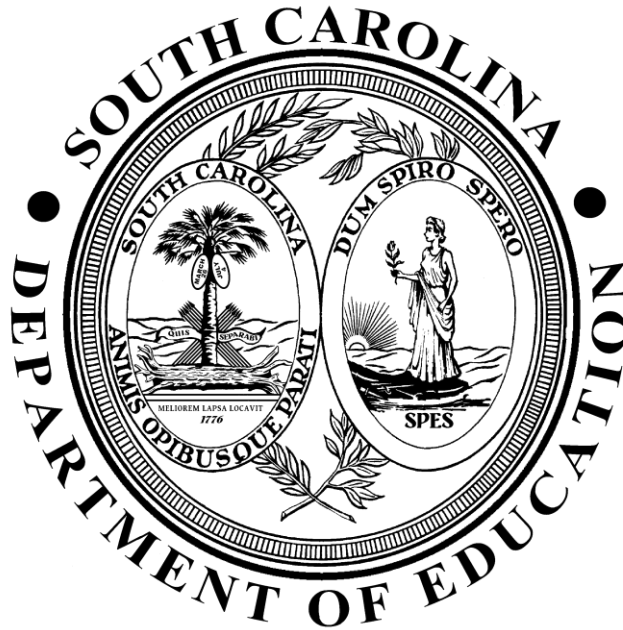


STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



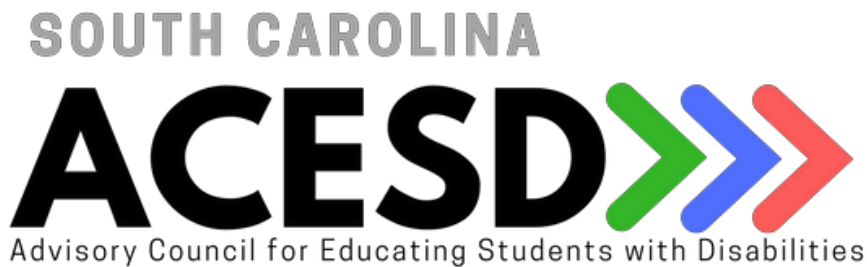
Report Summarizing Services Provided Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to Preschool Children with Disabilities 2019–20 School Year

Provided to the Interagency Coordinating Council, the Senate Finance Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the House Education and Public Works

Pursuant to Act 86, Chapter 36 of Title 59 of the Amended Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976

February 1, 2021

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February 1, 2021

Governor Henry McMaster
President *Pro Tempore* Harvey S. Peeler
Speaker James H. Lucas
Speaker *Pro Tempore* Thomas E. Pope
Members of the General Assembly:

The preschool committee of the Advisory Council for Educating Students with Disabilities (ACESD) is pleased to present its 2021 Annual Report of services provided to children ages three through five, and corresponding recommendations. The committee is charged with the important responsibility of identifying and studying key issues in special education and early intervention and advising and assisting the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), Office of Special Education Services (OSES).

The 2021 Annual Report and resulting recommendations are pursuant to Act 86 of 1993, Chapter 36 of Title 59 of the Amended Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976. The 2020 recommendations of the preschool committee of ACESD include the following:

Coordinated Professional Development. It is recommended that the SCDE (specifically its OSES with the Office of Early Learning and Literacy) continue scaling-up its provision of high-quality professional development opportunities using multiple methods including online modules, face-to-face presentations, webinars, and follow-up on-site collaborative consultations with feedback to practitioners and administrators. Professional development activities should be posted and archived on the SCDE website for future use whenever possible. It is further recommended that the SCDE pursue collaboration across early childhood sectors and agencies including early childhood education, special education, early care and education, Head Start, BabyNet, First Steps to School Readiness, and other early childhood service providers. A statewide implementation schedule for personnel in the multiple early childhood sectors should be developed based on an annual needs assessment that may include a statewide survey of practitioners and key administrators and practitioners in the multiple early care and education sectors. Professional development activities should be aligned with the evidence-based and evidence-informed recommendations, especially in the areas of:

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL), behavior supports and self-regulation for young children and their families;
- Curriculum implementation and formative assessment strategies (e.g.,

screenings, progress monitoring), especially with consideration of Universal Design for Learning, Early Childhood Multi-tiered System of Supports, and Response to Intervention;

- South Carolina Early Learning Standards and access to the general education curriculum;
- Augmentative and alternative communication methods, and use of assistive technology;
- Supporting educators and administrators in promoting appropriate behavior in changing routines and contexts; and
- Supporting self-care and sustainability of teachers and special education providers and retain highly qualified professionals in the field.

Procedural Guidance and Training for General Education Early Childhood Teachers and Administrators on Inclusion and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Because the field of early childhood education is comprised of a variety of sectors, and none of these is mandatory for families to engage in, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandate of LRE becomes increasingly important and multifaceted as regulations and procedures that operate a variety of programs must align with the federal mandate. By continuing to intentionally reach out to early childhood leadership across sectors and share training resources with early childhood educators and administrators, successful inclusion, access to the general education curricula and early learning standards, and typically developing peers will ensure we meet our state and federal legislative mandates, prepare young children with disabilities for kindergarten, ensure accommodations for children entitled to them are available, and all early childhood providers are supported, empowered, and expected to do so.

COVID-19 Recovery and Post-Pandemic Special Education. In March 2020, COVID-19 changed the context for education and as a result special education services and access to civil rights protected by IDEA and ADA had to modify as well. The preschool committee of the ACESD recommends a review of the following areas to support future planning:

- broadband access;
- virtual instruction strategies and limiting virtual exclusionary discipline practices;
- stakeholder (providers and families) feedback on successes and opportunities for improvement in service provision and access;
- early intervention model and formats for virtual or at home learning for young children including: social supports, inclusion, behavior supports;
- review procedures for C to B transition conferences and eligibility determination in the context of virtual instruction and contact restrictions; and
- review communication procedures for supporting families during the pandemic including:
 - loss of contact to families/young students with disabilities;
 - prior written notice and Individualized Education Program (IEP) services in LRE when general education location changes; and
 - supporting families of young children who are highly mobile (homeless or migrant families), military, speak English as a second language, are foster families, or have other unique needs.

Accomplishments for 2020:

In the 2020 Annual Report, the committee recommended a review of Child Find Processes and Procedures due to a decrease in early childhood special education numbers. As a result of these efforts, despite the influence of the pandemic, early childhood special education numbers have increased. As such, continued monitoring of child find data and review of policies and procedures as needed will occur.

The 2020 Annual Report also recommended increased attention and recommendations to support timely C to B transitions as the number of eligible three-year-olds has consistently increased over the past several years. Through close partnership between Parts C and B 619 and the efforts of the transition committee of the Child Find Task Force for preschool students, South Carolina Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have policies and processes in place to support an increase in eligible three-year-olds. As such, continued monitoring of transition data and strategic supports as needed will occur.

Thank you for your consideration of the thoughtful study and recommendations contained in this report.

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Kathy Bryant, South Carolina Continuum of Care
Mary Lynne Diggs, Head Start State Collaboration
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Karma Marshall, South Carolina Commission for the Blind
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Background

Act 86 of 1993 requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to serve children with disabilities ages three through five. This state mandate represented a downward extension of all the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Public Law 101–476. One of the stipulations of the state mandate is the requirement for the submission of a report to the South Carolina General Assembly by February 1 of each year that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) initiatives related to preschool programs for children with disabilities;
- data and program information from LEAs related to activities involving the Child Find process and LEA services;
- updates of policies and procedures for preschool programs for children with disabilities;
- financial information pertaining to implementation of preschool programs for children with disabilities; and
- information collected from other state agencies providing services for preschool children with disabilities, including the Commission for the Blind; the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs; the Department of Health and Environmental Control; the Department of Mental Health; the Division of Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children; the Office of the Governor; the School for the Deaf and the Blind; and the State Department of Social Services. Information collected includes the following:
 - pertinent program data;
 - financial information; and
 - pertinent policies and procedures related to programs for preschool children with disabilities.

The stipulations are outlined in the legislation for preschool children with disabilities, Act 86, Chapter 36 of Title 59 of the Amended Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976.

Executive Summary

Initiatives by the SCDE, Office of Special Education Services (OSSES) and other state agencies to provide a comprehensive system of service for preschool children with disabilities in the 2019–20 school year are summarized in this report. The sections address the number of preschool children with disabilities in South Carolina receiving special education during the school year; who they are and where they received their services; available state and federal funds; and initiatives and services provided on behalf of preschool children with disabilities and their families by LEAs, state agencies, and Head Start programs.

Section I: Data for Programs for Preschool Children with Disabilities

According to the Child Count data collected on October 22, 2019, for the 2019–20 school year, 10,399 children with disabilities ages three through five received special education services in South Carolina: 2,209 three-year-olds, 3,332 four-year-olds, and 4,858 five-year-olds.

Section II: Financial Information

During the 2019–20 school year, the combined state and federal funds specifically allocated for preschool children with disabilities totaled \$27,386,489 (\$7,320,975 IDEA funds for preschool, and \$20,065,514 state funds).

Section III: Policies and Procedures for Programs for Preschool Children with Disabilities

In 2014–15, State Board of Education Regulation 43–62 was revised and became effective on June 26, 2015. This regulation governs requirements for additional areas of certification, including early childhood special education. In addition, the SCDE promulgated guidance approved by the South Carolina State Board of Education. At the time of this report, the OSES restructured and is revamping the monitoring structure. While the outcomes to young children with disabilities are not yet reflected in the data, these efforts are described within the report. Additionally, activities and supports to ensure special education services are provided to all eligible young children during the Pandemic are also described as these efforts required a great deal of time and energy from staff and stakeholders, despite results not yet being reflected in the data provided in this report.

Section IV: Programs/Services for Preschool Children with Disabilities: Information on Other State Agencies and Head Start Programs

A brief overview of programs and services available to preschool children with disabilities through state agencies and Head Start Programs is provided herein.

