

Documenting a Student's Special Education Placement Determination

ODE provides a Special Education Placement Determination [school age form](#) (581-5138b-P) for local educational agencies (LEAs) to document special education placement determinations, following the completion of each individualized education program (IEP), or as otherwise needed.

The sample form includes instructions outlining ODE's expectations for using the form to comply with Federal and State requirements. This document aims to provide additional context to address misconceptions ODE has observed in the form's usage, rather than replicate the instructions included with the form. In the course of monitoring activities, ODE has noted that not all placement determination pages document all less restrictive placement options as required. This form records the placement determination process of the team, providing explicit evidence of whether the appropriate placement procedures were followed.

Therefore, it should provide clear evidence that the team has adhered to IDEA's placement and LRE requirements. For every placement decision, the team determining placement must start with the least restrictive setting in the continuum of alternative placements (i.e., instruction in regular classes) and determine whether the child can successfully receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in that environment, with supplementary aids and services. The selected or rejected placement is documented, along with the rationale.

If the least restrictive possible setting is chosen, no further consideration of placement is necessary (though teams are able to document additional placement options, and should fully consider any placements proposed by the parent). If rejected, the team moves to the next, slightly more restrictive setting within the LEA's continuum of alternative placements, determining whether the child's IEP can be implemented and FAPE provided in this new setting. This decision is documented as a placement option that was considered. If selected, no further placement options need to be listed.

If rejected, the team progresses to the next slightly more restrictive setting on the district's continuum of alternative placements. This process continues until the team identifies the least restrictive placement option that meets the child's needs.

To comply with the IDEA's LRE provisions, every placement determination must demonstrate consideration of placement in regular classes. Additional placement options may be necessary depending on the child's unique circumstances.

Local policies and procedures may vary. Your agency may require you to include further information on the placement page beyond what the state requires. As long as it complies with Federal and State requirements, local agencies have discretion to add their own policies and procedures that go beyond Federal and State requirements.