Inclusion of Preschool Aged Children with IEPs

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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Requirements for Services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

* Office of Special Education (OSEP) Preschool LRE Letter (Feb. 29, 2012)
  * “The LRE requirements under Part B of the IDEA state a strong preference for educating children with disabilities in regular classes alongside their peers without disabilities. The term “regular class” includes a preschool setting with typically developing peers.”
IDEA Results

Equality of Opportunity
- Opportunities to be included in all aspects of the community and protected from attempts at segregation

Full Participation

Economic Self-Sufficiency
- Opportunities to engage in income producing work that contributes to household

Independent Living
- Opportunities to fully participate in decision making and to experience autonomy in making choices
Preschool Inclusion: The Facts

* Inclusion benefits children with and without disabilities.
* Children with disabilities can be effectively educated in inclusive programs using specialized instruction.
* Families of children with and without disabilities generally have positive views of inclusion.
* Inclusion is not more expensive.
* Children with disabilities do not need to be “ready.”
Preschool Inclusion: The Facts

- Research is clear: it’s effective
- IDEA is clear: it’s preferred
- The profession is clear: DEC/NAEYC position statement
Early Childhood Inclusion:

A Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
"Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society."

(Division of Early Childhood & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009, p. 2)
“The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include:

* a sense of belonging and membership,
* positive social relationships and friendships, and
* development and learning to reach their full potential.”

“The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are…

*access, participation, and supports.”

(Division of Early Childhood & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009, p. 2)
To meet Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requirements under IDEA, ISBE must submit a State Performance Plan (SPP) and an Annual Performance Report (APR) every year.

ISBE reports on 20 indicators in the SPP/APR.

The EE Codes are used to report data under Indicator 6 - Preschool LRE.
SPP/APR Indicator 6

* Percent of children 3 through 5 with IEPs attending:

  * Indicator 6A: Regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program.

  * Indicator 6B: Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.
EE Codes and Indicator 6A Data

- Children with IEPs attending regular early childhood programs and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood programs. (EE Codes 30 & 32)

- The desired direction of change for these data would be represented by a percentage increase.
Children with IEPs in PFA classrooms

* Compliance Checklist requirements:
  * Children with disabilities participate in a variety of activities with supplementary aids, services and instructional strategies
  * Staff attend and participate in IEP meetings
  * Staff participate in professional development activities related to providing services to children with IEPs in the regular early childhood classroom
  * Special education supports and services are provided in the PFA classroom and embedded into the activities and routines of the day.
Children with IEPs attending separate special education classes, separate schools or residential facilities. (EE Codes 23, 24, 25)

The desired direction of change for these data would be represented by a percentage decrease.
There’s an app for that!

Educational Environment Codes for Preschoolers

Educational Environment (EE) codes tell what type of early childhood education program a child attends and where their services are provided.

NEW!

An application to generate EE Codes for districts in Illinois has just been launched. A User's Guide can be downloaded here. To use the application visit ec-appecsix.com.
Does the child attend regular early childhood program?

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?
    - **30 – in the regular early childhood program**
    - **31 – 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?
    - **32 – in the regular early childhood program**
    - **33 – in some other location**

**Definitions: Regular Early Childhood Program** is a program that includes a majority (at least 50 percent) of nondisabled children (i.e., children not on IEPs). This category may include, but is not limited to:

- Head Start
- Kindergarten, public or private
- Preschool classes, public or private
- Group child development center or child care

If **NO**, determine the following:

Is the child attending a special education program?

If **YES**:

- **23 – Separate Class**
- **24 – Separate School**
- **25 – Residential facility**

Definitions: **23 – Separate Class** is a special education classroom which includes a majority (at least 50%) 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 the majority of special education and related services in the residence of the child’s family or care giver?

If **YES**, 26 – Home

If **NO**, 27 Service Provider Location - Is the child receiving the majority of special education and related services in service provider location or other location not in any other category?

**SPP/APR Indicator 6B**: Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility. \((23 + 24 + 25 \text{ divided by total number of children 3-5 with IEPs x 100})\)

NECTAC and Nancy Skorheim, Section 619 Coordinator, ND; amended for IL May, 2013
ISBE Technical Assistance Projects That Provide Help with Preschool Inclusion

* Early CHOICES - www.eclre.org
* STAR NET
  * Northwest/Central Regions I & III - www.starnet.org
  * Northern Region II - http://www.thecenterweb.org/starnet
  * Southern Region IV – www.roe.stclair.k12.il.us/starnet
  * City of Chicago Region V - www.starnetchicago.org
  * Region VI - http://www.swcccase.org/StarNet