Data and Information on Preschool Programs and Services

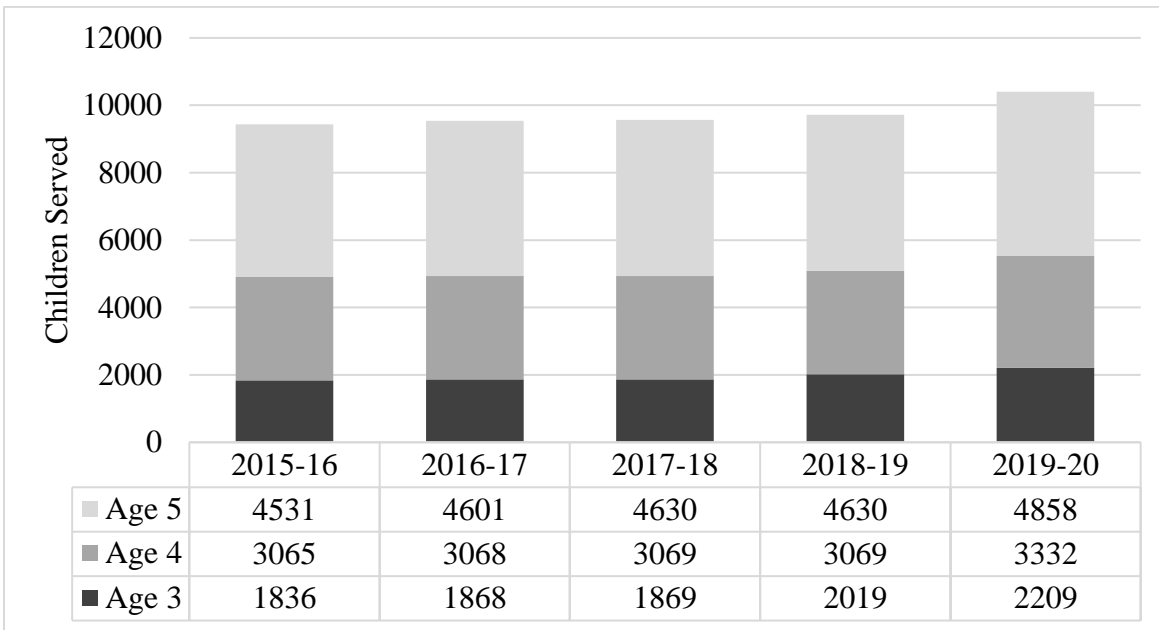
Part B of the IDEA requires the SCDE to submit to the United States Department of Education (USED), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), a certified count, annually, of the number of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services through IEPs. Children ages three through five are included in this Child Count Report each year, based upon a child’s age as of the data collection date (defined as the fourth Tuesday in October, annually). Preschool children can begin receiving services on their third birthday, regardless of when it occurs. Therefore, the annual Child Count information does not reflect the total number of students who received services during any entire school year.

Population and Age¹

According to the 2019 Child Count, 10,399 children with disabilities ages three through five received special education services in South Carolina: 2,209 three-year-olds, 3,332 four-year-olds, and 4,858 five-year-olds as reflected in Table 1. This total marks an approximate seven percent increase in the overall number of preschool students reported receiving services from the 2018 Child Count (9,718). Children with disabilities in age group three increased over nine percent; age group four increased approximately eight-and-one-half percent; and the age group five increased approximately five percent between 2018–19 and 2019–20. Figure 1 displays the number of children by age group receiving services for the past five reporting years. Table 1 shows the trend increasing the total number of children served from 2015 through 2020 school years and an overall increase of over 10 percent over the past five reporting years. Over the past

five reporting years, three year olds have increased over 20 percent. The four-year-old age group increased over eight percent with the five-year-old group increasing over seven percent in the past five reporting years. Of the preschool children served in the 2019–20 school year, 738 or seven percent had limited English proficiency.

Figure 1. Comparison of Children Ages 3–5 Receiving Special Education Services 2015–19



Note. Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, Table 1 (Child Count), 20 Child Count.

Table 1

Five-Year Trend of Children Ages 3–5 Receiving Special Education Services

	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	Percent Change 2014–18
Age 3	1,836	1,873	1,869	2,019	2,209	20.32%
Age 4	3,065	3,054	3,069	3,095	3,332	8.71%
Age 5	4,531	4,704	4,630	4,678	4,858	7.22%
Total	9,432	9,631	9,568	9,792	10,399	10.25%

Note. Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, Table 1 (Child Count), 2019 Child Count.

¹These data are reflective of students with disabilities, ages 3–5, special education and related services through IEPs under the coverage of the IDEA, 2004. These counts would not include children with disabilities who do not have IEPs. The designation of * indicates that the values were 10 or less. Consequently, the data have been suppressed to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and with the SCDE’s policy on public reporting of small cell sizes. Numbers and/or percentages may not add up to statewide totals or 100 percent as a result. The child count date for the 2019–20 school year was Tuesday, October 22, 2019.

Race/Ethnicity

Table 2 displays, by race/ethnicity, the percentage of preschool children receiving services as of the 2019 Child Count. The seven reporting categories are American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, and Two or More Races.

Preschool children with disabilities are predominately White (non-Hispanic) (5,309) or African American (3,225). Preschool children with disabilities who are Hispanic/Latino (1,180) make up the third largest ethnic group with an 11 percent representation, one percent increase from the last reporting year. Aside from the one percent increase in the number of preschool children with disabilities who are Hispanic/Latino, the race and ethnicity of this group has remained stable for the past school year.

Table 2

Percentage of Children 3–5 Receiving Services in 2019 by Race/Ethnicity

	Ages 3–5
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	.00%
American-Indian or Alaska Native	.00%
Asian	1.0%
Two or More Races	5.0%
Hispanic/Latino	11.0%
Black or African American	31%
White	51%

Note. Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, Table 1 (Child Count), 2019 Child Count

Primary Areas of Disability

Table 3 shows the number of children ages three, four, and five years of age receiving services by the area of primary disability on the 2019 Child Count. Children in this age range may be classified as having a developmental delay or, per South Carolina regulations, as having a disability in any of the other twelve categories listed in the table. Data have been suppressed for cells containing less than ten students for confidentiality purposes. Children with developmental delay (37 percent) or speech-language impairment (43 percent) and autism and autism spectrum disorder (15 percent) continue to make up the greatest percentage of all children with disabilities ages three through five receiving services on the 2019 Child Count. These three primary disability categories make up 95 percent of all preschool aged students receiving special education services. Forty-three percent of children age three receiving special education services have a primary disability of developmental delay. Speech-language impairments are the second highest disability categories for three-year-olds, representing 33 percent of the group, and autism or autism spectrum disorder represents 19 percent. Of four-year-olds served in the 2018–19 school year, 41 percent had a primary disability of speech/language impairment and 39 percent developmental delay. Fifteen percent of four-year olds had a primary diagnosis of autism or autism spectrum disorder. Five-year-olds receiving special education services for speech-language impairment, developmental delay, or autism or autism spectrum disorder in the 2018–19 school year were 49, 34, and 12 percent respectively.

Table 3*Number of Children Ages 3–5 Receiving Services by Area of Disability on 2019 Child Count*

Primary Area of Disability	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Ages 3–5
Deaf-Blindness	*	*	*	*
Emotional Disability	*	*	*	*
Traumatic Brain Injury	*	*	*	*
Hearing Impairment	*	*	*	*
Specific Learning Disability	*	*	*	*
Intellectual Disability	*	*	20	20
Visual Impairment	14	19	18	51
Orthopedic Impairment	*	11	25	36
Multiple Disabilities	24	31	26	81
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	41	44	42	127
Other Health Impairment	39	61	81	181
Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder	409	511	588	1,508
Developmental Delay	947	1,295	1,657	3,899
Speech or/Language Impairment	725	1,351	2,393	4,469
Grand Total	2,199	3,323	4,850	10,372

Note. Source of Data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, Table 1 (Child Count), 2019 Child Count.

Table 4 shows the number of children ages three through five receiving services by primary disability across the last five Child Count reports. Cells containing less than ten students are suppressed for confidentiality purposes, and are denoted with an asterisk. Autism is the third largest disability category (13 percent) in South Carolina. This is a 35 percent increase from 2014. This state trend continues to mirror the national trend regarding preschool children with autism, and as a response to this growing population, the OSES has created and implemented an Autism Task Force, a Virtual Toolkit of Autism Resources, a Milo pilot study, Pyramid Model Implementation at the state level, and collaborations with South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services on funding behavior supports for students with autism and increasing the number of certified ABA providers. With the exception of the continuing increase in autism over the past five school years, the other disability categories have remained relatively stable.

Table 4*Areas of Disability Ages 3–5, Comparison for Years 2015–19*

Primary Disability	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Autism	1,026	1,035	1,143	1,234	1,508
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	105	133	121	112	127
Deaf Blindness	*	*	*	*	*
Developmental Delay	3,461	3,553	3,539	3,708	3,899
Emotional Disability	*	*	*	*	*
Intellectual Disability	59	32	32	23	20
Multiple Disabilities	70	74	78	75	81
Orthopedic Impairment	46	49	55	55	36
Other Health Impairment	154	186	183	194	181
Specific Learning Disability	22	11	*	*	*
Speech Language Impairment	4,413	4,481	4,336	4,307	4,469
Traumatic Brain Injury	*	*	*	*	*
Visual Impairment	55	49	41	48	51
Grand Total	9,432	9,631	9,568	9,792	10,399

Note. Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, Table 1 (Child Count), 2019 Child Count.

Educational Environments/Least Restrictive Environment by Age

All LEAs must ensure that preschool children with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment, regardless of whether the LEA operates public preschool programs for children without disabilities. To that end, an LEA may provide services to a preschool child with a disability in a variety of settings, including a regular kindergarten class, public or private preschool program, community-based childcare facility, or in the child’s home. Any LEAs that offer a public preschool program may serve a preschool child with a disability in that program; however, LEAs that do not have a public preschool program must explore alternative methods to ensure preschool children with disabilities are placed in the LRE. Those methods include (1) providing services in preschool programs offered by other public agencies (such as Head Start or community-based childcare); (2) enrolling children in private preschool programs for children without disabilities; (3) locating classes for preschool children with disabilities in regular elementary schools; or (4) providing home-based services. In September 2019, a memorandum was shared with LEAs to describe the continuum of service delivery environments in the early childhood sectors so that children with disabilities are supported appropriately in the LRE. This memo can be found in Appendix A. Children’s educational environments for the 2019 Child Count are shown in Table 5. Twenty-two percent of young children receiving special education services are being served in a special education class separate from the regular education setting. The percentage of children served in a separate special education class during preschool has remained relatively constant over time. Fourteen percent of children receiving services are in the general education classroom (early childhood program or another location) less than ten hours a week. Fifty-five percent of young children

receiving special education services are served in the regular education classroom (either the early childhood program or another location) ten hours a week or more. This data has remained constant for the past three reporting years with only minor changes (2017–18 and 2018–19 school years).

The highest percentage of children age three (46 percent) received their services in a special education program only (separate class) as shown in Tables 5 and 6. This is not surprising since the majority of LEAs have not traditionally offered programs for typically developing three-year-old children in which they can receive their special education and related services through inclusive educational practices. The IDEA requirement that special education services be provided in a continuum of service delivery environments applies to preschool in the same manner it applies to school-aged students, and as a result infrastructure with non-district early childhood sectors must be built to meet this obligation.

Table 5
Educational Environments of Preschool Children with Disabilities 2019–20

Educational Environment	Count	Percent
Home	100	1%
In Regular Education at least 10 hrs. per week - EC Program	4,297	41%
In Regular Education at least 10 hrs. per week - Other Location	1,466	14%
In Regular Education less than 10 hrs. per week - EC Program	974	9%
In Regular Education less than 10 hrs. per week - Other Location	430	4%
Residential Facility		
Separate Class	2,266	22%
Separate School	104	1%
Service Provider Location	762	7%
Grand Total	10,399	99%

Note. Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, Table 1 (Child Count), 2019 Child Count. Columns may not total as cells less than 10 are obscured to protect privacy.

