



USING

---

**EVERY  
STUDENT  
SUCCEEDS  
ACT**

---

FUNDS FOR EARLY  
CHILDHOOD



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Emergency Federal Funds for Pandemic Relief	4
<b>➔ EXPAND ACCESS TO EARLY LEARNING</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Using Title I Funds to Expand Access to High-Quality Early Learning</i>	<b>5</b>
<i>Using Title IV Funds to Add Services</i>	<b>6</b>
District Example: Chicago Public Schools	6
<b>➔ IMPROVE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND KINDERGARTEN</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Coordination with Early Childhood Programs</i>	<b>7</b>
<i>Transitions into Kindergarten</i>	<b>8</b>
<b>➔ ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF SERVICE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>➔ ENGAGE FAMILIES</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>➔ BUILD PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY</b>	<b>14</b>
District Example: West Chicago Elementary School District 33	15
<b>➔ EXPAND CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>➔ SUPPORT ENGLISH LEARNERS</b>	<b>17</b>
District Example: Elgin School District U-46	18
<b>➔ INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>21</b>

# INTRODUCTION

*This guidance is intended to help districts understand some of the options they have to use federal funds provided under multiple sections of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Investment in early learning as an effective strategy is supported by research from the science of learning and development that shows that early childhood is a critical time for brain development.<sup>1</sup> The quantity and quality of interactions children have with adults at this stage determines the foundation upon which all other educational experiences will build.<sup>2</sup>*

Early childhood experiences have a great impact on long-term outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Ensuring children have a strong foundation that can support them throughout their educational careers may help school districts and states avoid expensive remediation and retention and contribute to significantly better outcomes for children.<sup>4</sup> The benefits of investments in early childhood highlight the importance of leveraging ESSA dollars on improving student experiences in the early years.

While high-quality early education experiences are an important factor in setting children on the path to success, research is also showing the value of aligning those experiences to what happens when children enter kindergarten and advance through the early grades. The U.S. Department of Education has highlighted the importance of practices that seek to build strong transitions for children by encouraging districts to align standards, curriculum, instruction, assessments, and environments across grades.<sup>5</sup> But while investments in the access to and quality of early childhood settings are an allowable use of ESSA funds, many school districts have limited understanding of how funds within ESSA can be used to help increase the availability of high-quality early childhood programs.

What follows is guidance for districts to not only strengthen early learning experiences, but to sustain that same level of quality throughout the preschool to third grade continuum. When considering how to move forward, districts should take into account how each of the following strategies might contribute to an aligned system of supports for children and families across the early years and grades. Districts should also consider the equity implications of different policy choices in each area; this guidance highlights those where relevant.

This guide is organized by type of activity:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ➔ <b>Expand Access to Early Learning</b> | ➔ <b>Improve Transitions Into Kindergarten</b> |
| ➔ <b>Enhance the Quality of Service</b>  | ➔ <b>Engage Families</b>                       |
| ➔ <b>Build Professional Capacity</b>     | ➔ <b>Expand Curricular Activities</b>          |
| ➔ <b>Support English Learners</b>        | ➔ <b>Instructional Materials</b>               |



Importantly, much of the discretion on how to spend these funds rests at the district level — although state leaders may want to provide incentives, guidance, technical assistance, and monitoring guidelines to promote early learning at the local level and improve coordination and alignment between and across programs and schools.<sup>6</sup> States may want to consider issuing official guidance, which may help districts understand exactly what they can and cannot do using federal funds. States are encouraged to include any or all of the language in this document as part of their official guidance, and to draw upon federal guidance.<sup>7</sup>

Districts should be thoughtful about how they consider these options, especially given that there are many other possible uses for these funds. As districts begin to plan for investments in early childhood, they may want to assess what they have in place, and work with families, community partners, and other stakeholders to identify gaps.<sup>8</sup> Stakeholder engagement to develop the application and implementation plans at the district level should include early learning leaders and advocates. The early learning community should be prepared to work with their school boards and district leadership to help make the case for these expenditures, and to support the district in implementing early learning effectively and with equity at the center of decision making.

## ***Emergency Federal Funds for Pandemic Relief***

During the coronavirus pandemic, children across the country had to adjust to a new approach to schooling. For our youngest children, especially those in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and early elementary, this has limited their access to developmentally appropriate, relationship based educational opportunities. Research shows that pre-kindergarten and kindergarten enrollment dropped precipitously during the pandemic.<sup>9</sup> During the pandemic, young children not only missed out on learning opportunities, many experienced instability and trauma that will impact their development. Schools should act to address these needs by investing in supports for young children — as well as their families, teachers, and other professionals.

While this guidance is meant to be useful throughout ESSA's remaining life, it is being published at a time when school districts and states are receiving substantial federal funding for COVID-19 relief. Early childhood is an allowable use of COVID-19 relief funds provided through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Program.\* As a result, school districts should be thinking about how to use their COVID-19 relief funding for elementary and secondary education — as well as other state funds — to ensure that all young children have access to high-quality early childhood settings from birth through third grade.



