



California Early Childhood  
Special Education Network



**Funded by the California Department of Education (CDE),  
Special Education Division**

**Indicator 6: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

**September 11, 2026**





**CALECSE**  
California Early Childhood  
Special Education Network

# About CalECSE



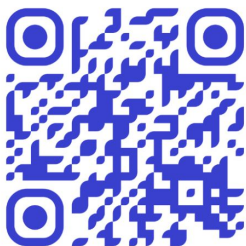
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Supporting Educators.  
Strengthening Partnerships.  
Improving Outcomes.

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## California Early Childhood Special Education Network (CalECSE)

A CDE-funded technical assistance project supporting local education agencies (LEAs), Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA), county offices of education (COEs), and agency partners through:

- Professional learning
- Technical assistance
- Evidence-based resources
- Cross-agency collaboration

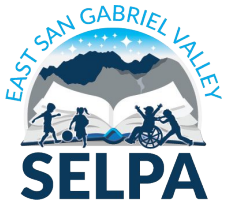
## Mission

Strengthen early childhood systems to improve outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families.



**CALECSE**  
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Special Education Network

# Leadership Team



**Scott Turner**  
Co-Executive  
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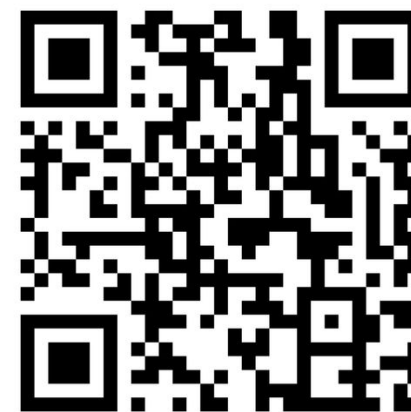


**André Eng**  
Program Specialist,  
Birth to Three



# Tiny Steps to Golden Futures Symposium Registration is Open

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for two days of exceptional  
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# Today's Presenter

**Heather DiFede**

Exemplar Lead, Data Governance

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# Overview of Indicator 6



Indicator 6 is divided into three subindicators:

- 6a Preschool: Regular Setting
- 6b Preschool: Separate Setting
- 6c Preschool: Home

This indicator measures the extent to which preschool children with disabilities receive special education and related services in inclusive environments.

# Overview: Indicator 6a

# 6

## State Performance Plan Indicator **6a**: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment, Regular Setting

Indicator 6 is a performance indicator that utilizes three components to measure whether preschool students with disabilities are educated within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). 6a measures the percent of children with disabilities ages 3 through 5 (excluding 5-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten or transitional kindergarten) attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program.

What is the data source? Indicator 6a uses data from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) Fall 1/Census Day submission. This indicator is reported by the District of Special Education Accountability.

# How is Indicator 6a calculated?

***# of students with disabilities ages 3-5 enrolled in preschool, attending a regular early childhood program, and receiving the majority of services in the same location\****

***Total # of students with disabilities ages 3-5 enrolled in preschool within the LEA***

***X 100***

# Overview: Indicator 6b

6

## State Performance Plan Indicator **6b**: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment, Separate Setting

Indicator 6 is a performance indicator that utilizes three components to measure whether preschool students with disabilities are educated within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). 6b measures the percent of children with disabilities ages 3 through 5 years (excluding 5-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten or transitional kindergarten) and attending a separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility.

What is the data source? Indicator 6b uses data from the CALPADS Fall 1/Census Day submission. This indicator is reported by the District of Special Education Accountability.

Source: System Improvement Leads. 2024. *2024–2025 SPPI Guide*. <https://systemimprovement.org/r/2024-2025-sppi-guide>

# How is Indicator 6b calculated?

$$\left( \frac{\text{\# of students with disabilities ages 3-5 enrolled in preschool and attending a separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility}}{\text{Total \# of students with disabilities ages 3-5 enrolled in preschool within the LEA}} \right) \times 100$$

# Overview: Indicator 6c



# 6

## State Performance Plan Indicator **6c**: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment, Home Setting

Indicator 6 is a performance indicator that utilizes three components to measure whether preschool students with disabilities are educated within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). 6c measures the percent of children with disabilities ages 3 through 5 years (excluding 5-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten or transitional kindergarten) enrolled in a preschool program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the home.

Data Source: Indicator 6c uses data from the CALPADS Fall 1/Census Day submission. This indicator is reported by the District of Special Education Accountability.

Source: System Improvement Leads. 2024. *2024–2025 SPPI Guide*. <https://systemimprovement.org/r/2024-2025-sppi-guide>

# How is Indicator 6c calculated?

*# of students with disabilities ages 3-5 enrolled  
in preschool and receiving the majority of  
services in the home*

*Total # of students with disabilities ages 3-5  
enrolled in preschool within the LEA*

*X 100*

# Indicator 6 Targets

| Indicator 6 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 6a Target   | 39%  | 41%  | 43%  | 45%  | 47%  | 49%  |
| 6b Target   | 33%  | 31%  | 29%  | 27%  | 25%  | 23%  |
| 6c Target   | 3.5% | 3.5% | 3.5% | 3.5% | 3.5% | 3.4% |

# Educational Setting: Offer of Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)



## Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):

----Select One----

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

### The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:

☐ Same as above ☒ Different from above

### Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater

☐ Yes ☐ No

### Will the student's Preschool Program Setting change within the IEP year?

☐ Yes ☐ No

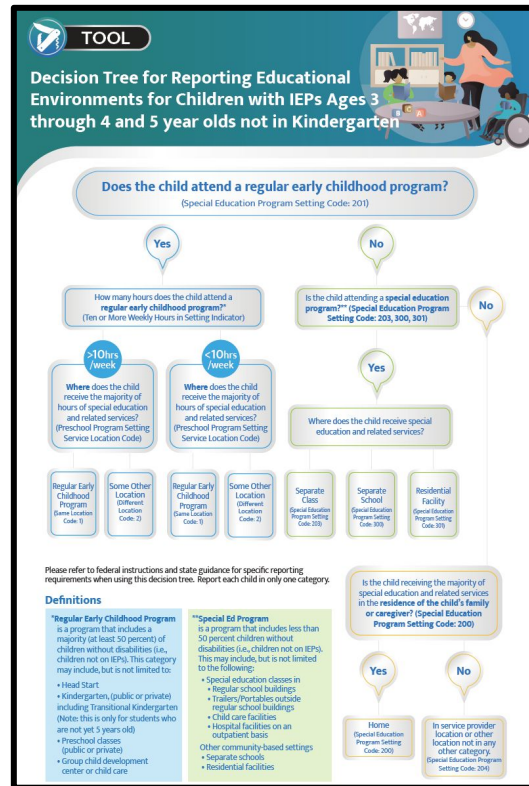
## Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):

