



Early Childhood Special Education Orientation

Indicator 6: Early Childhood Educational Environments

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Objective

- Review foundational documents that influence Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education
- Review important documents that promote inclusion
- Define Indicator 6 and understand federal reporting requirements under the IDEA
- Understand how, when, and why we collect and report
- State possible early childhood educational environments as stated in the ECSE IEP
- Utilize the Decision Tree
- Problem solve to create better outcomes for each and every child

Vermont Guiding Principles: Supporting Each and Every Young Child and Family's Full and Equitable Participation

We believe that each and every child...

- Learns within the context of secure and authentic relationships, play, and interactions within their environments.
- Deserves equitable access to experiences that acknowledge and build on their uniqueness.
- Deserves opportunities to deeply learn and develop to their full potential through joyful interactions in safe, accepting environments.



Advancing Equity

All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Thus, all early childhood educators have a professional obligation to advance equity. They can do this best when they are effectively supported by the early learning settings in which they work and when they and their wider communities embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths, uphold fundamental principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities.

*- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC
Position Statement on Equity, April 2019)*

Considerations for Equity

1. Provide high-quality early education programs that build on each and every child's unique individual and family strengths, cultural background, language(s), abilities, and experiences.
2. Eliminate differences in educational outcomes as a result of who children are, where they live, and what resources their families have.



DEC Recommended Practices

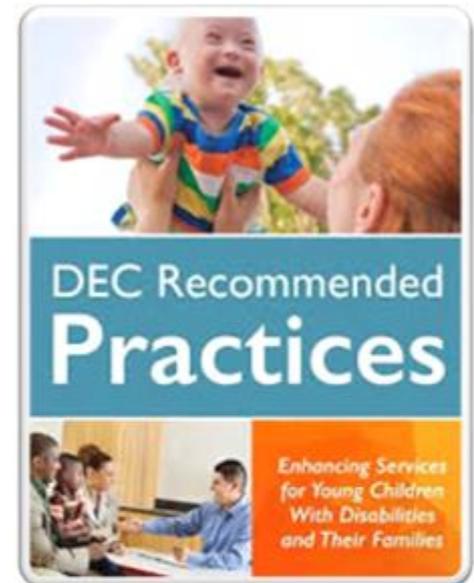


DEC Recommended Practices: Environment

Focus on Environment

E1. Practitioners provide services and supports in natural and inclusive environments during daily routines and activities to promote the child's access to and participation in learning experiences.

E3. Practitioners work with the family and other adults to modify and adapt the physical, social, and temporal environments to promote each child's access to and participation in learning experiences.



DEC Practice Improvement Tools: Environment

ecta Vermont Department of Education

Supporting Children's Everyday Learning

Include a view of the globe

Available Technology

- Support children doing everyday learning activities in their home or community. The most important activities to support are those that are most meaningful to the child and that are most likely to be used in the home or community.
- Support children doing everyday learning activities in their home or community. The most important activities to support are those that are most meaningful to the child and that are most likely to be used in the home or community.

A Quick Peek

Checklist for using available technology to support children's everyday learning activities. This checklist is available at <https://www.vermont.gov/doc/education/ecta/ecta-practice-improvement-tools>.

How to use this guide

This practice guide is based on the following DEC Recommended Practices, Tools, and Other Products:

- The child is engaged in the activity over and over again.
- The child participates in the activity over and over again.
- The child asks to do the activity.



ecta Vermont Department of Education

Natural Environment Learning Opportunities Checklist

This checklist includes the types of environmental events, features and adult content or processes that can be used to engage children in learning in the home or community. The checklist includes a list of indicators that can be used to assess the quality of the learning opportunities and to support the child's learning in the home or community.