\* U.S. Department of Education (May 2021). *Frequently Asked Questions: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Programs, Governor's Emergency Education Relief Programs*. p. 42. Retrieved from: [https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER\\_FAQs\\_5.26.21\\_745AM\\_FINALb0cd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER_FAQs_5.26.21_745AM_FINALb0cd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf)



---

## Expand Access to Early Learning

---

*One important potential use of school district funds is to actually expand access to high-quality early learning. Many school districts provide early learning themselves, and all districts can partner effectively with the early learning providers in their community — including state-funded preschool programs, Head Start, and child care providers — to share information on children and families, align standards and expectations, coordinate professional development and supports, and implement systems that support the transition into kindergarten.<sup>10</sup> Opportunities in this area include:*

### **Using Title I Funds to Expand Access to High-Quality Early Learning**

Title I funds can be used to add preschool classrooms, and there are numerous evidence-based models that can be used to do so.<sup>11</sup> Districts that choose to pursue this opportunity must ensure that early childhood classrooms funded by Title I comply with the education performance standards within the federal Head Start Performance Standards.<sup>12</sup> These funds can also be used to pay for:

- *Salaries and benefits for teachers and other staff;*
- *Extended day programs in Head Start or community-based child care programs;*
- *Summer enrichment programs for young children and their families; and*
- *Family literacy programs.*

## Using Title IV Funds to Add Services

Title IV dollars can also be used to provide services, through several different models:

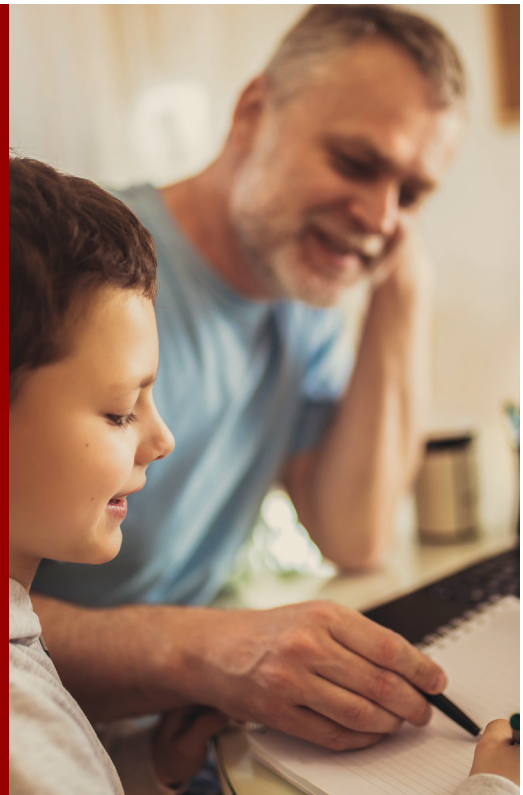
- **Child-Parent Center:** *Provides comprehensive educational and family support services in a school-based setting for families with preschool age children. (Title I funds can also be used for this purpose.)*
- **Community Schools:** *Provides additional program hours before, during, or after the traditional school day.*
- **Community Support for School Success:** *Includes Full Service Community Schools, which require some funds be used for “pipeline services.” Pipeline services include: high-quality early childhood education programs; support for a child’s transition to elementary school, as well as other transition points; family and community engagement and supports; and social, health, nutrition, and mental health services and supports.*

### ***District Example***

#### ***Chicago Public Schools***

Chicago Public Schools became one of the first districts in the country to use Title I funds to support early learning when it established the first Child-Parent Center in 1967. The Child-Parent Center provides high-quality preschool education and comprehensive services to meet the needs of both children and their families. Provision of these supports is accomplished through the use of a collaborative team that includes a head teacher, parent resource teacher, and school community representative. Strategies used by this program to engage families include:

- A School-Home agreement signed by parents committing them to 2 ½ hours of weekly involvement.
- Workshops offered to parents that cover: child development and parenting; health, safety, and nutrition; education, career, and personal development; and more.
- Home Visits Participation in this program is associated with greater school achievement, higher rates of school completion, and lower rates of remedial education services, juvenile delinquency, and child maltreatment.<sup>13</sup>



In addition to funding additional enrollment, Title I can be used to enhance quality in numerous ways — including acquiring the space and developing the systems necessary to support expanded access.

- **Leasing Space:** If space is not available in a public building, funds can be used to lease space in private facilities.
- **Minor Remodeling:** Classrooms/centers that are in need of minor repairs to accommodate a preschool program in an existing building. For example, funds can be used to support rewiring or the extension of utility lines.
- **Upgrading Existing Space:** Funds can be used to acquire furniture and classroom materials.



---

## Improve the Connection Between Early Childhood and Kindergarten

---

### Coordination with Early Childhood Programs

*School districts and Head Start programs are each required to have a memorandum of understanding (MOU or MOA) to improve coordination across the district.<sup>14</sup> These agreements can help school districts design meaningful plans for coordinated professional learning, family engagement, transition, supports for children with special needs, and those who are experiencing homelessness. These agreements can also lead to data sharing agreements that can make the transition and planning process much easier for children, families, teachers, and administrators.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, if school districts provide preschool themselves, they are required to coordinate with other preschool providers.<sup>16</sup>*

The language in ESSA encourages support for transitions between schools and community-based providers, including Head Start. These issues should be addressed in LEA and local school plans to use Title I funds for early childhood programs, as part of the planning for schoolwide Title I schools using funds for early childhood, and as a possible use of funds in targeted assistance schools. School districts often stand to benefit from this coordination, because it provides an opportunity to ensure that children are developing the skills they need to enter kindergarten ready to learn.<sup>17</sup> By sharing resources and supports with infant-toddler and preschool providers, districts can help improve the care and education children receive in the early years — and set them on the developmental trajectory that leads to better academic outcomes.

