



Utah State
Board of
Education

Special
Education
Services

DETERMINING PRESCHOOL SERVICE TIME IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

A UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE DOCUMENT

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Service time on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) refers to the amount of time a student receives special education services. This time is crucial for ensuring that the student's unique needs are met and that they can make progress toward their educational goals. This document attempts to clarify common misconceptions around service time in preschool special education services by highlighting that the process for determining service time and setting should be consistent with the procedures used for K-12 students, while also considering the unique needs of preschool-aged children.

Service Time on an IEP for a preschool student is determined by the student needs outlined in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) and special factors. Service time is also addressed in the IEP goal ([SpEd Rules III.I-III.J](#)).

Although a preschool classroom may have a high number of students with disabilities and be referred to as “self-contained,” “separate class,” or a “special class,” the class itself does not determine service time outlined on the IEP. Additionally, service time is not equivalent to the number of minutes a service provider is present in the classroom. Instead, it should be based on the individualized needs of the child and the amount of specially designed instruction (SDI) and related services necessary to ensure adequate progress on the IEP goals.

The service time should reflect the time that specially designed instruction (SDI) and related services are provided to the student to address the “unique needs of the student that result from the student’s disability; and ensure access of the student to the general curriculum so that the student can meet the educational standards...that apply to all students” ([SpEd Rules I.E.51](#)).

Additionally, the service time should not be driven by the school's master calendar. Instead, it should be determined by the IEP team based on what they believe will help the child make progress on their goals. The team should consider a general education setting for all students unless there is data indicating that it is not appropriate for the child. The goal is to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet the

child's unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living ([IEP Reflective Framework](#)).

Individualized preschool student's services enable the student to advance toward attaining annual goals and participate with other similar-aged students where appropriate ([SpEd Rules III.K](#)). The service time outlined on the IEP reflects the intentionality of instruction and alignment with the child's IEP goals.