



First Five Years Fund

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

January 2017

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.

In the year since ESSA's passage, the U.S. Department of Education has completed several important rulemaking proceedings and published the following non-regulatory guidance and policy letters:

- [Fiscal Changes and Equitable Services Requirements \(including funding transferability\) \[11/21/16\]](#)
- [Early learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act Guidance – Expanding Opportunities to Support Our Youngest Learners \[10/21/16\]](#)
- [Title IV, Part A Guidance – Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants - \[10/21/16\]](#)
- [ESSA Title II, Part A Guidance – Supporting Educators \[9/27/16\]](#)
- [ESSA Dear Colleague Letter on Tribal Consultation \[9/26/16\]](#)
- [ESSA Title III Guidance – English Learners \[9/23/16\]](#)
- [Evidence Guidance \[9/16/16\]](#)
- [ED/HHS Foster Care Joint Guidance PowerPoint \[7/27/16\]](#)
- [Homeless Student Guidance \[7/27/16\]](#)
- [Foster Care Guidance \[6/23/16\]](#)



The First Five Years Fund recognizes that state and local leaders must make an array of policy decisions prior to ESSA's implementation beginning in 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 resource, 'What Early Learning in ESSA Can Look Like for States and Districts', 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. Non-regulatory ESSA Guidance is hyperlinked to electronic versions throughout, select provisions from the guidance is highlighted below, and initial ideas and supplementary resources for integrating the law's early learning provisions into state and local policy and practice are provided. 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.

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

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.

ESSA Sections:

- 1111(c)
- 1111(g)(1)(A)

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

Title I. LEAs must describe in their Title I plans how they will support, coordinate, and integrate Title I services (if applicable) with early childhood education programs at the LEA or school level, including plans for the transition of children to elementary school. SEAs must describe in the state plan how the State will provide assistance to LEAs and schools choosing to use Title I funds to support early childhood education programs. State plans should address the comprehensive needs of all young children (e.g., children with disabilities, children in poverty, ELs, immigrants, homeless, etc.).

Children in Foster Care. If an LEA offers a public preschool education, it must meet all of the ESSA foster care requirements, including ensuring that a child in foster care remains in his or her preschool of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest. For further information about ESSA and foster care students, please see [Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care](#) guidance, which was released jointly by the Department and HHS in June 2016.

Allowable/Possible Opportunity (Guidance Appendix A). For the State ESSA Consolidated Plan, the State may consider using an early learning measure as one indicator of school quality or student success.

[Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care \(June 2016\)](#)

Title I educational stability provisions apply to preschool-age children in foster care (see Children in Foster Care above).

Examples of the Potential Roles and Responsibilities of a Child Welfare Agency POC. If a child welfare agency identifies a POC, some examples of the possible roles and responsibilities of that child welfare agency POC include coordinating services so that children in foster care can access early educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Early Head Start, home visiting, and preschool programs administered by the SEA or LEA, and screening and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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 requirements for early learning (if any).
- Strategy for helping districts and elementary schools leverage early learning to improve performance on the state's K-12 accountability indicators.
- 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).
- Ensure that the Rural Education Initiative under Title IV, Part B has been addressed.

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Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

[Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments \(September 2016\)](#)

SEAs and LEAs should engage in timely and meaningful consultation with a broad range of stakeholders (e.g., families, students, educators, community partners) and examine relevant data to understand the most pressing needs of students, schools, and/or educators and the potential root causes of those needs. Interviews, focus groups, and surveys, as well as additional information on students (e.g., assessment results, graduation rates), schools (e.g., resources, climate) and educators (e.g., effectiveness, retention rates), provide insights into local needs.

Once needs have been identified, SEAs, LEAs, schools, and other stakeholders will determine the interventions that will best serve their needs. By using rigorous and relevant evidence and assessing the local capacity to implement the intervention (e.g., funding, staff, staff skills, stakeholder support), SEAs and LEAs are more likely to implement interventions successfully.

Related Resources:

- [Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington \(2013\)](#)
- [Head Start Program Performance Standards \(2016\)](#)
- [CEELO. A Supplemental Tool for Structuring Your Plan for Preschool to Third Grade](#)
- [QRIS Resource Guide](#)
- [Ounce of Prevention. Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Child Succeeds Act](#)
- [School Readiness T/TA Resource. Office of Head Start](#)
- [NAEYC. Choosing an Appropriate Assessment System](#)
- [Accreditation Resource at the National Association for the Education of Young Children](#)
- [Golan, et. al. Case Studies of the Early Implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments. U.S. Department of Education \(2016\)](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)
- [State ESSA Implementation Planning Grade-Level Reading Policy Priority Checklist. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#)
- [Preschool Through Third Grade Alignment and Differentiated Instruction: A Literature Review. U.S. Department of Education \(2016\)](#)

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

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 less than age 6 (based on other provisions in Title I and other ESSA initiatives).