Practitioner: _____ **Date:** _____

	Indicator 1: Child is engaged in the activity	Indicator 2: Child participates in the activity	Indicator 3: Child asks to do the activity	Indicator 4: Child is engaged in the activity over and over again	Indicator 5: Child participates in the activity over and over again	Indicator 6: Child asks to do the activity
1. Observe the child in everyday activities to identify child and environmental factors that affect the child's attention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Identify the everyday family activities and daily routines that the child finds most interesting and enjoyable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Select those activities that provide the most opportunities for the child to acquire targeted behavior and/or behavior capabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Promote and encourage child participation in the everyday activities and routines that are most interesting to the child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Respond positively (congruently) to the child's behavior in the everyday activities to sustain child engagement and play.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Join in the activities and provide support and guidance to sustain child engagement or support behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Encourage child behavior intentionally by using diverse instructional strategies (modeling, shaping, etc.) to expand upon the child's behavioral skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional Information:

This checklist is available at <https://www.vermont.gov/doc/education/ecta/ecta-practice-improvement-tools>.

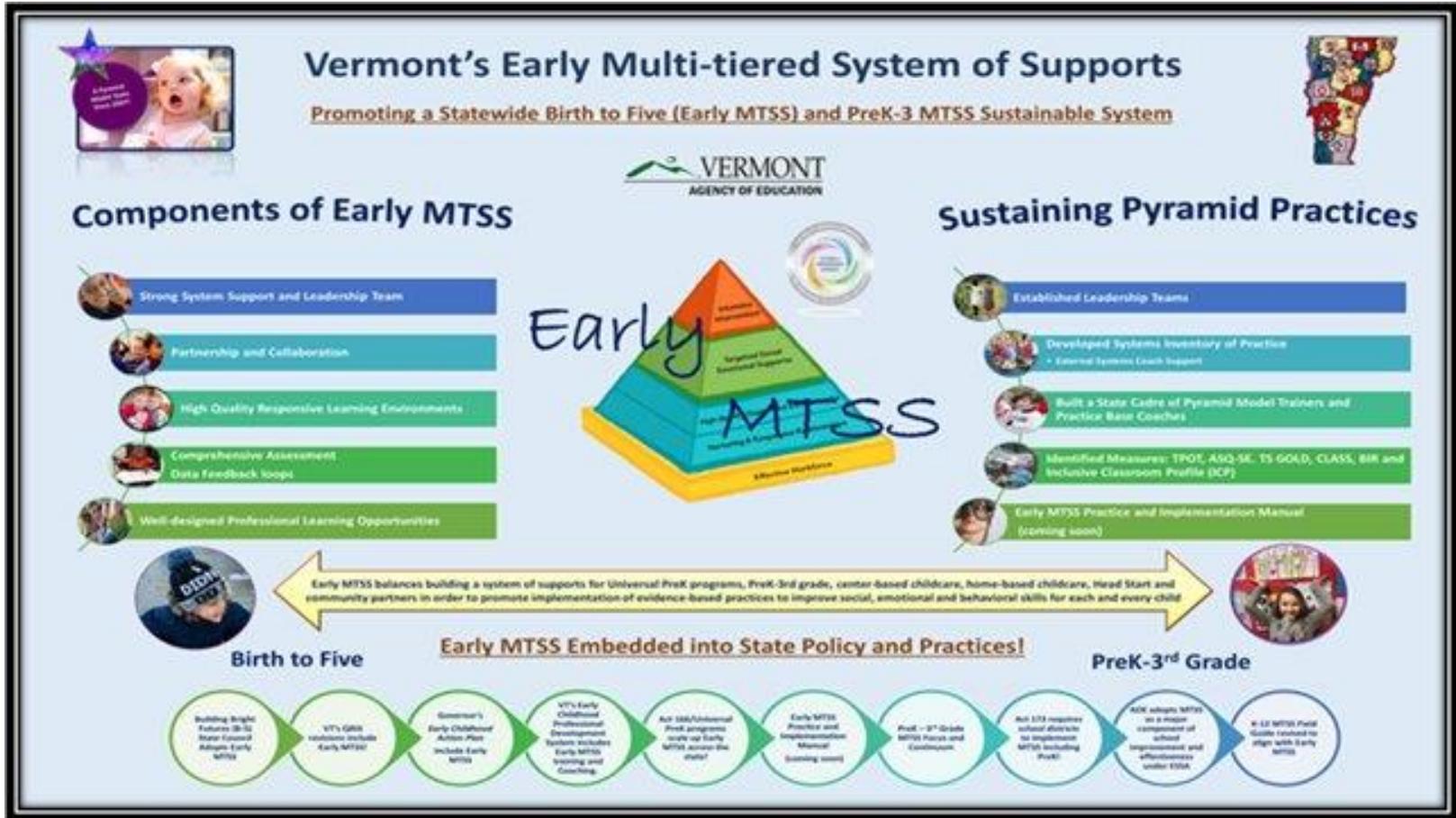
Access this checklist and other products at <https://www.vermont.gov/doc/education/ecta/ecta-practice-improvement-tools>.

