

PLRE

PRESCHOOL LEAST RESTRICTIVE
ENVIRONMENTS/SETTINGS



OVERVIEW

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, schools are responsible for providing students who are receiving special education services the opportunity to participate in school through the least restrictive environment. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum, be involved in the general curriculum, and progress in the general curriculum.

As districts begin the process of providing preschool children with access to the general curriculum, some may struggle with steps for initiation and implementation.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of a variety of options for including preschool children. It includes a brief description of each environment, the steps to implementation and additional considerations that might need to be discussed. It is not intended to be a finite list; just a starting point to assist decision-makers as they work to develop quality inclusive programs for young children. Please keep in mind a continuum of services should be available to Preschool children with disabilities. If you need further assistance with the continuum of services offered to student's ages 3 and 4 please consult your local Education Service Center Preschool Specialist.



PRE-K/PPCD COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOMS

| Description of Setting | Steps to Implementation | Additional Considerations |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Certified Pre-K & Special Education teachers co-teach in one classroom that serves Pre-K eligible students along with PPCD eligible students.</p> <p>3 and 4 year old students might also be served through a teacher who is dually certified as a general educator and special educator.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook for guidelines regarding staffing and funding (instructional arrangement, coding) information. • Program Supervisors (Pre-K and PPCD) meet with LEA Resource Planning Dept. to establish and maintain a ratio of less than 50% of children with special needs to meet the definition of a Least Restrictive Environment. • Program Supervisors develop program model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Staffing ratio ◦ Staff roles ◦ Curriculum ◦ Student assessment ◦ Equipment/material purchases ◦ Daily routine • Program Supervisors meet with principal, Pre-K, and PPCD teacher on campus to review program model and assist in implementation for their campus. • Campus holds ARD's for students in PPCD to reflect changes of instructional arrangement coding, schedule of services and placement decisions. • Program model is explained by both Pre-K and PPCD Teacher to parents at the first "meet the teacher" date, prior to the first day of school. • LEA Program Supervisors provide follow up support/ visits to ensure compliance and program quality. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regardless of setting, PEIMS (Public Education Information Management System) coding varies for these students based on age (3 or 4 years old) and Pre-K eligibility. • How is Transportation handled when there is not a program on every campus? |



HEAD START PARTNERSHIPS



| Description of Setting | Steps to Implementation | Additional Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Certified Special Education teacher co-teaches with Head Start teacher in one classroom who serves Head Start eligible students along with PPCD eligible students.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook for guidelines regarding staffing and funding (instructional setting and coding) information. • Create partnership materials (brochures, flyers, PowerPoint presentations) that describe the program and desired outcomes. • Establish criteria for appropriate Head Start Partners and select. • LEA and Head Start Exec. Director tour existing Head Start/Pre-K Collaboration sites. • LEA and Head Start Executive Director tour existing PPCD sites. • LEA and Head Start meet to develop MOU which contains guidelines for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Potential fees ◦ Personnel ◦ Curriculum ◦ Student assessment ◦ Calendar ◦ ARD meeting attendance ◦ Professional development ◦ Insurance ◦ Program requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Start has specific required standards that must be included. ◦ Transportation ◦ State licensing requirements • Appropriate staff is hired and trained • LEA holds ARD's for PPCD students to reflect changes of instructional arrangement coding, schedule of services and placement decision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Representative of Head Start Program attends ARD ◦ Explanation of collaboration for family • LEA program supervisor provides follow-up support/visits to ensure compliance and program quality and serve as a liaison between Head Start and LEA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Start guidelines require that a minimum of 10% of students served must be preschoolers with disabilities under their federal grant. • Head Start must maintain a set staff to student ratio, so if a PPCD eligible student is not Head Start eligible this may not be a viable option if ratio is exceeded. • Head Start teacher may or may not be certified • Transportation |

COMMUNITY-BASED PRIVATE CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIPS



| Description of Setting | Steps to Implementation | Additional Considerations |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Local Education Agency provides direct services to students at private community child care sites.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook for guidelines regarding staffing and funding (instructional arrangement, coding) information. • Create partnership materials (brochures, flyers, PowerPoint presentations) that describe the program and desired outcomes. • Identify potential Community Child Care Providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ask parents who their current providers are • Potential Child Care Director tours existing LEA programs with LEA Program Supervisor. • Selected Child Care Director meets with LEA to develop and sign MOU which contains information about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Fees ◦ Personnel ◦ Curriculum ◦ Student assessment ◦ Calendars ◦ Materials/supplies ◦ ARD Participation ◦ Transportation ◦ Professional development ◦ State licensing requirements • Appropriate staff is hired and trained. • LEA holds ARDs for students in PPCD to discuss changes of instructional arrangement coding, schedule of services and placement decision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Representative of Child Care attends ARD meeting ◦ Explanation of collaboration for family • LEA Program Supervisor provides follow-up support/visits to ensure compliance and program quality and serves as a liaison between the Child Care site and the LEA. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Faith-based child care centers may be considered if the curriculum is general, not with a specific religious focus • Child care staff may not be considered highly qualified under the NCLB Act which may cause TEA funding audit issues • Staff turnover in private child care facilities • LEA purchased child specific adaptive equipment and materials remaining with the PPCD student at private child care center |

