**Considerations for Reporting Indicator 6: Preschool Environments**

Indicator 6 is collected through the December 1 Child Count. The validity of the December 1 Child Count data collection is of the utmost importance to ensure accurate state and federal required reporting. The submission of data should reflect the content of the IEP that will be in effect on the date of the collection (December 1). If instructional models change prior to December 1, the LEA should adjust calculations accordingly.

# Indicator 6

Percent of children aged three through five with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) attending a:

1. Regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program; and
2. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provides information to assist local education agencies (LEA) with calculating and reporting this data based on traditional face to face educational environments. Resources include:

* [Virginia Indicator 6 Decision Tree](https://va-leads-ecse.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS747-1bZgdn3jQ/Resource-virginia-indicator-6-decision-tree)
* [Customized Indicator 6 Decision Tree Tool](https://va-leads-ecse.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS76uDoWaNMBG6Q/Resource-customized-indicator-6-decision-tree-tool)
* [Indicator 6 Instructions: Educational Environments for Children Birth-Five](http://doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/disabilities/data-collection/index.shtml)
* [Indicator 6: Questions and Answers for Educational Environments and Children Birth-Five](http://doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/disabilities/data-collection/index.shtml%22%20%5Co%20%22Indicator%206%3A%20Questions%20and%20Answers%20for%20Educational%20Environments%20and%20Children%20Birth-Five)
* [Understanding Indicator 6: Early Childhood Special Education Settings for Children Ages Birth-Five Webinar](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDG3BgJ9NEU&list=PLRTyI0-OTuVNTnPYK-xrhYfSZ9g-mjURy&index=1)
* [Understanding the Indicator 6 Terminology: Early Childhood Special Education Settings for Children Ages Birth-Five Webinar](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXHjJDqgYSU&list=PLRTyI0-OTuVNTnPYK-xrhYfSZ9g-mjURy&index=2)
* [Understanding Data Reporting Requirements of Indicator 6: Early Childhood Special Education Settings for Children Ages Birth-Five Webinar](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unH9nyr57Aw&index=3&list=PLRTyI0-OTuVNTnPYK-xrhYfSZ9g-mjURy)

For more information on the December 1 Child Count visit the [Special Education Child Count webpage](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/child_count/index.shtml) which can be found on the [VDOE website](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/index.shtml).

# Background Information

## Instructional Models

In the 2020-2021 school year, Virginia’s local school divisions are adjusting to the realities of COVID-19 with a wide array of instructional modalities and calendars. For some divisions, the school year is beginning in entirely remote or virtual fashion with a blend of synchronous and asynchronous instruction; others are offering nearly all in-person instruction.Models may include:

* In Person - Children receive instruction in a school building up to five days per week.
* Hybrid - Children receive instruction through a combination of in person and virtual models.
* Virtual - Children receive instruction from their homes through the use of a variety of digital tools and practices, interactions, and learning activities.

## Virtual Instruction

Virtual approaches toward learning provide both **synchronous** and **asynchronous** learning opportunities. In a synchronous approach, which more closely models direct instruction in the classroom, students experience learning activities at the same time. Examples of virtual synchronous learning might include a video conference for a morning meeting, a live science demonstration that all children watch together, or the use of tools where content is presented by a teacher and children can interact during a lesson. The synchronous approach for a student puts the student into direct contact with a teacher and usually other peers.

The asynchronous modality affords families and children time to work on their learning on their own schedule. Some asynchronous activities may be specific activities designed by a teacher (e.g., build an obstacle course and label prepositions) while others may be less structured (e.g., work on choice making throughout the day). Asynchronous activities may include opportunities for children to practice developmentally appropriate skills by embedding opportunities into their everyday environments. Examples of asynchronous instruction might include answering “wh” questions while listening to a story read by a parent, following directions during movement activities, using picture cards to request assistance during meals, or taking turns with a sibling or peer.

# Reporting Indicator 6A

Percent of children attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program.

