



**First Five Years Fund**

# **Every Student Succeeds Act**

## What Early Learning in ESSA Can Look Like for States and Districts

May 2016

---

Signed by the President on December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, P.L. 114-95) includes numerous early learning provisions designed to encourage and enable states, school districts, and schools to strengthen and expand connections between early childhood programs and elementary school. ESSA's important early learning references include meaningful state planning requirements, flexibility to use the law's major formula programs to promote kindergarten readiness; professional development for teachers, principals and district leaders, family engagement supports, and a dedicated new competitive grant focused on expanding preschool opportunities.

The First Five Years Fund recognizes that state and local leaders must make an array of policy decisions prior to ESSA's full implementation during school year 2017-18, including identifying and adopting effective strategies for maximizing the impact of the law's early learning provisions. To that end, FFYF designed this tool to highlight the law's express early learning provisions, as well as others that, could strengthen and expand early childhood initiatives at the state and local level. The paper also suggests initial ideas and supplementary resources for integrating the law's early learning provisions into state and local policy and practice. These ideas and resources are not exhaustive. Pending a funding announcement for the Preschool Development Grants Program authorized under Title IX of ESSA, FFYF will share a state- and local-level resource.

# What Early Learning in ESSA Can Look Like for States and Districts

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### ESSA, Title I Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

**State ESSA, Title I Plans Must Address Early Childhood.** ESSA requires states to submit Title I plans to the U.S. Department of Education. As part of this planning requirement, the new law calls on states to describe how they will assist school districts and elementary schools that elect to use Title I funds to support early childhood education programs. ESSA requires states to engage community stakeholders in this planning effort.

**States could include the following topics in their ESSA stakeholder planning discussions and embed related policies in their Title I Plans:**

- Strategy for promoting PreK-3rd Grade alignment and supporting district and elementary school capacity building focused on the following early learning areas including: (1) educator effectiveness; (2) instructional tools (standards, curriculum and assessments); (3) learning environments (culturally inclusive, promote relationships, and structured to support diverse learners); (4) data-driven improvements (child based data and school/program data); (5) family engagement (prioritizing it, promoting two-way communication, and cultivating shared decision making); (6) continuity and pathways (access and continuity of services, PreK-3 pathway); (7) cross-sector work (governance, strategic planning, funding); and (8) administration (leader effectiveness).
- Strategy for helping districts and elementary schools satisfy the Head Start program's performance standards, including providing technical assistance for district/school leaders, teachers, and other learning professionals.
- Strategy for helping districts and elementary schools implement curricula aligned to the state's early learning standards.
- Strategy for helping districts and elementary schools understand and meet the state's quality indicators for early learning (if any).
- Strategy for helping districts and elementary schools understand and meet the state's K-2 accountability indicators (if any).
- Strategy for helping districts and elementary schools understand and use preschool and early elementary assessments that are developmentally appropriate and aligned to state learning standards to assess school readiness (if any).

**Related Resources:**

- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington
- Head Start Program Performance Standards
- QRIS Resource Guide: <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?do=resourceguide>
- Ounce of Prevention - Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Child Succeeds Act <http://www.theounce.org/resources/publications#sthash.6CJZmssl.dpuf>
- School Readiness T/TA Resource from the Office of Head Start: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/school-readiness>
- NAEYC - Choosing an Appropriate Assessment System: <https://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200401/shillady.pdf>
- Accreditation Resource at the National Association for the Education of Young Children: <https://www.naeyc.org/academy/>

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### Continued

### ESSA, Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

#### State Report Cards Must Address

**Preschool.** ESSA requires states to publish annual “report cards” describing how public schools are performing, and otherwise promoting, greater transparency about educational opportunities. Among other data, ESSA, Title I requires state report cards to include the number and percentage of students enrolled in preschool programs. This requirement appears to be broadly inclusive of any programs serving children under age 6 (based on other provisions in Title I and other ESSA initiatives).

