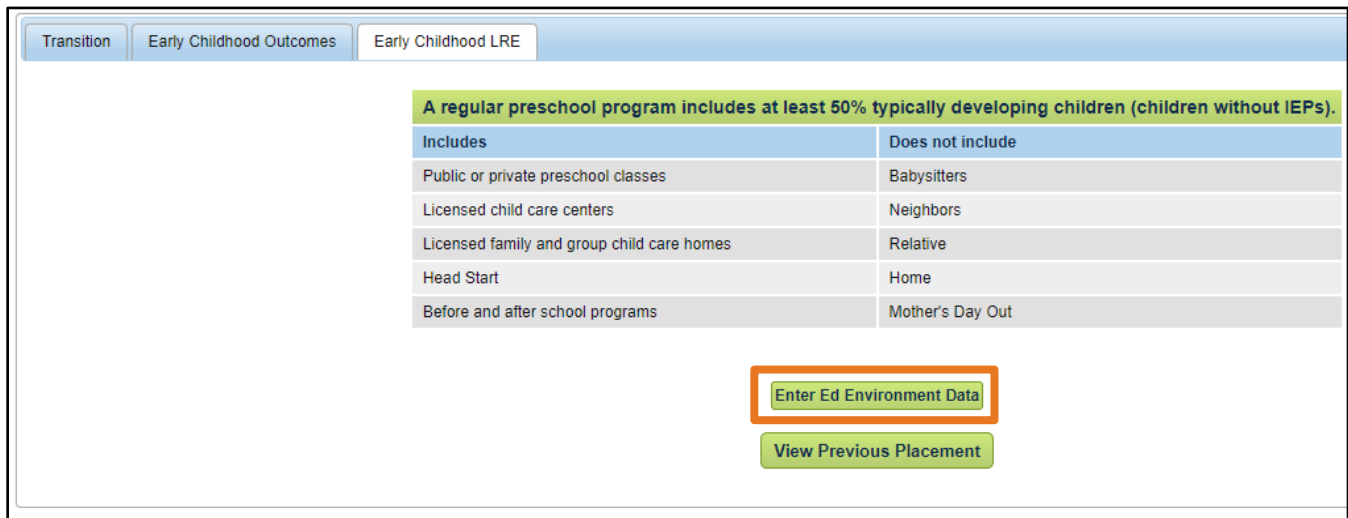
3. The first decision tree question will populate: *"Is the student enrolled in a regular early childhood program?"* Choose "*yes*" or "*no*" based on the definition of a regular early childhood program and the examples listed.

> **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 #14 in this FAQ document.

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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 early childhood program? [▾]

A. If the child is enrolled in a regular early childhood program:

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 early childhood program? [Yes ▾]

1. 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:	[▾]		Number of parent-provided regular early childhood program hours per week:	[▾]
Location of services:	- Select - ▾		Enter Name of Program Here:	[ ]
If location not listed, enter location name here:	[ ]			

2. 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:	[▾]		Number of parent-provided regular early childhood program hours per week:	[▾]
Location of services:	- Select - ▾		Enter Name of Program Here:	[ ]
If location not listed, enter location name here:	[ ]			

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3. Next, answer the question "*Where does the student receive the majority of special education and/or related services?*". The 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, snack, 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 and ongoing activities 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

4. Once you have answered the majority of the services question, click "save and continue."

Number of LEA-provided regular early childhood program hours per week:	20.0 or more ▾		Number of parent-provided regular early childhood program hours per week:	None ▾
Location of services:	Test School ▾		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 Previous Placement

Clear All **Cancel**

Save and Continue

5. EasyIEP 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**

6. 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 EasyIEP has returned to the "enter educational environment data" page.

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B. If the child is <u>not</u> enrolled in a regular early childhood program:

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 early childhood program? [No ▾]

1. 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)?*"
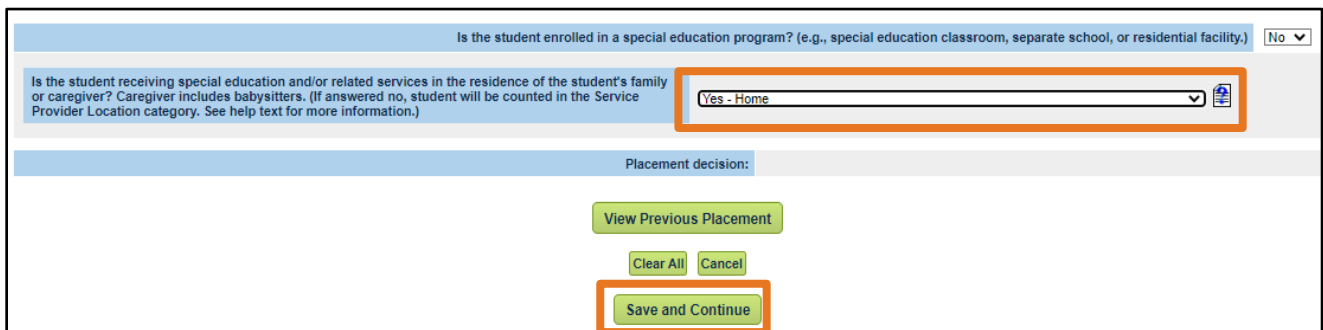
Is the student enrolled in a special education program? (e.g., special education classroom, separate school, or residential facility.) [▾]