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Vermont Early Learning Standards



Early MTSS



State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR)

IDEA requires each state to develop an SPP/APR that evaluates the state's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA, and also describes how the state will improve its implementation.



SPP/APR

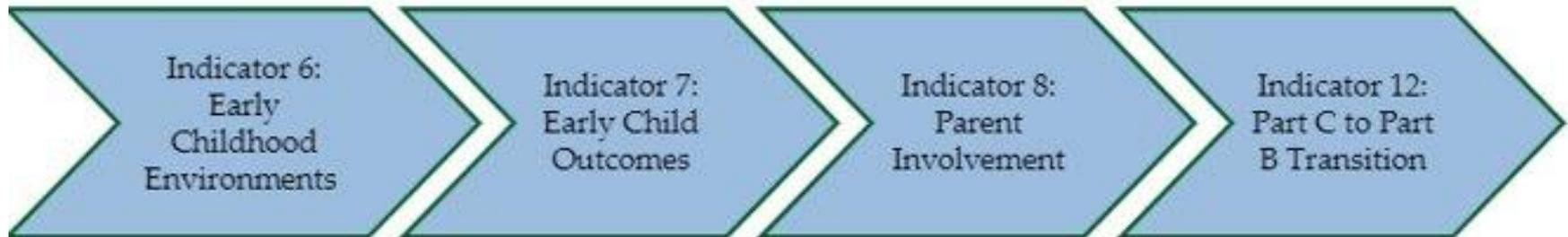


SU/SDs are required to submit information and data for reporting, monitoring and compliance purposes.

What are Performance Indicators?

- For purposes of measuring effectiveness for special education programs and services funded through the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), 12 performance indicators are used.
- Performance indicators are measurable values that demonstrate how effectively state-level programs are achieving objectives.
- Organizations use performance indicators to evaluate their success at reaching targets.

ECSE Indicators



What is Indicator 6: Early Childhood Educational Environments

Indicator 6 examines the percent of children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs who:

- A. attend a **regular early childhood program** and receive the majority of special education and related services in the **regular early childhood program**; or
- B. attend and receive the majority of special education and related services in a **separate** special education class, separate school or residential facility. (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A)).



What does “Other than Regular Education Classroom” mean?

The U.S. Department of Education defines services being delivered in "other than regular education setting" as: *Classroom or program that includes less than 50 percent nondisabled children.*

“Other regular education settings” may include, but are not limited to:

- Special Education classes
- Hospital facilities
- Separate rooms, classes, or schools
- Separate school or programs
- Residential facilities

Where are Regular Education Classrooms?

Regular Education Settings in Vermont include:

- Head Starts
- Pre-qualified public or private PreK's
- Licensed Center Based Child Care Programs
- Licensed Family Child Care Homes
- Kindergarten (public or private)

A regular education classroom includes no more than 50% of children with disabilities

Determining Early Childhood Education Environments/Placements

Placement decisions are made by the IEP team which includes:

- Parents
- Educator
- Special Educator
- Related Service Providers
- Other persons knowledgeable about the child



Important Documents Supporting Inclusion and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

DEC & NAEYC Joint Position Statement on Inclusion (2009)

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in EC Programs Joint Policy Statement (2015)

Dear Colleague Letter on Preschool LRE (2017)

DEC and NAEYC Joint Position Statement on Inclusion (2009)

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. 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.