#### School District's Title I Plans Must Describe The Early Childhood Programs Supported Using Title I Resources.

ESSA permits, but does not require, Title I funding to be used for early childhood education. If a school district plans to use Title I resources for early learning, their Title I plans must describe how the district will “support, coordinate, and integrate services” provided under this part with early childhood education programs at the district or school level. Plans must include a description of how the district will support participating students’ transition to local elementary schools. In other words, districts are not obligated to use Title I funding for early learning, but if they elect to do so, they must develop and describe a strategy as part of their Title I plan.

#### States should consider including the following early learning information in their annual report cards:

- The number and percentage of students enrolled in preschool programs, including any programs serving children under age six.
- The availability and accessibility of ECE services.
- The quality of available ECE services.
- The capacity of the existing ECE workforce.

#### Related Resources:

- Early Childhood Data Collaborative – The Ten ECE Fundamentals <http://www.ecedata.org/>
- Build Initiative - Rising to the Challenge: Building Effective Systems for Young Children and Families. <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/2015-35BuildChap7.pdf>
- ‘Investments in Early Childhood’ state-by-state fact sheet by the Office of Child Care: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/investments-in-early-childhood>
- NIEER Yearbook: <http://nieer.org/yearbook>
- CLASP Fact Sheets: <http://www.clasp.org/in-the-states>

#### Districts electing to use Title I resources should consider describing the following areas in their Title I Plans (as applicable):

- The district’s vision for high-quality, developmentally appropriate learning PreK-3.
- Resources available for supporting children’s transition to kindergarten.
- Plans for coordinating with community based early learning programs
- A strategy for promoting PreK-3rd Grade alignment and supporting district and elementary school capacity building focused on the following early learning areas: (1) educator effectiveness; (2) instructional tools (standards, curriculum and assessments); (3) learning environments (culturally inclusive, promote relationships, and structured to support diverse learners); (4) data-driven improvements (child based data and school/program data); (5) family engagement (prioritizing it, promoting two-way communication, and cultivating shared decision making); (6) continuity and pathways (access and continuity of services, PreK-3 pathway); (7) cross-sector work (governance, strategic planning, funding); and (8) administration (leader effectiveness).

#### Related Resources:

- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington [http://depts.washington.edu/pthru3/PreK-rd\\_Framework\\_Legal%20paper.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/pthru3/PreK-rd_Framework_Legal%20paper.pdf)
- Head Start Program Performance Standards
- QRIS Resource Guide: <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?do=resourceguide>
- School Readiness T/TA Resource from the Office of Head Start: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/school-readiness>
- Accreditation Resource at the National Association for the Education of Young Children: <https://www.naeyc.org/academy/>

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### Continued

#### ESSA, Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

**School Districts That Receive Title I Funding Must Coordinate With Early Childhood Programs.** Districts must, regardless if they elect to use Title I resources to support early learning initiatives, undertake activities that increase coordination with early childhood education programs.

**School Districts Using Title I Resources For Early Learning Must Meet Head Start Performance Standards.** If a district elects to use Title I resources for early learning, ESSA requires that the services comply with the performance standards established by the Head Start Act. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is expected to publish a final rule updating these standards in 2016.

**Districts should consider the following steps to help ensure the obligation to coordinate with community early childhood programs is met:**

- Establishing a shared vision for PreK-3 quality and alignment with community providers.
- Understanding “feeder patterns” of children into public schools.
- Developing and implementing a systemic procedure for receiving records for community providers.
- Establishing regular channels of communication with providers and stakeholders.
- Conducting meetings with families and other programs to cultivate two-way communication.
- Ensuring school leaders and educators organize and participate in training related to strengthening the transition to elementary school.

**Related Resources:**

- Ounce of Prevention - Birth to Third Grade Case Studies <http://www.theounce.org/resources/community-briefs>
- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington
- Ounce of Prevention – An Early Learning User’s Guide for Illinois School Boards: <http://www.theounce.org/what-we-do/policy/national-policy-team-district>

**Districts electing to use Title I resources for early learning program should consider the following activities related to meeting Head Start’s performance standards:**

- Using ESSA, Title II resources for ongoing professional development for educators and school leaders focused on promoting understanding and application of the standards.
- Coordinating technical assistance and other related activities with the state education agency and Head Start Collaboration Office in the state.
- Encouraging educator preparation programs to include pre-service training on the standards for early elementary and early learning educators.
- Integrating the standards into induction programs for early elementary and early learning educators.

