

Early Childhood Education Preschool Environment Codes Frequently Asked Questions

1) What ages receive a Preschool Environment (PE) code?

Children who are 3-5 years old with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in preschool who are not enrolled in kindergarten require a PE code. Children with an IEP who are 5 and enrolled in kindergarten are included in 5-21 codes.

2) Where and when does ISBE pull data for PE codes?

PE codes come from I-Star data and are collected for all early childhood children enrolled as of the December 1 child count date. After the December 1 snapshot, districts are allowed to review the data and correct errors until the final count is taken (around April 1), at which time the superintendent must verify and sign off on the data. The [Harrisburg Project](#) provides technical assistance regarding collection periods and child count.

3) How can I review my PE Code Report?

Follow these steps in I-Star:

- Select “Reports.”
- Select “Application Reports.”
- Select “Student” as report type.
- Select “Statistics” as report categories
- Select “Report” from report list by clicking on the appropriate radio button.
- Select “Run Report” at the bottom of the screen.

The [Harrisburg Project](#) can provide individualized assistance if further help is needed.

4) What are regular early childhood programs?

A regular early childhood program is a program that includes a majority (at least 50 percent) of nondisabled children (i.e., children not on IEPs). This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Head Start
- Preschool classes offered to an eligible prekindergarten population by the public school system
- Private preschools
- Group child development centers or child care entities

Note: This definition applies to the PE codes. In Illinois, a regular early childhood program is a program that includes at least 70 percent of nondisabled children.

5) What are special education programs?

A special education program is a program that includes less than 50 percent nondisabled children (i.e., children not on IEPs). This may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Special education classes in regular school buildings
- Separate schools
- Residential facilities

Note: This definition applies to the PE codes. In Illinois, a special education early childhood program is a program that includes less than 70 percent of nondisabled children.

6) When considering if a child is attending a regular early childhood program, does the child need to be enrolled in the program vs. attending as a “visitor” for a portion of time?

The child must be enrolled in the program.

7) What is considered “majority of special education minutes”?

The U.S. Department of Education defines majority as 50 percent or more of total special education and related services in the regular early childhood program minutes. This would be either code 30 or 32.

8) If a child is enrolled in a regular early childhood program outside of the school -- but not as a part of an IEP team decision -- does this still count as being enrolled in a regular early childhood program for PE codes?

Yes. LEAs should take into consideration child care and other programs that families have chosen for their child when determining the appropriate PE code. Informal settings, such as weekly school-based or neighborhood playgroups or home settings, are not considered regular early childhood programs as these informal settings are generally not required to comply with early learning programs standards or curricula.

9) How should children receiving the majority of special education and related services in a location other than the child’s regular education classroom but within the same building be reported?

Special education and related services delivered to the child in the course of daily activities and routines in which all children in the classroom participate (e.g., “circle time,” “learning centers”) would be considered as being received in the regular early childhood program and coded as a PE 30 or 32. Services delivered in a location that removes the child from the opportunity to interact with nondisabled children would not be considered as being received in the regular early childhood program. These include, but are not limited to, services delivered in a 1:1 therapeutic setting, or in a small group composed solely of children with disabilities whether or not they are provided in another location within the building where the regular early childhood program is located. If more than 50 percent of IEP minutes take place outside of the regular early childhood program, PE code 31 or 33 is used.

10) If a child attends a blended classroom five times per week in the morning and a day care five times per week in the afternoon, would you combine those minutes to come up with time spent in the early childhood program?

Yes.

Visit the [Determining Preschool Environment Codes Module to learn about specific coding scenarios.](#)

Resources

- [Determining Preschool Environment Codes Module](#)
- [Decision Tree for Coding PE](#)
- [Early CHOICES Decision Tree App](#)
- [The Harrisburg Project](#)
- [ISBE Preschool Inclusion Website](#)
- [Webpage to Generate PE Codes](#) and [User Guide](#)