PART B CHILD COUNT AND EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT DATA NOTES

2013-14 Reporting Year

This document provides information or data notes on the ways in which states collected and reported data differently from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) data formats and instructions. In addition, the data notes provide explanations of substantial changes or other changes that data users may find notable or of interest in the data from the previous year.

Alabama

The provision of targeted technical assistance was provided to local service providers clarifying the appropriate use and documentation of LRE codes stemming from guidance outlined in the Dear Colleague Letter on Preschool LRE provided by the USDOE/OSEP.

Alaska

Alaska attributes the increase in the number of 3 to 5 year old students receiving SPED services in the home and also the decrease in the number of 3 to 5 year old students who attend a regular ECO program for less than 10 hours per week who received most of their SPED services in another location to changes in one of our larger LEAs. This LEA migrated to a new SPED student management system and conducted extensive training on 3 to 5 LREs during the roll-out. This resulted in changes in the understanding of the 5 to 3 LREs and that in turn resulted in significant changes in the count of students in several of the 3 to 5 LREs in the 2013-14 school year for this LEA. Both the SEA and the LEA will be watching the counts for the next few years to see if they stabilize in the future.

Arizona

3-5 Separate School

Arizona’s training and technical assistance to PEAs that serve the 3-5 age group encourages PEAs to instruct students using service providers that travel to the student wherever they are located. Rather than students being served in separate schools, Arizona encourages inclusion as much as possible. Based on this data, it appears that PEAs are heeding this message, resulting in a decrease in the number of students being served in separate school settings.

Arkansas

In Arkansas, SLD is not a valid disability for preschool students. Preschool students listed under SLD are five-year old kindergarten students. Many of these students previously would have been identified as having a developmental delay.
Arkansas saw a decrease in the number of students receiving services in a separate class environment. School districts that operate their own early childhood special education programs have taken strides to integrate the students into the regular early childhood classroom.

The decrease in the number of students reported as being served in a correctional setting is mainly attributed to fewer school age students (18-21) in the state prison system.

**Colorado**

Increase in “Separate School”: As we review the data changes across our LEAs in this LRE setting, these numbers have increased in districts where early childhood programs have been designed to provide focused specialized instruction, with more intensive services. Across the state, there has been a focus on early intervention and identifying needs in preschool children as early as possible in order to better meet their needs. There has been outreach activities conducted in communities which would have also increased community awareness of Child Find evaluations and intervention opportunities.

Decrease in “Service Provider Location”: In Colorado, FAPE for preschool children has been defined as children with disabilities receiving the same amount of access to the regular early childhood program as children at risk, i.e., preschool programs rather than individual services only provided at a service provider location. This is a positive change to see a decrease in this category of “service provider location”; we would expect to see lower numbers in this category.

In the fall of 2011, Colorado passed new rules for eligibility determinations which included the stipulation to align with IDEA defined disability categories. These changes will be fully implemented by rule by July 1, 2016. Prior to this change, the following federal categories were reported under a category of Physical Disability, i.e., Other Health Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Autism, and Traumatic Brain Injury. With the migration to categories that align with the federal reporting categories, there will be changes in the OHI and OI reporting, i.e., there will now be reported numbers rather than values of 0. In addition, there may be subsequent changes/increases in the categories of autism and TBI which had previously been included in the Physical Disability category. Finally, Colorado has extended the age limit of Developmental Delay to nine years of age rather than the prior maximum age of six years of age to align with federal reporting requirements; this change may result in an increase in the number of children identified with Developmental Delays.

**Connecticut**

Connecticut has consistently demonstrated improvement in their state data relative to early childhood environments through programmatic and data-specific training and technical assistance to local education agencies (LEAs).

One aspect of Connecticut’s training and technical assistance to LEAs has focused on the importance of providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). State training and technical assistance has also included an emphasis on reporting the number of hours per
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week a child participates in a regular early childhood program outside of what is provided as part of the individualized education program (IEP). As a result, more children are reported as attending a regular early childhood program 10 or more hours a week. Additionally, CT conducted an extensive clean-up and verification of children reported as attending residential facilities.