One specific strategy for districts seeking to improve coordination is the use of the Early Development Instrument (EDI), which can be supported by Title I and IV funds. The EDI is an evidence-based population measure that equips communities with accessible and reliable data visualized through community level tables and maps.<sup>18</sup> Tables and maps illustrate the developmental strengths and needs of young children in a specific combination of domains by neighborhood. The EDI holistically measures development in five domains. The data can be used to inform program planning, identify appropriate evidence-based



interventions, and ultimately drive public policy, investments and systems change that positively affect young children and families. The EDI encourages cross sector collaboration as other indicators and census data are layered on top of the EDI data to better inform analysis and systems change.

School district leaders may also wish to increase coordination by:

- *Building relationships with community child care programs;*
- *Participating in community-wide early childhood planning opportunities;*
- *Expanding ChildFind; and*
- *Sharing demographic and other data with early childhood providers.*

## Transitions into Kindergarten

*The transition for children and their families from early childhood settings to school-based preschool or kindergarten can be challenging, but coordinated efforts can support students and their families to be successful when they enter school.<sup>19</sup> Transition activities should take place throughout the year, and should be designed to build relationships with incoming students and their families — respectfully taking into account students’ language, culture, and previous experiences.<sup>20</sup>*

ESSA funds — including Titles I, II, III, and IV — can support transition strategies that help parents prepare for the elementary experience and set expectations for school supports. In addition to professional development for teachers and other school staff to help them effectively work with families during transition, activities to improve transitions that can be supported by ESSA can include:

- Establish a transition planning team that meets year round and includes community members, families, school-based teachers, early childhood providers, early intervention staff, and others to implement a strategy for transitioning all children early elementary.
- Develop and use a needs assessment to gather information on the demographics and experiences of children entering school to help with planning, classroom organization, and identification of resource needs.<sup>21</sup>
- Invite families and school staff to participate in focus groups to explore families’ and the school’s expectations for students, families’ needs in supporting their children’s transition to school, or other related topics.
- Hold informational sessions in various languages and throughout the district with community members and families in child care settings to share the school’s approach to meeting the needs of all students and the school’s goals for students and staff.
- Ask family members of older elementary school students to participate in discussion groups that will provide the families of preschool and kindergarten students with insight into how to prepare the children for school, including ways that families can support classroom instruction.



- Make direct contact with families by phone or at community activities in order to share grade-level expectations and school contact information.
- Provide home visits, open houses, and parent orientation sessions off the school grounds at community centers or local churches, and pamphlets in multiple languages.
- Provide summer learning sessions to mitigate summer learning loss and introduce children and their families to schools, teachers and other school staff, routines and expectations.
- Establishing data sharing protocols so that schools have information on what children know and are able to do.
- Provide developmental and hearing and vision screenings to all children entering kindergarten to identify any needed support services or referrals.
- Translate all materials into the language spoken by families in the community — and identify community liaisons to share materials and help connect families to transition activities.



At schools that provide preschool to 4-year-olds (or 3- and 4-year-olds), these same transition strategies can benefit children entering preschool.

An important technology support that can facilitate transitions into or within the school district is developing coordinated data systems that share student information between grade levels and across the district. Data systems can also be aligned with those of early learning providers in the area, with appropriate legal and technological safeguards in place.



---

## Enhance the Quality of Service

---

*The best early learning programs are those that can meet high-quality standards, including support services that meet the needs of children and families.<sup>22</sup> ESSA funds can play a valuable role in enhancing the quality of early childhood services in a district — whether provided directly by the district or by a community partner.*

- **Support Teacher Salaries.** Teaching quality is the most important variable in the quality of a program.<sup>23</sup> Salaries for early childhood teachers are extremely low;<sup>24</sup> turnover for early childhood teachers is extremely high.<sup>25</sup> Federal funds can help ensure that quality teachers are paid a sufficient amount to remain in the classroom.
- **Extend Time.** Studies have shown that the amount of time students spend in high-quality programs impacts their long-term outcomes.<sup>26</sup> Schools can leverage federal funds to address this issue in different ways:
  - *Provide full day programming.*
  - *Provide extended day options for at least part of the year.*
  - *Provide full year programming or additional summer options.*
- **Support a “Head Teacher.”** In larger programs a head teacher can help to ensure the successful implementation of effective learning experiences in the classrooms and perform one or more of several other important roles: provide professional development support for preschool and kindergarten staff; act as a program coach or mentor to preschool and kindergarten teachers; collaborate with all staff to maintain the smooth functioning of the center; align curriculum to ensure smooth transitions between grade levels (which at times may require changes in practice to meet the needs of the children); and/or act as a program coordinator who is responsible for organizing and implementing program services by teaming up with classroom teachers, administrators, and other specialist staff (e.g., nurses, outreach coordinators, ELL teachers).