----Select One----

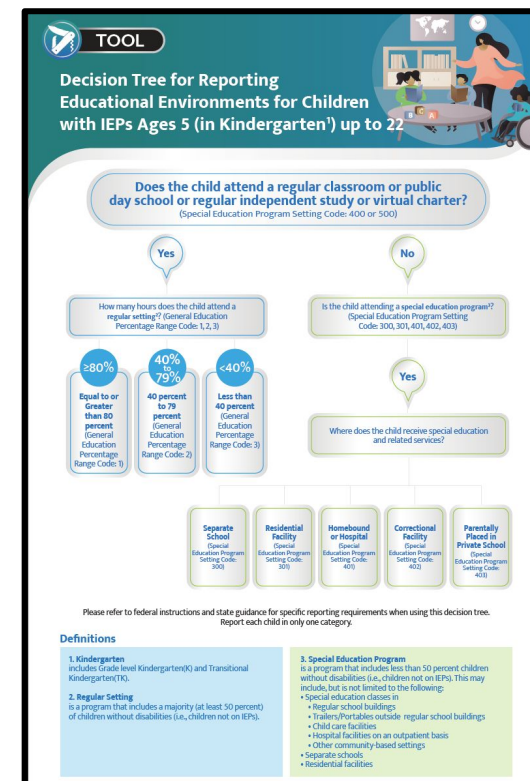
----Select One----

- 200 - Home
- 201 - Regular Early Childhood Program
- 203 - Separate Class
- 204 - Service Provider Location
- 300 - Separate School
- 301 - Residential Facility

# Decision Trees



Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children with IEPs Ages 3 through 4 and 5 year olds not in kindergarten is available on High Quality Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) website: [https://highqualityieps.net/uploads/blogs/files/1682three5840three26\\_DecisionTreeForReportingECP\\_final.pdf/](https://highqualityieps.net/uploads/blogs/files/1682three5840three26_DecisionTreeForReportingECP_final.pdf/)

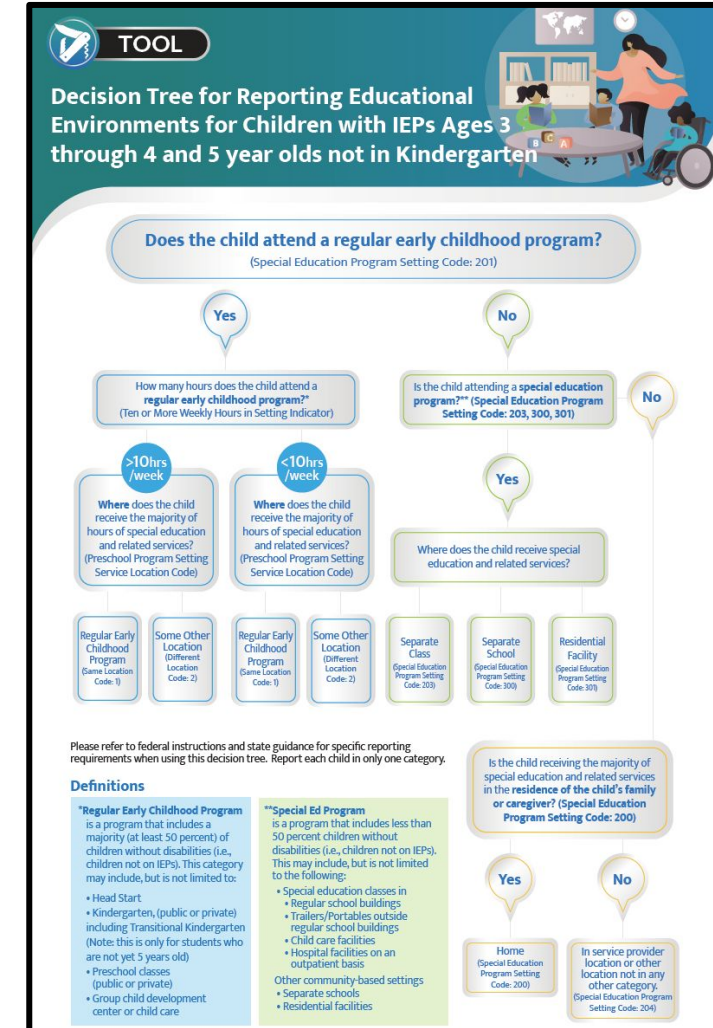


Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children With IEPs Ages 5 (in Kindergarten) up to 22 is available on High Quality IEPs website: [https://highqualityieps.net/uploads/blogs/files/1682three5840three26\\_DecisionTreeForReportingupto22\\_Final.pdf/](https://highqualityieps.net/uploads/blogs/files/1682three5840three26_DecisionTreeForReportingupto22_Final.pdf/)

# Defining Preschoolers for Indicator 6

- Preschoolers are defined as:
  - Students, including those ages three to five with disabilities, enrolled in a preschool program.
  - The federal definition also considers four-year-old students enrolled in transitional kindergarten (TK) or kindergarten as of the October CALPADS census date to be a preschooler.
- Those not considered as preschoolers are:
  - Five-year-olds in TK or kindergarten as of the October CALPADS census date are considered school age students and fall under Indicator 6 LRE.

Note: Census Day is the first Wednesday in October.



