Preschool Extended School Year (ESY) Guidance

Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West
Student Services

Preschool Extended School Year (ESY) Guidance

What are Extended School Year services?

Extended School Year (ESY) services provide preschool children with disabilities continued support beyond the regular school year to ensure they can maintain essential skills and make progress on their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. ESY is not summer school and is not automatically provided for all students. Recommended services are based on individual needs and supported by evidence to prevent significant regression of skills that cannot be quickly regained after a break.

How does the team determine the need for Extended School Year services?

Extended school year services are not limited to a particular category of disability, nor can the services be unilaterally limited in type, amount or duration. The need for ESY services must be determined on an individual basis, based upon the judgment of the IEP team members and the team's decision-making process. ESY must be provided only if a child's IEP team determines that the services are necessary to provide FAPE to the child. To determine the need for ESY, the team must have sufficient documentation to show that it made an appropriate, individualized determination regarding the provision of ESY services.

According to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW), the IEP team should consider extended school year services to prevent significant regression of skills or knowledge retained by the child so as to seriously impede the child's progress toward their educational goals, and whether extended school year services are necessary to avoid something more than adequately recoupable regression of skills or knowledge.

The team needs to determine whether the time the student will need to re-learn the skills lost is excessive, particularly compared to the time it takes nondisabled students to regain skills lost during a school break.

ESY is an extension of the education the student receives during the regular school year. It is not enrichment but a continuation of the IEP objectives that were being implemented during the regular school year. "Extended School Year" may be the same or different from the child's regular school year services, as determined by the IEP team.

The standards for determination of the need for Extended School Year (ESY) will be:

- Whether ESY services are a necessary, not just beneficial, component of an appropriate education
- Whether ESY services are required to prevent significant regression of skills or knowledge due to an interruption of instruction between school years; and
- Whether ESY services are required to prevent significant regression of skills or knowledge retained by the child that cannot be recouped in a reasonable amount of time.

The IEP team has the ultimate responsibility for determining the appropriateness of Extended School Year services. The decision regarding the provision of Extended School Year services will be made annually by the IEP team. The IEP team will utilize procedures and guidelines developed by the school district in determining the appropriateness of Extended School Year services for students with disabilities.

The parents/guardians of all students with disabilities and suspected disabilities will address the issue of Extended School Year services during their annual IEP meeting. Related information is also included in a parent information booklet entitled “A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education”, which is available to parents through your child’s Intervention Specialist, your child’s school or the Educational Services Department.

Decision-Making Process

- Collect Data
    - Use progress monitoring, work samples, therapy notes, behavioral logs, and parent observations (before/after long breaks).
- Review Evidence
    - Did the child regress in key skills?
    - Was the recoupment period longer than expected?
    - Would interruption cause long-term harm to independence or readiness?
- Team Decision
    - If evidence shows ESY is needed, document services in the IEP (specific goals, type, setting, frequency, provider).

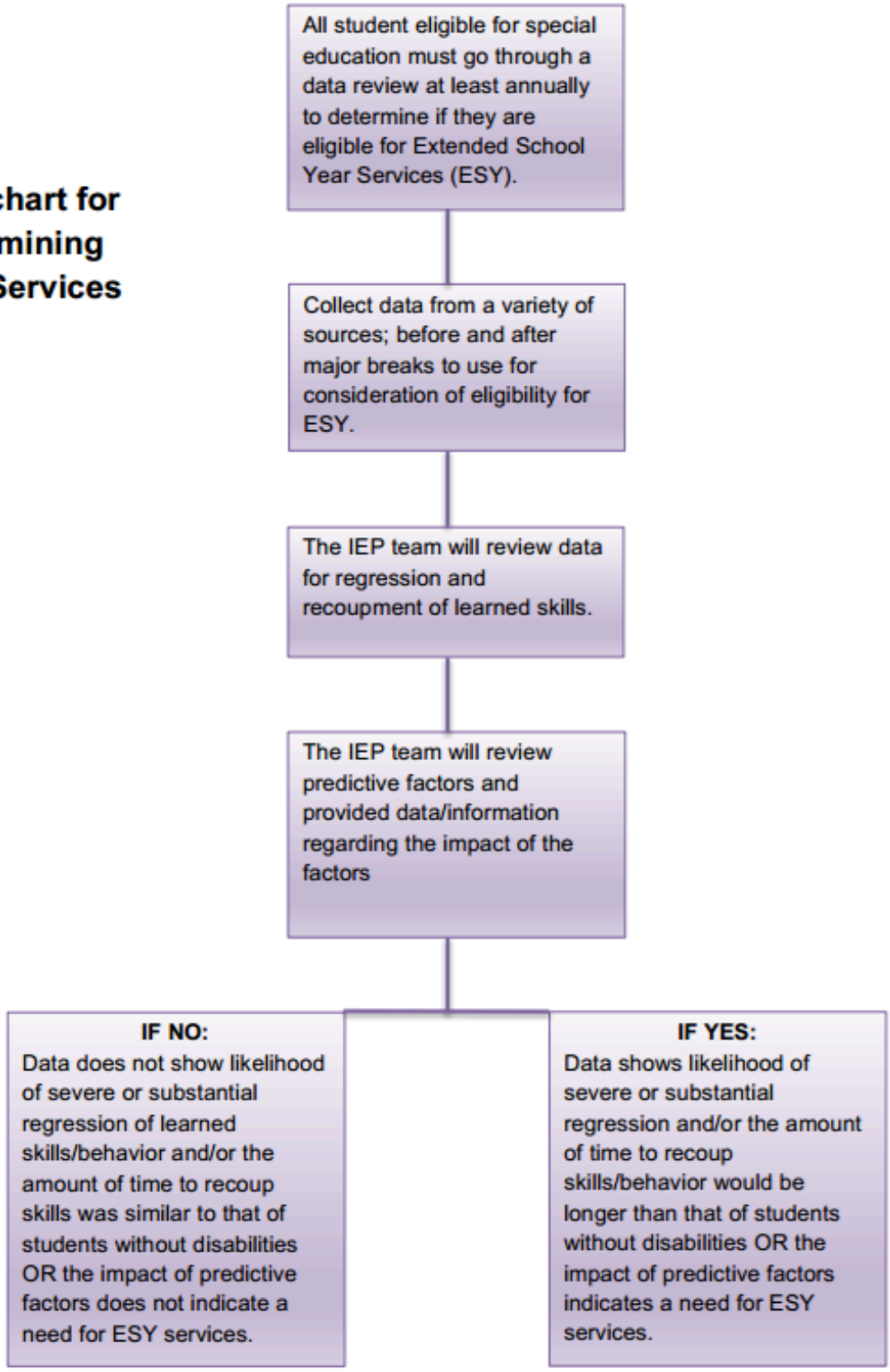
- If evidence does not support ESY, record the decision and rationale.

Preschool-Specific Guidance

- ESY goals should focus on maintenance of critical functional skills needed for future learning (e.g., communication, social interaction, play, behavior regulation, self-care).
- Services may look different from the school year: shorter sessions, play-based intervention, home activities with family coaching, or therapy “boosts.”
- Services should be provided in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the child.
- ESY is not daycare, summer enrichment, or compensatory education.

Documentation

If ESY is provided:

- The IEP team must clearly describe:
  - Targeted IEP goals
  - Type and frequency of services
  - Service location and provider
- Progress should be reviewed at the start of the school year to evaluate effectiveness.

Flowchart for Determining ESY Services