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs Policy Statement (2015)



Inclusion in early childhood programs refers to including children with disabilities in early childhood programs, together with their peers without disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development, friendships with peers, and sense of belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with the mildest disabilities to those with the most significant disabilities.

Dear Colleague Letter on Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) (2017)



A preschool child with a disability who is eligible to receive special education and related services and his or her families are entitled to all the rights and protections guaranteed under Part B of IDEA and its implementing regulations in 34 CFR Part 300. One of these guaranteed rights is the right to be educated in the LRE in accordance with section 612(a)(5) of IDEA and CFR section 300.114 through 300.118. The LRE requirements under Part B of IDEA state a strong preference for educating children with disabilities in regular classes alongside their peers without disabilities.

Why Inclusion?



Special Education is a service,
not a placement.

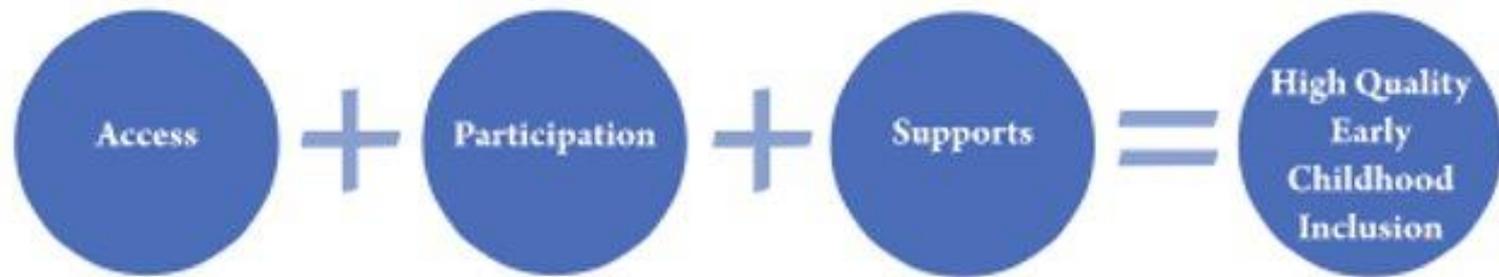
not a placement:
Special Education is a service.

Research Based Facts on Inclusion



- In 27 years, the practice of providing special education and related services in regular early childhood settings to preschoolers with disabilities has increased only 5.7% and many young children with disabilities continue to be educated in separate settings.
- Inclusion benefits children with and without disabilities.
- The quality of preschool programs including at least one student with a disability were as good as or better than preschool programs without children with disabilities. However, traditional measures of early childhood program quality might not be sufficient for assessing quality of programs that include children with disabilities.

Access, Participation, and Supports



ECSE IEP and Reporting



Vermont Early Childhood Educational Environments Memo

5-year-olds who are attending kindergarten and receiving special education services must be reported in a school-aged educational environment beginning with the 2020-2021 school year.



The Vermont Early Childhood Special Education IEP (Form 5)

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1 National Life Drive, Davis 3, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901
(p) 802-828-1130 | (t) 802-828-6430 | education.vermont.gov

For parents/legal guardians who have signed a Release of Information form, the school district is authorized to bill Medicaid for the services listed in the Individual Education Program (IEP) and to release necessary special education records to a physician/nurse practitioner in order for him/her to reach determinations that the services are medically necessary and to individuals within the Agency of Education and the Agency of Human Services charged with processing Medicaid bills for IEP services that are also considered medical services under Vermont Medicaid rules. This consent will remain in effect until I revoke my consent or until the student reaches the age of 18 (after which the student must consent) or the student graduates. Refusal to consent does not affect the school district's responsibility to provide these services to my child at no cost to me. I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time. If I revoke this consent, it will apply to billing for services from that date forward.

