



# Memo

**To:** Special Education Directors, Child Find Coordinators, Preschool Special Education Administrators

**From:** Paul Foster, Exceptional Student Services Executive Director  
Heidi McCaslin, Preschool through Third Grade Office, State Preschool Director

**Date:** November 6, 2019

**Re:** Change in requirements for reporting educational environments for 5-year-old kindergarteners with disabilities

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The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education recently announced changes to the requirements for how States must report 5-year-old children with disabilities in kindergarten. Currently, 5-year-old children with disabilities are reported with the early-childhood education environment categories (e.g., at least 10 hours per week and majority in regular early childhood program, service provider location, etc.) regardless of whether they are attending preschool or kindergarten. Starting in School Year 2020-21, OSEP will require States to report kindergarteners with the school-age educational environment categories (e.g., inside regular class 80% or more of the day; inside regular class 40% through 79% of the day; Separate School, etc.). To align with new OSEP requirements, the change in reporting requirements for children in kindergarten will take effect for the December Count 2020 (School Year 2020-21).

Consequently, December Count 2020 will require kindergarteners who are 5 years of age as of December 1st, 2020, to be reported using the school-age educational environment codes, rather than those used for early childhood. Please refer to [this CDE guidance document](#) for more detail on educational environment codes for early childhood and school-age children.

The transition from preschool to kindergarten is a natural time for personnel to review the least restrictive environment for each child, including the code definitions, to ensure that any change from preschool/early childhood educational environments to school age educational environments are comparable, meaning that a change in code does not constitute an opportunity to change the student's educational environment without a review of existing information and further assessment, as appropriate. Generally speaking, preschoolers coded as 209 Regular early childhood classroom for 10+ hours per week would be expected to move to a school age setting of 301: Inside regular classroom at least 80% of the time. Prior to changing an educational environment between grade levels to be more restrictive, multiple sources of information must be considered and further assessment must take place. The IEP team must have a justification any time a student is moved to a more restrictive setting.

For questions regarding programming, please contact Heidi McCaslin at 303-866-6720 or [McCaslin\\_H@cde.state.co.us](mailto:McCaslin_H@cde.state.co.us). For questions regarding data and or coding, please contact Miki Imura at [Imura\\_I@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Imura_I@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-6976.