ESSA Sections:

- 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii)(II)(aa)
- 1111(h)(2)(C)

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

Data. The guidance reiterates that LEAs are responsible for reporting the number and percentage of children enrolled in preschool programs. Further, State report cards must include the number and percentage of children enrolled in preschool programs.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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](#)
- [Build Initiative. Rising to the Challenge: Building Effective Systems for Young Children and Families](#)
- [Investments in Early Childhood State by State Fact Sheet. Office of Child Care](#)
- [NIEER Yearbook](#)
- [CLASP Fact Sheets](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)
- [State ESSA Implementation Planning Grade-Level Reading Policy Priority Checklist. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#)
- [U.S. Department of HHS and U.S. Department of Education. The Integration of Early Childhood Data: State Profiles.](#)

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

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, its 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.

ESSA Sections:

- 1112(b)(8)
- 1113(c)(5)
- 1304(c)(4)

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

Preschool Programs. Title I, Part A of ESSA allows LEAs to provide preschool programs to improve educational outcomes for eligible children from birth to the age at which the LEA provides a free public elementary education.

A Title I LEA or school may use its Title I funds to support a district-operated preschool program or a school-operated preschool program, or for coordination with other preschool programs, based on the needs of its eligible students and the most effective use of those funds. The use of Title I funds for a preschool program is a local decision. The ways in which an LEA or school may use Title I funds to support a preschool program are described in the guidance document.

As a Title I recipient, an LEA or school that uses Title I funds to operate a preschool program must comply with the same requirements that apply to all Title I programs.

Migrant Education. The State must provide an assurance that it has or will address the unmet education needs of preschool migratory children.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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).
- Ensure that the Rural Education Initiative under Title IV, Part B has been addressed.

Related Resources:

- [Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington \(2013\)](#)
- [Head Start Program Performance Standards \(2016\)](#)
- [QRIS Resource Guide](#)
- [CEELO. A Supplemental Tool for Structuring Your Plan for Preschool to Third Grade](#)
- [School Readiness T/TA Resource. Office of Head Start](#)
- [Accreditation Resource at the National Association for the Education of Young Children](#)

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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.

ESSA Sections:

- 1111(a)(1)(B)
- 1114(a)(1), (3)
- 1119(a)
- 1119(b)

[Title I, Schoolwide Program Guidance \(September 2016\)](#)

Funding. A school operating a schoolwide program may consolidate Federal, State, and local education funds to better address the needs of students in the school (ESSA section 1114(a)(1),(3)).

Conducting a Comprehensive Needs Assessment. To ensure that a school's comprehensive plan best serves the needs of those children who are failing, or are at-risk of failing, to meet the challenging State academic standards, the school must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. Through the needs assessment, a school must consult with a broad range of stakeholders, including parents, school staff, and others in the community, and examine relevant academic achievement data to understand students' most pressing needs and their root causes.

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

If an LEA chooses to provide preschool services using Title I funds, the district must "support, coordinate, and integrate services provided under (Title I) with early childhood education programs." The program must also meet, at a minimum, the education performance standards of the Head Start Program Performance Standards that are aligned with the Head Start Child Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages Birth to Five (2015), which the Secretary of Education must disseminate to LEAs.

- [Golan, et. al. Case Studies of the Early Implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments. U.S. Department of Education \(2016\)](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)
- [State ESSA Implementation Planning Grade-Level Reading Policy Priority Checklist. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#)
- [Preschool Through Third Grade Alignment and Differentiated Instruction: A Literature Review. U.S. Department of Education \(2016\)](#)

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.
- Ensure that the Rural Education Initiative under Title IV, Part B has been addressed.

Related Resources:

- [Ounce of Prevention. Birth to Third Grade Case Studies](#)
- [Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington \(2013\)](#)

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Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

Coordination with Other Early Childhood Programs. An LEA or school may use Title I funds to improve the quality or extend the day or number of days of State preschool, Head Start, child care, or other community-based early learning programs for eligible children. See page 10 of the guidance document for further information. SEAs may want to use State advisory councils to ensure coordination of early childhood programs and services. Further, the Department encourages SEAs to think holistically when they create various State plans. This means ensuring, as appropriate, vertical and horizontal alignment and addressing the comprehensive needs of all young children, including children with disabilities or developmental delays, those in poverty, and those who are ELs, immigrants, refugees, migrant, homeless, or in foster care. SEAs may find it helpful to coordinate with their State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (SACs), as applicable.

