

Guiding Questions for Discussing Services in the Least Restrictive Environment

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team may begin to discuss a child's placement after it has documented the child's strengths and needs, developed goals, and considered special factors. The discussion begins with the supplementary aids and services a child would need to have their IEP successfully implemented in the early childhood program they attend (if any) or in a regular early childhood program. It is critical that the needs of the family are considered. Many families need to access child care to be able to work. **Best practice is that a family should never have to choose between attending the child care of their choice and receiving special education services.** These questions are designed to guide the placement discussion, but are not intended to be used at every meeting. Some of these questions also may be asked during the evaluation process. The IEP team should supplement these questions, as needed.

Current Enrollment

- Is the child currently enrolled in a regular early childhood program?
- How is the child doing in the early childhood program they are attending?
- What supports are already being offered in this environment?

Family Preference

- Does the family want the child to remain in the current program?
- What are the preferences of the family regarding placement and location?
- Will the family be able to visit setting options before agreeing to the proposed placement?
- Does the family require full day care?

Transportation/Transition

- Will transitions for the child be reduced or increased in this setting?
- Will time in transport to the setting be similar to transport time for children without disabilities?
- How would transit time impact the child's learning time and the length of their day?
- Will the parents have children in different elementary schools?

IEP Placement

- What supports would the child need to be successful?
- Can the IEP be implemented in the regular early childhood program with needed supports?
- Will the proposed placement allow the family to access child care, if needed?
- Will the regular early childhood program support the collaboration and specialized instruction for the child?
- What are the benefits for the child and family?
- Are there other placements that may be best for this child, and why?
- Does the team agree on the early childhood placement that is the appropriate option?