Educational Environments/Least Restrictive Environment by Disability

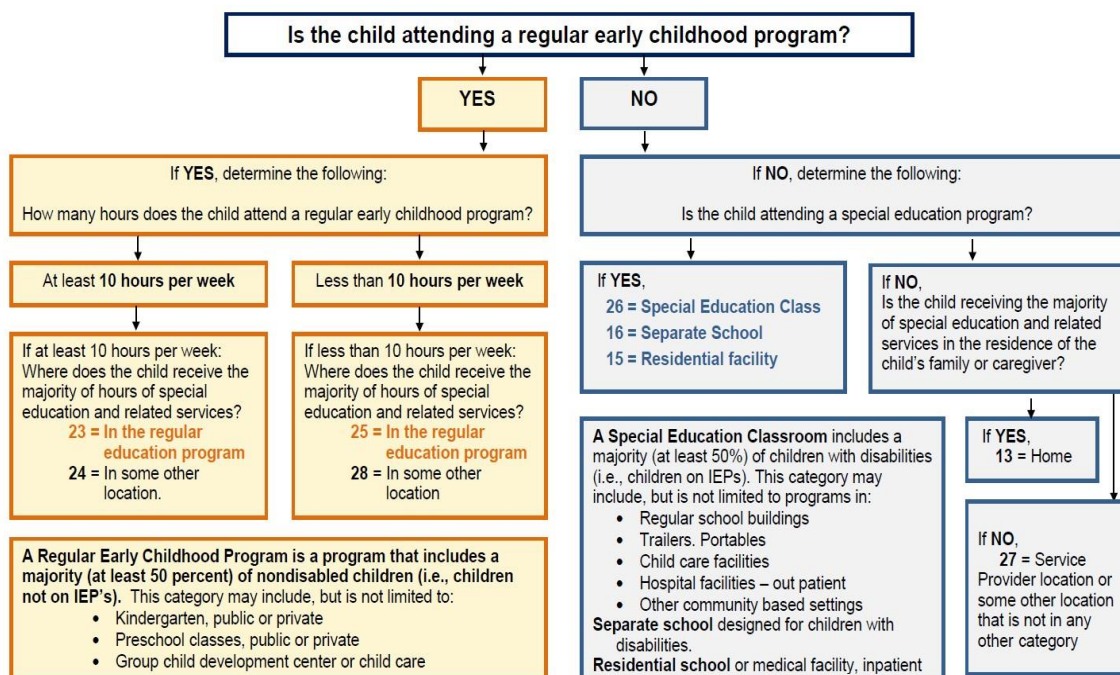
Of all preschool children receiving special education services, the three largest disability categories are speech-language impairment, developmental delay, and autism or autism spectrum disorder, representing 95 percent of preschool-aged children served in South Carolina. Children with these top three primary disabilities are served in a variety of educational environments across the state. Children with speech-language impairment are primarily served in regular education at least ten hours a week in an early childhood program (68 percent) or other location (25 percent) or 93 percent of the time. This is an 18 percent increase in the time spent in the early childhood general education setting from the last reporting year. Children with autism are served in a special education class 49 percent of the time and in a general education class (more than ten hours a week) 26 percent of the time —early childhood program (18 percent) or other location (8 percent). Thirty-seven percent of children with a developmental delay receive special educational services in a separate class or school. Forty-three percent of children with a developmental delay receive at least ten hours of instruction per week in a regular education classroom (early childhood program—34 percent or other location—9 percent), while 20 percent receive less than ten hours of instruction per week in a regular education classroom (early childhood program—15 percent or other location—5 percent). Table 6 shows the top preschool diagnoses by educational environment. Figure 2 shows the decision tree for coding educational environments for preschool special education.

Table 6*Top Preschool Diagnoses by Educational Environment for 2019–20*

Educational Environment	Autism	Developmental Delay	Speech Language Impairment	Grand Total
Home	*	*	50	50
In Regular Education at least 10 hrs. per week - EC Program	258	1,285	2,613	4,156
In Regular Education at least 10 hrs. per week - Other Location	105	345	946	1,396
In Regular Education less than 10 hrs. per week - EC Program	258	589	14	861
In Regular Education less than 10 hrs. per week - Other Location	126	190	*	316
Separate Class	697	1,359	*	2,056
Separate School	*	26	*	26
Service Provider Location	*	19	192	211
Grand Total	1,414	3,813	3,815	9,072

Note. Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, Table 1 (Child Count), 2019 Child Count. Columns may not total as cells less than 10 are obscured to protect privacy.

Figure 2. Decision Tree for Coding Educational Environments for Preschool Special Education



LRE Initiatives

Data Collection and Reporting

To ensure valid and reliable data, OSES staff worked diligently with school and preschool staff to ensure data on preschool LREs were captured and reported appropriately. All LEAs and state-operated programs were provided with a comprehensive OSES data manual that provided the new decision tree, reporting requirements, and a question-and-answer document. These materials are used in conjunction with other face to face trainings, webinars, technical assistance and guidance from OSES to appropriately collect data on preschool LRE. Additionally, the data team at OSES completed checks of the data before they are made public, and are available to provide support as data is both collected and reported by the LRE.

Continuum of Service Delivery Environments

On September 4, 2019, a [memorandum](#) from the OSES was sent to all District Special Education Directors and Early Childhood Education Coordinators communicating the federal and state requirements with respect to preschool placements for young students with disabilities. Statutory requirements for LRE do not distinguish between school-aged and preschool-aged children, and must be applied equally.

In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 300.115 through 300.116 a preschool continuum of alternative placements must be provided by each public agency to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services. The preschool continuum must: (1) include placements listed in the definition of special education under § 300.38 (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals

and institutions); and (2) make provision for supplementary services such as a resource room or itinerant instruction to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

By building and offering a continuum of service delivery environments, young children with disabilities will have increased access to typically developing peers and preschool activities while also receiving appropriate special education services to meet individualized goals. Scaling up the continuum of service delivery environments in early childhood years will also support several other priorities around compliance with IDEA and high quality early childhood education such as inclusion and providing supports through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). Scaling up the continuum of early childhood service delivery environments will require cross sector training and collaboration so that all students in all early childhood environments have high quality, developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn and access to intensive interventions and special education services as needed. This memo, and partnerships at the state level are serving as the foundation for cross-sector training, and policy alignment resulting in increased inclusive opportunities.

Inclusion

According to the *Policy statement on inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs* (USDHHS/ED, 2015), a joint policy statement of the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education, “children with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities and highest needs, can make significant development and learning progress in inclusive settings” (p. 3). Furthermore, inclusion in early childhood programs can set a trajectory for inclusion across the life course. To improve the opportunity for preschool children with disabilities to attend a regular early childhood program as part of their educational environment, a number of initiatives were undertaken to prepare well-qualified staff to create appropriate environments for working with young children with disabilities in all settings.

South Carolina was selected and is actively participating in Targeted Technical Assistance on Early Childhood Inclusion offered by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA). Representatives from Head Start, SCDE/Child Early Reading and Development Education Program (CERDEP), First Steps, and OSES participate on this team and are currently completing a self-assessment instrument and planning efforts to increase inclusion building from efforts funded through the Preschool Development Grant.

SC Partnerships for Inclusion (SCPI)

SCPI personnel developed a support framework for increasing inclusive opportunities and facilitated the organization of district-level cross-sector leadership teams. In addition, the SCPI team created tools to measure a school district’s strengths and needs related to preschool inclusion and adapted the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope planning process used by the Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC) to support district leadership team development of targeted implementation plans. SCPI has convened leadership teams comprised of school district personnel and early childhood stakeholders (e.g., Head Start, childcare programs) representing 37 school districts interested in increasing the provision of inclusive educational opportunities for young children. These teams receive state-sponsored support to design and implement plans to address the unique needs of each district, and to improve their

data as related to Indicators 6 and 7 on the federally-required State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Review (SPP/APR) collected each year. Districts participating in this initiative receive technical assistance to develop cross-sector leadership teams that create and execute an implementation plan to ensure that preschool children have access to and are able to meaningfully participate in the general education curriculum alongside children without disabilities. This work will continue, recruiting additional early childhood teams and supporting all cohorts through a tiered model of support similar post-secondary efforts led by TASC. For more information, please see annual reports available on the OSES preschool website.

The training opportunities provided in addition to the SCPI tiered technical assistance include two preconference sessions and five breakout sessions at the South Carolina Council for Exceptional Children Annual Conference in February 2020, and a Virtual Summer Camp series of information sessions in July 2020. Four webinars were offered including: Funding Models for Preschool Inclusion, LRE in Preschool and a Continuum of Placements, Pyramid Model and Statewide Implementation in South Carolina, the South Carolina Deaf Blind Project: Services and Strategies (An Introduction to Deaf-Blindness).

Other Initiatives

To prepare highly qualified staff to create appropriate environments for working with young children with disabilities in all settings, OSES staff undertook the following initiatives:

- The South Carolina Centers for the Re-Education and Advancement of Teachers in Special Education personnel preparation project, funded by the OSES, expanded to include teachers who would not meet the criteria for being grandfathered under the new certification but were currently working in the field. The early childhood special education certificate is also available to employees in the district in a different position interested in serving as a preschool special education teacher.
- Champions for Young Children Symposium was offered virtually at no cost in August 2020. The purpose of the event remains to provide a rich professional development experience around the theme, “Relationships, Resilience and Recovery.” Professionals from multiple facets of early childhood education and parents had an opportunity to access information and network with a cross-section of professionals (e.g., mental health, Head Start, pre-K, early intervention, early childhood special education, home visitation, early childhood education). The following partners participated in the planning and presentation of the 2020 event:
 - South Carolina Child Care Inclusion Collaborative,
 - BabyNet,
 - Children’s Trust of South Carolina,
 - South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office,
 - South Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Network,
 - Horry County School District,
 - Family Connections of South Carolina,
 - South Carolina Department of Social Services, Division of Early Care and Education and ABC Quality,

- South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness,
 - South Carolina Program for Infant Toddler Care,
 - South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs,
 - South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Special Education Services, and
 - South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Literacy.
- SCPI-TASC Research to Practice Summer Camp including the following early childhood centered sessions:
 - Increasing Collaboration Between General Education and Special Education Sectors to Support All Young Children,
 - Working with Partners: Effective Communication and Problem Solving Strategies,
 - Addressing Race and Bias in Early Childhood Classrooms,
 - Remote Service Delivery and Distance Learning for Pre-K and Kindergarten,
 - Supporting Young Learners with Dual Sensory Loss,
 - Caregiver Self-Care: Tips for Families and Educators,
 - Distance Screen-Free Parent Engagement for Kindergarten Readiness,
 - COVID-19 Guidance and Recommendations for Early Childhood,
 - Distance Child Find, and
 - State Level Staff training on OSEP sponsored National Summit to [Attract, Prepare, Retain: OSEP National Summit on Improving Effective Personnel for Children with Disabilities](#)
 - The 2020, South Carolina Council on Exceptional Children, with sponsorship from the SCDE, offered the following preconference and preschool strands:
 - The Meta Play Method & Dynamic Behavior Theory of Autism-preconference session,
 - Pyramid Model Practices to Support Young Learners who are Deaf-Blind-preconference session,
 - Lessons from the Field: Our Journey to Increase Inclusive Opportunities for Preschoolers,
 - What's Happening in Early Childhood Education,
 - Least Restrictive Environment in Preschool and Continuum of Placements,
 - Teaming in South Carolina to Increase Successful Outcomes from Preschool to Post-Secondary, and
 - Social-Emotional Toolkit for Families.