Placement decision:

2. If you answer *"yes"* to the special education program 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). **Note that none of these settings can be the correct categorization if the child is also enrolled in a regular early childhood program.**
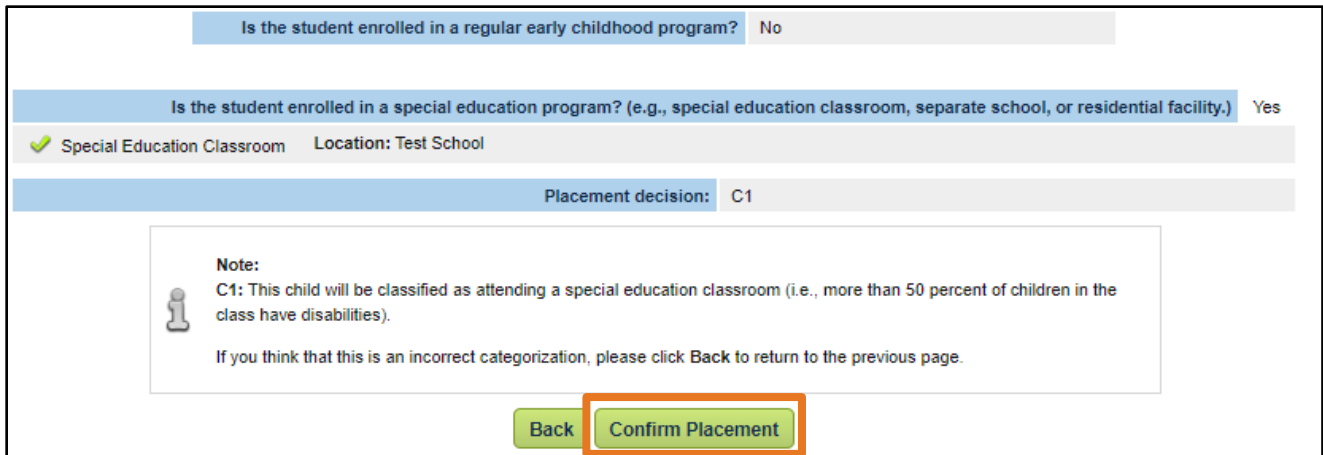
A special education classroom is defined as a classroom that includes more than 50 percent of children with disabilities (i.e., children with IEPs). If the child is enrolled in a special education classroom, select the location of the program from the drop-down menu or provide the name. If the student is enrolled in a separate school or residential facility provide that name. Click "Save and Continue."

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

- ● Special Education Classroom [Test School ▾]
- ○ Separate School
- ○ Residential Facility

Placement decision:

[View Previous Placement]

[Clear All] [Cancel]

[Save and Continue]

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3. Next, you will see the placement category (e.g., C1, C2, C3) and description. If the placement category is correct, click "confirm placement."

4. 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 decision, and EasyIEP has returned to the "enter educational environment data" page.
5. 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" services are being provided in the home, click "save and continue" and then "confirm placement."

6. 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."

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Note: If the student *is* enrolled in a regular early childhood program or a special education program, a "No" response must also be selected for the question, "Is the student receiving special education and/or related services in the residence of the student's family or caregiver?"

If the required information has not been provided, an error message will appear. Data entry has not been completed until you have confirmed the placement decision, and EasyIEP has returned to the "enter educational environment data" page.

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Additional Indicator 6 Resources:

- APR Indicator 6 Preschool LRE Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Preschool LRE Inclusive Classroom Models
- AnLar – Tennessee's Technical Assistance Network (TN-TAN)
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA): Inclusion
- Indicator 6 Data Collection Training Webinar: Early Childhood Environments/Preschool LRE
- Indicator 6: Preschool LRE Data Collection Worksheet (companion to this User Guide)
- IDEA Data Center (IDC) Preschool Environments Toolkit – includes materials and resources that provide support to LEAs to collect, report, analyze, and use preschool environments data.

For Indicator 6 technical assistance, contact your APR Support Team Divisional Consultant:

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