Another way to support the coordination of programs and services for children at the local level is through place-based initiatives, such as Promise Neighborhoods, which is authorized in Title IV, Part X of the ESSA (see below). This program provides a continuum of coordinated supports, services, and opportunities for children and families, including early learning programs.

[Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care \(June 2016\)](#)

Roles and Responsibilities of a Child Welfare Agency POC. POCs are responsible for coordinating services so that children in foster care can access early educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Early Head Start, home visiting, and preschool programs administered by the SEA or LEA, and screening and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.

- [Ounce of Prevention. An Early Learning User's Guide for Illinois School Boards](#)
- [Golan, et. al. Case Studies of the Early Implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments. U.S. Department of Education \(2016\)](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)
- [CCSSO. Advancing Equity through ESSA: Strategies for State Leaders \(2016\)](#)
- [Information on Integrating Early Care and Education Funding. U.S. Government Accountability Office \(2016\)](#)
- [State ESSA Implementation Planning Grade-Level Reading Policy Priority Checklist. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#)
- [Preschool Through Third Grade Alignment and Differentiated Instruction: A Literature Review. U.S. Department of Education \(2016\)](#)
- [CEELO. A Supplemental Tool for Structuring Your Plan for Preschool to Third Grade](#)

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

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 published a final revision and reorganization of the Head Start Program Performance Standards effective starting November 2016.

ESSA Sections:

- 1112(c)(7)
- 1119(a)
- 1119(b)

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

If an LEA chooses to provide preschool services using Title I funds, the district must “support, coordinate, and integrate services provided under (Title I) with early childhood education programs.” The program must also meet, at a minimum, the education performance standards of the Head Start Program Performance Standards that are aligned with the Head Start Child Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages Birth to Five (2015), which the Secretary of Education must disseminate to LEAs.

Now as part of ESSA, an LEA is also responsible for developing agreements with Head Start programs to coordinate services, such as data reporting and sharing, alignment of standards and curricula, and transition activities for children moving from Head Start into public school programs. Transition activities might include sharing assessment data, promoting summer learning programs, engaging families, and implementing joint professional development opportunities that involve both community-based providers and school staff.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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 \(2016\)](#)
- [Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches.](#) Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington (2013)
- [Golan, et. al. Case Studies of the Early Implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments.](#) U.S. Department of Education (2016)
- [Jobs for the Future. Two-Generation Approaches.](#) U.S. Department of Education (May 2016)
- [Loewenberg, Aaron, et al. Principal’s Corner: Perspectives on Teaching and Learning in PreK-3rd Grade.](#) New America (2016)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)
- [Information on Integrating Early Care and Education Funding.](#) U.S. Government Accountability Office (2016)

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Title I Schools Operating As “Schoolwide” 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 “schoolwide” 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.

ESSA Sections:

- 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(V)
- 1114(c)

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Title I, Schoolwide Program Guidance \(September 2016\)](#)

A schoolwide program school may use Title I funds to operate, in whole or in part, a preschool program to improve cognitive, health, and social-emotional outcomes for children from birth to the age at which the LEA provides a free public elementary education. Such programs are designed to prepare children for success in kindergarten. All preschool-aged children who reside in the school’s attendance area are eligible to participate.

Consistent with the benefits [described in the guidance document], a school operating a schoolwide program may use Title I funds for any activity that supports the needs of students in the school as identified through the comprehensive needs assessment and articulated in the schoolwide plan, including activities that may provide a well-rounded education. (ESSA section 1114(b)). See page 4 in the guidance and ESSA section 1114(b)(7)(A) for more information.

Examples of Uses of Funds in a Schoolwide Program (Based on a Needs Assessment):

- High-quality preschool or full-day kindergarten and services to facilitate the transition from early learning to elementary education programs.
- Activities that have been shown to be effective at increasing family and community engagement in the school, including family literacy programs.
- Two-generation approaches that consider the needs of both vulnerable children and parents, together, in the design and delivery of services and programs to support improved economic, educational, health, safety, and other outcomes that address intergenerational poverty issues.