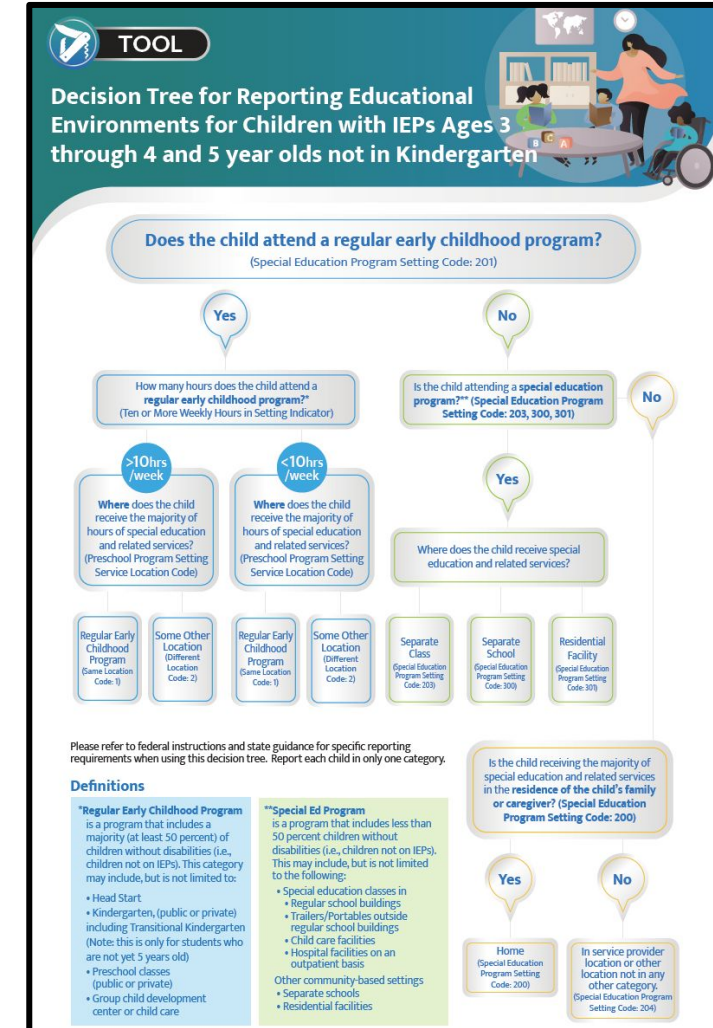
# Which students are in this category?



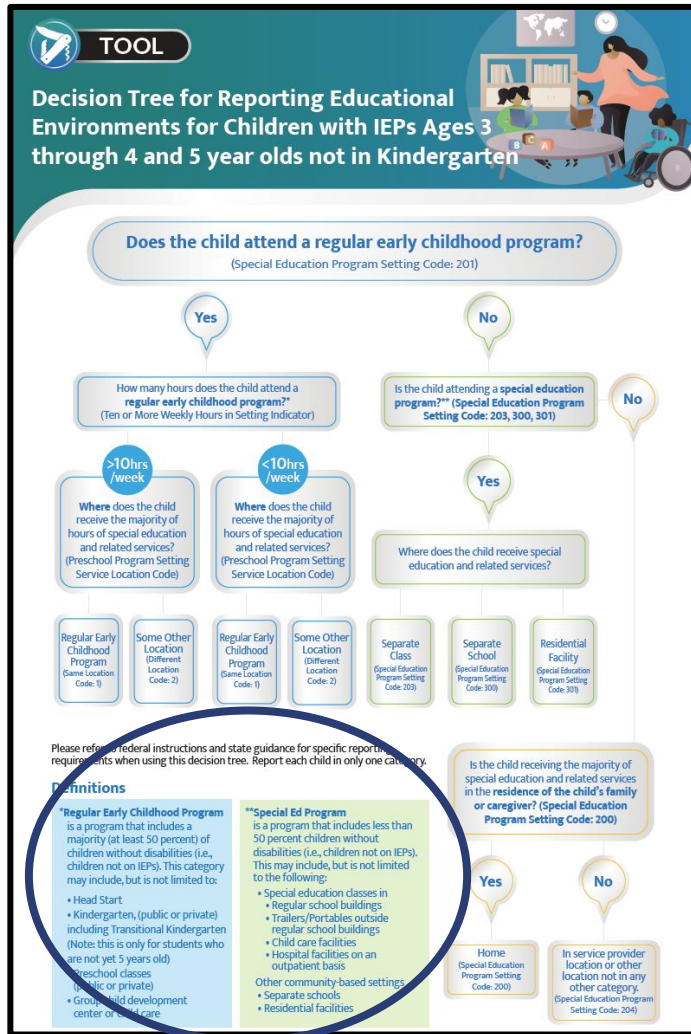
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Simplified:

- All three- and four-year-olds, regardless of grade level
- Any five-years-olds enrolled in preschool



# Regular Early Childhood Program



Regular Early Childhood Program is a program that includes a majority (at least 50 percent) of children without disabilities (i.e., children not on IEPs).

Special Ed Program is a program that includes less than 50 percent of children without disabilities (i.e., children not on IEPs).