**Related Resources:**

- Head Start Program Performance Standards
- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### Continued

### ESSA, Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

**Title I Schools Operating As “School Wide” Programs Are Encouraged To Address The Transition To Kindergarten In Their Comprehensive Plans.** Schools serving very large numbers of low-income students (greater than 40%) may be designated as a “school wide” Title I program. Such schools must have a “comprehensive” plan describing how these resources will be used for students. These plans must describe strategies for meeting the school’s needs, including addressing the needs of all children in the school, particularly those at greatest risk for not meeting state standards. This step may include supporting “strategies for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to local elementary school programs...” but other early learning initiatives may be supported using these funds. Schools operating school wide programs have significant spending flexibility and may commingle federal funds with state and local resources.

**When crafting their comprehensive plans, Title I “school wide” schools should describe strategies for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to local elementary school programs by:**

- Positioning early learning as a key component of addressing school needs in relation to meeting challenging State academic standards.
- Promoting PreK-3rd Grade alignment and supporting capacity building focused on the following early learning areas: (1) educator effectiveness; (2) instructional tools (standards, curriculum and assessments); (3) learning environments (culturally inclusive, promote relationships, and structured to support diverse learners); (4) data-driven improvements (child based data and school/program data); (5) family engagement (prioritizing it, promoting two-way communication, and cultivating shared decision making); (6) continuity and pathways (access and continuity of services, PreK-3 pathway); (7) cross-sector work (governance, strategic planning, funding); and (8) administration (leader effectiveness).

**Related Resource:**

- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### Continued

### ESSA, Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

#### **Title I Schools Operating As “Targeted” Programs Must Describe How Eligible Students Will Be Served, Which May Include Kindergarten Transition Strategies.**

Targeted program funds may be used to deliver early learning services to Title I eligible students. Such programs must determine which students will be served, including describing how the program will be coordinated with the regular education program. This description may include services to assist preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to elementary school.

**ESSA’s School Improvement Do Not Reference Early Learning Or Other Specific Strategies That State And Local Leaders Should Use To Improve Low Performing Schools Identified By State Accountability Systems.** However, such activities are permissible. FFYF encourages states and districts to consider adding high quality early learning as an element of their school turnaround policies and practices.

#### **Title I “targeted” schools should consider including the following activities in their comprehensive plans:**

- Positioning early learning as a key component for addressing school needs in relation to meeting the challenging state academic standards.
- Describing services preschool children receive when transitioning from early childhood education programs to elementary school.
- Promoting PreK-3rd Grade alignment and supporting capacity building focused on the following early learning areas: (1) educators effectiveness; (2) instructional tools (standards, curriculum and assessments); (3) learning environments (culturally inclusive, promote relationships, and structured to support diverse learners); (4) data-driven improvements (child based data and school/program data); (5) family engagement (prioritizing it, promoting two-way communication, and cultivating shared decision making); (6) continuity and pathways (access and continuity of services, PreK-3 pathway); (7) cross-sector work (governance, strategic planning, funding); and (8) administration (leader effectiveness).

#### **Related Resources:**

- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington

#### **States, districts, and schools should use early learning as a core school turnaround strategy for “comprehensive” and “targeted” support schools. This work could include:**

- Adopting and using developmentally appropriate, non-assessment measures for the purpose of integrating the early elementary grades into the state accountability system used to identify low performing schools (through ESSA’s “school quality” indicator).
- Including early learning in ESSA’s mandatory needs analysis for “targeted” and “comprehensive support” to schools identified by the state accountability system.
- Using the ESSA needs assessment to determine how early learning initiatives would most effectively be integrated into school turnaround plans.
- Calling on identified low performing schools to implement a strategy for promoting PreK-3rd Grade alignment and supporting capacity building focused on the following early learning areas: (1) educators effectiveness; (2) instructional tools (standards, curriculum and assessments); (3) learning environments (culturally inclusive, promote relationships, and structured to support diverse learners); (4) data-driven improvements (child based data and school/program data); (5) family engagement (prioritizing it, promoting two-way communication, and cultivating shared decision making); (6) continuity and pathways (access and continuity of services, PreK-3 pathway); (7) cross-sector work (governance, strategic planning, funding); and (8) administration (leader effectiveness).

