



W I S C O N S I N D E P A R T M E N T O F
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Virtual Learning – Educational Environment Guidance

Preschool Educational Environment Ages 3 through 5 Not in Kindergarten

The preschool educational environment codes focus on the programs children attend and the setting in which children receive special education and related services.

For children receiving virtual instruction, the child would be considered to be attending a regular early childhood program if the child continues to receive instruction from a regular early childhood teacher.

Scenarios:

- If the child receives the *majority* of special education and related services in a regular early childhood program with their nondisabled peers, either in person or virtually, this would be services inside the regular early childhood program (R1 or R3).
- If the child attends a regular early childhood program and receives the *majority* of special education and related services one-on-one or in a small group with other children with disabilities away from their nondisabled peers, either in person or virtually, this would be services outside the regular early childhood program (R2 or R4).
- If the child does not attend a regular early childhood program but is receiving special education and related services in a small group setting with other children with disabilities, either in person or virtually, the educational environment would be a separate class (B1).
- If the child does not attend a regular early childhood program and continues to physically attend a separate school, then the educational environment would be separate school (B2).
- If the child does not attend a regular early childhood program and continues to physically attend a residential facility, then the educational environment would be residential facility (B3).
- If the child does not attend a regular early childhood program and is receiving special education and related services one-on-one, either in person or virtually in the child's home, the educational environment would be home (B4).
- If the child does not attend a regular early childhood program and continues to physically come to a school building or some other location for one-on-one special education and related services, the educational environment would be service provider/other location (B5).

The [Preschool Educational Environment Decision Tree](#) should be referenced when determining the educational environment for children ages three to five who are not in kindergarten.

School Age Educational Environment Ages 5 in Kindergarten through 21

The school age educational environment codes focus on the extent to which students with disabilities attend educational programs alongside their peers without disabilities. For students who do not attend a program with peers without disabilities, the educational environment is the setting in which the special education and related services are provided.

For students receiving virtual instruction, consideration must be given to whether the course is open to students with and without disabilities, as well as the location in which the virtual instruction is accessed. **Generally, if the course is open to all students and there is no specific location for accessing the online learning, it considered time inside the regular classroom.**

When determining the hours in the school week, please reference the [Flexibility Framework Provisions – Hours of Instruction](#).

Scenarios:

- If the virtual course is unrelated to the student's disability and the student is taking the course at the same time as students without disabilities, this would be considered time inside the regular classroom.
- If the virtual course is unrelated to the student's disability and the student can take the course in no specific location, this would be considered time inside the regular classroom.
- If the virtual course is delivered in a special education setting in accordance with the student's IEP or in a location within the school building in isolation of students without disabilities, this would be considered time outside the regular classroom.
- If the virtual course constitutes specially designed instruction and is intended for students with disabilities, this would be considered time outside the regular classroom.
- If the virtual course is delivered in an off-campus site, such as a local library or community center, time inside or outside the regular classroom is dependent on whether students without disabilities are also accessing the course at the same time.
- For a student participating in virtual learning who has been placed in and is physically attending a separate school for more than 50 percent of their school day, the educational environment will continue to be public or private separate school.
- For a student participating in virtual learning who has been placed in and is physically attending a residential facility for more than 50 percent of their school day, the educational environment will continue to be public or private residential facility.
- For students placed in a homebound or hospital setting, correctional facility, or parentally placed in a private school, participation in virtual learning does not change the educational environment established by the IEP or Services Plan. These students would continue to be reported with an educational environment of homebound, hospital, correctional facility, or parentally-placed in a private school.

For more information about determining the educational environment code for a child participating in virtual learning, refer to the [Online Learning and IDEA Educational Environments](#) document developed by the IDC Data Center.