As part of the OSES's efforts to decrease the reading achievement gap between children with and without disabilities, professionals from IDEA Part C and Part B 619, early childhood partners, experts in audiology, and deaf education convened a work group to identify gaps and needs across the state in screening and supporting children with hearing loss so that they may have access to language, background knowledge and literacy. The group determined that a virtual library of resources about early childhood deaf education would be valuable to the field and families of young children ages birth through Kindergarten. The intended audience for this library include: educators, parents, audiologists, speech language pathologists, and others who

work with young children who experience hearing loss. The purpose is to provide access to resources so that appropriate screening, eligibility determination, and service delivery are achieved. This work has been well-received and will be used as a model for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education Partnership to expand the resources for older students. You can visit the [Early Childhood Deaf and Hard of Hearing Virtual Library](#) by clicking the link.

South Carolina is a Pyramid Partner and has begun implementing the Pyramid model of supporting social-emotional development at a state level, based upon the conceptual model of evidenced-based practices developed by the Center on the Social-Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CSEFEL). The [Pyramid framework developed by CSEFEL](#) is used to promote the social-emotional competence of children birth to age five in the context of nurturing relationships and quality learning environments. The Pyramid framework also provides strategies to prevent and address the challenging behavior of young children, while not being limited to a single curriculum. A cross-sector leadership team, including parents, Head Start, the Department of Mental Health, the Office of the Child Care Administrator, the Office of Early Learning and Literacy, institutions of higher education, and partnerships with other task forces and initiatives including the Autism Task Force and the Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health work group collaborates to scale up evidence-based practice related to young children's social-emotional development. A master cadre of trainers and behavior specialists is being developed to actualize the vision of the state leadership team that all South Carolina early childhood practitioners, in partnership with families, will have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and supports necessary to nurture infants and young children's social-emotional well-being within their family, culture, and community. The mission of the state leadership team is to develop, evaluate, and sustain a statewide collaborative process that utilizes the Pyramid framework. The integration of the Pyramid framework with other related promotion, prevention, intervention, and treatment efforts in the state will assure South Carolinians learn to promote social-emotional development of infants, young children, and their families beginning at birth to foster lifelong success. Goals of the implementation of the Pyramid model at the state level include:

- Build community- and state-level commitment in supporting the social-emotional well-being of all infants, young children, and families;
- Promote the social-emotional well-being of infants and young children and address challenging behavior;
- Foster and sustain statewide high fidelity use of the Pyramid framework integrated with other relevant South Carolina efforts; and
- Align policies with the Pyramid framework to build systems with capacity to support young children's social-emotional development.

Expected results from these goals and the work that they guide are:

- High quality early childhood workforce across tiers prepared to support social-emotional development and address challenging behavior;
- Reduction in preschool suspension and expulsion with increased access to high quality learning environments;
- Children having social and emotional foundations to promote their learning and development;
- Work informed by data and Pyramid framework embedded into existing data systems; and

- Families engaged as partners and supported in acquiring confidence and competence to support young children ages birth through five.

A number of state and local level efforts are in progress to ensure the Pyramid model is implemented with fidelity across early childhood environments and to facilitate this work a South Carolina Pyramid website is currently being developed. A uniform calendar of trainings and supports for all early childhood sectors will be housed on this site. Additionally, individual sectors are training coaches, teachers, and administrators to implement with fidelity.

South Carolina is piloting and leading the nation in Pyramid innovations including implementation with law enforcement as a partner and utilizing Pyramid as an Early Childhood MTSS system. South Carolina is in the early exploration stages of this work that will provide comprehensive supports for social emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors.

To support training and scaling up use of the Pyramid practices in early childhood, OSES has trained a cohort of 23 staff members and external technical assistance providers using the e-modules from the Pyramid Consortium and built a community of practice to support strategic planning of implementation. For more South Carolina Pyramid updates please see the [Pyramid](#) section of the OSES preschool website.

Child Outcomes Summary Initiatives:

State Guidance on Data Collection:

Each year the OSES reports the number of students ages three through five who demonstrated improvement since entering preschool special education services in three areas:

- Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships with peers and adults);
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and
- Use of appropriate behavior to meet needs.

The OSES supports LEAs to collect and report reliable data on [Indicator 7](#) through resources and guidance found on the website, pre-checks and opportunity to correct missing or incorrect data, and requests for training and assistance.

Targeted Technical Assistance

South Carolina was selected to participate in technical assistance through ECTA for 18 months to improve the quality and usefulness of child outcomes data for local programs. A cross sector team including TA providers, OSES, Office of Early Learning and Literacy (OELL), First Steps, Head Start, and LEA participants to achieve the following outcomes:

- State Education Agencies (SEA) will have increased capacity to effectively convey the vision, mission, and uses of the child outcomes data collection to LEAs.
- SEA will identify accountability and program improvement questions related to child outcomes.
- SEA will improve the quality, usefulness, and dissemination of child outcomes reports.
- SEA will increase capacity to support local use of child outcomes data.

Through completion of these SEA intended outcomes:

- LEA providers, supervisors, and others involved in data collection will have increased knowledge, skills, and commitment to analyze and use the data.
- LEA will identify accountability and program improvement questions related to child outcomes.
- LEA will improve the interpretation, reporting, and communication of child outcomes data.
- LEA will increase the regular use of child outcomes data to inform program improvements.

Parent Involvement

Parent Survey

The SPP/APR requires data on Indicator 8: Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. Using a stratified sample of LEAs, a survey is provided to parents of students with IEPs in specific LEAs to obtain information about the degree to which parents feel that their children's school facilitated their involvement. The survey is designed for the parents of children ages three to 21.

The percentage of parents with a child receiving special education services reporting that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities was 94 percent. The state exceeded its target for this indicator.

Parent Involvement Initiatives for Preschool Aged Students

[Text 2 Read](#) is an outreach program designed to engage new mothers and primary caregivers of young children in literacy and language development activities. *Text 2 Read* is a free mobile information service offering practical information about child development, and free or low cost language and literacy activities for young children. The service is modeled after the *Text 4 Baby* program, a national initiative that is run by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, which has already demonstrated success impacting the health and preparedness of mothers in the target population. *Text 2 Read* is an ongoing initiative of the OSES and has been in development with early childhood partners but recently has been launched for feedback and piloting purposes. This initiative was made available in March 2020 and was publicized by the Family Connection of South Carolina, OSES, SCDE and Literacy Coaches using Facebook, email, webinar, and a virtual brochure that can be placed on district or partner websites.

Parents who sign up for the service receive age-appropriate texts weekly with no or low cost activities to develop language and literacy skills, to illustrate milestones and questions for pediatricians, to direct parents to Child Find resources when appropriate, and to identify seasonal books and free or inexpensive events for young children. Texts are leveled with the children's age so that activities are age appropriate. Age groups are aligned with the Early Learning Standards for the state:

- Young Preschoolers (36–48 months); and

- Older Preschoolers (48–60+ months).

Text 2 Read is a data driven initiative with continuous data collection; project effectiveness will be evaluated monthly and internal research and evaluation efforts will guide the initiative. The Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate model will be used to conceptualize, maintain, and improve the *Text 2 Read* program as it is piloted in one part of the state. Upon evaluation and any required changes made to the program from the pilot phase, the *Text 2 Read* program would be made available statewide. The goals of the *Text 2 Read* program are to:

1. Empower all parents to include language and literacy activities in their day so that all children will arrive at school ready for kindergarten;
2. Provide Tier 1 Comprehensive Core Response to Intervention services to children who might be at risk of arriving to kindergarten unprepared without these early learning opportunities through family collaboration;
3. Provide focused services that support the OSES action to meet family engagement, State Systemic Improvement Plan goals and State-identified Measurable Results (increase the number of children with disabilities reading on grade level by third grade);
4. Support Read to Succeed work and support families in preparing children for kindergarten; and
5. Support parents in monitoring child development and speak with a pediatrician or Child Find screener should a developmental delay be suspected, so that children have access to early intervention services.

Given the initial success of this program, and at the request of literacy coaches a Kindergarten program is in development as is a Spanish version.

Parent and Family Engagement in Social-Emotional Development

An important part of South Carolina statewide Pyramid implementation is to ensure that parents and caregivers are empowered to support children's social-emotional development, extinguish persistently challenging behaviors, and teach desired ones using evidence-based strategies. Through master cadre development, approximately twenty-five professionals across early childhood sectors, including our Parent Training Information Center with support and consultative services by Able South Carolina to support parents with disabilities, have been trained for two days in the Positive Solutions for Families strategies for engaging families in supporting young children's social-emotional development. These strategies are taught to families over the course of six weeks with learning activities that include, discussion, question and answer, make and take, and sharing of resources. These six-week sessions have been offered to families at program implementation sites, and more broadly as South Carolina scales up implementation in both English and Spanish.

Transition

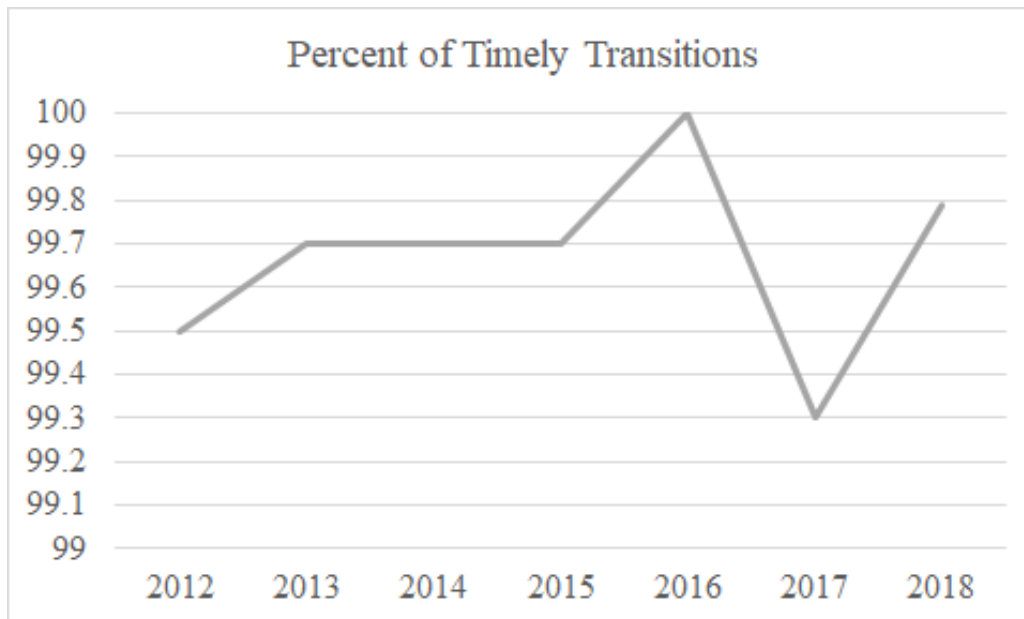
Both federal and state mandates require that LEAs develop procedures for transitioning preschoolers from an IDEA Part C early intervention program (from birth through two years of age, BabyNet at South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services) to an IDEA Part B preschool program (from three through five years of age) for children with disabilities. LEAs

must participate in a transition meeting with parents and referring agencies prior to evaluation and placement of an infant/toddler into preschool special education services. For preschool children ages three through five, the IDEA mandates that children who have been served by a Part C and who are referred from Part C to Part B (educational programs for children with disabilities ages three to twenty-one), must, if eligible for Part B special education and related services, have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthday.

The OSES and BabyNet worked to ensure that representatives from both agencies have information about areas of concern regarding this process. Members of the OSES program and data staff attend monthly BabyNet managers' meetings to ensure that processes are in place to address the rising number of potentially eligible children. After the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services became the lead agency for birth to age three special education services, infrastructure and capacity to serve more young children has increased substantially. It is a priority of the OSES to ensure that all LEAs are prepared to offer efficient, timely and compliant transitions despite growth in the Part C system. As previously illustrated in Table 1, there has been a 20 percent increase in the number of three year olds served in the past five years and a nine percent increase since between 2018–19 and 2019–20 school years. This trend is projected to continue, and LEAs must be supported to be prepared for timely transitions despite an increase in number and a change in context due to the pandemic. Figure 4 illustrates transition data.

Data show that the state continues to make progress in providing services to children transitioning from Part C to B and having IEPs developed and in effect by the third birthday. Historically, approximately 2,500 children are referred from Part C to Part B annually for transition meeting and eligibility determination for Part B. This year, due to increased capacity to service children birth to three years of age after a new lead agency and new policies and procedures implements over 4,000 children were referred for transition meetings. Since baseline data was collected in 2007, the state has made drastic improvements in the number and percentage of those eligible preschool children who have IEPs developed and implemented by the time they turn three-years-old. South Carolina's percentage on this SPP/APR Indicator 12 has remained above 97 percent since 2009.

Figure 3. *Eligible Preschool Children with Developed and Implemented IEPs by Age 3*



Note. Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 616, State Performance Plan Indicator 12, December 2019.

Because this is a child-specific entitlement through the IDEA, the OSEP requires that the state and each LEA maintain 100 percent compliance. When the state has evidence that an LEA is not meeting this requirement, the state must issue a finding of noncompliance and require the LEA to correct the noncompliance as soon as possible, but no later than one year after being notified.

The finding also requires the LEA to enter into a corrective action plan, demonstrate that each individual case has been corrected (i.e., each child), ensure that there was no denial of a basic IDEA right (or offer compensatory services if there was), and if applicable, ensure that the systemic causes of the noncompliance have been corrected. Since the beginning of this process, all LEAs with findings have corrected within the one-year required timeframe.

Transition Initiatives

The OSES is completing a suite of services to support LEAs and local early intervention agencies (LEIAs) in smooth transitions from Part C to Part B and to prepare for the anticipated increase in three-year-olds eligible for a transition meeting due to Part C increases in children served. These have included:

1. Communication of Part C Data: Due to policy changes and an increased number of children served in Part C, Part B 619 must prepare for transitions and eligibility determinations and subsequent services for an increased number of preschool students. Building this infrastructure depends on communication between Parts C and B around Part C policy and procedures under the new lead agency and the number of children transitioning. The OSES and Part C leadership are working closely together to share policies and best practices for efficient and compliant transitions so that the Parts C and B system are aligned. The OSES has utilized a Child Find Task Force comprised of staff and state leadership from all early childhood sectors, LEAs, Part C providers,

the South Carolina Academy of Pediatrics, School for the Deaf and Blind, the Department of Disability and Special Needs, Family Connections of South Carolina, and other advocates and service providers in early childhood. The Child Find Task Force has four committees: Outreach, Referral, Special Populations, and Transitions from Parts C to B. The Transitions committee is currently using data with OSES staff to determine about needs that exist to build the infrastructure to prepare for an increase in the number of three year olds entitled to a transition meeting and eligibility determination so that the state will continue to meet this individual entitlement requirement.

2. Preschool Parent Guide: This parent guide is designed specifically for parents of young children (ages two through five) to alert parents to the differences between Part C and Part B of the IDEA, how service delivery will differ, what to expect during transition and eligibility determinations, and frequently asked questions. This document also has answers to frequently asked questions and provides contact information for additional supports and resources. This guide was developed in partnership with Part C and the Parent Training Initiative for South Carolina and has been reviewed by the Interagency Coordinating Council and the Preschool Committee of the ACESD. This guide is housed on the [Family Connections of South Carolina](#) website and has been printed for distribution.
3. Child Find Task force: The [Child Find Task Force](#) is a group of professionals across sectors will determine needs and successes in preschool (3–5 years old, not yet in Kindergarten) Child Find activities. Using this information, a strategic plan (complete with action steps, timelines, and responsible parties) was developed by these leaders to meet needs, fill gaps, and scale up quality. There are four committees of the Child Find Task Force to reflect the different elements of early childhood child find activities:
 - Transition (C to B 619);
 - Child Find (Outreach);
 - Referral; and
 - Special Populations (dual language learners, migrant, homeless, children in foster care or kinship care).

Each committee developed a landscape overview of infrastructure and need in each priority area then developed an initiative to meet this need:

- Transition committee: collecting data to be put into district 1 page info sheets so that hiring to ensure efficient transition with Part C increase;
- Outreach: planning a pilot “information fair” for all childcare providers in 1 district that provides info and district presentations about screening, referral, and eligibility process;
- Referral: Reviewing LEA processes when receive referrals, and looking at mobile services for audiological evaluation; and
- Special Population: drafting desk guide to better serve young highly mobile, dual language learners that is aligned with early childhood [assessment guidance](#) for dual language learners.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Child Find Task Force focused on distance child find best practice, and these efforts will continue as communities recover from the pandemic.

Pandemic Response

In March 2020, the context of service delivery and education changed for the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the early childhood general education sectors made changes, OSES supported LEAs to ensure service delivery, access to the preschool activities and timely transitions and evaluations for eligibility determination. While the outcomes of these efforts will be reported in February 2022, several supports requiring great effort from OSES and LEAs occurred during this reporting period and include the following:

- COVID response weekly calls with special education directors each Wednesday from 12:00–1:00 p.m.;
- Guidance on Prior Written Notice for virtual learning for LEA use; and
- [Website](#) resources for distance learning and supports in early childhood.

Office Reorganization

During the 2019–20 school year, the OSES has reorganized to include four focus groups centered around indicators in the State Performance Plan: [early childhood outcomes](#), [SEL](#), [academics](#), and [post-secondary outcomes](#). Members of the early childhood focus group participate in Cohorts to support regions of LEAs so that each LEA has a data, finance, early childhood outcomes, SEL, academics, and post-secondary expert to support them throughout differentiated monitoring to ensure compliance and quality in special education services provided to meet the *Profile of the [South Carolina Graduate](#)*.

These groups are working diligently to implement the newly developed System of Tiered Assistance ([SOTA](#)). The main components of the SOTA include:

1. [Early Childhood Framework](#),
2. [Root Cause Analysis \(RCA\)](#) see Appendix B for RCA, and
3. Technical Assistance and Tiered Supports.

The Early Childhood Framework describes the program and goals of the OSES early childhood team, and the process OSES will use to support LEAs in meeting the mission and goals for early childhood special education. The Early Childhood Outcomes mission are to provide consistent, collaborative, proactive direction and support in the area of Early Childhood Education by using data-based decision making, quality instruction (EBPs), family and community engagement and fidelity of implementation to support all students to meet the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* (world-class knowledge, world-class skills, and life and career characteristics).

In order to achieve this mission, the Early Childhood Outcomes Team will:

1. Support LEAs and State Operated Programs (SOPs) by building capacity and infrastructure so all children ages three to five who are receiving special education services, can have access, opportunity and success as measured by indicators 6, 7, and 12 of the SPP/APR.

2. Support early childhood outcomes by building capacity and infrastructure to increase the use of high leverage practices to teach necessary early skills, offer a continuum of services, ensure timely transitions to early childhood education, and specialized instruction for young children with disabilities, as measured by indicators 6, 7 and 12 of the SPP/APR.

As the LEA completes the RCA in early childhood (see appendix B), levels of intervention will be determined based on the quality and degree of implementation of the elements in the RCA aligned with indicators 6, 7, and 12. All LEAs will have access to Tier 1 supports that will be largely online. Districts will receive Tier 2 and 3 supports with increasing intensity and supports through a variety of modalities.

The ACESD has restructured to align with the focus groups of the OSES and these committees will continue to advise and assist the OSES as a whole, with specificity for each focus group as needed. The SOTA being developed this year will be modified to align with OSEP's Differentiated Monitoring System (DMS) 2.0 and fully implemented next year.

Financial Information

During the 2019–20 school year, the combined state and federal funds specifically allocated for preschool children with disabilities totaled \$27,386,489 (\$7,320,975 IDEA funds for preschool, and \$20,065,514 state funds). The state allocation remained consistent between the last two reporting years.

Federal Funds

During the 2019–20 school year, the OSES received \$7,320,975 in funds under the IDEA federal preschool grant program. This represents an increase of \$168,894 from the previous year. Federal regulations allow the SCDE to retain a portion of the funds for administrative costs; however, the agency elects to flow through almost 100 percent of these funds to LEAs for the provision of direct services to preschool age children.

The IDEA allocations are calculated by means of a three-tiered formula: a base equal to the LEA's allocation for fiscal year 1997, the number of children in the age range from three to twenty-one in the LEA's public and private schools, and the number in that age range who are living in poverty. Consequently, the SCDE cannot readily determine the dollars that preschool children generate for an LEA. The LEA, however, can expend other federal funds on this population.

State Funds

The SCDE provides the following estimate regarding the amount of state funds disbursed for programs for preschool children with disabilities for the 2019–20 school year, as shown in Table 8. The state funds disbursed in the 2019–20 school year for preschool students with disabilities were \$20,065,514.29, which reflects no change from the 2018–19 school year.

Table 8

Estimated Amount of Funds Disbursed for Programs for Preschool Children with Disabilities for Past Three Years

Funding Source	Purpose	2019–20 Allocation	2018–19 Allocation	2017–18 Allocation
Education Finance Act	Four-year-old vision/hearing disabled children and five-year-old children with disabilities	\$20,065,514.29	\$20,065,514.29	\$18,587,614

Fiscal Monitoring

The IDEA requires that the SCDE monitor LEAs on a regular basis to ensure fiscal compliance with state and federal laws, rules, and regulations that govern the provision of special education and related services to appropriately identified children. The purpose of this monitoring is to focus federal, state, and local resources on improving results for children with disabilities and their families. The OSES is responsible for conducting IDEA fiscal monitoring activities. Annually, each district must submit a required self-assessment and other documentation. Based upon that information, a risk rubric is used to identify a district score. Up to ten districts with the lowest scores are then reviewed for a Tier Two desk audit. Based upon timely submission of that required documentation and other factors, onsite fiscal monitor (Tier Three) occurs, during which fiscal processes, policies, procedures, budgets, and expenditures are reviewed.

Policies and Procedures

South Carolina Regulatory Changes

In 2014–15, State Board of Education Regulation 43-62 was revised and became effective on June 26, 2015. This [regulation](#) governs requirements for additional areas of certification, including early childhood special education. In addition, the SCDE promulgated [guidance](#) approved by the South Carolina State Board of Education. (See embedded links for more information.)

Early Childhood Transition Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/BabyNet and the SCDE, OSES

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/BabyNet, under Part C of the IDEA, and the SCDE and LEAs, under Part B of the IDEA, have a statutory responsibility to ensure a smooth transition for each child and family in transitioning services. In addition, under the IDEA's Child Find provisions, both agencies must ensure the identification, location, and evaluation of each child eligible for services under Parts B and C of the IDEA, including children with disabilities attending private schools and highly mobile children with disabilities (such as migrant and homeless children).

The purpose of this MOA is to meet the requirements of 34 CFR § 303.209(a)(3)(i) of the final IDEA Part C regulations published on September 28, 2011, that the state Part C lead agency must have on file with the USED OSEP as part of its IDEA Part C application transition policies and procedures, an interagency agreement on transition with the SEA that administers section

619 of the Act. The agreement calls for an annual review and renewal prior to June 30, 2025, and is currently under Department of Health and Human Services or HHS, lead agency for BabyNet.

Early Childhood Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Head Start State Collaboration Office and the SCDE, OSES

Senior leadership of Head Start Grantees including the president of the Head Start Association, the Director of the ISWA Development Corporation Catawba Indian Nation Head Start, the Executive Director of East Coast Migrant Head Start Region XII and the chair of the South Carolina Association of Community Action Partnerships/South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Committee and the OSES have a state level agreement through a MOA about screening, eligibility determination, and service delivery models. This MOA shapes the local level MOAs between school districts and Head Start grantees and was signed in December 2017.

The purpose of this agreement is to meet the requirements of the Head Start Act at 42 U.S. Code § 9837(b), to be so designated, a Head Start agency shall, at a minimum, do all the following to involve and serve families and communities:

(14) Establish effective procedures for timely referral of children with disabilities to the State or local agency providing services under section 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ([20 U.S.C. 1419](#), 1431 et seq.), and collaboration with that agency, consistent with [section 9835\(d\)\(3\) of this title](#).

(15) Establish effective procedures for providing necessary early intervening services to children with disabilities prior to an eligibility determination by the State or local agency responsible for providing services under section 619 or part C of such Act, consistent with [section 9835\(d\)\(2\) of this title](#).

The following requirement is found in the Head Start Regulations at § 642B(a)(4) Head Start Collaboration; State Early Education and Care:

The State Director of Head Start Collaboration shall—

(C) promote partnerships between Head Start agencies, State and local governments, and the private sector to help ensure that children from low-income families, who are in Head Start programs or are preschool age, are receiving comprehensive services to prepare the children for elementary school;

(D) consult with the chief State school officer, local educational agencies, and providers of early childhood education and development, at both the State and local levels.

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), through state plans for Title I, SEAs are required to coordinate with other programs that provide services for young children, including programs administered by (i.e., under the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start Act) as well as the IDEA. The ESSA encourages SEAs to address the comprehensive needs of all young children, including children with disabilities or developmental delays, those in poverty, and those who are English-language learners, immigrants, refugees, migrant, homeless or in foster care.

Programs/Services for Preschool Children with Disabilities Information on Other State Agencies and Head Start Programs

As mentioned previously, the SCDE is required to work with other state agencies that provide services to this same population. These organizations include:

- Office of the Governor, Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children);
- South Carolina Commission for the Blind;
- South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs;
- South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control’s Children’s Rehabilitative Services program;
- South Carolina Department of Mental Health;
- South Carolina Department of Social Services, and
- South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Table 9
Contact Information for Other State Agencies

State Agency	Telephone	Website
Office of the Governor, Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children	803-734-4500	Continuum of Care
South Carolina Commission for the Blind)	803-898-8731 or 800-922-2222	Commission for the Blind
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	803-898-9600 or Toll Free: 888-DSN-INFO (376-4636)	DDSN
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Division of Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs	803-898-DHEC (3432), Division of Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs 803-898-0784	Services for Children with Special Healthcare Needs
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	Main Number: 803-898-8581 For Deaf Services: TTY: 864-297-5130: TTY and Voice Upstate: 866-246-0129 Midlands: 866-246-0130	DMH
South Carolina Department of Social Services	803-898-7601	DSS

South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind	Voice/TTY: 1-888-447-2732 Voice/TTY: 864-585-7711	SCSDB
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Conclusion

OSES efforts have begun developing infrastructure for improved early childhood outcomes despite a changing context and there is evidence that continued progress is being made and will be needed as the early childhood landscape shifts in South Carolina. As such, it is imperative that preschool programs and educators be supported to ensure that children are able to obtain the support they need from birth so that they may start preschool educational programs with the tools and supports they need. Only through these coordinated, early intervening efforts might the state see children start school ready to learn, progress from grade to grade, and be equipped with the skills, information, and supports they need for Kindergarten readiness and lifelong success.

References

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *Policy statement on inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Appendix A: Memorandum on Preschool LRE:



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Special Education Directors
District Early Childhood Education Coordinators

FROM: Rebecca Davis, Director, Office of Special Education Services

DATE: September 4, 2019

RE: Least Restrictive Environment in Preschool and Continuum of Placements

This memorandum serves as guidance on adhering to the least restrictive environment requirement with respect to preschool placements for young students with disabilities. As you are aware, regulations to local educational agencies (LEAs) in Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (34 C.F.R. Part 300), that provide LRE requirements apply to the placement of preschool children with disabilities. The statutory requirements for LRE do not distinguish between school-aged and preschool-aged children, and must be applied equally.

These requirements state IDEA's expectation that children with disabilities are educated in regular classes with supplementary aids and supports. Section 1412 (a)(5) of Title 20 of the United States code states that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, must be educated with children who are not disabled. Further, special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment may occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." Supplementary aids and services means aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 300.114 through 300.116.

In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 300.115 through 300.116 a preschool continuum of alternative placements must be provided by each public agency to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services. The preschool continuum must: (1) include placements listed in the definition of special education under § 300.38 (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions); and (2) make provision for supplementary services such as a resource room or itinerant instruction to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) staff have worked with Head Start, First Steps, Office of the Child Care Administrator and other state level partners to develop guidance that supports LEAs to build a preschool continuum of alternative placements for young students with disabilities. Examples and non-examples of a preschool continuum of placements, supplementary supports and resources to facilitate braided or blended funding at the district-level are provided in the attachment to this memorandum. LEAs and IEP teams should carefully review this guidance and the attached resources to ensure LRE is provided for preschool students.

After reviewing the guidance, LEAs may determine, based on IEP team decisions, that there is the need to modify the existing placement options for preschool students with disabilities. For example, offering only a self-contained special education class for three year olds is not a continuum and LEAs may determine the need for itinerant special education services to serve children in local early childhood education programs. If your LEA needs to obtain additional training on preschool LRE and how to build a preschool continuum of placements for young students with disabilities, please contact Jenny May, jmay@ed.sc.gov.

We appreciate your leadership and your team's hard work in providing a preschool continuum of alternative placements to ensure our students with disabilities have access to LRE.

Attachments

Attachment A

Examples and Non-exemplars of Least Restrictive Environment in the preschool continuum of alternative placements

South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) staff have worked with Head Start, First Steps, Office of the Child Care Administrator and other state level partners to develop guidance that supports local education agencies (LEAs) to build a preschool continuum of alternative placements for young students with disabilities, as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Examples and non-examples of a preschool continuum of placements, supplementary supports, and resources to facilitate braided or blended funding at the district-level are provided in the attachment to this memorandum. LEAs and IEP teams should carefully review this guidance for ensuring the least restrictive environment is provided for preschool students.

A student who is ineligible for a program due to age at time of enrollment or other program requirements such as financial eligibility is not automatically eligible for service in this

program using solely IEP as criterion. The student must be served in the LRE where the IEP team determines the student's needs will be met and he/she will have access to the South Carolina Early Learning Standards, general education curricula, and typically developing, age-appropriate peers. A good way to identify the LRE for a preschool-aged child is answering the question "Where would this child be served if he/she did not have a disability" and then using the IEP to determine appropriate supports and accommodations for the child to be successful in that setting.

As with Kindergarten through 12th grade, whichever source funds the general education program for young students who are the same age and eligibility, that source also funds the general early childhood education cost for the preschool student with disabilities. Excess costs for specialized materials, instruction or accommodations are paid for using IDEA funds, either those designated for preschool (619) or other IDEA funding sources.

Preschool Continuum of Alternative Placements

Examples

An LEA offers special education services to children ages three, four, and five (not yet Kindergarten eligible) in a variety of settings to meet the diverse needs of young children with disabilities. Preschool children with disabilities can access high quality early childhood educational activities in regular preschool classes, special education classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals. Young children with disabilities have access to needed supplementary services such as a specially designed instruction or speech services provided during part of the day in the CERDEP program through a pull-out or inclusion model. This may include direct and indirect services provided to the child as well as consultation provided to the classroom teacher and staff.

A child who is not financially eligible for a Head Start program, *may* be able to be served in this setting if the Head Start program successfully waives the financial eligibility requirement to meet its federally required program enrollment of 10% of students having an IEP. This will be considered by the Head Start program on a case by case basis for children who are not financially eligible.

Non-Exemplars

The following scenarios place the district in a legally vulnerable situation and are NOT considered a continuum.

An LEA offers a self-contained class for three-year-old students with disabilities. If parents do not want to enroll their child in this class, there are no other special education services provided for three-year-olds.

An LEA offers a half-day program for three, four and five (not yet Kindergarten eligible) students with IEPs and children without an IEP are served in a full day preschool program.

A CERDEP 4K class has a requirement that children are four years old by September 1 of the school year. This would not be an appropriate LRE for child who turns 4 in December, even if they would not begin in the CERDEP class until January. This child could be served in

community-based childcare, or other age-appropriate setting until he or she is age eligible for the CERDEP class by September 1 of that school year.

Trouble Shooting Tips

Scenario: A community based childcare setting refuses to allow the speech therapist into the setting to serve a child in their center.

Tips: The special education director or designee can call the childcare director and explain that the speech therapist has passed all requisite district security checks, and is under the general supervision of the district and parents have consented that this person work with their child to provide services. Use the Authorization for Intervention, Therapy and Extracurricular Activities (DSS Form [2930](#)) from the Office of the Childcare Administrator to formalize the procedure.