#### **Related Resources:**

- Ounce of Prevention - Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Child Succeeds Act <http://www.theounce.org/resources/publications#sthash.6CJZmssl.dpuf>
- Ounce of Prevention – Changing the Metrics of Turnaround to Encourage Early Learning Strategies: <http://www.theounce.org/what-we-do/policy/policy-conversations>
- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### Continued

### ESSA, Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

**Family Engagement Funds May Be Used For Joint Professional Development Inclusive Of Early Childhood Educators.** The law authorizes spending focused on promoting family and parental engagement. Funding can be used to support schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development for district and school staff about parent and family engagement. The professional development may be provided jointly to, “teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.”

#### School districts should use ESSA's family engagement program to:

- Establish family engagement as a primary goal/priority.
- Create a family engagement curriculum or toolkit that is updated regularly.
- Gather data and evaluate the family engagement progress.
- Include families in planning, developing materials and other activities related to the engagement strategy.
- Incorporate family engagement into evaluations of district/school leaders and educators.
- Support schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development regarding parent and family engagement strategies for early childhood educators, school leaders, and other educators.

#### Related Resource:

- National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family>

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### ESSA, Title II Professional Development Formula Funds and Literacy Competitive Grant

**Title II Professional Development Funds May Be Used For Early Learning Capacity Building.** States may use Title II funding for a variety of professional development and other activities, including providing early learning focused professional development. ESSA specifies that states and districts may use Title II formula funds for the following activities (please note that these uses do not exclude other ECE focused activities):

States may...

- Support training teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, early childhood education program directors, and other early childhood education program providers to participate in joint efforts to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.
- Set aside an additional 3% of Title II funding, beyond the traditional 5% state set aside, for state level activities focused on school and district leader professional development. This leader focused PD could be focused on early learning capacity building.

**States interested in using Title II resources to build early learning capacity should consider:**

- Using the Title II state set aside, including the additional 3% set aside for leader professional development, to build capacity of PreK-3rd Grade educators and school leaders consistent with early learning best practice.
- Constructing school districts' Title II applications to encourage the use of Title II funding for building early learning capacity.
- Targeting professional development to focus on instruction (effectively supporting language, reading, math, social and emotional development and differentiating instruction); visible practice (regularly observing classroom practice to promote effectiveness); and working as teams.

**Related Resources:**

- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington
- Professional Development Resource from Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/pd>

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### Continued

### ESSA, Title II: Professional Development Formula Funds and Literacy Competitive Grant

**Title II Professional Development Funds May Be Used For Early Learning Capacity Building.** Districts may use this program for a variety of professional development, including providing early learning focused professional development. The language also highlights early learning specific uses. ESSA specifies that states and districts may use Title II formula funds for the following (these uses do not exclude other ECE focused activities):

Districts may...

- Provide programs to increase the knowledge base of teachers, principals, or other school leaders on instruction in the early grades and on strategies to measure whether young children are progressing.
- Provide programs designed to increase the ability of principals or other school leaders to support teachers, teacher leaders, early childhood educators, and other professionals to meet the needs of students through age 8. This might include providing joint professional learning and planning activities for school staff and educators in preschool programs addressing elementary school transition.

**Districts should use their Title II funds to provide professional development opportunities for elementary principals and school leaders to support early childhood educators teaching in their schools, in addition to training that addresses students' needs in transitioning to an elementary school setting. Such activities could include:**

- Encouraging annual professional development related to the learning and development of children, birth through age 8.
- Developing and cultivating leadership skills around improving learning opportunities for young children.
- Establishing and implementing effective induction programs and on-going supervision/evaluation of site administrators and teachers who work in PreK-3rd grade settings.
- Instructing educators in children's language/reading, math, and social and emotional development.
- Building capacity to effectively respond to individual children's development and learning needs.
- Focusing on effectively supporting children's language/ reading, math, social, and emotional development; and on differentiating instruction for all young learners.
- Ensuring observations of classroom practices are regularly used to assess and improve teachers' effectiveness in creating high-quality instructional, social, and emotional climates.