To report indicator 6A, answer the following questions:

1. **Is the child attending a Regular Early Childhood Program?**

A Regular Early Childhood Program for the purpose of data collection required by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is defined as an early childhood program that includes a majority of children without disabilities (50% or more children without disabilities). This can include, but is not limited to:

* Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI)
* Head Start
* Reverse inclusion classrooms
* Preschool classes (public or private)
* Group child development center or child care
* Community based play groups

A child’s attendance is to be considered across a typical week. A typical week is what the child does consistently across weeks during the school year. For example a child may attend a community-based licensed child care every Monday in the afternoon. This is considered typical. However, if the child only occasionally goes to child care this would not count as typical. A week is considered for preschool children because the child may not have the same schedule each day. For example, a child may attend child care three days a week and not daily.

**Recommendation: As the intention of the data collection is to identify access to regular early childhood education, if the program meets the OSEP definition, regardless of whether it is taking place in person or virtually, it would be considered a Regular Early Childhood Program. The data collection must remain accurate. If the child is not in a class with a majority of children without disabilities, than it is not a Regular Early Childhood Program.**

## Regular Early Childhood Program Examples

Example 1) A child with an IEP is placed in a Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) program. There are two children with IEPs and 12 without. The preschool is virtual until January. The child participates in the VPI program with his peers.

Example 2) A child with an IEP is placed in a Head Start program. There are four children with IEPs and 12 without. Parents have an option to have their child attend in person or virtually. Due to COVID-19, many parents have elected for their child to receive virtual instruction. This child will attend in person along with the other three children with IEPs and three children without IEPs. The other 9 children will attend virtually.

Example 3) A child with an IEP attends a VPI program that is providing virtual instruction. There are 14 children without IEPs in the class. The child participates in the VPI program three days a week. On Tuesday and Thursday, he attends school in person and receives special education and related services in an early childhood special education classroom.

## Regular Early Childhood Program Non-Examples

Example 1) A child with an IEP is placed in a VPI program. Due to COVID-19, the district has struggled with recruitment of preschoolers and the class has more children with IEPs than without.

Example 2) A child was placed in a community-based preschool. The preschool is no longer providing services due to COVID-19 and difficulty implementing health and safety standards. The IEP team, which includes the parents, determine the child’s placement will be changed and he will receive services virtually from the early childhood special education teacher until the community-based preschool is able to open safely. They anticipate the opening to be in January.

1. **Is the child attending a Regular Early Childhood Program for 10 or more hours a week?**

The number of hours a child attends in person, hybrid, or virtual instruction are to be calculated. Include both synchronous and asynchronous activities.

**Recommendation: Calculate the number of hours delivered in person. For hybrid or virtual instruction, add the synchronous and asynchronous activities together for a total number of hours a week.**

1. **Where do the majority of special education and related services take place?**

Determine when and where special education and related services are provided for in person, hybrid, or virtual instruction. Consider both synchronous and asynchronous activities.

**Recommendation: The intent of the data collection is to determine if special education and related services are delivered in the general education environment or if the child is removed to receive services. For hybrid or virtual instruction, identify whether the majority of special education and related services take place within synchronous and asynchronous learning activities or are provided outside of the school day or recommended instructional activities.**

# Reporting Indicator 6B

Percent of children attending a separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.

Use the following definitions to determine if the child attends a separate class, separate school or residential facility.

A separate special education classroom includes classrooms provided by the LEA with 50 percent or more students with disabilities. Classrooms may be in:

* Regular school buildings
* Trailers, portables
* Hospital – outpatient
* Other community-based settings

A separate school is a public or private day school designed specifically for students with disabilities.

A residential facility is a program in a public or privately operated residential school or residential medical facility where the student stays on an inpatient basis.

**Recommendation: As the intention of the data collection is to identify children who receive services in a separate setting and not in a regular early childhood program, if a program meets the definition of a separate class, school, or residential setting, regardless of whether it is taking place in person, through a hybrid approach, or virtually, then it should be reported as such.**

## Separate Class, School, or Residential Facility Examples

Example 1) A child with an IEP is placed in an ECSE self-contained program. There are eight children with IEPs. The preschool is virtual until January.

Example 2) A child was placed in a community-based preschool. The preschool is no longer providing services due to COVID-19 and difficulty implementing health and safety standards. The IEP team, which includes the parents, determine the child’s placement will be changed and he will receive services virtually from the early childhood special education teacher until the community-based preschool is able to open safely. They anticipate the opening to be in January.