TOPIC: IEP Contents - Preschool Settings and Percent of Time

"How is percent of time calculated for preschoolers on the IEP?"

Districts are not required to calculate percent of time in services for preschool-age children (3-5) on the IEP. There is no state or federal requirement to do so. Rather, the documentation required for preschool-aged children is whether the child is in a regular early childhood (EC) setting or in a special education setting, or is supported at home or in a hospital/clinic setting. Whether a child is served in a regular EC setting or special education setting is determined by the number of typically-developing children compared to the number of children with IEPs in that setting.

The reporting requirement and definition is:

Regular EC Setting means a setting where 50% or more of the children are typically-developing (i.e., do not have IEPs).

For example: If a child with an IEP attends a Head Start center where there are 20 children in the classroom and 5 have IEPs, the child would be counted as being served in a regular EC setting because 15 of 20 (75%) of the children are typically-developing.

Special Education Setting means a setting where 50% or more of the children have IEPs.

For example: If a child with an IEP attends a school-based EC program where there are 12 children in the classroom and 8 have IEPs, that child would be counted as being served in a special education setting because 8 of 12 children (67%) have IEPs.

The reporting requirement is to determine the status of least restrictive environment, and whether states and districts are making progress towards serving children in regular early childhood settings.

In summary, districts must document on the IEP form the setting in which preschool-age children with IEPs are served, as defined above (regular EC or sped setting). It is about the setting itself, not about percent of time the child spends in the setting.

NOTE for SRS Users:
NDE has been advised by SRS staff that districts utilizing the SRS IEP will need to enter a number in the Percent of Time field on the SRS IEP in order to finalize the IEP. The computer is only looking to see that a number is entered in the field. Once entered, the number is ignored by the system. It does not matter what number is entered; it can be any number from 0 to 100, as it is not used by NDE for any purpose.