Early Childhood Educational Environment/Placement

Child's Name: IEP Meeting Date:

There are several options to consider when determining a child's educational environment/placement. As of the 2020-2021 school year, 3-year-olds attending kindergarten whose IEP team decides they should remain in an ECSE IEP, should appropriately indicate kindergarten as the child's educational environment. 3-year-olds must transition to a school age (4 through 22) IEP by their 4th birthday. Additionally, IEP Teams have the choice of a 3-year-old being on a school age (4 through 22) IEP or ECSE IEP in kindergarten.

Indicate and describe the child's educational environment/placement:

Early Childhood Environment/Placement Describe (e.g. public or private preschool, home, Head Start, etc.):

OR

Kindergarten Environment/Placement Describe:

Indicate the general characteristics of the child's early childhood education environment/placement (ages 3 through 5).
*Regular early childhood program refers to a program that includes a majority (at least 50 percent) of nondisabled children (i.e., children not on IEPs):

Child is attending a regular early childhood program* for 18 or more hours per week.

and receives at least 50% of their special education services in the regular early childhood program.

Form 5: ECSE Ages Three Through Five IEP Page 18 of 22

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Environments/ Placements:

- Early Childhood
or
- Kindergarten

Early Childhood Educational Environment/Placement: Attending a Regular Early Childhood Program

Child is attending a regular early childhood program* for 10 or more hours per week.

and receives at least 50% of their special education services in the regular early childhood program

and receives at least 50% of their special education services in some other location

OR

Child is attending a regular early childhood program* for less than 10 hours per week

and receives at least 50% of their special education services in the regular early childhood program

and receives at least 50% of their special education services in some other location

Indicate where the child received the majority of their special education services.

Early Childhood Educational Environment/Placement: NOT Attending a Regular Early Childhood Program

OR

Child is not attending a regular early childhood program* and receives special education services in:

- a separate special class
- a separate school
- a residential facility
- their home
- the service provider's location or another

Head Starts, private childcares, or other preschool programs are regular early childhood programs, unless the class contains more than 50% of children with disabilities.

ECSE IEP: Early Childhood Educational Environment/Placement: Attending Kindergarten

OR

Child is attending kindergarten and receives special education services:

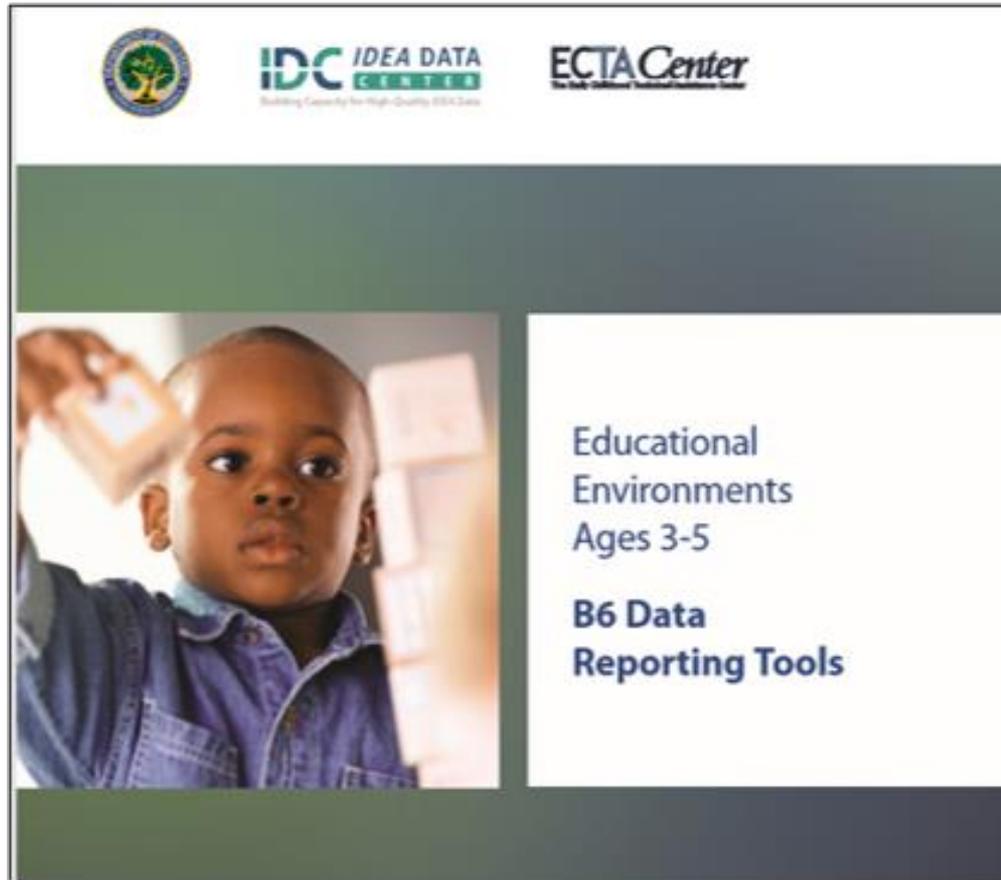
- Inside regular class at least 80% of the time
- Inside regular class 40% to 79% of the time
- Inside regular class less than 40% of the time
- Separate day school – public or private
- Residential facility