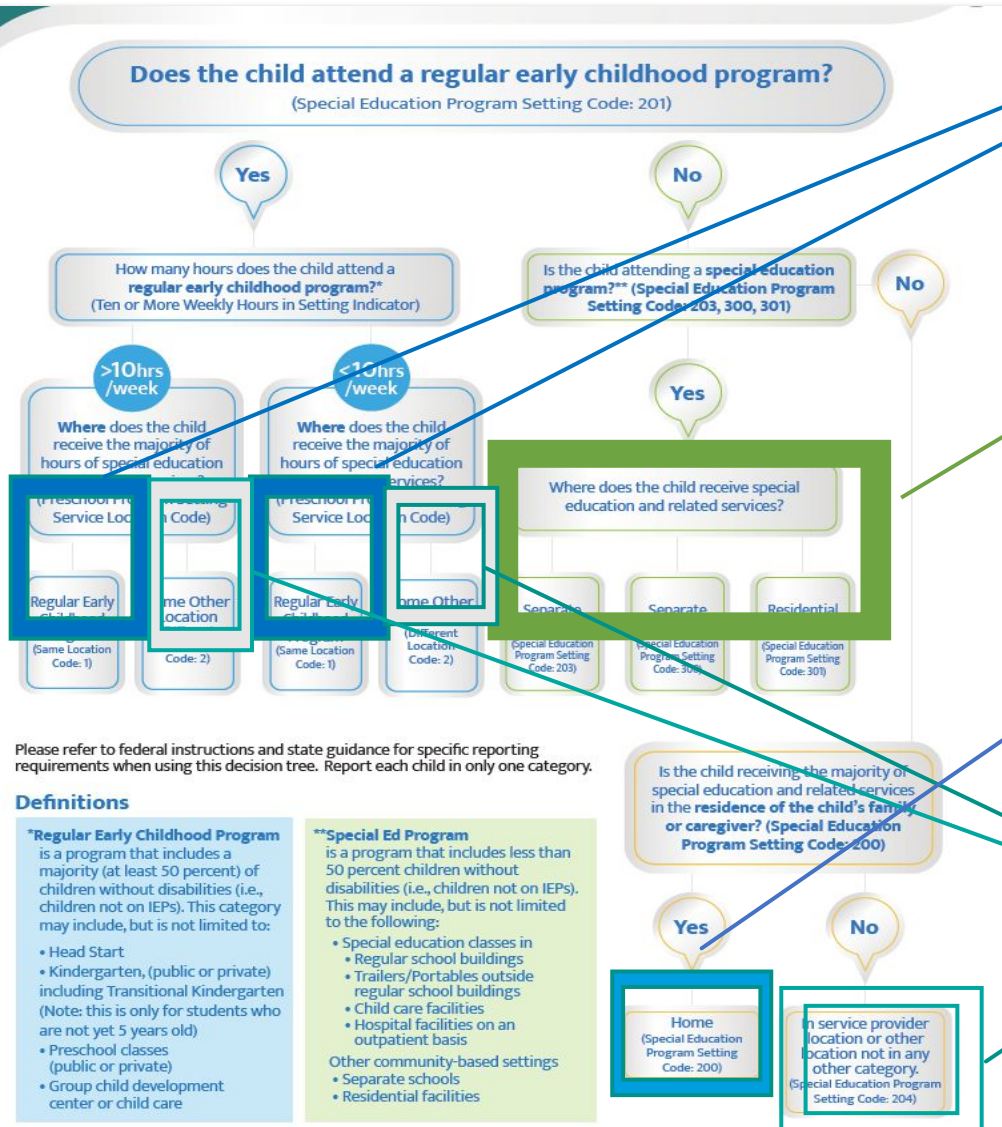
# Preschool Service Location



Does same location mean the same campus or the same classroom? Clarification provided from the U.S. Department of Education:

“Special education and related services delivered in the child’s classroom in the course of daily activities and routines in which all children in the classroom participate..., would be considered as being received in the Regular Early Childhood Program. However, services delivered in other locations that remove the child from the opportunity to interact with nondisabled children would not be considered as being received in the Regular Early Childhood Program. These include, but are not limited to, services delivered in a 1:1 therapeutic setting, or in a small group comprised solely of children with disabilities in another location within the building where the regular early childhood program is located.”

# LRE Decision Tree and Indicator 6a–c



Indicator 6a: Regular Setting

Indicator 6b: Separate Setting

Indicator 6c: Home

In denominator of the calculations for 6a, 6b and 6c, but not in any numerators.

# Impact of Denominator

Twenty-five preschoolers with disabilities receiving their services in the same location as their regular early childhood program. The total number of preschoolers is 100.

$$25/100 = 0.25 \text{ (25 percent)}$$

If the number of preschoolers in the other locations increases, it lowers the percentage toward Indicator 6a. For example, if there are 25 preschoolers that count towards 6a, and the denominator is increased by 25 students served in other locations for a total of 125.

$$25/125 = 0.20 \text{ (20 percent)}$$

If those same students are instead also counted in the numerator of the 6a calculation, it increases the percentage towards Indicator 6a.

$$50/125 = 0.4 \text{ (40 percent)}$$

# Preschool Elsewhere



According to the California Department of Education (CDE), if the early childhood program is outside of the LEA providing special education services, it is appropriate to consider that early childhood program when determining the Program Setting.

## Program Setting – Student Receives Services Only at LEA, Attends PreK Elsewhere

### Program Setting Definition:

- A coded value representing the special education program setting in which the student is receiving or has received the majority of special education and related services according to the student's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), Individualized Education Program (IEP), or Individual Service Plan (ISP)

Special Education is included in the definition of 'Educational Instruction' as used in the Reporting Data for Students with Disabilities Documentation, Column G:

- Which LEAs (...) provide the majority of educational instruction, or if no educational instruction is provided, which LEAs (...) provide the majority of related special education services...

Therefore, it is appropriate to use Program Setting 201 – Regular Early Childhood Setting for students that receive Special Education services from one LEA, but they attend any other early childhood education program (e.g. Head Start).

CALPADS Special Education Data Office Hours

# Educational Setting: Offer of FAPE



## Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):

----Select One----

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

### The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:

☐ Same as above ☒ Different from above

### Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?

☐ Yes ☐ No

### Will the student's Preschool Program Setting change within the IEP year?

☐ Yes ☐ No

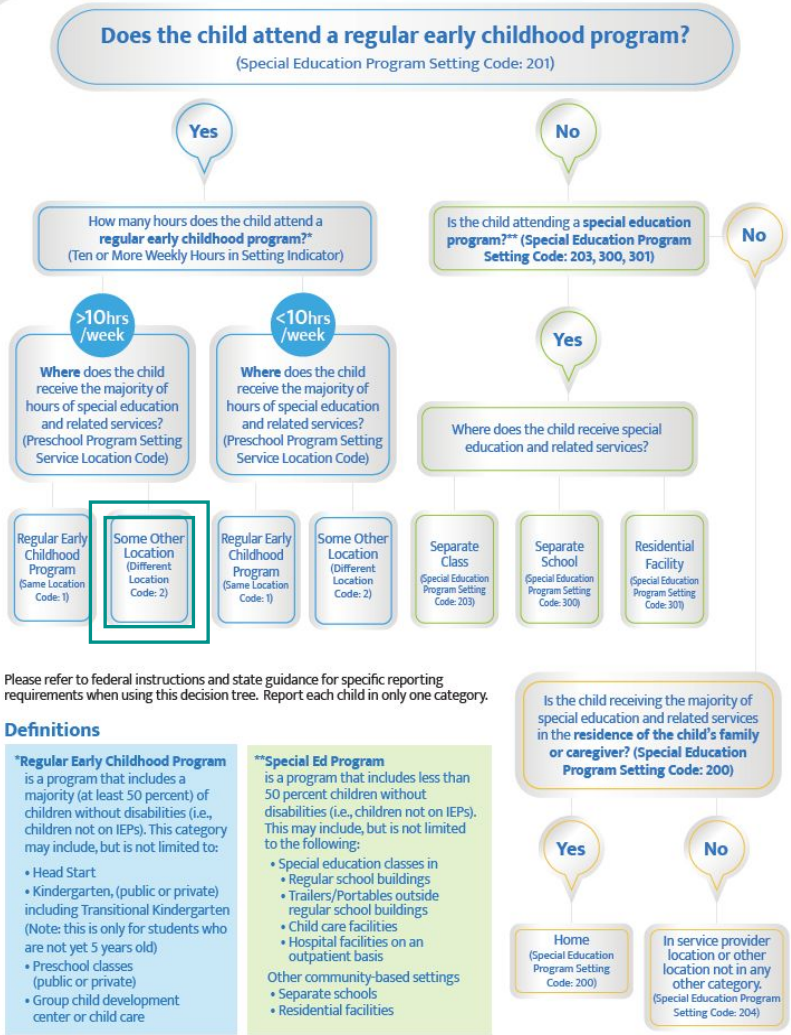
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# Pause and Reflect: Activity One



- Do you currently have a process or procedure within your LEA to determine if a student is attending:
  - an early childhood program?
  - 10 hours or more per week?
- Consider points to collect this information:
  - During referral or intake
  - During collection of developmental history data
  - During the assessment process
  - At the IEP meeting
  - At other points identified by your team
- Consider providing information on general education early childhood programs where the family could enroll

Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children with IEPs Ages 3 through 4 and 5 year olds not in Kindergarten



# Example One

Three-year-old student enrolled by parent or guardian in preschool program (greater than 10 hours per week) and attending the district's speech and language center for FAPE.

**Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):**

201 - Regular Early Childhood Program

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

**The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:**

☐ Same as above ☒ Different from above

**Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?**

☒ Yes ☐ No

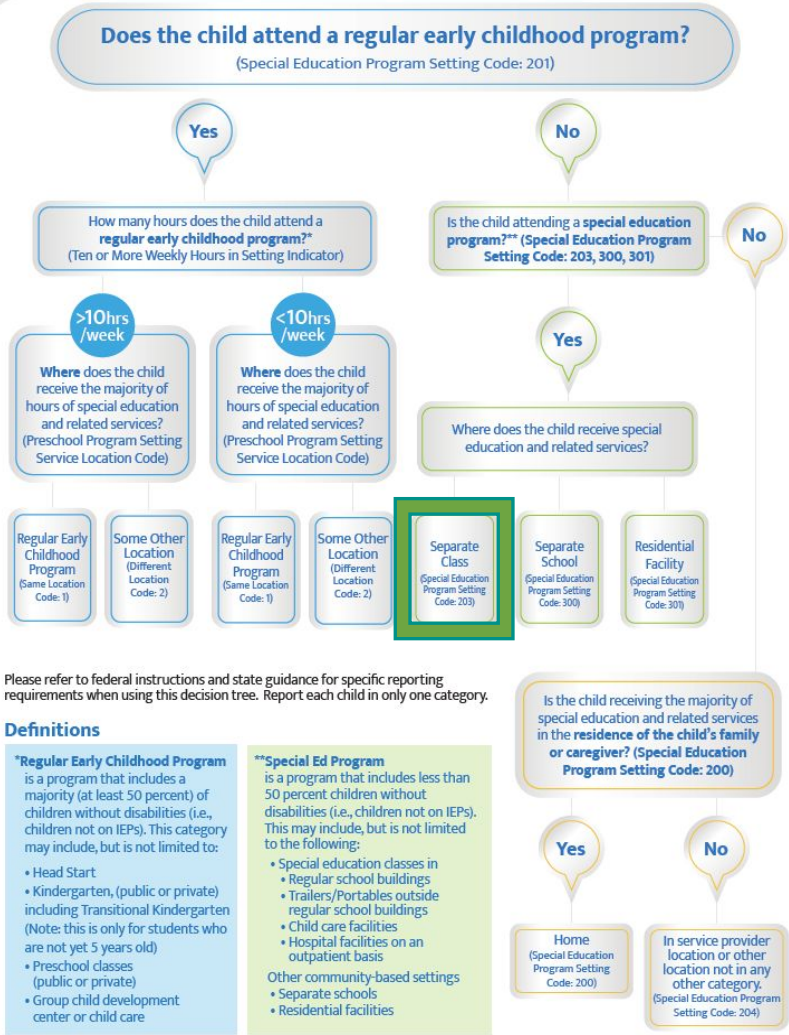
**Will the student's Preschool Program Setting change within the IEP year?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

Denominator

Note: these fields are only completed because the student attends a regular early childhood program.

Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children with IEPs Ages 3 through 4 and 5 year olds not in Kindergarten



# Example Two

Three-year-old student attending a Special Day Class (SDC) for students with mild/moderate support needs as their offer of FAPE.

**Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):**

203 - Separate Class

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

**The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:**

☐ Same as above ☐ Different from above

**Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

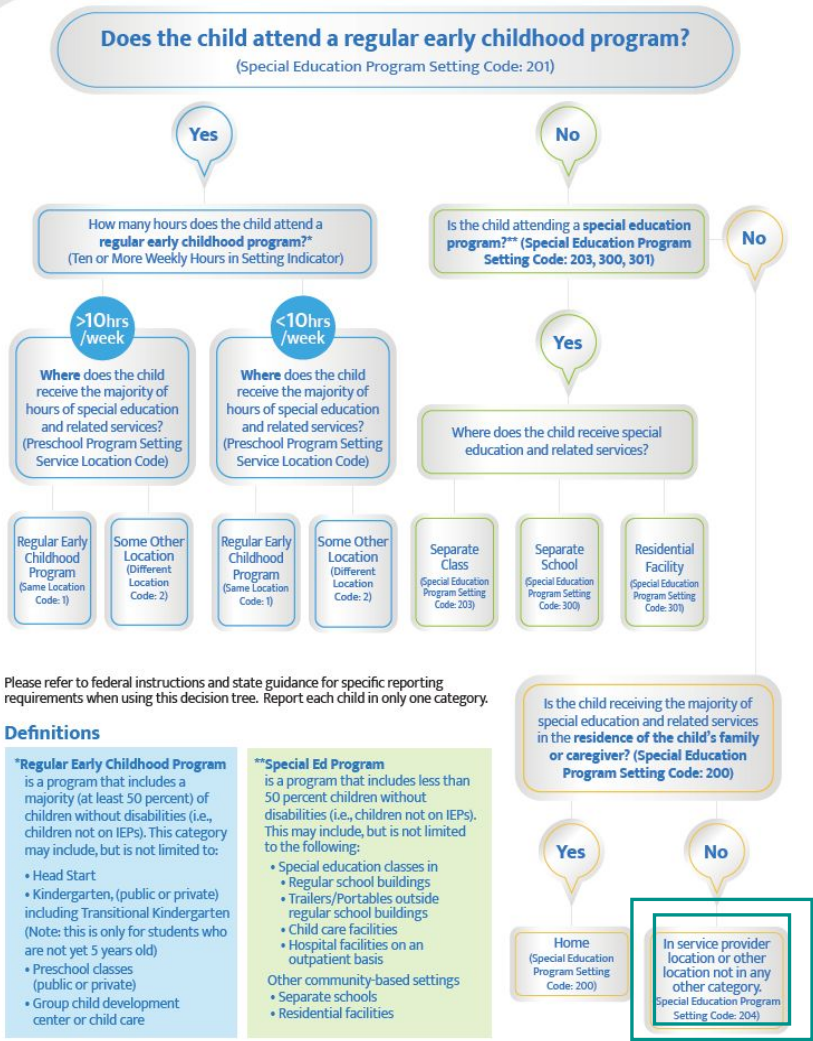
**Will the student's Preschool Program Setting change within the IEP year?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

## Indicator 6b: Separate Setting

Note: these fields are not completed because the student does not attend a regular early childhood program.

Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children with IEPs Ages 3 through 4 and 5 year olds not in Kindergarten



# Example Three

Four-year-old not enrolled in any program and attending district's speech and language center for FAPE.

**Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):**

204 - Service Provider Location

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

**The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:**

☐ Same as above ☐ Different from above

**Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?**

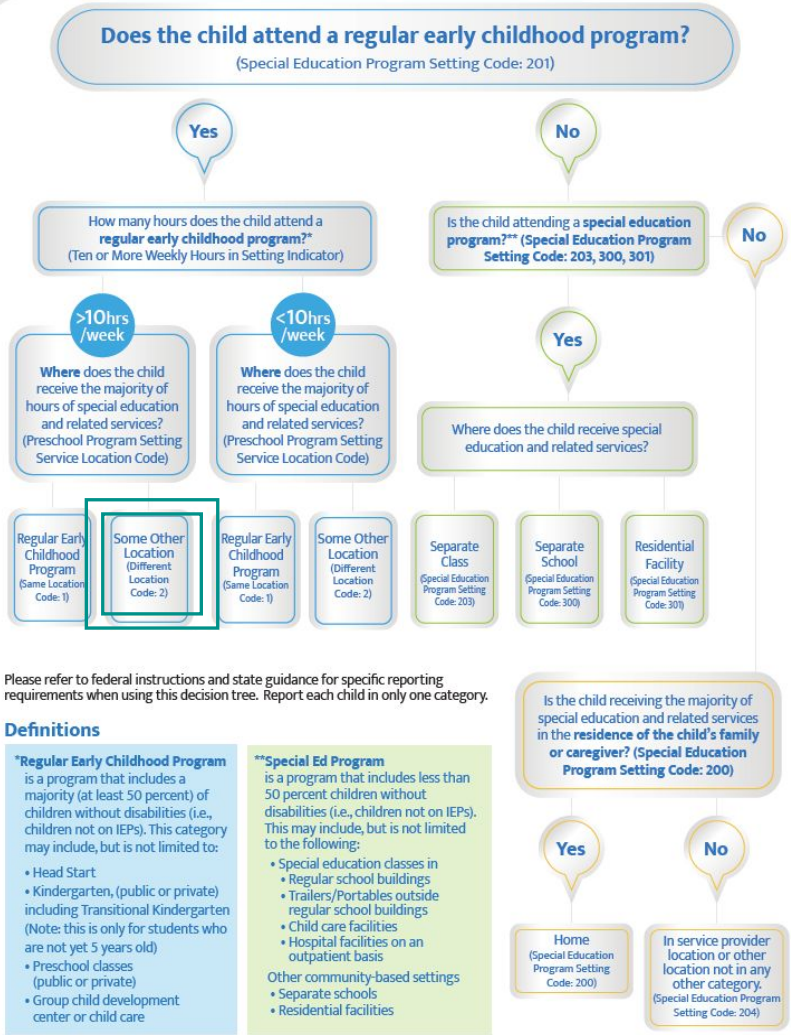
☐ Yes ☒ No

**Will the student's Preschool Program Setting change within the IEP year?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

Denominator

Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children with IEPs Ages 3 through 4 and 5 year olds not in Kindergarten



# Example Four

Four-year-old attending special education preschool program for students with mild/moderate support needs in morning and Head Start preschool (greater than 10 hours per week) in afternoon.

**Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):**

201 - Regular Early Childhood Program

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

**The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:**

☐ Same as above ☒ Different from above

**Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?**

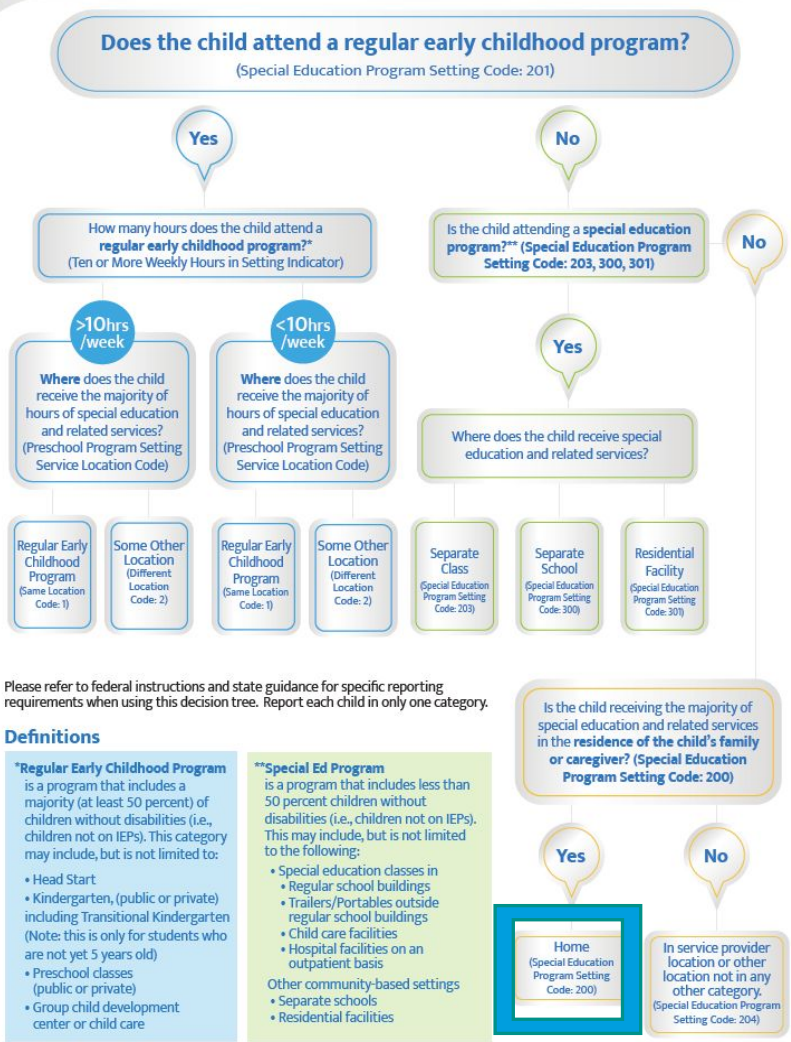
☒ Yes ☐ No

**Will the student's Preschool Program Setting change within the IEP year?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

Denominator

# Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children with IEPs Ages 3 through 4 and 5 year olds not in Kindergarten



# Example Five

Three-year-old student receiving all special education and related services in the home, as specified in the IEP.

**Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):**

200 - Home

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

**The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:**

☐ Same as above ☐ Different from above

**Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**Will the student's Preschool Program Setting change within the IEP year?**

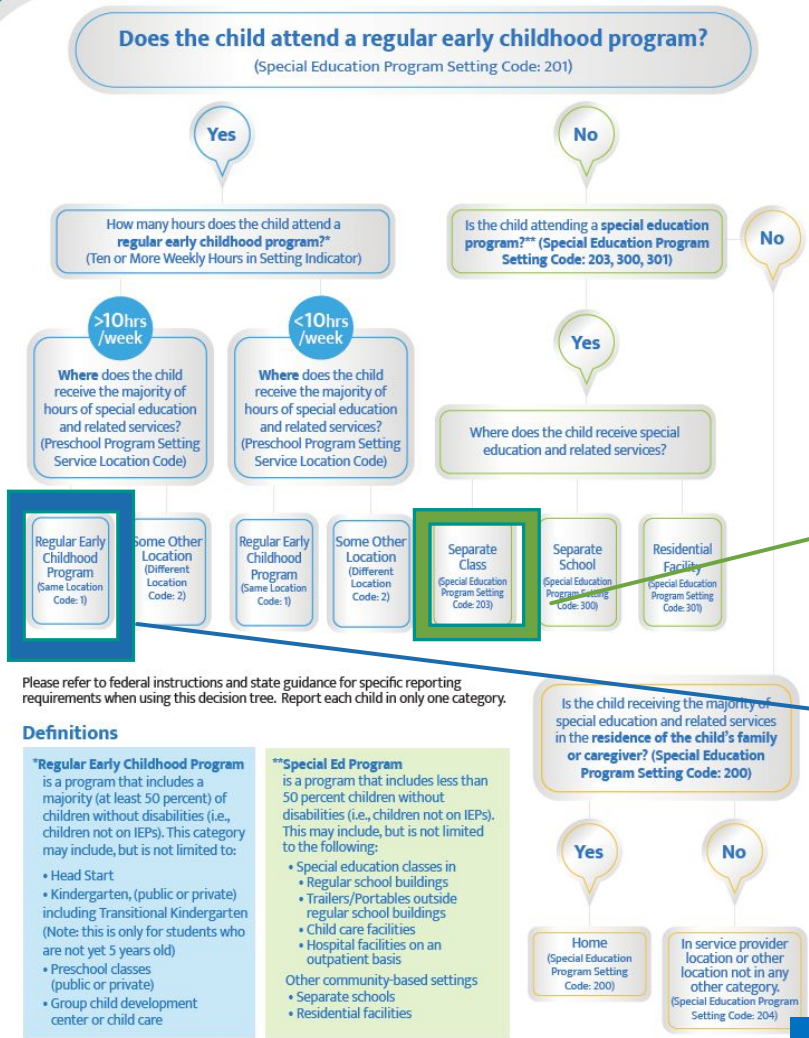
☐ Yes ☒ No

# Indicator 6c: Home

Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children with IEPs Ages 3 through 4 and 5 year olds not in Kindergarten

# Example Six

Four-year-old child attending a separate special education program for preschool and transitioning to general education TK program (greater than 10 hours per week) in the fall. Student will be four years old for the duration of the IEP. The student will receive the majority of special education services in general education TK setting.



Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):

203 - Separate Class

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:

☐ Same as above ☐ Different from above

Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Will the student's Preschool Program Setting change within the IEP year?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Start Date

08/15/2023

Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):

201 - Regular Early Childhood Program

The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:

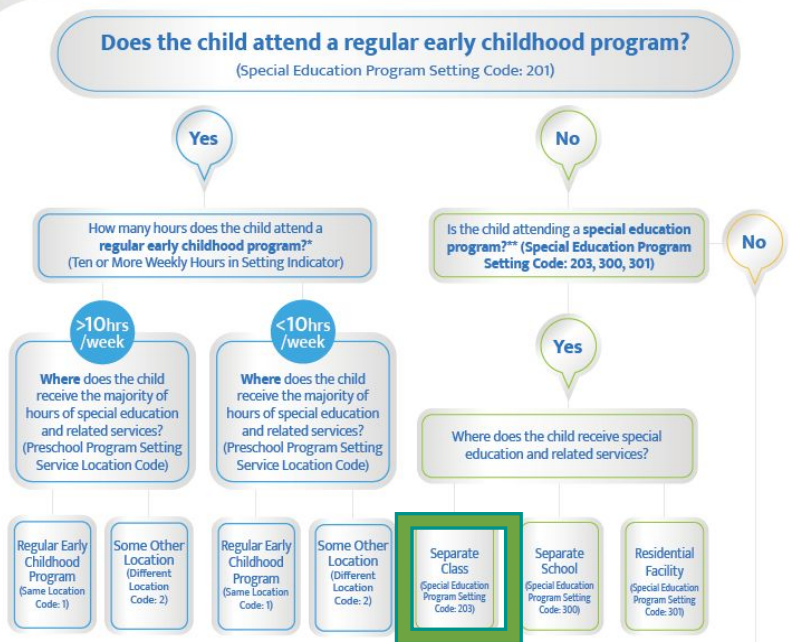
☒ Same as above ☐ Different from above

Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Indicator 6a: Regular Setting

Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children with IEPs Ages 3 through 4 and 5 year olds not in Kindergarten



Please refer to federal instructions and state guidance for specific reporting requirements when using this decision tree. Report each child in only one category.

Definitions

**\*Regular Early Childhood Program** is a program that includes a majority (at least 50 percent) of children without disabilities (i.e., children not on IEPs). This category may include, but is not limited to:

- Head Start
- Kindergarten, (public or private) including Transitional Kindergarten (Note: this is only for students who are not yet 5 years old)
- Preschool classes (public or private)
- Group child development center or child care

**\*\*Special Ed Program** is a program that includes less than 50 percent children without disabilities (i.e., children not on IEPs). This may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Special education classes in
  - Regular school buildings
  - Trailers/Portables outside regular school buildings
  - Child care facilities
  - Hospital facilities on an outpatient basis
- Other community-based settings
  - Separate schools
  - Residential facilities



# Example Seven

Four-year-old attending SDC preschool program and transitioning to general education TK program (greater than 10 hours per week) starting August 15. Student will turn five on September 15 and will receive the majority of special education services in the general education TK setting.