District of Columbia

Pursuant to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), a student classified as having a “Developmental Delay” should be three to seven years of age. In the District of Columbia dataset, we have included students who have an eligibility determination of “Developmental Delay” that are eight and nine years old. These students were included and submitted with our Child Count data because we did not think it was appropriate to delete students that are 8 and 9 years old from the dataset because they are still identified and receiving services, according to IDEA federal policy, at the time of the Child Count date. However, we are working with our LEAs to correct instances of noncompliance and to ensure that they comply with state and federal regulations as it pertains to the education and provision of services for students with IEPs.

Georgia

Georgia’s data reflect a two year trend in the reduction of the number of young children served in separate schools and a corresponding increase in the number of young children served in regular early childhood programs. Collaboration with other agencies serving young children and a continued emphasis on serving young children in the least restrictive environment are considered contributing factors for these data change.

Iowa

LRE 3-5 Separate Class

The SEA attributes the year to year change to coordinated and consistent data entry procedures in the collection of the educational environments data. The SEA has worked to address data quality with a statewide implementation of a new IEP web-based form to consistently collect the following on every child’s IEP:

* Setting(s) in which children attend throughout the school day;
* Amount of time children attend general education setting(s), if applicable; and
* Specific amount of time and type of educational environment in which children receive special education instructional and support/related services.

In addition, the SEA has also increased emphasis on how the provision of services in the Least Restrictive Environments (LRE) applies to the placement of preschool children. Additionally, multiple stakeholders, including Area Education Agency (AEA) Directors of Special Education and AEA Early Childhood
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Leadership Network, have received a copy of the OSEP Letter on Least Restrictive Environments for Preschool Children with Disabilities (February 2012) to clarify the provision of a full continuum of placements for preschool children in special education.

**Kansas**

Kansas has had over all shifts in immigrant populations based on the work availability for migrant farm workers and within the meat packing industry. The shift in the LEP category for students is representative of the shift in the state-wide immigrant population.

The decrease of the IEP student population in correctional facilities represents a state-wide decrease of juvenile incarcerations. Judges are now employing new sentencing criteria based on a ranking system that uses other factors (e.g. Crime committed, threat to others, violent behavior, etc.) to determine if an individual is placed in a correctional facility or serves their sentence in the community. The result is an overall decrease in the number of IEP students in correctional facilities.

**Michigan**

There was a decrease in the category of: other location regular early childhood program (less than 10 hours). This is due to the increase in children receiving services in a service provider location or in a regular early childhood program. Michigan has done extensive technical assistance to locals regarding where children 3-5 should be served based upon their individual needs.

**Mississippi**

The increase in 3 to 5 year olds with LEP status correlates to an overall increase in the number of LEP students in the State over the last year.

**Missouri**

The LEP category for ages 3-5 increased from 2012-13 to 2013-14 primarily due an increase in one school district which serves students whose parents are assigned to a military base.

**Nebraska**

Decrease in Separate Class: The reduction in separate class was largely comprised from five larger metro area schools. This may reflect a number of factors that have collectively emerged: more accurate reporting according to relatively new OSEP reporting criteria; growth of regular Early Childhood programs in districts has created more opportunities for all children to be served in regular Early Childhood classrooms; and Indicator 6 public reporting requirements have encouraged districts to prioritize inclusive practice in regular Early Childhood settings.
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Ohio
Ohio added elements to its collection that allowed districts to explicitly report correctional facility placement. Previously, the SEA inferred the placement from data collected outside of the special education data elements.

This change affected both the counts of students in correctional facilities that showed a large increase, and the counts of students in residential facilities, which showed a significant decrease. Previously, some of the students in correctional facilities may have been classified as being in residential facilities.

Oklahoma
Services Regular Early Childhood Program (less than 10 Hours) – decrease - Full-Day Kindergarten was mandated in Oklahoma during the 2013-2014 school year which caused an increase in full day programs and a decrease in partial day programs.

Oregon
The change in Other Location Regular Early Childhood Program (less than 10 hours) and Services Regular Early Childhood Program (at least 10 Hours) could be attributed to all or part of the following:

* increased number of Kindergarteners who were 5 on December 1st,
* continued training and improved documentation for LEAs in this area, and/or
* numerous data system changes across the state.

