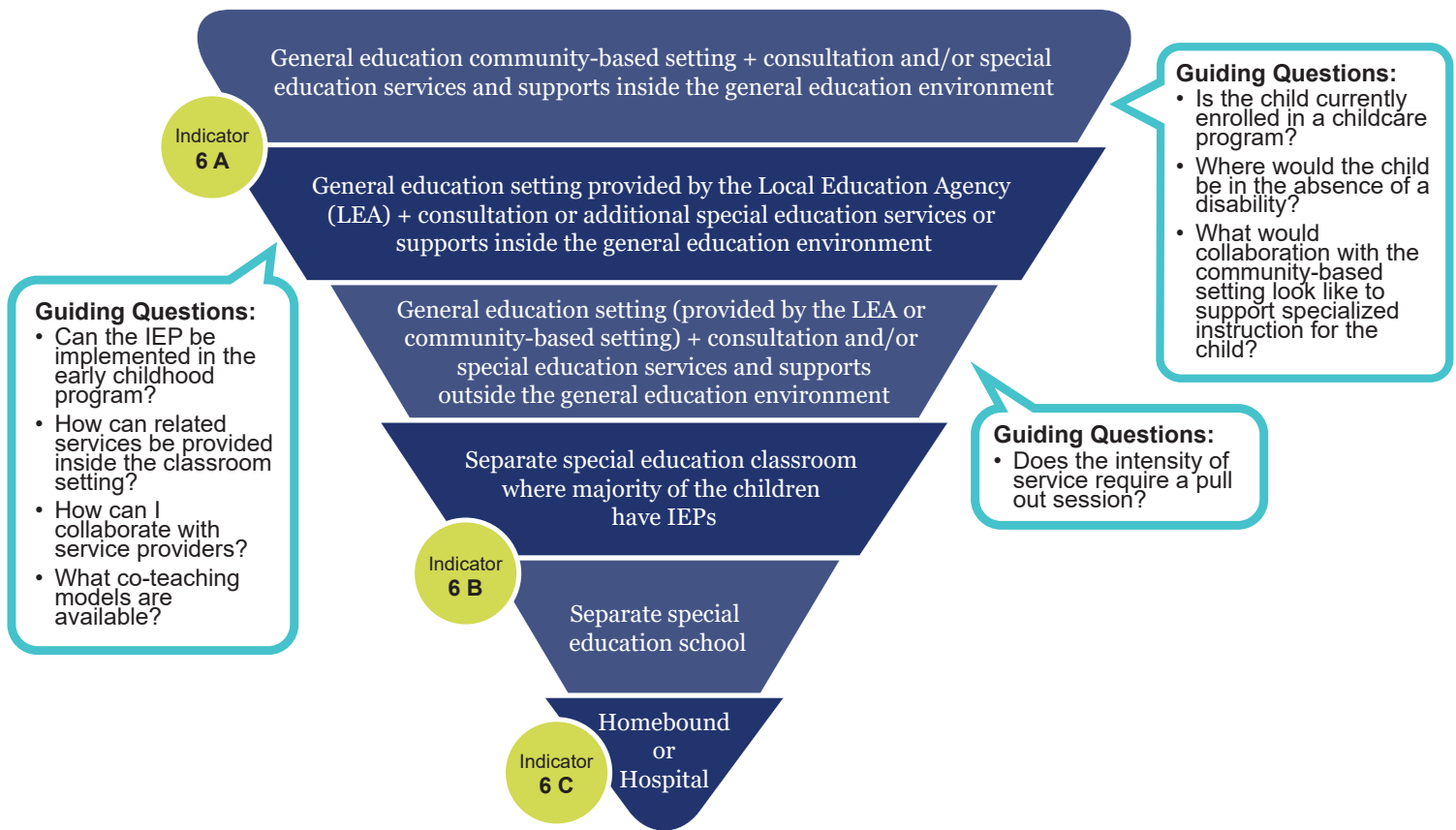


Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Continuum

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.



Key Terms

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

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

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