

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Young Children, Ages 3-5

Section 2 Identifying Young Children 3-5

- OSEP Letter to Brekken, dated June 2, 2010, states “IDEA does not require, or encourage, an LEA to use an RTI approach prior to a referral for evaluation or as part of determining whether a 3, 4 or 5-year old is eligible for special education and related services.”
- This same OSEP letter indicates that States or LEAs who adopt the RTI approach as part of the eligibility criteria, among other components, for determining whether a child has a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) need to take into consideration that the **category of SLD is generally not applicable to preschool age children.**
- For children enrolled in kindergarten who are age 5, the LEA may choose to use a process based on the child’s response to scientific evidence-based intervention (MTSS/RTI), if appropriate

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Section 9 Early Childhood Outcomes (EOC)

Federal Guidance as of Spring 2021

- No student initially placed on an IEP in kindergarten will have an ECO (entry or exit) completed on them. ECO's (early childhood outcomes) should only be completed for children receiving IEP services in preschool.
- Exit guidance is that an exit ECO is completed when a child receives 180 days of services **AND** the first of these things happen:
 1. A child exits preschool (to go to kindergarten);
 2. A child exits special education services while still preschool age (including if family declines further services);
 3. A child's 6th birthday happens while the child is still in preschool.

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- All children who receive an entry rating must be given an exit rating if they receive at least 180 calendar days of services from the date of the initial IEP to the last day of IEP services/end of year. End of year services are calculated as of June 30 of the current school year if an exit date is not provided. Exit dates should reflect when the ratings were actually completed (for example, at the end of the preschool year in May) and are not future dated. This may mean occasionally that the length of services reported will be less than 180 days.

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- If a child has not received at least 180 (calendar) days of service, an ECO is not required. If a child transfers to another district with less than 180 days of services, an exit rating is not given by the sending district. If services resume at the receiving district and the total time of services at the former site plus the new site equals 180 days or longer, an exit rating is given when the child leaves the receiving program.

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- Parent/caregiver input is crucial. Family members see the child in situations that professionals do not. As members of the IEP team, families are expected participants in the discussion where ECO ratings are determined. Professionals must be able to explain to the entire team why the rating is being done, what it means, and the evidence that shows why the team identified the selected rating for each child

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- If a preschool child moves to kindergarten and is missing an ECO exit, one should be completed as soon as possible with input from the IEP team members after noting that ECO is missing. Typically, that ECO will be counted as missing in the data if not completed by June 30th after the child exits preschool.
- ECO ratings are **required** and need to be completed.

For additional information about Early Childhood Outcomes:

<https://sde.ok.gov/special-education-early-childhood-outcomes>

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Section 10, Funding

- LEAs that do not operate programs for nondisabled preschool aged children are not required to initiate or pay for such early childhood programs solely to satisfy the requirements regarding placement in the LRE.
- However, each LEA is required to provide appropriate placement options to meet the child's specific area of need based on their IEP. The LEA responsible for providing a FAPE to the child is responsible for ensuring that all costs associated with the special education and related services contained in the IEP are at no cost to parents.

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- The LEA is also responsible to ensure that the IEP can be implemented, and the child can make progress appropriate, in light of the child's unique disability-related needs, whether placement is in a program operated by the LEA, another public agency, in a private facility, community-based or faith-based preschools or day care centers.
- A preschool age child on an IEP is not necessarily required to attend an early childhood program to receive the special education and related services. For example, a three-year-old child whose IEP team determined speech therapy as the only area of need would not necessarily need to attend an early childhood program. The LEA would be responsible for providing or paying for the speech therapy in this example.