



**Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent**  
*"Educating Georgia's Future"*

**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (GADOE)**

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**Office of Technology Services - Technology Management**

**FY2016 FTE Guidelines for Special Education  
Environments: Ages 5 and Under**

## **Children with Disabilities Ages 3-5 by Educational Environment**

**When reporting educational environments for children ages 3 through 5, use the following decision rules to determine which environment to use when reporting each child.**

Please note that the order of the categories for children with disabilities ages 3-5 does *not* reflect a continuum from least to most restrictive. Federal special education reporting is age based not grade based. It is important to remember that children who are age 5 on September 1 will be reported with Age 3-5 Environments even if their grade placement is kindergarten.

Children with disabilities ages 3 through 5 will fall into one of the following three categories:

- Children Attending a General Education Early Childhood Program (Section 1)
- Children NOT Attending a General Education Early Childhood Program and are Attending a Special Education Program (Section 2); or
- Children NOT Attending a General Education Early Childhood Program or Special Education Program and are receiving services in their Home or a Service Provider Location (Section 3).

The first factor to consider is whether the child is attending a General Education Early Childhood Program. If the answer is yes, then please refer to Section 1. If the answer is no, please refer to Section 2, or Section 3, as appropriate.

### **1. Children Attending a Regular Education Early Childhood Program**

If the child is attending a regular education early childhood program, report the child in one of the regular education early childhood program environments **even if the child receives special education services in other environments**. Refer to the instructions in the section below to determine which of percent of time category is appropriate.

Early Childhood Program: A program that includes **at least 50 percent non-disabled** children. Early childhood programs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Head Start
- kindergarten
- reverse mainstream classrooms
- private preschools
- preschool or kindergarten classes
- preschool classes offered to an eligible pre-kindergarten population by the public school system
- group child care OR group child development center

Attendance at an early childhood program need not be funded by IDEA, Part B funds. If the child is **NOT** attending a General Education Early Childhood Program as defined above, please move to Section 2 or 3 as appropriate.

### **Reporting Time in Regular Education Early Childhood Programs**

When determining whether to report a child in Environments 'A', 'B', 'C', or 'D', the amount of time the child is in a regular education early childhood program must be known. Report all children who attend a regular early child hood program in Environments 'A', 'B', 'C', or 'D', even if the child receives special education services in some other location.

The child must attend a Regular Early Childhood Program at least 10 hours per week to be reported in Environments 'A' or 'B'. Refer to the criteria below to determine if Environment 'A' or 'B' best represents the environment the child receives the majority of the IEP defined special education and related services.

The child must attend a Regular Early Childhood Program less than 10 hours per week to be reported in Environments 'C' or 'D'. Refer to the criteria below to determine if Environment 'C' or 'D' best represents the environment the child receives the majority of the IEP defined special education and related services.

**The Regular Early Childhood Program educational environments categories are defined as follows:**

- **Environment 'A'** Children who attend a Regular Early Childhood Program at least 10 hours per week and receive the majority of their special education and related services in the Regular Early Childhood Program.
- **Environment 'B'** Children who attend a Regular Early Childhood Program at least 10 hours per week and receive the majority of special education and related services in some other location.
- **Environment 'C'** Children who attend a Regular Early Childhood Program less than 10 hours per week and receive the majority of their special education and related services in the Regular Early Childhood Program.
- **Environment 'D'** Children who attend a Regular Early Childhood Program less than 10 hours per week and receive the majority of special education and related services in some other location.

**2. Children Attending a Special Education Program**

If the child **does not attend a regular education early childhood program or kindergarten**, report the child according to the location of the special education program. Report the child in one of these special education environments even if the child also receives special education at home or in a service provider location.

Special Education Program: A program that includes less than **50 % non-disabled children**. Special education programs include, but are not limited to, special education and related services provided in:

- **Environment 'E'** Special education classrooms: Children who attended a special education program in a class with less than 50% nondisabled children. (Do not include children who also attended a regular education early childhood program.)  
For example, programs located in:
  - school buildings;
  - trailers or portables outside school buildings;
  - child care facilities;
  - hospital facilities on an outpatient basis; and
  - other community-based settings
- **Environment 'F'** Separate schools: Children who received education programs in public or private day schools designed specifically for children with disabilities. (Do

not include children who also attended a regular education early childhood program.)

- **Environment 'G'** *Residential facilities:* Children who received education programs in publicly or privately operated residential schools or residential medical facilities on an inpatient basis. (Do not include children who also attended a regular education early childhood program.)

**3. Children NOT Attending a Regular Education Early Childhood Program or Special Education Early Childhood Program in the location of the program.**

If the child **does not receive** his/her special education services at a **regular education early childhood** or a **special education early childhood program** location, but receives some or all of his/her special education services in the home, report the child in Environment H.

- **Environment 'H'** *Home:* Children who received special education and related services in the principal residence of the child's family or caregivers, and who did not attend an early childhood program or a special education program provided in a separate class, separate school, or residential facility. *Include children who receive special education both at home and in a service provider location.* The term *caregiver* includes babysitters. If the child **does not receive** any special education services in the home, report the child in Environment 'I'.

- **Environment 'I'** *Service provider location:* Children who received **all of their special education and related services from a service provider**, and who **did not attend** an *Early Childhood Program* or a *Special Education Early Childhood Program* provided in a separate class, separate school, or residential facility, or receive services in their home. This includes children who received all of their special education and related services from a service provider in a location that is not in any other category.

For example, speech/language services provided in:

- *Private Speech/Language Pathologists' offices;*
- *hospital facilities on an outpatient basis; and*
- *Speech/Language Pathologists' offices located in school buildings*

(Do not include children who also received special education services at home. Children who received special education services both in a service provider location and at home should be reported in the home category.)

- **Environment 'J'** *Parentally Placed in Private School:* Give an unduplicated total of children who have been enrolled by their parents or guardians in regular parochial or other private schools **and** whose basic education is paid through private resources **and** who receive special education and related services at public expense from a local education agency under a service plan. Do not include children who are placed in private schools by the local education agency (school system).