- **Curriculum Specialist Supports.** Some schools engage a curriculum specialist to ensure differentiated, high-quality curriculum is available for each learner. The curriculum specialist typically engages with the teacher to ensure lesson plans are robust and improve upon curricula for both students and educators. These specialists may also push in or pull out small group activities to meet the needs of the students.
- **Address Chronic Absenteeism.** Research has shown that preschool attendance is linked to attendance in later years — and that low attendance in later schooling is linked to a host of negative outcomes, including increased identification for special education, increased rates of grade retention, and lower performance on standardized tests.<sup>27</sup> It is important to build in supports from the beginning creating foundational school practices such as attendance. Federal dollars can be used to help fund an attendance support counselor/home visitor, personalized outreach for families, monitoring attendance data, calling homes daily to provide support, and staff training to support outreach. This area may be particularly important in states where chronic absenteeism is included in the ESSA accountability formula.<sup>28</sup>
- **Social-Emotional Supports.** A high-quality social-emotional curriculum can help students and teachers process and respond to emotions. Social-emotional curriculum encourages increased academic success, improved quality of relationships, and decreased problem behaviors.<sup>29</sup>
- **Trauma/Crisis Counselor.** These counselors are skilled in specific counseling and intervention strategies around working with children and adults. In some instances, schools have created shared or part-time positions.
- **Medical Services.** To promote student health schools can hire nurses or other medical personnel — or have focused initiatives relating to issues like asthma, vision, or dental health — and identify any physical or mental health issues.
- **Developmental Screenings.** Districts can support screenings for all children who might enter Title I schools in order to identify needed referrals for early intervention or other health screenings. These screenings are often most effective when done in collaboration with community agencies.
- **Comprehensive Services and Supports.** Title I funds can be used for transportation, nutrition services, and other supports that will help early learning programs meet the full range of developmental needs of children and their families.
- **Prevent Suspensions and Expulsions of Young Children.** Implicit bias, lack of training, overcrowding, and lack of materials and resources can all contribute to an environment in which young children are suspended or expelled from pre-kindergarten or early elementary.<sup>30</sup> Titles I, II, III, and IV can fund professional development, additional classroom materials, school counselors, screenings, additional staff, and other resources to help teachers manage classrooms and prevent inappropriate discipline practices with young children.





---

## Engage Families

---

*Particularly in the early years, the connection between parents and schools is critical. There are numerous proven strategies that schools can use to strengthen their relationships with parents — which should then be sustained throughout the course of a child’s schooling.<sup>31</sup> These strategies also have an impact on attendance, which as noted above is now part of the ESSA accountability formula in many states.*

- **Home Visiting.** Research has shown that home visiting promotes higher school attendance, increase in school achievement and readiness, higher family self-sufficiency, reduced child abuse/ neglect, better birth outcomes.<sup>32</sup> Title I and Title IV funds can be used to hire home visiting staff and to support training and ensure that home visiting programs reflect families’ language and culture.
- **Hire a Parent Teacher.** The parent teacher should be a highly qualified educator that will coordinate and facilitate workshops, activities, and events. The parent teacher should use a needs assessment to guide services. The parent teacher will also engage community partners to build resources and support programmatic planning.
- **Provide Parent and Family Workshops.** These workshops should be held during and after school, including evenings and Saturdays (or online as needed). Workshop funds could pay for presenters and/ or materials. Topics can include adult literacy, financial literacy, child development, parenting strategies, homework help, school integration, mental health, and more.
- **Parent Empowerment Activities.** Parents should have a voice at the table planning for their children and their communities. Parent focus groups, parent leaders, peace circles, parents as mentors, and other activities can help parents grow into a leadership role.
- **Family Outreach.** Strategies to build relationships and integrate the school into the community (not the community into the school) and build cultural sensitivity to better support families. Outreach is needed to bridge the gap between home and school, which promotes higher academic achievement. Funds can support staff time for working with community collaborations, religious institutions, hospitals, clinics, housing authorities, and others to support efforts to build relationships with families.





- **Engaging Homeless Families.** A homeless liaison should be the voice of students and families to the school and support families in locating the proper resources. Liaisons can provide sensitivity training to staff, collaborate with staff to identify students and provide services to families, locate resources, advocate, and meet with families to plan and support.
- **Support Migrant Programs.** In some communities, districts may need to develop and implement supplemental educational support services to assist migratory children. Services may include supplemental academic programs to assist achievement, instructional training, health programs, readiness and transitioning programs, home visiting, academic counseling, parent involvement, migrant student data and collection, and summer school programs.



---

## Build Professional Capacity

---

*Professional development can be a powerful lever for creating high-quality instructional environments for children in early childhood programs, and can be supported by Title I, Title II, and Title III funds. While traditional professional development has involved periodic trainings and workshops aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of early childhood professionals, a new body of research suggests that professional development that aims to strengthen organizational systems and engages both teachers and leaders in continuous professional learning may result in better outcomes for children.<sup>33</sup>*

The strengthening of organizations in this way can be accomplished through the use of job-embedded professional learning, which is characterized by the use of routines of collaboration that encourage shared learning and reflection. These routines should provide opportunities for educators to come together for joint professional development and planning not just within but also across grades, and inclusive of community-based early childhood providers.<sup>34</sup>

Areas of early childhood PD for school staff and community partners can include but are not limited to:

- Appropriate child development and instructional practices that foster learning across the range of developmental domains, including social and emotional;
- Transition practices for children from early childhood programs to kindergarten and between the early elementary grades (K-1, 1-2, 2-3), as well issues related to school readiness;
- Identification and support for children with special needs;
- Strategies to minimize suspensions and expulsions;
- Culturally sensitive and differentiated parent and family engagement strategies and best practices;<sup>35</sup>
- Effective strategies to support and promote high-quality education for English Language Learners and their families;

- Home visiting strategies and supports;
- Strategies to promote age appropriate digital literacy;
- Supports for principals and other school leaders to understand and support quality early childhood settings;
- Trauma informed care; and
- Effective strategies to support teachers, students, and families experiencing trauma.