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

As a Title I recipient, an LEA or school that uses Title I funds to operate a preschool program must comply with the same requirements that apply to all Title I programs and may use all or a portion of its Title I funds to operate a preschool program for eligible children.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

When crafting their comprehensive plans, Title I “schoolwide” 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 Resources:

- [Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington \(2013\)](#)
- [Jobs for the Future. Two-Generation Approaches. U.S. Department of Education \(May 2016\)](#)
- [CCSSO. Advancing Equity through ESSA: Strategies for State Leaders \(2016\)](#)

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

ESSA Early Learning Provisions	Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance	Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources
	<p>If a school operates a preschool program in a schoolwide program school, all preschool children who reside in the school's attendance area are eligible to be served. A Title I school may operate a schoolwide program if a minimum of 40 percent of the students enrolled in the school or residing in the attendance area served by the school, are from low-income families. A Title I school with less than 40 percent poverty may request a waiver from the SEA to operate a schoolwide program. Guidance on schoolwide programs can be found in Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program.</p>	
<p>Title I Schools Operating As “Targeted” Programs Must Describe How Eligible Students Will Be Served, Which May Include Kindergarten Transition Strategies.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>ESSA Sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1115(b)(2)(C) 	<p><u>Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act (October 2016)</u></p> <p>A Title I LEA or school may use its Title I funds to support a district-operated preschool program or a school-operated preschool program, or for coordination with other preschool programs, based on the needs of its eligible students and the most effective use of those funds.</p>	<p>Title I “targeted” schools should consider including the following activities in their comprehensive plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 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). <p>Related Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington (2013) • Golan, et. al. Case Studies of the Early Implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments. U.S. Department of Education (2016) • CCSSO. Advancing Equity through ESSA: Strategies for State Leaders (2016)

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

ESSA's School Improvement Sections 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.

ESSA Sections:

- 1003

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

States may wish to consider how to build a stronger continuum of learning from preschool through early elementary school to improve student outcomes. Some States have already undertaken significant efforts in this regard, such as aligning State early learning guidelines and K–12 standards. Pursuant to CCDBG, all States must develop or demonstrate the existence of early learning and developmental guidelines that describe what all children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do across multiple domains of learning. States could consider carrying this vertical alignment through to the third grade. Other strategies include integrating early education data with State longitudinal data systems so that elementary school teachers can benefit from information on early childhood assessments, and early childhood programs can receive feedback on children's progress in the elementary grades. At the local level, districts and schools can adopt strategies to align curriculum and instruction from preschool through elementary school as part of their school improvement efforts.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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) 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:

- [Ounce of Prevention. Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Child Succeeds Act](#)
- [Ounce of Prevention. Changing the Metrics of Turnaround to Encourage Early Learning Strategies](#)
- [Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington \(2013\)](#)

Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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.”

ESSA Sections:

- 1116(a)(3)(D)(i)

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

In addition to providing direct preschool services, Title I funds may also be used to support early learning in other ways, such as for professional learning (including joint professional development for early childhood staff and elementary school staff); minor repairs or remodeling of space to accommodate a Title I preschool program; and health, nutrition, and other comprehensive services for children in a Title I preschool program. Many LEAs have found strategic ways to use their Title I funds to support the education needs of eligible children before they enter kindergarten.

This guidance also recommends sharing data (consistent with applicable privacy laws), summer learning programs, family engagement activities, and joint professional development opportunities that involve both community-based providers with school staff.

- [Jobs for the Future. Two-Generation Approaches. U.S. Department of Education \(May 2016\)](#)
- [Connors-Tadros, Lori, et al. Incorporating Early Learning Strategies in the School Improvement Grants Program. Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, Center on School Turnaround \(2015\)](#)

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 Resources:

- [National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement](#)
- [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine. Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0-8](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)
- [State ESSA Implementation Planning Grade-Level Reading Policy Priority Checklist. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#)

Title II: Professional Development Formula Funds and Literacy Competitive Grant

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

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. 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. Districts may also 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.

ESSA Sections:

- 2101(c)(4)(B)(xvi)
- 2103(b)(3)(G)(i)
- 2103(b)(3)(G)(ii)
- 2103(b)(3)(J)

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Title II, Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Leading \(September 2016\)](#)

ESSA highlights new ways SEAs and LEAs may use Title II, Part A funds to support early learning so children begin kindergarten ready to succeed. Title II, Part A funds may be used to support the professional development of early educators.

Title II, Part A funds may be used by SEAs and LEAs for the following strategies:

- For the first time, allowing LEAs to support joint professional learning and planned activities 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 eight. (ESSA section 2103(b)(3)(G)).
- Supporting LEAs to increase the knowledge base of teachers, principals, or other school leaders regarding instruction in the early grades and developmentally appropriate strategies to measure how young children are progressing. (ESSA section 2103(b)(3)(G)).
- Supporting LEA training on the identification of students who are gifted and talented, and implementing instructional practices that support the education of such students, including early entrance to kindergarten. (ESSA section 2103(b)(3)(J)).
- Allowing SEAs to support opportunities for principals, other school leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals, early childhood education program directors, and other early childhood education program providers (to the extent the State defines elementary and secondary education to include preschool; explained further in the Early Learning Guidance) to participate in joint efforts to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness. (ESSA section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xvi)).

