

# FY2022 FTE Guidelines for Special Education Environments: Early Childhood

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
(GADOE)

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## **Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood settings by Educational Environment**

NOTE: Students with IEP Services of Y (YES, IEP Services) or S (Services under a Services Plan) should be reported with the appropriate Environment Code of A-I. *Students with IEP Services of N (Not Served) should not be reported with an Environment Code.*

When reporting educational environments for preschool children in Early Childhood settings, use the following rules to determine which environment to use for each child. These categories do not reflect a continuum from least to most restrictive, nor do the categories reflect the percentage of time in the regular education classroom.

- Children who are 5 years old on Count Day should be reported with an Early Childhood Environment only if they are in Preschool.
- Children who are 5 years old on Count Day and in Kindergarten should be reported with a School Age Environment.
- Children who are 6 years old or older on Count Day, regardless of grade, should be reported with a School Age Environment.
- *For preschool environments, preschool students who are attending a private school are reported as attending a regular early childhood program following the guidance below.*

Children with disabilities in Early Childhood settings will fall into the following three categories:

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

### **Section 1: Children Attending a Regular Education Early Childhood Program**

**Early Childhood Program:** A program that includes at least 50 percent non-disabled children. Attendance at an early childhood program need not be funded by IDEA, Part B funds. Early childhood programs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Head Start
- Private preschool
- Public Preschool, such as GA PreK
- Group childcare OR group child development center

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 also receives special education services in other environments. Refer to the instructions in the section below to determine which percentage of time category is 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 childhood program in Environments 'A', 'B', 'C', or 'D', even if the child also receives special education services in some other location.

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

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

- ★ 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 their special education and related services in some other location.

### Section 2: Children Attending a Special Education Program

If the child does not attend a regular education early childhood program report the child according to the location of the special education program. Report the child in one of these special education program 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 attend 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
  - Childcare facilities

- Private preschool
  - Hospital facilities on an outpatient basis
  - Other community-based settings
- ★ Environment 'F': Separate schools: Children who received special education services 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 special education services 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.)

Section 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 or at a Service provider location,

- ★ 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
- 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.)