**Related Resource:**

- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### Continued

### ESSA, Title II: Professional Development Formula Funds and Literacy Competitive Grant

ESSA, Title II Includes A Separate Focus –  
The Literacy Education For All Program  
- On Promoting Student Literacy From Early  
Education Through Grade 12 Literacy Program.

States should apply for the Literacy Education for all Program and leverage its early learning focus. Investing early in children's literacy development will positively impact their progress and success in literacy and multiple other areas of learning. Suggested actions include:

- Reflecting early language and literacy skills in the state adopted learning standards.
- Supporting parents' engagement and capacity to develop their children's early literacy and language skills through programs such as home visiting.
- Developing comprehensive early learning assessment systems to track children's progress, inform instruction, and target interventions as early as possible.

#### Related Resources:

- National Governors Association – A Governor's Guide to Early Literacy: Getting All Students Reading by Third Grade: <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2013/1310NGAEarlyLiteracyReportWeb.pdf>
- Education Commission of the States – A Problem Still in Search of a Solution: A State Policy Roadmap for Improving Early Reading Proficiency: <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/04/41/10441.pdf>

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### ESSA, TITLE III Language Instruction for English Learners and Migrant Students

**ESSA, Title III Focuses On Providing States And Districts Additional Support For Educating English Learners And Migrant Students. Among Other Investments, Title III Authorizes A National Professional Development Program Inclusive Of Early Learning.** ESSA authorizes the U.S. Department of Education to make competitive grants to higher education institutions (or public/private entities with relevant experience working with State education agencies or school districts) to provide professional development to improve instruction for English learners and support educators working with such students. Among other uses, program funds may be used to support strategies that promote school readiness of English learners and their transition from early learning programs to elementary school.

**States should apply for this competitive grant opportunity with an emphasis on early childhood programs in order to serve the growing population of English/Dual Language Learners.**

Early learning programs are serving the growing population of English/Dual Language Learners before the K-12 system; therefore, investing in early learning programs should be prioritized by:

- Training all teachers to support the academic growth of English/Dual Language Learners.
- Incentivizing bilingual teacher candidates to work in early learning programs to instruct the growing population of English/Dual Language Learners.

**Related Resource:**

- New America – Beyond Subprime Learning: [https://static.newamerica.org/attachments/743-beyond-subprime-learning/Beyond\\_Subprime\\_Learning\\_by\\_Bornfreund-et-al\\_New\\_America\\_Jul2014.pdf](https://static.newamerica.org/attachments/743-beyond-subprime-learning/Beyond_Subprime_Learning_by_Bornfreund-et-al_New_America_Jul2014.pdf)

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### ESSA, TITLE IV SSAEG Block Grant, Charter Schools Program

#### ESSA's Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program Offers A Flexible Source Of Financial Support For Initiatives

**In Three Areas:** (1) well rounded students (enrichment); (2) safe and healthy students; and (3) effectively using technology. PreK-3rd Grade settings are eligible for support under these initiatives, but may best align with elements (1) and (2). 95% of program funding flows to districts. States receive 1% for program administration and 4% for programmatic activities. Districts that wish to receive Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants must submit an application to their states, including information that states "reasonably require" (95% of funds must be passed to districts).

#### Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities

- Offering well-rounded educational experiences to all students, including low-income students who are often underrepresented in critical and enriching subjects, which may include: high-quality STEM initiatives, activities and programs in music and the arts, and other courses, activities, or programs that contribute to a well-rounded education.

#### Support Safe and Healthy Students

- Establishing learning environments and enhancing students' effective learning skills that are essential for school readiness and academic success, such as by providing integrated systems of student and family supports.
- Improving instructional practices for developing relationship-building skills and learning environments that enhance student's effective learning skills.