For more information here, see page 25 in the guidance document.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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:

- Using the Title II 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.
- 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.

Title II: Professional Development Formula Funds and Literacy Competitive Grant

ESSA Early Learning Provisions	Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance	Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources
	<p>Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act (October 2016)</p> <p>Title II, Part A funds may be used to support the professional development of early educators. States may use funds to support opportunities for joint professional development for elementary school educators and early childhood education program educators to address the transitions from early childhood programs to elementary school and school readiness.</p> <p>Allowable/Possible Opportunities (Appendix A). LEAs may use funds 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; and the ability of principals or other school leaders to support school and preschool program educators to meet the needs of students through age 8, including through joint professional learning and planning activities that address the transition to elementary school.</p> <p>LEAs may also provide training to support the identification of students who are gifted and talented, and the implementation of instructional practices that support the education of such students, including early entrance to kindergarten.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring observations of classroom practices are regularly used to assess and improve teachers' effectiveness in creating high-quality instructional, social, and emotional climates. Ensure that the Rural Education Initiative under Title IV, Part B has been addressed. <p>Related Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington (2013) Professional Development Resource. Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center Loewenberg, Aaron, et al. Principal's Corner: Perspectives on Teaching and Learning in PreK-3rd Grade. New America (2016) National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education (2016) State ESSA Implementation Planning Grade-Level Reading Policy Priority Checklist. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
<p>ESSA, Title II Includes A Separate Focus—The Literacy Education For All Program.</p> <p>This program promotes student literacy From early education through grade 12.</p> <p>ESSA Sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2222-2224 	<p>Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act (October 2016)</p> <p>In Subpart 2 of Title II, the Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) includes the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grants program, which will provide competitive awards to SEAs to support comprehensive literacy instruction (ESSA sections 2222-24). SEAs that receive grants must spend 15 percent of the funds on early learning (defined as birth to kindergarten entry). Funds must be used for high-quality professional development; training to administer evidence-based early childhood education literacy initiatives; and coordination of families, early childhood staff, principals, and other school leaders in addressing children's literacy development (ESSA section 2223). The overall purpose of the program is to improve student academic achievement in reading and writing for children from birth through grade 12 by providing subgrants to LEAs,</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

Title II: Professional Development Formula Funds and Literacy Competitive Grant

ESSA Early Learning Provisions	Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance	Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources
	<p>early childhood education programs, and their partners to implement evidence-based programs that ensure high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction for students most in need.</p>	<p>Related Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Governors Association. A Governor's Guide to Early Literacy: Getting All Students Reading by Third Grade • Education Commission of the States. A Problem Still in Search of a Solution: A State Policy Roadmap for Improving Early Reading Proficiency • Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2016)
<p>Innovative Approaches To Literacy.</p> <p>The Secretary is authorized to award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, on a competitive basis, to entities for the purposes of promoting literacy programs that support the development of literacy skills in low-income communities.</p> <p>ESSA Sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2226 agreements, on a competitive basis, to entities for the purposes of promoting literacy programs that support the development of literacy skills in low-income communities. <p>ESSA Sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2226 	<p>Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act (October 2016)</p> <p>Allowable/Possible Opportunities (Appendix A). LEAs, BIE, and nonprofit organizations may use funds for literacy programs, including early childhood literacy, in low-income communities.</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Related Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Governors Association. A Governor's Guide to Early Literacy: Getting All Students Reading by Third Grade • Education Commission of the States. A Problem Still in Search of a Solution: A State Policy Roadmap for Improving Early Reading Proficiency • Jobs for the Future. Two-Generation Approaches. U.S. Department of Education (May 2016) • Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2016)

Title III: Language Instruction for English Learners and Migrant Students

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

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.

ESSA Sections:

- 3102(4)
- 3111(b)(2)(B)
- 3112
- 3115
- 3116(b)(4)
- 3131(c)(1)(C)(6)

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Title III, English Learners and Title III \(September 2016\)](#)

Early Learning Programs and Title III. While Title III funds could be used to serve ELs as young as age 3 under the ESEA prior to the ESSA amendments, the ESSA amendments further promote the inclusion of ELs in early learning programs as part of Title III. For example:

- ESSA Section 3102, which outlines the purposes of Title III, now explicitly includes preschool teachers. See page 31 in the guidance for further information.
- ESSA Section 3115, which outlines provisions related to the Title III EL formula subgrants, now refers to early childhood education programs as part of the stated purposes of subgrants and in the authorized uses of funds. See page 31 in the guidance for further information.
- ESSA Section 3116, which contains the requirements for local plans for the Title III EL subgrants, includes a new assurance pertaining to early learning programs, and requires that LEAs coordinate activities and share relevant data under the plan with local Head Start and Early Head Start agencies, including migrant and seasonal Head Start agencies, and other early childhood education providers.

