

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) FOR STUDENTS AGES 3-5 (EARLY CHILDHOOD)

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Q1: WHAT ARE REGULAR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS?

A: A 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 may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Head Start
- Kindergarten
- Preschool classes offered to an eligible pre-kindergarten population by the public school system
- Private kindergartens or preschools
- Group child development center or child care

Q2: HOW SHOULD CHILDREN RECEIVING THE MAJORITY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES IN A LOCATION OTHER THAN THE CHILD'S CLASSROOM BUT WITHIN THE SAME BUILDING BE REPORTED?

A: Special education and related services delivered to the child in the course of daily activities and routines in which all children in the classroom participate (e.g., "circle time", "learning centers") would be considered as being received in the Regular Early Childhood Program (LRE codes PA1 or PB1). However, services delivered in a location that removes 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 whether or not they are provided in another location within the building where the regular early childhood program is located.

Q3: WHEN CONSIDERING IF A CHILD IS ATTENDING A REGULAR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM, DOES THE CHILD NEED TO BE ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM, VS. ATTENDING AS A 'VISITOR' FOR A PORTION OF TIME?

A: PEAs should report these data based on children with disabilities being enrolled in these types of programs. CWDs being enrolled in a regular early childhood program most closely aligns with the intent of the least restrictive environment provisions of the IDEA.

Q4: WHAT ARE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

A: A special education program is a program that includes less than 50 percent nondisabled children (i.e., children not on IEPs). This may include, but is not limited to the following:

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

Q5: SHOULD CHILD CARE AND OTHER PROGRAMS THAT FAMILIES HAVE CHOSEN FOR THEIR CHILD BE CONSIDERED WHEN REPORTING THESE DATA?

A: Yes, PEAs should take into consideration child care and other programs that families have chosen for their child when determining the appropriate educational environment report category (LRE code).