DISTRICT EMPLOYEE CHILD CARE



| Description of Setting | Steps to Implementation | Additional Considerations |
|---|---|--|
| <p>A tuition-based early childhood program for the children of district employees, ages 3 & 4. Certified Special Education and General Education teachers provide direct services at the Local Education Agency for PPCD eligible students at no cost alongside district employees' children for a fee.</p> <p>Dually certified teacher may serve both roles (General Education teacher and Special Education teacher) in this setting.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook for staffing and funding (instructional arrangement, coding) information. • LEA staff tours an existing employee child care/PPCD in another district. • Create marketing materials for LEA Staff. • Survey LEA Staff to determine interest/participation • Develop program model to include information regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Staffing ratio ◦ Staff roles ◦ Daily routine ◦ Curriculum ◦ Student assessment ◦ Tuition for employees ◦ Hours of operation ◦ Waiting list guidelines • Develop improvement package for school board approval. • Appropriate staff is hired and trained. • Program Supervisor meets with campus principal, PPCD Teacher and Early Childhood Teacher to review program model and assist with program implementation for their campus. • Campus holds ARD's for students in PPCD to reflect changes of instructional arrangement coding, schedule of services and placement decisions. • Program model is explained by both Early Childhood Teacher and PPCD Teacher to parents at the first "meet the teacher" date, prior to the first day of school. • LEA Program Supervisor provides follow up support/visits to ensure compliance and program quality and serves as a liaison between the Employee Preschool and LEA. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPCD eligible students would receive services at no cost during the instructional day only. • Extended care hours are only available for district employees. • Transportation • Classroom space • Employee child care site being centrally located for district personnel • Fee for employees' children should reflect comparable rate within your community • LEA provides standards/rules for child care setting |

EARLY CHILDHOOD COOPERATIVE FOR SMALL/RURAL DISTRICTS



| Description of Setting | Steps to Implementation | Additional Considerations |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Neighboring small/ rural Local Education Agency's establish a shared service arrangement to serve Pre-K eligible and PPCD eligible students. Certified Pre-K & Special Education teachers co-teach in one classroom that serves Pre-K eligible students along with PPCD eligible students.</p> <p>Dually certified (General Education and Special Education) teacher can serve both roles for students 3 and 4 years old.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of adjoining LEAs meet to discuss potential of pooling resources to provide services for 3 and 4 year old students. • Review TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook for guidance on funding (instructional setting and coding) information. • Representatives of participating LEAs develop MOU to clarify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Location (which district will host) ◦ Materials ◦ Curriculum ◦ Student Assessment ◦ Funding (Development of Shared Services Agreement) ◦ Personnel ◦ Transportation ◦ Identification of non-disabled students (3 and 4 year olds) ◦ Referral process for students with disabilities • Develop improvement packages and submit to participating LEA School Boards for approval. • Representatives of participating LEAs meet with host campus administrator to discuss program. • Appropriate staff is hired and trained. • LEAs hold ARD meetings with eligible PPCD students to discuss services, location and program objectives. Appropriate classroom staff attend ARD meetings with family. • Representatives of participating LEAs meet regularly to monitor program (evaluate outcomes and need for revisions). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Centralized classroom location • Fiscal Agent Responsibilities • Distance between school districts |

UNIVERSAL (OPEN OR TUITION BASED) PRE-K FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS



| Description of Setting | Steps to Implementation | Additional Considerations |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Any private or public Universal Pre-K can serve as an inclusive setting for 3 or 4 year olds.</p> <p>Dually certified (General Education and Special Education) teacher can serve both roles for students 3 and 4 years old.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook for guidance on funding (instructional setting and coding) information. • Develop improvement packages and submit to LEA School Boards for Approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Develop survey of community support/participation to determine need • Representatives of participating ISDs develop MOU which contains information about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Location (which LEA will host) ◦ Materials ◦ Curriculum ◦ Student Assessment ◦ Funding (Development of Shared Services Agreement) ◦ Personnel ◦ Transportation ◦ Identification of non-disabled students (3 and 4 year olds) ◦ Establishment of “wait list” (*Students who qualify for Pre-K cannot be put on a waiting list without a waiver from TEA.) ◦ Referral process for students with disabilities • Create marketing materials for local community, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ School District Newsletter ◦ School District Website ◦ Community Newspaper • Representatives of participating LEAs meet with host campus administrator to discuss program. • Appropriate staff is hired and trained. • LEAs hold ARD meetings with eligible PPCD students to discuss services, location and program objectives. Appropriate classroom staff attends ARD meetings with family. • Representatives of participating LEAs meet regularly to monitor program (evaluate outcomes and need for revisions). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for students not eligible for Pre-K must be local funds • Transportation • Centralized classroom location • Length of program (half/full day) |

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS



| Description of Setting | Steps to Implementation | Additional Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| <p>At-risk preschool students who have not been referred to special education receive instruction/interventions with PPCD eligible students by a certified general education and special education teacher. Additional interventions are provided by a certified SLP.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook for guidance on funding (instructional setting and coding) information. • Develop program model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Guidelines for selection of “at risk” students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • screening process/tool • guidelines for determining need for referral for special education referral ◦ Student assessment ◦ Staffing ratio ◦ Staff roles ◦ Daily routine ◦ Curriculum ◦ Student assessment ◦ Hours/days of operation • Develop improvement package and submit to LEA School Board for approval. • Create marketing materials (flyers, brochures and PowerPoint presentations) to make community aware of program goals and objectives. • Appropriate staff is hired and trained. • LEA staff meets with families of identified “at risk” students to explain the program goals and process. • LEA staff and family meet regularly to review child progress and plan future steps (potentially formal referral for evaluation for special education). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding of program for student not eligible for special education • CEIS (Coordinated Early Intervening Service) funding is non-allowable for students ages 3-5 • This program should not preclude or postpone students with obvious disabilities from accessing the formal assessment process for special education services. • Transportation • Determine how long these programs run (days/week, hours/day)? |

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