The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has identified 20 indicators to guide State Education Agencies (SEAs) in their implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B. These indicators are also used by the SEA to report progress and performance to OSEP. This, in turn, allows OSEP to report concrete data back to Congress and to monitor and supervise State implementation in specific areas.

Indicator 6 challenges Local Education Agency's (LEA's) to place students with disabilities in the same academic and social environments as their chronologically same aged peers. While we understand that sometimes a self-contained setting is the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for a specific student and their level of need, self-contained is not the LRE for all students with disabilities. The indicator reads as follows:

Percent of children aged 3 through 5 with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) attending:
A. Regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program; and
B. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.
[20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A)]

Driving Question: Are Early Childhood special education students served in the Least Restrictive Environment?

Instructions

Prior to beginning the self-assessment, the LEA may need to gather and review educational records, processes, information, and documents related to **preschool environment** in the LEA. This information may include:

1) **Students' IEPs**
2) **Professional Development Resources or Presentations**
3) **Written Policies and Procedures**

Each component and best practice description is followed by a list of measures. Some include examples. An LEA's stage of practice should be informed by these measures.

Stages of Practice

The self-assessment is intended to identify a Local Education Agency's (LEA's) stage of practice in the area of preschool settings and provide guidance for LEAs in improving their practice. The Oklahoma State Department of Education, Special Education Services division (OSDE-SES) envisions stages of practice along this continuum:

1) Little or No Knowledge
2) Basic Knowledge
3) Partial Application
4) Regular Practice
5) Best Practice

An LEA may assess its practice as "Best Practice" if the LEA has measurable/observable evidence of the practice and documentation of consistent use.

Components

For the area of preschool settings, the OSDE-SES has identified three quality indicators. These indicators provide a comprehensive description of preschool settings in the LEA.

1) **Student Participation in the General Education Environment**
2) **Continuum of Placement Decisions**
3) **Staff Development**

Self-Assessment Team

A team consists of more than one person. The self-assessment should be completed by a team of at least 3-5 individuals. The Self-Assessment Team may include:

1) Special Education Services Director
2) Special Education Teacher(s)
3) General Education Teacher(s)
4) Administrator(s)
5) Counselor(s)
6) Related Service Providers

List the team here:

Name	Role	Signature

Components

1) **Student Participation in the General Education environment**

Best Practice: Each student is served in a general education or natural setting to the maximum extent possible. Accommodations are made as needed for the student to be successful. *The needs of the student are considered first, then placement is determined. Creative alternatives are considered for younger preschool students.*

Measures:

___ Considerations such as providing services in childcare settings, community programs, and/or other alternate settings are made.

- Ex. The LEA may not have a designated program for students with disabilities under the age of 4. The LEA is still responsible for serving these students under IDEA, so creative alternatives are considered. These alternatives may include providing services in natural settings (Child Care Center, Head Start, etc.)

___ Placement decisions are made based on the needs of the child rather than programs available.

- Ex. A three year old student whose primary needs are in the areas of speech and gross motor skills does not require a full time Developmentally Delayed preschool simply because that is the program the school has available for that age range.

Comments/Documentation:

2) Continuum of Placement Decisions

Best Practice: IEP teams consider all possible placements and services to support students with special needs on an annual basis using data from students' present levels of performance. *Placements and services are continuously monitored and reviewed.*

Measures:

___ Is general education considered in the continuum of placement?

- Ex. The continuum of placement ranges from full time general education to full time special education. Decisions are based on what the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is for that student.

___ Monitoring of student's progress and review of placement decision should be ongoing and adjusted as needed. Young students may gain skills quickly and Least Restrictive Environment should be maximized.

- Ex. The student began in a full time special education setting, but is gaining skills quickly. An IEP meeting was held mid-year to modify the times to provide time in the general education environment.

Comments/Documentation:

3) Staff Development

Best Practice: An ongoing staff development program exists that includes research-based training emphasizing strategies to work with students with disabilities and provide access to the general education environment.

Measures:

___ All staff should receive training on working with students with disabilities.

_____ Specific Staff _____All staff

- Ex. A required training is provided to all staff regarding Least Restrictive Environment at least yearly.
- Ex. Staff access online trainings and resources regarding Least Restrictive Environment on an ongoing basis.

Comments/Documentation: