## Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Continuum



When offering a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to a preschool child with a disability, local education agencies (LEAs) must ensure that the child is educated alongside his or her peers to the maximum extent appropriate. 34 C.F.R. § 300.114; see also U.S. Dept. of Educ., *Dear Colleague Letter* (Jan. 9, 2017) ("IDEA's LRE provision does not distinguish between school-aged children and preschool-aged children."). LEAs must make available the full continuum of alternative placements, including instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions. 34 C.F.R. § 300.115. This graphic represents the Tennessee Department of Education's continuum of services for preschool special education. With the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, including the family, this graphic can help you consider the service options in your district. The guiding questions prompt district and IEP teams to discuss placement options and prioritize inclusion so that the child learns alongside their non-disabled peers as much as possible. The guiding questions can also help district teams think innovatively about program design and the structure and partnerships of their current early childhood system. The Indicator 6 data categories are also available to help teams understand how the federal government measures preschool environments.

General education community-based setting + consultation and/or special **Guiding Questions:** education services and supports inside the general education environment Is the child currently enrolled in a childcare Indicator program? 6 A Where would the child General education setting provided by the Local Education Agency be in the absence of a disability? (LEA) + consultation or additional special education services or What would supports inside the general education environment collaboration with the community-based setting look like to support specialized General education setting (provided by the LEA or **Guiding Questions:** instruction for the Can the IEP be community-based setting) + consultation and/or implemented in the early childhood program? child? special education services and supports outside the general education environment How can related **Guiding Questions:** services be provided inside the classroom Separate special education classroom Does the intensity of service require a pull out session? setting? where majority of the children How can I have IEPs collaborate with service providers? Indicator What co-teaching 6 B Separate special available? education school Homebound or Indicator

## **Key Terms**

Consultation - support or training provided directly to the early childhood educator/staff

6 C

Special education services and supports - accommodations, modifications, and/or direct services

Hospital

Community-based setting - examples include Head Start, community preschool, childcare programs, and/or private preschool programs

General education setting provided by the LEA - examples include Title I-funded classrooms, LEA-funded classrooms, Voluntary Pre-K classrooms, and/or braided early childhood classrooms with a minimum of a 50/50 ratio of children with and without IEPs