## ***District Example***

### ***West Chicago Elementary School District 33***

West Chicago Elementary School District 33 has been using Title I to fund materials for the district's early childhood program for several years. Recently the district made the decision to expand the use of Title I funds to support the hiring of an instructional coach to provide job-embedded professional development for early childhood teachers. Because research has shown the use of coaches to be effective in improving early childhood instruction and producing positive outcomes for both students and teachers,<sup>36</sup> instructional coaches are a recommended component of implementing high-quality job-embedded professional learning for early childhood professionals.<sup>37</sup>





---

## Expand Curricular Opportunities

---

*Meeting the developmental needs of young children is an important part of their long-term success. ESSA funds can be used to expand curricular opportunities for children from birth through the early grades. Examples include:*

- **Nutrition Education.** Childhood obesity has been a focus of many new school lunch menus and policies. Nutrition and health practices will help children live healthy and productive lives. Activities can include creating a class garden, instruction in healthy cooking and eating, meal planning, and more.
- **Interactive Technology.** Increasingly there is a recognition that if used correctly technology can be a helpful teaching tool with young children. This can include:
  - *Interactive websites;*
  - *Enriching apps; and/or*
  - *Collaborative resources such as digital books.*
- **Student Field Trips.** Children should be exposed to their local community as well the greater world around them. Field trips provide a student with learning tools to add to their backpack of knowledge, which enrich a students' knowledge base with hands-on experiences. Field trips can promote interest, socializations, critical thinking, and higher academic performance overall. They must be educationally related, address an identified need in the school, and be reasonable in cost.
  - *For example, visiting a farm will bring ideas to life beyond the pages of the many books they may have read about animals, vegetables, or farms.*
  - *Other common field trips include museums, zoos, art studios, and live theater.*
  - *Some programs bring activities to the classroom, like a story bus, zoo on wheels, or musicians.*





---

## Support English Learners

---

*While the needs of English Language Learners have been referenced throughout this guidance, a coordinated strategy for working with ELLs could include the following elements supported by ESSA funds:*

- **Building Out Dual Language and Transitional Bilingual Education Programs.** These programs should promote bilingualism and biliteracy and support the growth and development of students to attain the State Seal of Biliteracy. Strategies include:
  - *One-way (two languages for predominately EL students);*
  - *Two way (two languages for both EL and English speaking students) dual language;*
  - *Transitional Bilingual Education (20 or more students that speak the same heritage language); and*
  - *Transitional Program of Instruction (19 or fewer children in the same school who speak the same language).*
- **Dual Language Library.** Books that represent the linguistic diversity of the classroom promote inclusion and celebrate diversity among peers and families. A wide variety of books in all languages represented in the classroom community should represent multiple genres that support child development, parent practices, and life skills support. Additional literature should be offered for parents that may pique their interest. This literature should reflect various cultures, abilities, gender, generations, and ideas. They should be attractive and inviting (new books) that include pamphlets, magazines, books on tape, and books in different languages.

- **Opportunities to develop professional learning resources.** Districts may invest in specific resources designed to build the skills of the teachers across the community who may be working with young English Language Learners.
- **Curricular Supports.** Teams of teachers can be given time to create authentic lessons and assessments based on the background knowledge and languages of their students to extend the learning from the core curriculum. These supports should be engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive, and reflective of students and school community.
- **Technology Resources.** Technology can enhance the curriculum and provide additional support for teachers of EL students. Using graphics, audio, and video can be an effective way to engage ELLs as well as varied learning styles. Examples include computers and tablets with interactive websites and apps.
- **Take-home supports.** These can promote literacy, critical thinking, math, creativity, and parent involvement. Take home packs can include books with coordinated activities to support concepts covered in the classroom. These activities and books can be in the home language or English. Audio books can be added as well. Either Title I or Title IV funds can be used for these.

## ***District Example***




### ***Elgin School District U-46***

Elgin School District U-46 provides extensive dual language supports to English Language Learners, beginning with home visits with Spanish speaking families before children even enter school.<sup>38</sup> Children then receive dual language instruction in preschool under either a one-way or two-way model. Classroom instruction is provided in both Spanish and English, with Spanish instruction occurring 80% of the time in preschool and gradually decreasing over the years so that students are prepared to receive 50% Spanish and 50% English instruction by 3rd grade. Research shows that dual language models like those used by U-46 have been effective at narrowing the achievement gap not only for English Language Learners, but also for native English speaking low-income children.<sup>39</sup>



## INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Schools concerned about ongoing carrying costs may choose to use ESSA funds to purchase instructional materials for school-based or community-based early childhood programs. Some examples include:

CURRICULAR AREA	RATIONALE	EXAMPLES
<b>STEAM supplies (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts (creativity), and Math)</b> 	<p>These foundational pieces to curriculum align with state standards and curriculum in most elementary schools. Additionally, math is integrated into the many play areas of the preschool classroom, dramatic play, manipulatives, blocks, cooking, technology, art, music, and more.</p>	<p>Cumulative projects, media creation, exploration walks, take-home activities &amp; kits, observation stations, water or sensory stations, creation stations, manipulatives.</p>
<b>Dramatic Play</b> 	<p>Dramatic play in the early childhood classrooms is a critical piece in developing language, literacy, math, and social emotional development. Children develop the prerequisites to reading and writing development; i.e. Oral Language (Vocabulary &amp; Listening), Metalinguistic Awareness (Phonemic Awareness &amp; Concept of words), Underlying Cognitive Skills- Executive Function (Symbolic Thinking &amp; Self-Regulation- Brain Development).</p>	<p>Dress-up clothing and props related to themes, puppets, music (for rhythm and rhyme), books, writing tools.</p>
<b>Classroom Magazines or Newspapers</b> 	<p>Subscriptions can provide a 3-4 page “newspaper” for each child in the classroom once a month. This is something they can take home and read with their families and it builds on parent involvement in the home and the extension of curriculum between home and school.</p>	<p>Time Kids, Weekly Reader, Scholastic News.</p>

continues

## CURRICULAR AREA

## RATIONALE

## EXAMPLES

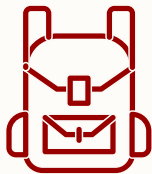
### Classroom Library



A classroom library promotes literacy development and allows additional access for all students and their families to check out literature that meets their needs and interests.