When is Indicator 6 Data Collected and Reported?

- December 1 Child Count collection period begins, entering no later than December 15th.
- June 30th collection period begins, entering no later than July 15th.

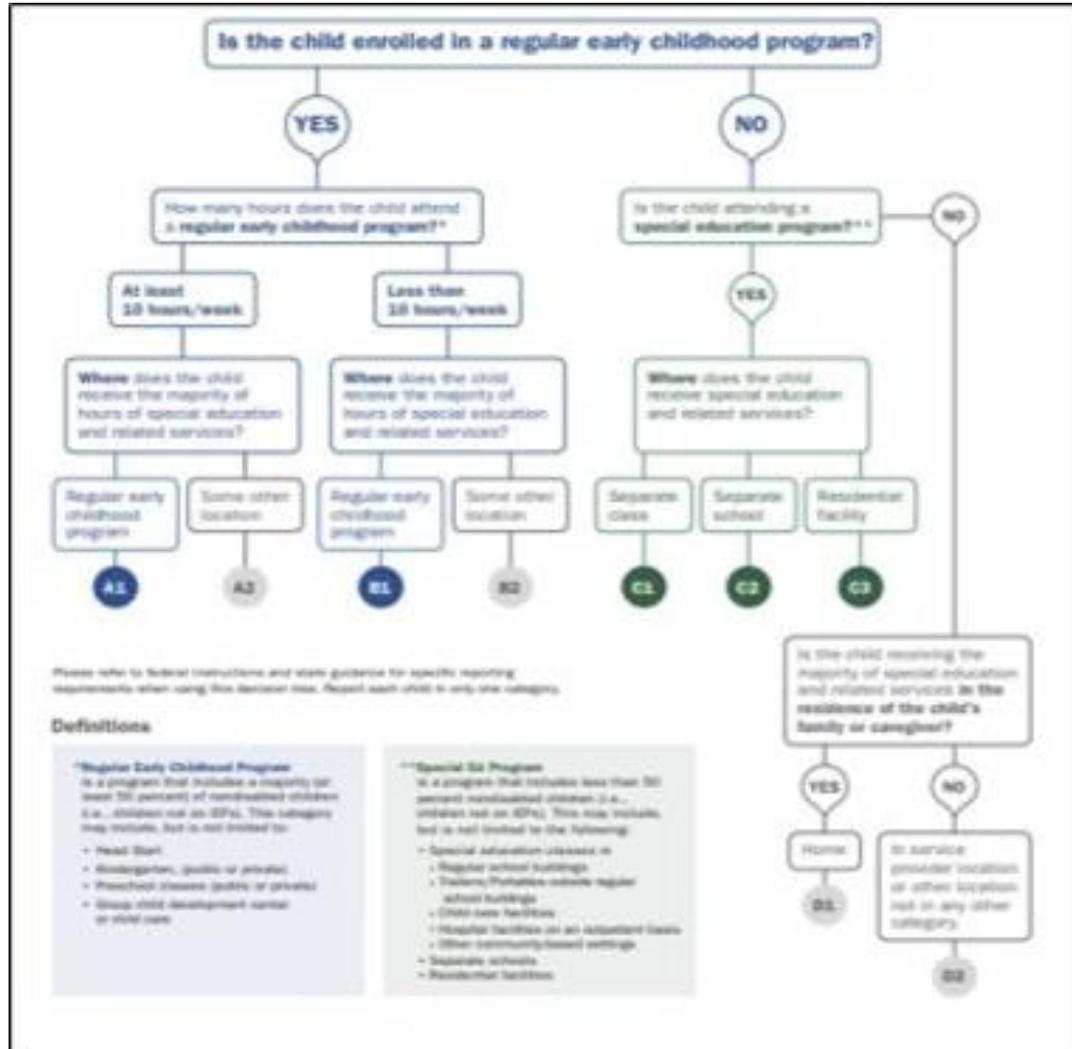


Breaking it Down: Reporting Educational Environments Ages 3 through 5



The image shows the cover of a report. At the top left is the Vermont State Seal. To its right are the logos for the IDC IDEA DATA CENTER (with the tagline 'Building Capacity for High-Quality ECE Care') and the ECTA Center. Below the logos is a dark grey horizontal bar. The main cover area is split into two sections: on the left, a photograph of a young child in a blue denim shirt holding up a small object; on the right, a white box containing the text 'Educational Environments Ages 3-5' and 'B6 Data Reporting Tools' in a dark blue font. A dark grey horizontal bar is at the bottom of the cover.

Decision Tree for Reporting Early Childhood Educational Environments for Children Ages 3-5 with IEPS



Category Definitions of Programs and Services to Report Indicator B6

Category Definitions of Programs and Services to Report Indicator B6

<p>Children attending a regular early childhood program...</p> <p>A1 ...at least 10 hours per week and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program</p> <p>B1 ...less than 10 hours per week and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program</p>	<p>Children attending a special education program (not in any regular early childhood program)...</p> <p>C1 separate class C2 separate school C3 residential facility</p>