## Indicator 6b: Separate Setting

Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):

203 - Separate Class

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:

08/15/2023

201 - Regular Early Childhood Program

The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:

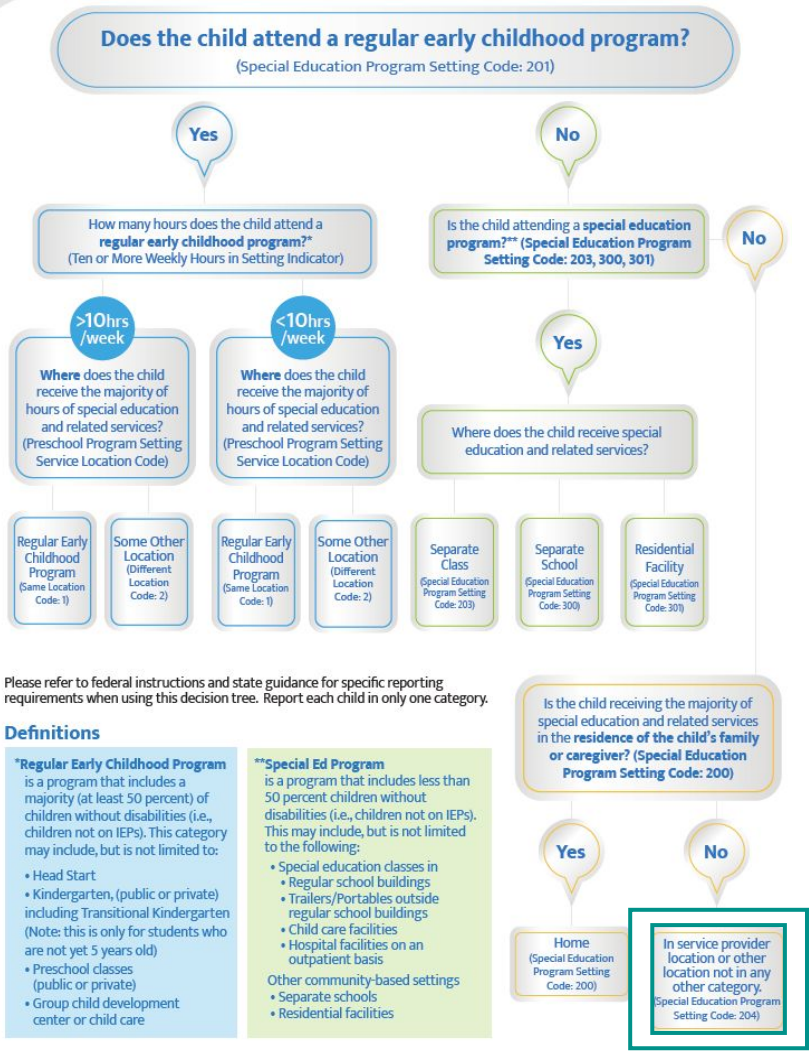
☒ Same as above ☐ Different from above

Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Note: Because this student turns five before Census Day, this will not impact Indicator 6, but will impact Indicator 5.

Decision Tree for Reporting Educational Environments for Children with IEPs Ages 3 through 4 and 5 year olds not in Kindergarten



# Example Eight

Five-year-old student not enrolled in any program and attending the speech and language center for FAPE. Transitioning to general education kindergarten in the fall with speech services.

Preschool Program Setting (3-5 year-old Preschool and 4 year-old TK/Kgn):

204 - Service Provider Location

(Note: Answer items below for students ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program and 4 year-olds in TK/Kgn)

The location where the student receives the majority of their special education services the same as above:

☐ Same as above ☐ Different from above

Is the Regular Early Childhood Program ten hours per week or greater?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Will the student's Preschool Program Setting change within the IEP year?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Program Setting (TK/Kgn or greater, ages 5-22):

400 - Regular Classroom/Public Day School

Note: Because this student is five, when they transition to kindergarten in the fall, it will not impact Indicator 6, but will impact Indicator 5.

Denominator

# Annual Performance Report



- It is important to recognize that the next Annual Performance Report (APR) is based on the Fall 1 data that is submitted to CALPADS that is already certified.
- Any changes made up until Census Day 2026 will be in the subsequent APR.
- It will take time to see these changes reflected in the state-level data, but they can be monitored through local sources.

# Pause and Reflect: Activity Two



- Review the Decision Tree available on the High Quality IEPs website at: [https://highqualityieps.net/uploads/blogs/files/1682358326\\_DecisionTreeForReportingECP\\_final.pdf](https://highqualityieps.net/uploads/blogs/files/1682358326_DecisionTreeForReportingECP_final.pdf)
- Make a list of the program offerings for preschoolers (ages three through five) and transitional kindergarteners (four-year-olds)
- For each type of program, determine as a group what the program setting would be for that program

# Next Steps

- Using the notes from today's breakout sessions identifying the programs and how they should be coded based on the Decision Tree, review data from your Special Education Data System (SEDS).
- Based on the data your team identified of the LEA's preschool program settings, do those preschool program settings in your SEDS make sense in what you know about that program/service provider?
- If not, in the SEDS, review the IEP. Based on your team's review of the IEP, using the LRE decision tree, do you agree with the determination of the preschool program setting?
- With your team, identify any next steps to review the data.
- Include any data items to explore further, or any other areas your LEA might explore next.
- What supports or resources might you need to implement your action plan?

# Questions



# Communities of Practice: Join the Conversation

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Find CalECSE's full schedule of CoPs at:  
<https://www.calecse.org/news-resources/communities-of-practice>



Join a regional, job-alike, or statewide Community of Practice (CoP) to share ideas, solve problems of practice, exchange successful strategies and tools, and strengthen early childhood special education across California.

If you are interested in joining a CoP, please complete this form by scanning the QR code below or filling out this google form

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf2mTRqNCNqmfQp\\_1UzwO7hQvJoqUrlgGkoG0-qqUBXMYqAwA/viewform?usp=preview](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf2mTRqNCNqmfQp_1UzwO7hQvJoqUrlgGkoG0-qqUBXMYqAwA/viewform?usp=preview)



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# CALECSE

California Early Childhood  
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Thank you—we appreciate you taking time to be here with us today. We hope you will join us again. You can find our full lineup of no-cost trainings at:

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