A wide variety of books should represent multiple genres that reflect various cultures, abilities, gender, generations, and ideas. They should be attractive and inviting (new books) that include pamphlets, magazines, hardcover, paperback, books on tape, and books in multiple languages.

### Take-Home Curriculum Support Backpacks



Backpacks or bags, filled with activities to support curriculum extension and parent involvement at home. Can be used as a library and parents can rotate between multiple themes.

Little Red Hen backpack may include the book of the Little Red Hen, some beans and a cup of dirt to plant and watch seeds grow at home (science), a bread recipe (math, cooking), and a story retelling game (literacy). Backpacks can also be pre-made through various companies-- including a story and a game for the family to play.

### Family Game Library



Interactive, developmentally appropriate games that families are allowed to check out by a library system. These games can promote curriculum extension, family time, and parent involvement.

Hi Ho Cheerio, Candyland, Lincoln Logs, Count Your Chickens, Discovery Beach.

### Classroom Technology



Technology can be a valuable teaching tool in the early years to improve students' academic achievement and digital literacy.

Smart boards, tablet computers, and more, for student and teacher use.

### Social Emotional Curriculum Supports



Research shows that social and emotional competencies in children are necessary for academic and life success. Providing supports to strengthen these competencies are needed for both in the classroom and home.

Social emotional curriculum, positive behavioral interventions, social-emotional instructor/specialist, mindfulness professional development.



# Acknowledgments

This guidance document was developed by a writing team that included Danielle Ewen of EducationCounsel, Jaclyn Vasquez of the Erikson Institute, Kyrsten Emanuel of Start Early (formerly the Ounce of Prevention), and Elliot Regenstein of Foresight Law + Policy, with additional contributions from Lisa Hood at the Center for the Study of Education Policy (CSEP) at Illinois State University. A stakeholder meeting on this subject was convened November 7, 2016, by Erika Hunt of CSEP and hosted at the Erikson Institute in Chicago. Attendees at that meeting also included Samantha Aigner-Treworgy of the City of Chicago; Danielle Ewen of EducationCounsel; Cristina Pacione-Zayas and Jaclyn Vasquez of the Erikson Institute; Mercedes Gonzalez and Sessy Nyman of Illinois Action for Children; Cathy Mannen of the Illinois Federation of Teachers; Alberto Morales of the McCormick Foundation; Kyrsten Emanuel and Joyce Weiner of Start Early; and Ann Courter of the Sargent Shriver Poverty Law Center. Special thanks to the McCormick Foundation for underwriting a significant portion of the work involved in developing this guidance.

The guidance was originally focused on Illinois, and an earlier version of this report was approved by the Illinois Early Learning Council's Executive Committee in March 2017.

# References

<sup>1</sup> Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2016). *From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts: A Science-Based Approach to Building a More Promising Future for Young Children and Families*. (pp. 12-14). Retrieved from: [https://46y5eh11fhgw3ve3ytpwxt9r-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/From\\_Best\\_Practices\\_to\\_Breakthrough\\_Impacts-4.pdf](https://46y5eh11fhgw3ve3ytpwxt9r-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/From_Best_Practices_to_Breakthrough_Impacts-4.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Center on the Developing Child. (2007). *A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy*. Retrieved from: [http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Policy\\_Framework.pdf](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Policy_Framework.pdf); Phillips, D.A. and Shonkoff, J.P., eds. (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. National Academies Press.

<sup>3</sup> Downey, D.G. (2020). *How Schools Really Matter*. University of Chicago Press.

<sup>4</sup> Regenstein, E. (2021). *Building a Coherent P-12 Education System in California*. Foresight Law + Policy (pp. 9-14). Retrieved from [https://www.flpadvisors.com/uploads/4/2/4/2/42429949/flp\\_buildingcoherent\\_tp-12\\_edsysteminca\\_020921.pdf](https://www.flpadvisors.com/uploads/4/2/4/2/42429949/flp_buildingcoherent_tp-12_edsysteminca_020921.pdf); Regenstein, E. (2019). *Why the K-12 World Hasn't Embraced Early Learning*. Foresight Law + Policy (pp. 5-7). Retrieved from: [https://www.flpadvisors.com/uploads/4/2/4/2/42429949/why\\_the\\_k12\\_world\\_hasnt\\_embraced\\_early\\_learning.pdf\\_final.pdf](https://www.flpadvisors.com/uploads/4/2/4/2/42429949/why_the_k12_world_hasnt_embraced_early_learning.pdf_final.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Service (2016). *Preschool Through Third Grade Alignment and Differentiated Instruction: A Literature Review*.

<sup>6</sup> NC Early Childhood Foundation, Public Schools of North Carolina, and EducationCounsel (2019). *Recommendations for Early Learning additions to the NC CCIP 2019-2020/NC DPI Consolidated Application*. Retrieved from: <https://buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Recommendations-for-Early-Learning-Additions-to-the-NC-CCIP-2019-2020.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education (2016). *Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance10202016.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Ed Trust (2014). *Expanding Access to Early Childhood Programs*. Retrieved from: [https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ESSA\\_FactSheet\\_Early-Childhood\\_Hyperlink.pdf](https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ESSA_FactSheet_Early-Childhood_Hyperlink.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Bassok, D. and Shapiro, A. (February 22, 2021). *Understanding COVID-19-era enrollment drops among early-grade public school students*. Brookings Institution. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/02/22/understanding-covid-19-era-enrollment-drops-among-early-grade-public-school-students/>; Schaffhauser, D. (February 24, 2021). *Preschoolers Losing Learning Opportunities in Pandemic*. THE Journal. Retrieved from: <https://thejournal.com/articles/2021/02/24/preschoolers-losing-learning-opportunities-in-pandemic.aspx>.