Preschool Teachers and Pre-Service and In-Service Professional Development Activities. Title III funds may be used to provide professional development for teachers of ELs in publicly funded preschool programs to help ensure that preschool teachers are well prepared to meet the unique needs of ELs in those preschool programs. We encourage States and LEAs to include preschool teachers in professional development. Early learning programs, including preschools, can set ELs on a strong path to long-term school success; professional development to strengthen the knowledge and skills of preschool teachers working with ELs may help facilitate these positive outcomes on a broader scale.

Language Instruction in Preschool Programs for ELs. An LEA receiving a Title III subgrant may use a portion of those funds to provide effective preschool LIEPs that are coordinated with other relevant programs and services by providing supplemental language instruction for ELs in public preschool programs. In doing so, an LEA may braid Title III subgrant funds

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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.
- Ensure that the Rural Education Initiative under Title IV, Part B has been addressed.

Related Resources:

- [New America. Beyond Subprime Learning](#)
- [English Learner Toolkit for SEAs and LEAs. U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [Dual Language Learner Toolkit. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)

Title III: Language Instruction for English Learners and Migrant Students

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Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

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with other funding streams available to provide effective preschool language instruction for ELs. An LEA should prioritize funds for high-quality and effective preschool programs when utilizing Title III funds to support language instruction for ELs in preschool, as these programs may be more likely to produce positive outcomes like improved school readiness and language development. For more information, see page 32 of the guidance document.

Use of Title III Funds in a Preschool. A district may use Title III funds for language instruction educational services in an existing preschool program that the district operates or funds, as long as the use of funds is supplementary and the funds are prorated proportionally to the number of ELs in the program. For examples and further information, see pages 32-33 in the guidance document.

Considerations for Using Title III Funds to Support ELs in Preschools. An LEA that uses Title III subgrant funds to support preschool-aged ELs should ensure that its language instruction and other services are developmentally appropriate for young ELs, culturally responsive, reflective of the latest research on effective instruction for ELs in early learning programs, and supportive of all ELs' needs. An LEA should consider the developmental and language needs of children when determining which students may be served using Title III funds. Like LIEPS in elementary and secondary schools, LIEPs provided in preschool for ELs must also be "effective," and should be expected to demonstrate improved learning outcomes for ELs. (ESSA Section 3115(a), (c)). For more information, see page 33 in the guidance document.

Data That LEAs Should Share and Activities That LEAs Should Coordinate With Head Start Agencies (Including Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Agencies) and Other Early Childhood Education Providers. The alignment of standards, curricula, instruction, and assessment systems for students from birth to age 8 may benefit children in early learning programs and elementary schools, including ELs, as it facilitates greater continuity and better organization of supports for students. This alignment may also help to make expectations more consistent

Title III: Language Instruction for English Learners and Migrant Students

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between programs and foster greater collaboration between early learning programs and elementary schools. The requirement that, as part of the local plan, LEAs that receive Title III subgrant funds must coordinate activities and share data with early childhood programs (ESSA Section 3116) should help lead to improved alignment across the early educational years and improved outcomes for ELs

LEAs may hold joint professional development for elementary educators and preschool teachers of ELs, including those in Head Start and other early childhood community-based settings, coordinate data reporting and sharing, align standards and curricula, and conduct transition activities for children and families, as part of the activities coordinated with early childhood programs.

In determining which data would be most appropriate to share with early learning programs, including Head Start agencies, we encourage LEAs to consult with and solicit feedback from early learning programs in the community. We also encourage LEAs to consider which indicators would be most beneficial to create a feedback loop that informs the improvement of programs and supports for ELs, and then to consider which data could most accurately be used to measure progress against such indicators. For more information here, see page 34 in the guidance document.

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

Research indicates that providing education supports for young children who are ELs through early learning programs can help prepare them for school success and promote their language development and academic achievement. Longitudinal studies have also shown that ELs who participate in early learning programs achieved English language proficiency sooner than their peers who did not participate in such programs. High-quality early learning programs can also present an opportunity for ELs to strengthen and nurture their home language while on a path to English language acquisition. For more information, see page 14 of the guidance document.

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Title III of the ESSA includes a strengthened focus on providing services to support young ELs and immigrant children.