Scenario: A parent would like special education services to be provided in a private childcare center and the district pay the tuition to satisfy the federal requirement of a free appropriate public education and special education services be provided there. This is a childcare center chosen by the parents.

Tips: The district special education funds cannot support payment of the general preschool education/tuition cost as special education funds only cover the excess cost of specialized services or instruction. The district also cannot assume liability for a center that is not under its general supervision when it is a parent-selected site. Parents do have the right to place preschool students at the center or program of their preference, however similarly to K through 12th grade funding structures, the general education cost of preschool is paid for by the funding stream that would pay for it if the student did not have a disability, and IDEA funds (619 or 611) would pay for the excess cost of specialized instruction, services, or accommodations. A student can be served in an age-appropriate public setting such as CERDEP or a Title 1 preschool setting, or the team may consider a First Steps or Head Start program. Parents can be advised to research if they are eligible for a childcare voucher to offset the tuition cost of community-based child care programs. To gain information on South Carolina [Vouchers](#) visit the website.

Resources

Legal Guidance:

[Supporting Preschool Inclusion](#)

[LRE Placement Decisions](#)

[2017 Memo from OSERS](#)

[Joint Position Statement on Inclusion](#)

Research and Best Practice:

[Research Synthesis on Inclusive Practices](#)

[Research on Inclusion in Early Childhood](#)

What we know about [Inclusion](#)

[Inclusion Research](#)

Inclusion [Self](#)-Assessment

[Guiding Questions for Teams](#)

Funding:

[Preschool Inclusion Finance Toolkit](#)

[Funding](#) Preschool Inclusion

Appendix B: Preschool Ages 3-5 Root Cause Analysis

How to complete the Root Cause Analysis: Please complete the following Root Cause Analysis in its entirety. Provide comprehensive evidence that clearly supports the level of implementation indicated. If there is no evidence to support the level of implementation, select the corresponding rating scale (1) no evidence of practice being implemented. There may be instances where items of implementation evidence could support one or more of the essential characteristics listed in the analysis. Please upload the evidence for each instance separately, as it relates to the area of implementation. This analysis will assist the OSES in providing technical assistance to your school/LEA/SOP.

Rating Scale: For each Essential Program Characteristic, choose one of these four numerical options to describe the degree of implementation.

1. The practice is not being implemented.
2. The practice is implemented sometimes, but it is not consistently implemented throughout the LEA/SOP.
3. The practice is evident most of the time and, in most classrooms, where transition aged students are served.
4. The practice is implemented consistently in all classrooms where transition aged students are served.

Examples of Evidence of Implementation:

- **Weak Evidence:** written policies and/or procedures, articulated agreements within and across agencies, curriculum, instruction or training materials, and meeting agenda/notes.
- **Moderate Evidence:** teacher lesson plan/services plan, IEP goal, objective or transition services, and transcripts.
- **Strong Evidence:** data collection forms, progress monitoring, or service notes, unit/lesson grades, work product, instruction artifact, program evaluation data supporting implementation.

*Indicates that a numerical or written response is required.

Predictor Category	Essential Program Characteristics	Degree of Implementation	Evidence of Implementation
<p>Educational Environment (Ages 3-5) is defined as the setting where a child participates in early learning experiences. This could be any early childhood sector in South Carolina and children with disabilities should be supported in any early learning environment they are otherwise (age, income or other qualifying component) eligible for.</p>			
<p>Educational Environment</p>	<p>3. *Indicate the number of inclusive/general education (70 percent or more children without a disability) early childhood classroom available and currently used to serve children with disabilities in the LEA/SOP by the following types:</p> <p>CERDEP PreK: _____</p> <p>LEA/SOP funded PreK</p> <p>First Steps 4K program</p> <p>Regional Head Start: _____</p> <p>Title 1: _____</p> <p>Parent pay private early childhood center _____</p> <p>Other (specify): _____</p> <p>*What percent of the LEA/SOP’s Head Start seats are filled with children with disabilities?</p>		

Predictor Category	Essential Program Characteristics	Degree of Implementation	Evidence of Implementation
	<p>*What percent of the LEA/SOP's CERDEP seats are filled with children with disabilities?</p> <p>The LEA/SOP provides itinerant special education services to non-LEA/SOP pre-k programs (i.e. community based child care programs, first steps, etc.) to young children (ages 3-5) with disabilities.</p> <p>There are early childhood environments that are currently available and used for children with disabilities who are three, that are NOT self-contained early childhood special education classrooms.</p> <p>Staff and related personnel who are involved in making IEP decisions for early childhood students with disabilities have adequate training regarding the principles of least restrictive environment. Those principles are applied with fidelity when developing every IEP for early childhood students with disabilities.</p> <p>There is a defined process for training and orienting staff who participate in IEP meetings about LRE and the continuum of service delivery environments.</p>		

Predictor Category	Essential Program Characteristics	Degree of Implementation	Evidence of Implementation
	<p>The LEA/SOP reviews special education and related services provided to children placed in a general early childhood programs (e.g., integrated therapy, push in, or pull-out) and found them to be developmentally appropriate.</p> <p>A criteria is developed and used to determine that an inclusive/general education classroom is or is not the appropriate placement for a child.</p> <p>A criteria is developed and used to determine whether related services can be provided in an integrated setting rather than a pull-out method.</p> <p>When determining where special education and related services (e.g., speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, etc.) are provided, the LEA/SOP follows LRE expectations and always begin with the assumption that services will be provided in the general education setting unless the nature or severity of the disability is such that providing those services within the classroom setting cannot be achieved.</p> <p>When making placement decisions, the LEA/SOP ensures that the student has full access to the environment. The</p>		

Predictor Category	Essential Program Characteristics	Degree of Implementation	Evidence of Implementation
	<p>LEA/SOP ensures that the student has full visual, auditory and linguistic access within the educational setting.</p> <p>Consideration is given to all educational environments (classrooms, hallway, cafeteria, playground, transportation etc.) when determining placement decisions and determining where general education services, special education services, and related services are provided.</p> <p>*What criteria is used to determine the accessibility of each of the educational environments and any needed supports for access?</p> <p>For those students that need some or all of their related services conducted outside of the classroom, there is a defined process for moving toward being able to increasingly provide those services in the classroom setting.</p> <p>Robust training is given to general education teachers related to students with disabilities, differentiated instruction, and classroom management strategies.</p>		

Predictor Category	Essential Program Characteristics	Degree of Implementation	Evidence of Implementation
	<p>The IEP services page and LRE statements clearly indicate where special education and related services will be taking place.</p> <p>Each prior written notice clearly and thoroughly documents the rationale for all placement decisions and the locations of services, including those for initial IEPs.</p> <p>LEA/SOP staff receive adequate training on collecting, entering, and reporting early childhood environment data (i.e., Indicator 6).</p> <p>Factors are considered by the IEP team when determining a young student’s LRE.</p> <p>Throughout progress monitoring, there is a defined process for IEP conversations to determine the appropriateness of placement and modify if needed to a more or less restrictive environment based on student needs and data collected.</p>		
<p>2. A program of study is an individualized set of experiences, and curriculum designed to develop students’ academic and functional achievement to support the attainment of students’ desired preschool goals.</p>			
Program of Study	Staff training on developmentally appropriate practice/teaching		

Predictor Category	Essential Program Characteristics	Degree of Implementation	Evidence of Implementation
	<p>practices has taken place for all involved in delivering programs and services to preschool children with disabilities.</p> <p>Staff are trained in the Early Learning Standards and can identify how they connect with the preschool curricula and learning activities.</p> <p>*What is the LEA/SOP's general preschool curriculum?</p> <p>Staff are appropriately trained to support students with disabilities access the general education curricula.</p> <p>The process of determining Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF) ratings been examined, and if any problems have been found, corrections been implemented with fidelity.</p> <p>The LEA/SOP COSF data been examined and areas of concern addressed appropriately.</p> <p>The COSF information is included in each child's IEP file.</p> <p>IEPs are routinely checked for the development of appropriate present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) with measurable annual goals. There is a formal process for continual improvement.</p> <p>The entrance and exit COSF determination process the LEA/SOP uses is defined and documented. Information about parent involvement, the use of any tools, such as the Child Outcome</p>		

Predictor Category	Essential Program Characteristics	Degree of Implementation	Evidence of Implementation
	<p>Summary Form or anchor instruments, are included and used to inform COSF determinations.</p> <p>All LEA/SOP staff, including those serving children with disabilities in kindergarten, who are responsible for collecting entrance and/or exit data are adequately trained on how to accurately determine COSF ratings.</p> <p>There is a defined process in place for new staff or those new to the COSF determination process within the LEA/SOP to be trained on COSF.</p> <p>COSF refresher trainings routinely scheduled and provided.</p> <p>The LEA/SOP uses COSF and other available data to evaluate program effectiveness.</p> <p>*What is the LEA/SOP’s system for progress monitoring?</p> <p>The LEA/SOP has a training program for educators so that progress monitoring for young children can be done and used.</p> <p>Robust professional development is provided regarding behavior management in early childhood settings.</p> <p>Behavior intervention plans for preschool students with disabilities are developed when required.</p>		

Predictor Category	Essential Program Characteristics	Degree of Implementation	Evidence of Implementation
	<p>Early childhood staff have received robust professional development on how to implement functional behavior assessments (FBAs) and behavior intervention plans (BIPs).</p> <p>*What are the LEA/SOP's COSF determination process or indicator 7 related training needs?</p>		
<p>1. Part C to Part B Transition is children who have received early intervention services from the ages of 0-3 under an Individualized Family Service Plan through BabyNet are entitled to a transition meeting, eligibility determination and if eligible, an IEP in place by their third birthday without interruption of services.</p>			
<p>Transition</p>	<p>Adequate information is provided to the parent(s) at the transition conference (e.g., contact information, next steps, meeting schedules) in a mode that they readily can access and understand.</p> <p>After a transition conference, an adequate and efficient process in place to address the referral. This process is communicated to all involved staff with roles and responsibilities that are clearly defined and outlined.</p> <p>The LEA/SOP's evaluation procedures/schedules (i.e., assessments, meetings) for children transitioning from EC have been thoroughly reviewed for adequacy and efficiency.</p> <p>For children transitioning from Part C, procedures are in place to ensure that eligibility is determined and an IEP is in place by the third birthday. For children transitioning from Part C who are determined eligible for Part B, procedures are established to ensure that the IEP is in place by the third birthday. Those procedures, along with staff roles and responsibilities, are clearly defined and communicated to all involved.</p>		

Predictor Category	Essential Program Characteristics	Degree of Implementation	Evidence of Implementation
	<p>Summer/school breaks are addressed in a manner that ensures the indicator timeframes are met.</p> <p>There is a documented process that builds in margin and plans for potential delays due to various circumstances while still meeting the third birthday requirement. Those procedures, along with staff roles and responsibilities, been clearly defined and communicated to all involved.</p> <p>When children are not eligible for Part B 619 (preschool/ages 3,4,5 not yet kindergarten) but received Part C services, parents are provided information on monitoring child development, preschool activities that support development, and information on who to call if the child is not meeting milestones.</p> <p>There is robust professional development on the issues of early childhood transition (i.e., Indicator 12) that is provided to all staff involved.</p> <p>The LEA/SOP has a defined process to ensure late referrals are prioritized and processed as quickly as reasonably possible and that documentation is maintained on each late referral.</p> <p>For children transitioning from EC who did not have an IEP in place by the third birthday, there is a documented process to get the IEP into place as quickly as reasonably possible. This process is documented and tracked by the LEA/SOP.</p> <p>*What are the LEA/SOP's current Indicator 12 related training needs?</p>		

Examples of Evidence of Implementation (This is not an exhaustive or comprehensive list of examples of evidence.)