<p>Children attending a regular early childhood program...</p> <p>A2 ...at least 10 hours per week and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in some other location</p> <p>B2 ...less than 10 hours per week and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in some other location</p>	<p>Children attending neither a regular early childhood program nor a special education program (not included in category A, B, or C)...</p> <p>D1 ...and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in the home</p> <p>D2 ...and receiving special education and related services at the provider location or some other location</p>

SPP/APR Part B Indicator 6 Calculation

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR), Part B, Indicator 6

Indicator B6-A

Percent of children 3 through 5 with IEPs attending regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program.

$$\frac{\mathbf{A1+B1}}{\mathbf{total\ number\ of\ children\ 3-5\ with\ IEPs\ (A1+A2+B1+B2+C1+C2+C3+D1+D2)}} \times 100$$

Indicator B6-B

Percent of children 3 through 5 with IEPs attending separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.

$$\frac{\mathbf{C1+C2+C3}}{\mathbf{total\ number\ of\ children\ 3-5\ with\ IEPs\ (A1+A2+B1+B2+C1+C2+C3+D1+D2)}} \times 100$$

Scenarios for B6 Reporting Tools: Educational Environments for Children Ages 3–5



Essential ECSE Questions for Leadership

- Is the team collaborating with local childcare centers, preschools, and other early childhood settings to coordinate inclusive services?
- What are the district's procedures for determining placement in the LRE?