In order to ensure ELs receive effective language instruction educational programs, Title III funds may be used for professional development to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers of ELs, including preschool teachers and school leaders (ESSA sections 3102, 3115(c)(2), 3115(d)(4)). Title III subgrantees must, as applicable, coordinate activities and share data with Head Start agencies and other early childhood providers (ESSA section 3116(b)(4)); one such activity that may be coordinated with early childhood programs is professional development for educators to support preschool-aged ELs. See page 25 in the guidance document for further information.

Grants may also support the teaching, learning, and studying of Native American/Alaska Native languages while also increasing the English language proficiency of students in preschool, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels or combinations of these levels.

Title IV: SSAEG Block Grant, Charter Schools Program

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

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).

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 students' effective learning skills.

ESSA Sections:

- Title IV, Part A

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Title IV, Part A Guidance - Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants \(October 2016\)](#)

A well-rounded education starts with early learning opportunities that make time for exploration and continues with K-12 education that helps students make important connections among their studies, their curiosities, their passions, and the skills they need to become critical thinkers and productive members of society.

Environmental Education. Many schools across the nation provide environmental education classes for students. Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is one example of an award-winning environmental education program designed for teachers and other educators, parents, and community leaders working with youth from preschool through grade 12. For more information on this program, see page 24 in the guidance document.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

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 aligned 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.
- Ensure that the Rural Education Initiative under Title IV, Part B has been addressed.

Related Resources:

- [National Head Start Association. The Head Start Model](#)
- [Jobs for the Future. Two-Generation Approaches. U.S. Department of Education \(May 2016\)](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)

Title IV: SSAEG Block Grant, Charter Schools Program

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

21st Century Community Learning Centers.

The purpose of this section is to provide opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities in community learning centers that provide opportunities for academic enrichment, offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, and offer families of students served by these centers the opportunity for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education.

ESSA Sections:

- Title IV, Part B

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

Grants under Title IV, Part B, may support students in all grades, including early childhood education.

[Title IV, Part A Guidance - Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants \(October 2016\)](#)

Leveraging Federal, State and Local Resources. In order to maximize the use of SSAE program resources, SEAs, LEAs and schools may partner with organizations such as nonprofits, IHEs, and museums and community organizations to offer programs and services to students. At the local level, schools may use other ESSA program funds to coordinate and strengthen complimentary services.

Title IV, Part B funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers also provide opportunities for academic enrichment through an array of programs and activities.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

States and districts should consider using the 21st Century Community Learning Centers to support PreK-3rd Grade settings.

Suggested steps for leveraging the program for early learning include:

- Applying for these grants under Title IV Part B, with the express purpose of using the program for early learning.
- Maintain the focus of parental involvement in the early childhood learning programs through these centers.
- Partner with local organizations, such as nonprofits, IHEs, museums, and other community organizations to offer more variety in the programs and services that are offered to young students under this program.
- Ensure that the Rural Education Initiative under Title IV, Part B has been addressed.

Related Resources:

- [National Head Start Association. The Head Start Model](#)
- [Jobs for the Future. Two-Generation Approaches. U.S. Department of Education \(May 2016\)](#)

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.

ESSA Sections:

- 4302(a)

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

High-quality public charter schools can play a strong role in promoting education equity for our youngest learners. Title IV, Part X of the ESSA provides continued opportunities to serve preschool children through the Charter Schools Program (CSP), which is aimed at expanding the number of high-quality charter schools available to students across the nation. Building on appropriations acts that, since fiscal year 2014, have allowed CSP funds to be used to support preschool education, the ESSA explicitly authorizes support for charter schools that enroll early childhood students (ESSA section 4302(a)) so long as these schools also offer a program in elementary or secondary education. The law amends the CSP definition of "charter school" to include schools that serve students in early childhood education programs, in addition to providing a program in elementary or secondary education, or both, as

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) 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