<sup>10</sup> Start Early (formerly the Ounce of Prevention Fund) and Illinois Association of School Boards. *Illinois Early Learning User's Guide for Illinois School Boards*. Retrieved from: <https://startearly.org/app/uploads/pdf/IASB-Ounce-EL-Users-Guide-full.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. *Title I Preschool*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/early-learning-read-achieve/title-i-preschool>.

<sup>12</sup> First Five Years Fund. (January 2017). *What Early Learning in ESSA Can Look Like for States and Districts*. Retrieved from: [http://ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/F\\_FFYF\\_ESSA\\_WhatECECanLookLikeinStatesDistricts\\_011817.pdf](http://ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/F_FFYF_ESSA_WhatECECanLookLikeinStatesDistricts_011817.pdf); U.S. Department of Education (October 2016). *Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance10202016.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Robertson, D. L., and Mann, E. A. (2002). "Age 21 Cost Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Centers." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(4), pp. 267-303. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/01623737024004267>.

<sup>14</sup> Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, 42 U.S.C. § 642(b)(13) and §1302.33(a)(3); U.S. Department of Education. *Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act* (p. 9).

<sup>15</sup> The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation's website includes some examples of district agreements – including White Settlement Independent School District in Texas, and the Trenton R-IX School District in Missouri. Retrieved from: [https://buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Texas\\_White-Settlement-MOU-2017-2019.pdf](https://buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Texas_White-Settlement-MOU-2017-2019.pdf) and [https://buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Missouri\\_MOU-Between-LEAs-and-Green-Hills-Head-Start.pdf](https://buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Missouri_MOU-Between-LEAs-and-Green-Hills-Head-Start.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Council of Chief State School Officers and National Head Start Association (December 2017). *New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): A Toolkit for State and Local Educational Agencies, Head Start Programs, and the Early Childhood Field*. Retrieved from: <https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/Toolkit-New%20Early%20Childhood%20Coordination%20Requirements%20in%20the%20ESSA-for%20pr....pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Education. *Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act*.

<sup>18</sup> Erikson Institute (March 20, 2021). *Early Development Instrument: A community-wide look at early childhood*. Retrieved from <https://www.erikson.edu/policyleadership/early-development-instrument-edi/>.

<sup>19</sup> Illinois created a Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee to provide guidance on how to manage the transition into Kindergarten; the Committee issued its final report on September 29, 2018. The report highlights how to align teaching and learning, align assessments and data, and strengthen cross-sector partnerships. Retrieved from: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/Kindergarten%20Transition%20Advisory%20Committee%20Report%20Sept%202018.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Connecticut State Department of Education and the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. *Transitioning to Kindergarten: The Why, What, and How of this Important Milestone for Connecticut Students*. Retrieved from: [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/ESSA/TransitioningToKindergarten\\_WhyWhatHow.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/ESSA/TransitioningToKindergarten_WhyWhatHow.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Connecticut State Department of Education and the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. *Early Childhood Landscape Analysis Tool For Connecticut Schools and Districts*. Retrieved from: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/ESSA/EarlyChildhoodLandscapeAnalysis>.

<sup>22</sup> Weiland, C., and Yoshikawa, H. (2013). *Impacts of a Prekindergarten Program on Children's Mathematics, Language, Literacy, Executive Function, and Emotional Skills*. *Child Development*, 84(6), pp. 2112-2130; Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C. Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M., Espinosa, L., Ludwig, J., Magnuson, K., Phillips, D., and Zaslow, M. (2013). *Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education*. Ann Arbor, MI: Society for Research in Child Development.

<sup>23</sup> Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C. Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M., Espinosa, L., Ludwig, J., Magnuson, K., Phillips, D., and Zaslow, M. (2013). *Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education*. Ann Arbor, MI: Society for Research in Child Development; Burchinal, M., Howes, C., Pianta, R., Bryant, D., Early, D., Clifford, R., and Barbarin, O. (2008). *Predicting Child Outcomes at the End of Kindergarten from the Quality Of Pre-Kindergarten Teacher-Child Interactions and Instruction*. *Applied Developmental Science*, 12, pp. 140-153.

<sup>24</sup> McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., Whitebook, M., & Olson, K.L. (2021). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2020*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <https://cscc.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/report-pdf/>.

<sup>25</sup> Bassok, D., Markowitz, A.J., Bellows, L., and Sadowski, K. (2021). *New Evidence on Teacher Turnover in Early Childhood*. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 43(1), pp. 172-180. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0162373720985340?journalCode=epaa#articleCitationDownloadContainer>.