There are two factors contributing to the reduction of students in correctional facilities:

* the Oregon Youth Authority reduced bed capacity to meet juvenile justice priorities and requirements, and
* due to mandatory sentencing of violent offenders, the trend has been that the incarcerated youth has been getting older, where a greater number of youth aged 18-25 years of age are occupying the Oregon Youth Authority beds.

Separate School decrease is largely due to our Long Term Care and Treatment programs not exclusively serving students with disabilities.

Puerto Rico
The state attributed the changes on the educational environments and child count tables to state efforts to improve the accuracy of data reported by local school systems. Because data are used for monitoring practices, local education agencies are striving to increase data accuracy. The state reported that it provided training for data collection/reporting regarding identification of students.
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The state attributed the changes in the total number of Child Count and Educational Environments to improved data accuracy resulting from its new agency-wide data collection system (MiPE). This new integration between the student information system (SIS) and the information system of special education (MiPE) allows the state to validate, have a better quality of data and a single source for demographic information and enrollment in schools.

South Carolina

The Child Count date was revised to the fourth Tuesday in October beginning with the 2013 Child Count. The 2013 Child Count date was October 22, 2013.

The SC Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) reported by a continuum of LREs in the past. In 2013, DJJ reported LRE as a correctional facility except for YCA as this is a voluntary program and students are not convicted or incarcerated.

Utah

In SY2013-2014 Utah implemented more rigorous procedures for the collection, validation, and reporting of EdFacts data. As a result the State was able to more accurately provide an unduplicated count of students.

In SY2013-2014 Utah provided technical assistance to LEAs on accurate data reporting through multiple training sessions and publication of a data manual. Upon increased reporting quality, the SEA provided additional supports and services related to LRE for children ages 3-5.

In SY2013-2014 Utah provided technical assistance to LEAs clarifying that students who are age 5 and enrolled in kindergarten must be reported using the 3-5 early childhood environments.

In SY2013-2014 the Utah state legislature supported LEAs in providing intensive supports to children ages 3-5 who are at risk but are not students with disabilities. The State will carefully monitor the identification of children over the next several years to determine whether this support reduces the number of students who are mis-identified as students with disabilities but in fact require early education supports other than special education.

Correctional Facility

1. High levels of variation are expected from year to year in the placement of students with disabilities in correctional facilities. Factors outside of the IEP team impact this environment, such as funding levels for the Department of Human Services, the severity of the offense, overcrowding in correctional facilities, and the delinquency history of the student. Of all Utah youths involved in the corrections system, about 23% are in correctional facilities.
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Home/Hospital

1. Utah State Board of Education Rule R277-419 provides a mechanism for all students to receive home or hospital services in the case of injury or illness. During the SY2013-2014 USOE provided technical assistance to LEA Data Managers and LEA Special Education Directors regarding the difference between these services (available for all students) and home/hospital placement as designated by the IEP team.

Other Location Regular Early Childhood Program (at least 10 hours).

1. In SY2013-2014 Utah provided technical assistance to LEAs clarifying that the “10 hours” referenced in the environment code represents the number of hours the student is attending a regular early childhood program, not the number of hours the student is receiving specialized instruction or related services.

Other Location Regular Early Childhood Program (less than 10 hours).

1. In SY2013-2014 Utah provided technical assistance to LEAs clarifying that the “10 hours” referenced in the environment code represents the number of hours the student is attending a regular early childhood program, not the number of hours the student is receiving specialized instruction or related services.

Regular Early Childhood Program (at least 10 hours).

1. In SY2013-2014 Utah provided technical assistance to LEAs clarifying that the “10 hours” referenced in the environment code represents the number of hours the student is attending a regular early childhood program, not the number of hours the student is receiving specialized instruction or related services.

West Virginia

Four additional LEAs reported PreK students in this educational environment on December 1, 2013, as compared to the prior year. Moreover, the additional students in the category may be attributed to the number of districts attempting to provide additional special education and/or related services within the RECP.