Critical Teaming Questions

1. Do all team members participate in the discussion?
2. Is parent input considered?
3. Is the team considering the full continuum of educational environments in their classroom discussion?
4. Does the team describe the child's functioning, rather than just test scores?
5. Does the discussion include the child's full range of functioning, including skills and behaviors that are age appropriate, immediate foundational, and leading to immediate foundational?

Commonly Asked Question 1

Q1: Should private programs that families have chosen for their child, be considered when determining a child's environment/placement?



Answer 1

A1: Yes. LEAS should consider the full continuum of educational placement, including childcare and other private programs that families have chosen for their child when determining the appropriate educational placement.

Commonly Asked Question 2

Q2: Is a private program such as a childcare, licensed family home, or Head Start considered a “regular early childhood program?”



Answer 2

A2: Regular Early Childhood Program is a program that includes a majority (at least 50 percent) of nondisabled children (i.e., children not on IEP's). This category may include, but is not limited to: Kindergarten, public or private Preschool classes, public or private Group child development center or childcare. However, more informal settings such as neighborhoods settings would not because they are generally not required to comply with VELs or curriculum.

Commonly Asked Question 3

Q3: How should a child receiving the majority of special education and related services in a location other than their classroom but within the same building be reported?



Answer 3

A3. This would be reported in "some other" location. ECSE and related services delivered in a location that removes the child from the opportunity to interact with children without disabilities, **would not be considered** as being received in a "regular early childhood program".

This includes but is not limited to services delivered in a 1:1 therapeutic setting, or in a small group comprised solely of children with disabilities, whether they are provided in another location within the building where the regular early childhood program is located.

Commonly Asked Question 4

Q4: If a PreK classroom at a school has 10 students, 6 with IEPs, and 4 without IEPs. Is this classroom considered a “regular education program?”



Answer 4

A4: No. If more than 50% of children attending a program have IEPs, it is not reported as a “regular education program”. It is considered a special education classroom.

Commonly Asked Question 5

Q5: At a recent IEP meeting, the IEP team decides that the best environment for the child is the school's preschool program. Currently the classroom has 4 children with IEPs and 4 children not on IEPs. Is this a regular education environment?

Answer 5

A5: No. If more than 50% of children attending a program have IEPs, it is not reported as a regular education program. It is considered a special education classroom.

Commonly Asked Question 6

Q6: Does the IEP team need to amend the ECSE IEP each time the classroom ratio changes?



Answer 6

A6: No. The preschool environment is entered at the time the ECSE IEP is written. The environment applies at the time the ECSE IEP is written. We understand ratios may fluctuate throughout the school year.

Resources

- [Vermont Guiding Principles](#)
- [Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education, National Association for the Education of Young Children](#)
- [DEC Recommended Practices](#)
- [DEC/ECTA Performance Checklists](#)
- [Interactive Selection Tool](#)
- [Practice Guide for Practitioners](#)
- [Vermont Early Learning Standards](#)
- [DEC/NAEYC Joint Policy Statement](#)
- [US Department of Education and Office of Special Education Dear Colleague Letter](#)
- [Brief Summary Fact Sheet on Inclusion](#)
- [ECTA LRE Determination](#)
- [VT AOE Memo: Child Count Educational Environments for 5 year olds in Kindergarten Reporting](#)

IDC Educational Environment Resources

- [Educational Environments Ages 3-5 B6 Data Reporting Tools 2017-18 Clarifications](#) contains a decision tree, the SPP/APR Part B Indicator 6 Measurement Table and reporting clarifications.
- [IDC B6 Project](#) contains an interactive decision tree, glossary, and information on reporting categories with scenarios for educational environments for children ages 3-5.
- [Environments 3-5 Data Template: Calculating Local Data Worksheet](#) is a template for calculating local data so that SEAs and LEAs can see in real-time the percentages of their children ages 3-5 attending and receiving services in specific educational environments.