<sup>26</sup> Zaslow, M., Anderson, R., Redd, Z., Wessel, J., Tarullo, L. and Burchinal, M. (2010). *Quality Dosage, Thresholds, and Features in Early Childhood Settings: A Review of the Literature* (OPRE 2011-5). Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from: [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/quality\\_review\\_0.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/quality_review_0.pdf); Robin, K.B., Frede, E.C., and Barnett, W.S. (2006). *Is more better? The Effects of Full-Day vs. Half-Day Preschool on Early School Achievement: Executive Summary*. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from: <http://nieer.org/resources/research/IsMoreBetter.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> Connolly, F., and Olson, L.S. (March 2012). *Early Elementary Performance and Attendance in Baltimore City Schools' Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten*. Baltimore Education Research Consortium. Retrieved from: <http://www.baltimore-berc.org/pdfs/PreKAttendanceFullReport.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> In the initial wave of ESSA state plans chronic absenteeism was a popular accountability indicator, appearing in 36 state plans. Jordan, P.W. and Miller, R. (September 2017). *Who's In: Chronic Absenteeism Under the Every Student Succeeds Act*. FutureEd, p. 1. Retrieved from: [https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/REPORT\\_Chronic\\_Absenteeism\\_final\\_v5.pdf](https://www.future-ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/REPORT_Chronic_Absenteeism_final_v5.pdf). States that want to increase the emphasis on the early years in their accountability system could choose to place additional emphasis on K-2 chronic absenteeism, which would provide some balance for the fact that mandated test-based accountability focuses on the later years. Regenstein, E., Connors, M., and Romero-Jurado, R. (February 2016). *Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Student Succeeds Act*. Start Early. Retrieved from: [https://startearly.org/app/uploads/2020/09/PUBLICATION\\_-\\_Valuing-the-Early-Years-in-State-Accountability-Systems-Under-the-Every-Student-Succeeds-Act.pdf](https://startearly.org/app/uploads/2020/09/PUBLICATION_-_Valuing-the-Early-Years-in-State-Accountability-Systems-Under-the-Every-Student-Succeeds-Act.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Examples include but are not limited to Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices, Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms, I Can Problem Solve, Incredible Years Classroom Dinosaur Curriculum, PATHS Preschool/Kindergarten Classroom Module, Peacemaking Skills for Little Kids, and Second Step Early Learning.

<sup>30</sup> National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. *Understanding and Eliminating Expulsion in Early Childhood Programs*. Retrieved from: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/understanding-eliminating-expulsion-early-childhood-factsheet.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> The Illinois State Board of Education's website includes a "Families Toolkit" that includes materials on approaches to learning and self-regulation, language and literacy development, math, and social emotional development. Illinois State Board of Education, Families Toolkit. Retrieved from: [https://www.isbe.net/Pages/KIDS\\_Parents\\_Families.aspx](https://www.isbe.net/Pages/KIDS_Parents_Families.aspx).

<sup>32</sup> Olds, D. L., Kitzman, H., Cole, R., Robinson, J., Sidora, K., Luckey, D. W., et al. (2004). *Effects of nurse home-visiting on maternal life course and child development: Age 6 follow-up results of a randomized trial*. *Pediatrics*, 114(6), pp. 1550–1559; DuMont, K., Kirkland, K., Mitchell-Herzfeld, S., Ehrhard-Dietzel, S., Rodriguez, M. L., Lee, E., Layne, C., and Greene, R. (2010). *A randomized trial of Healthy Families New York (HFNY): Does home visiting prevent child maltreatment?* Rensselaer, NY: New York State Office of Children & Family Services and Albany, NY: The University of Albany, State University of New York; Anisfeld, E., Sandy, J., and Guterman, N. B. (2004). *Best Beginnings: A randomized controlled trial of a paraprofessional home visiting program: Technical report*. Report to the Smith Richardson Foundation and New York State Office of Children and Family Services. New York: Columbia University School of Social Work; Duggan, A., Caldera, D., Rodriguez, K., Burrell, L., Rohde, C., and Crowne, S. S. (2007). *Impact of a statewide home visiting program to prevent child abuse*. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 31(8), pp. 801–827; Olds, D. L., Robinson, J., Pettitt, L., Luckey, D. W., Holmberg, J., Ng, R. K., et al. (2004). *Effects of home visits by paraprofessionals and by nurses: Age 4 follow-up results of a randomized trial*. *Pediatrics*, 114(6), pp. 1560-1568.

<sup>33</sup> Pacchiano, D., Klein, R., and Hawley, M.S. (2016). *Job-Embedded Professional Learning Essential to Improving Teaching and Learning in Early Education*. Start Early. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED570108.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, *Preschool Through Third Grade Alignment and Differentiated Instruction: A Literature Review*, Washington, DC, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> District of Columbia Public Schools. *Family Engagement Partnership*. Retrieved from: <https://dcps.dc.gov/node/994252>.

<sup>36</sup> Pianta, R., DeCoster, J., Cabell, S., Burchinal, M., Hamre, B., Downer, J., LoCasale-Crouch, J., Williford, A., and Howes, C. (2014). *Dose-Response Relations Between Preschool Teachers' Exposure to Components of Professional Development and Increases in Quality of their Interactions with Children*. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 29(4), pp. 499- 508.

<sup>37</sup> Pacchiano, D., Klein, R., and Hawley, M.S. *Job-Embedded Professional Learning Essential to Improving Teaching and Learning in Early Education*.

<sup>38</sup> Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, Ounce of Prevention Fund, and BUILD Initiative. *From Birth to Third: Aligning Education Systems. Elgin District U-46: Investments in Coordination and Alignment*. Retrieved from: <http://www.theounce.org/resources/community-briefs>.

<sup>39</sup> Collier, V.P. & Thomas, W.P. (2004). The astounding effectiveness of dual language education for all. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, 2(1), pp. 1-20.



**EducationCounsel**  
Policy | Strategy | Law | Advocacy

**Erikson  
Institute**



# FORESIGHT LAW+POLICY

[www.flpadvisors.com](http://www.flpadvisors.com)

800 Maine Avenue, SW, Suite 200  
(p) 202.499.6996 (f) 202.644.9779  
Washington, D.C. 20024  
[Foresight@FLPAdvisors.com](mailto:Foresight@FLPAdvisors.com)