#### States and districts should consider using the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program to support PreK-3rd Grade settings. Suggested steps for leveraging the program for early learning include:

- Including early learning as a focus area in the program's mandatory needs assessment, which must be conducted before the districts apply for state program funding.
- Structuring the state SSAEG funding application to require or encourage districts to include early learning in needs assessments and ensuring SSAEG investments in early learning align with relevant state standards and policies.
- Using SSAEG funding for developmentally appropriate early learning projects that are with the program's well-rounded educational element, such as STEM, music, cultural competency, language, and other enrichment activities beneficial to young learners.
- Using SSAEG funding for developmentally appropriate early learning projects that are aligned with the program's safe and healthy students element, such as school based mental and behavioral health; health and safety practices; promoting active lifestyles; improving instructional practices for developing relationship-building skills; establishing learning environments and enhancing effective learning skills that are essential for school readiness and academic success, such as providing integrated systems of student family supports.

#### Related Resource:

- National Head Start Association – The Head Start Model: <https://www.nhsa.org/why-head-start/head-start-model>

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### Continued

#### ESSA, TITLE IV: SSAEG Block Grant, Charter Schools Program

**ESSA, Title IV Authorizes Federal Charter School Programs.** Among other purposes, these provisions focus on charter schools' program design and implementation; quality; evaluating impact; access to facilities; work with children with disabilities and work with English learners; and other underserved students. ESSA authorizes the Secretary to use program funds to support charter schools that serve early childhood students, and not just elementary and secondary schools.

Similar to other public schools, charter schools and charter management organizations, should use federal funds, including those available through ESSA's Charter Schools Program, to support well-designed early learning initiatives. Charters interested in launching or strengthening their early learning programs could consider developing strategies for promoting PreK-3rd Grade alignment and supporting capacity building focused on the following early learning areas: (1) educators effectiveness; (2) instructional tools (standards, curriculum and assessments); (3) learning environments (culturally inclusive, promote relationships, and structured to support diverse learners); (4) data-driven improvements (child based data and school/program data); (5) family engagement (prioritizing it, promoting two-way communication, and cultivating shared decision making); (6) continuity and pathways (access and continuity of services, PreK-3 pathway); (7) cross-sector work (governance, strategic planning, funding); and (8) administration (leader effectiveness).

#### Related Resources:

- Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington Head Start Program Performance Standards
- QRIS Resource Guide: <https://qrisguide.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?do=resourceguide>
- Ounce of Prevention - Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Child Succeeds Act <http://www.theounce.org/resources/publications#sthash.6CJZmssl.dpuf>
- School Readiness T/TA Resource from the Office of Head Start: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/school-readiness>
- NAEYC - Choosing an Appropriate Assessment System: <https://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200401/shillady.pdf>
- Accreditation Resource at the National Association for the Education of Young Children: <https://www.naeyc.org/academy/>
- Bellwether – Pre-K and Charter Schools: Where State Policies Create Barriers to Collaboration: <http://belwethereducation.org/publication/pre-k-and-charter-schools-where-state-policies-create-barriers-collaboration>

## ESSA Early Learning Provisions

## Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

### ESSA, Title IX Education for the Homeless and Other Laws

#### Preschool Development Grants

**ESSA, Title IX authorizes \$250 million for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2020**

to help low-income families gain access to high-quality early learning opportunities by supporting states to:

1. Implement a strategic plan for high quality early learning.
2. Encourage partnerships with Head Start, states, and local agencies.
3. Maximize parental choice within a mixed delivery system – better braiding within a system of multiple funding sources.

#### Planning and Transition

- **IN GENERAL**—The recipient of an award for a preschool development grant for development or expansion under such program as it existed on the day before the date of enactment of this Act may continue to receive funds in accordance with the terms of such existing award.
- **TRANSITION**—The Secretary, jointly with the Secretary of Education, shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure an orderly transition to, and implementation of, the program under this section from the preschool development grants for development or expansion program as such program was operating prior to the date of enactment of this Act, in accordance with subsection (k).

Through vision, leadership, influence, funding and accountability the First Five Years Fund advances federal investment in quality early childhood education for disadvantaged children from birth to age five. FFYF provides policymakers, advocates, business leaders and the public with the research and information necessary to make informed investments in quality early childhood development. For further information about FFYF, or this tool, please contact Fae Rabin ([frabin@ffyf.org](mailto:frabin@ffyf.org)); Amanda Guarino ([aguarino@ffyf.org](mailto:aguarino@ffyf.org)); or Sarah Rittling ([srittling@ffyf.org](mailto:srittling@ffyf.org)).