- Service Logs
- Sample School/Classroom Expectations
- Class Daily Schedules
- Lesson Plans with Social Skills Training Included
- Classroom Observation Results
- IEPs/FBAs/BIPS
- Accommodations/Behavioral Goals
- Meeting Notes
- Class/School-wide Behavioral Supports
- Strategies for Instruction
- LEA/SOP/School Policies and Procedures Related to Behavior
- Behavioral Data
- Programs of Study
- Age Appropriate Assessments
- Behavioral Curriculum
- Parent Communication Logs
- Meeting Letters
- Communication Forms
- Professional Development Plans
- Training of Early Learning Standards, Curricula and progress monitoring strategies for prek and early childhood special education teachers and staff
- Lesson Plans
- LEA/SOP School Policies and Procedures Related to Early Childhood

Appendix C: Agency Data

Reporting Period: *From: 2019 To: 2020*

Name of Agency: South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind

Name of Person Providing Information: Elaine Gentry

Title of Person Providing Information: Early Intervention Program Director

Address: 101 Executive Center Dr. Suite 120, Columbia South Carolina, 20210

Telephone Number: 803-896-9789

Fax Number: 803-896-8279

Email Address: egentry@scsdb.org

Website: SCSDB.org

1. **Provide a brief, general description of the programs/services provided by your agency for preschool children with disabilities (ages 3-5).** Services include: service coordination, family training and instruction.
2. **Briefly outline your agency’s initiatives for programs/services for preschool children with disabilities (ages 3-5) carried out in fiscal year 2015 (2014–2015 school year).** The Early Intervention program expansion into services for children ages 3-5 was in development during this time period.
3. **Indicate specific programs/services that your agency is financially responsible for providing to preschool children with disabilities.** Service coordination, Family Training, interpreting services as it pertains to each of these services listed.
4. **Number of preschool children with disabilities served in each age group.**

Not available

	Total	Number served by LEA
3-year-old children		
4-year-old children		
5-year-old children		
Total		

If the above information is available by race/ethnicity, please provide a breakdown:

	American Indian or Alaskan	Asian	Black or African American	Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Two or more races	White
3-year-old children						
4-year-old children						
5-year-old children						
Total Served						

5. **Amount of funds expended for preschool children with disabilities by age group (if available).** Not Available
 - a. **3-year-old children**
 - b. **4-year-old children**
 - c. **5-year-old children**
 - d. **Total Funds Expended on children ages 3-5**
6. **Indicate funding sources for funds specified in Item 5** Not applicable
7. **Where can information about your program’s pertinent policies/procedures regarding programs/services for preschool children with disabilities (ages 3-5) be obtained?** On the SCSDB website

Reporting Period: *From: July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020*

Name of Agency: South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

Name of Person Providing Information: Joyce Kimrey

Title of Person Providing Information: Director of Early Intervention

Address: 3440 Harden Street Extension, Columbia South Carolina 29203

Telephone Number: 803 898 9145

Fax Number:

Email Address: jkimrey@ddsn.sc.gov

Website: www/ddsn.sc.gov

1. **Provide a brief, general description of the programs/services provided by your agency for preschool children with disabilities (ages 3-5).** The SCDDSN provides Early Intervention services, including Family Training/Special Instruction and Service Coordination, to children ages 3-5 who meet eligibility criteria.
2. **Briefly outline your agency’s initiatives for programs/services for preschool children with disabilities (ages 3-5) carried out in fiscal year 2015 (2014–2015 school year).** The SCDDSN has seen tremendous growth in the Early Intervention program. The SCDDSN continues to provide services to all eligible consumers with Early Intervention providers serving in every county of the state.
3. **Indicate specific programs/services that your agency is financially responsible for providing to preschool children with disabilities.** Programs for children include Family Training/Special Instruction and Service Coordination, family support services and respite to consumers who meet certain eligibility criteria and interpretation/translation during the provision of a SCDDSN service.
4. **Number of preschool children with disabilities served in each age group.**

	Total	Number served by LEA
3-year-old children	822	
4-year-old children	561	
5-year-old children	217	
Total	1605	

If the above information is available by race/ethnicity, please provide a breakdown:
Information on race is not kept by SCDDSN

	American Indian or Alaskan	Asian	Black or African American	Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Two or more races	White
3-year-old children						
4-year-old children						
5-year-old children						
Total Served						

5. **Amount of funds expended for preschool children with disabilities by age group (if available).** Information is not available.
 - a. **3-year-old children**
 - b. **4-year-old children**
 - c. **5-year-old children**
 - d. **Total Funds Expended on children ages 3-5**
6. **Indicate funding sources for funds specified in Item 5.** SCDDSN bills Medicaid for Early Intervention Services for consumers who are Medicaid eligible and pays for services through state appropriated funds for children who are not Medicaid eligible.
7. **Where can information about your program’s pertinent policies/procedures regarding programs/services for preschool children with disabilities (ages 3-5) be obtained?**
www.ddsn.sc.gov

Reporting Period: From: July 1, 2019 To: June 30, 2020

Name of Agency: South Carolina Commission for the Blind

Name of Person Providing Information: Rhonda Thompson

Title of Person Providing Information:
 Director, SCCB Older Blind and Prevention of Blindness Programs
 Children’s Services and Low Vision Clinics

Address: 620 North Main Street, Greenville, South Carolina 29601

Telephone Number: (864) 241-1111 **Fax Number:** (864) 241-1159

E-mail address: Rhonda.Thompson@sccb.sc.gov **Web-Site:** www.sccb.state.sc.us

1. **Provide a brief, general description of the programs/services provided by your agency for preschool children with disabilities (ages 3-5).**

Legally blind children, within the preschool age range (3-5), may receive assistance through the South Carolina Commission for the Blind's Children's Services Program. Our Children's Services counselors provide direct assistance with adjustment to blindness/vision loss, and may also coordinate a variety of other appropriate resources.

Services for children who are blind, or visually impaired, may include:

- Counseling and Guidance for Parents;
- Direct assistance (ex. low vision and/or assistive technology assessments and recommended equipment and devices, orientation and mobility);
- Workshops and Support Groups for Families;
- Reinforcement of the Development of Independent Living Skills; and
- Consultation and Coordination with Community Resources.

While we assist with addressing the unique needs of legally blind children with multiple disabilities, community-based early intervention programs can also assist families with obtaining appropriate services from professionals with specialized training in visual impairments and infant/toddler and child development.

As appropriate, Children's Services counselors coordinate with several agencies and organizations to ensure all needs are completely addressed. Some of those referral sources include, but are not limited to, eye care professionals, the South Carolina Department of Social Services, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind, Vision Instructors, and Pro Parents, and public and private schools across the state.

Children's Services counselors also assist with the transition to preschool programs at age three. While the children are in school, our counselors attend the annual IEP meetings and provide adaptive material and equipment and other items necessary for adjustment and completing school assignments. The items children use will vary depending on the individual child's specific abilities and needs.

If it is a viable option, the Children's Services counselors may refer children to our Low Vision Clinics for periodic low vision evaluations. Subsequently, the recommended low vision devices are provided, and the Children's Services counselor will review proper usage techniques during follow up home visits. Most often the children benefit from magnifiers (digital and basic), monocular, and protective eyewear. In some cases, consumers are provided with equipment such as a Closed-Circuit Television.

Our counselors conduct thorough assessments to identify the specific needs of children and their families. Family input is an integral part of the process, which outlines goals and determines

services to be provided. The assessments result in the development of Individualized Service Plans (ISP) for the children. The Plans are amended, as needed, and updated annually.

2. Briefly outline your agency’s initiatives for programs/services for preschool children with disabilities (ages 3-5) carried out in fiscal year 2019 (2018–2019 school year).

- Provided quality assistance and necessary learning tools to promote the appropriate adjustment skills development.
- Provided information for parents regarding beneficial resources, and promoted parental involvement in their child's development and educational plans.
- Encouraged coordination among programs to address various needs and assisted with the children achieving established goals.
- Participated in interagency meetings, and provided virtual activities and workshops to further engage the consumers and family members and increase public awareness of the Children’s Services Program.
- Provided resource materials on child development and the impact of blindness on development through presentations to service providers and community organizations.
- Maintained contact and interaction with appropriate referral sources such as eye specialists, other school districts, communities, and families.
- Provided early intervention services, counseling and guidance, and informational workshops for blind and visually impaired children and their families.
- Established a plan of service, coordinated service delivery, and attended meetings with school personnel, agencies and other service providers regarding the special needs of each child.
- Coordinated with our agency’s Transition Program to conduct outreach in underserved areas.

3. Indicate the specific programs/services that your agency is financially responsible for providing to preschool children with disabilities.

In addition to the aforementioned services, and depending upon the child’s needs, our agency may provide low vision devices, orientation and mobility training and associated equipment, assistive technology, and other adaptive aids and educational supplies.

4. Number of preschool children with disabilities served in each age group.

	Total	Number served by LEA
3-year-old children	1	Same
4-year-old children	3	Same
5-year-old children	3	Same
Total	7	

Elementary Educational Service Partners FY 2019–2020:

- Wallace Gregg Elementary (Florence County)
- Broad River Elementary (Beaufort County)
- South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind (Spartanburg County)
- Sheridan Elementary (Orangeburg County)
- Riley Child Development Center (Greenville County)

Note: The majority of the children assisted this year are between the ages of 6 and 12.
(If the above information is available by race/ethnicity, please provide a breakdown.)

	American Indian or Alaskan	Asian	Black or African American	Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic Latino	Two or More Races	White
3-year-old children							1
4-year-old children	1		1			1	
5-year-old children			2				1
Total Served	1		3			1	2

Note: Race/ethnicity was unknown for one of the five children assisted.

5. Amount of funds expended for preschool children with disabilities by age group (If available).

Expenditures are not available by age group. However, our data reveals approximately \$7, 000.00 was spent directly on consumer services (ages 3-12) during the past fiscal year. This amount may vary among cases, due to the consumers’ needs being individualized.

6. Indicate funding sources for funds specified in Item 4.

State funds are appropriated by the General Assembly for the SCCB Children’s Services Program.

7. Where can information about your program’s pertinent policies/procedures regarding programs/services for preschool children with disabilities (ages 3-5) be obtained?

Our Program’s guidelines are outlined in our Policies and Procedures Manual. The information includes services provided to eligible consumers, as well as each counselor’s responsibilities to the consumers we serve. We also highlight the Program’s services in agency literature and on the agency’s website.