Title IV: SSAEG Block Grant, Charter Schools Program

ESSA Early Learning Provisions	Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance	Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources
	<p>determined under State law (ESSA section 4310(2)). Whether a recipient may use funds to support charter schools that only enroll preschool-age children depends on whether the recipient's State defines "elementary education" to include preschool.</p> <p>The Department encourages CSP grantees and subgrantees to support expanding early learning opportunities, if appropriate, as part of the following charter school efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting up new charter schools. • Replicating and expanding high-quality charter schools. • Assisting charter schools with financing facility acquisition, construction, and renovation efforts. • Disseminating best practices. • Improving authorizing quality and oversight of charter schools. <p>Additional <i>CSP Guidance on the Use of Funds to Support Preschool Education</i> continues to be valid in the 2016–17 school year.</p>	<p>pathway); (7) cross-sector work (governance, strategic planning, funding); and (8) administration (leader effectiveness).</p> <p>Related Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington (2013) • Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) • QRIS Resource Guide • Ounce of Prevention. Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Child Succeeds Act • School Readiness T/TA Resource. Office of Head Start • NAEYC. Choosing an Appropriate Assessment System • Accreditation Resource at the National Association for the Education of Young Children • Bellwether. Pre-K and Charter Schools: Where State Policies Create Barriers to Collaboration
<p>Magnet Schools Assistance.</p> <p>The primary purpose of including Magnet Schools in ESSA is to assist in the desegregation of schools served by LEAs by providing financial assistance for certain activities in public elementary schools, public secondary schools, and public educational programs.</p> <p>ESSA Sections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4401-4407 	<p>Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act (October 2016)</p> <p>Grant funds may be used by an LEA, or LEA consortium, for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and promotional activities at magnet schools. • For the acquisition of books, materials, and equipment. • The compensation, or subsidization of the compensation, of elementary school and instructional staff to conduct programs in magnet schools. • To enable the school to have more flexibility in the administration of the programs and flexibility in the design of magnet schools for students in all grades. 	<p>Similar to other schools, magnet schools should use federal funds to support well designed early learning initiatives. Magnets interested in launching or strengthening their early learning programs could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing strategies for 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).

Title IV: SSAEG Block Grant, Charter Schools Program

ESSA Early Learning Provisions	Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance	Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources
		<p>Related Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington (2013) • Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) • QRIS Resource Guide • Ounce of Prevention. Valuing the Early Years in State Accountability Systems Under the Every Child Succeeds Act • School Readiness T/TA Resource. Office of Head Start • NAEYC. Choosing an Appropriate Assessment System • Accreditation Resource at the National Association for the Education of Young Children • Bellwether. Pre-K and Charter Schools: Where State Policies Create Barriers to Collaboration
<p>Grants For Education Innovation And Research.</p> <p>This section encourages the creation, development, implementation, or replication of entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement and attainment for high need students, as well as rigorous evaluation of such innovations.</p> <p>ESSA Sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4611 	<p>Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act (October 2016)</p> <p>Grants may be used to support early learning.</p> <p>No less than 25 percent of the funds made available must be awarded to programs in rural areas.</p>	<p>States and districts should consider using the Grants for Education Innovation and Research under ESSA Section 4611 to support PreK-3rd Grade settings. Suggested steps for leveraging the program for early learning include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using grants for education innovation and research for early learning purposes. • Working together with non-profit organizations, businesses, IHEs, etc., to pool resources and funds to focus on early learning. • Using funding for developmentally appropriate early learning projects that are aligned with the program’s high needs students’ requirement.

Title IV: SSAEG Block Grant, Charter Schools Program

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Promise Neighborhoods.

These competitive grants must be used to implement pipeline services – that is, a continuum of coordinated supports, services, and opportunities for children from birth through entry into and success in postsecondary education, and career attainment, that must include, at a minimum, high-quality early childhood education programs (Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act (October 2016)).

Full-Service Community Schools. These schools must have plans to ensure that each school site has a full-time coordinator of pipeline services, and plans for professional development for the personnel managing, coordinating, and delivering those pipeline services.

ESSA Sections:

- 4624(d)(2)
- 4625(e)(1)

Assistance For Arts Educators.

Section 4107 discusses activities to support well-rounded educational opportunities, which may include programs and activities that use music and the arts as tools to support student success through the promotion of constructive student engagement, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

Section 4642 awards funding to programs to promote arts education for students, including disadvantaged students and students who are children with disabilities.

ESSA Sections:

- 4107
- 4642

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

Examples of Alignment, Coordination, and Collaboration of P-12 Programs. Partner with Promise Neighborhoods and Full-Service Schools grantees to ensure early learning is part of a coordinated system of supports for families.

Building Strong Communities. Another way to support the coordination of programs and services for children at the local level is through place-based initiatives, such as Promise Neighborhoods, which is authorized in Title IV, Part X of the ESSA. This program provides a continuum of coordinated supports, services, and opportunities for children and families, including early learning programs.

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

Awards may, for example, be used to promote school readiness through the development and dissemination of accessible instructional materials and art-based educational programming.

[Title IV, Part A Guidance - Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants \(October 2016\)](#)

Studies show that prekindergarten and kindergarten students whose teachers integrated music and arts with STEM curricular and lessons experienced significant increases in math learning.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

States and districts should consider using the Promise Neighborhoods and Full Service Community Schools funding to support PreK-3rd Grade settings. Suggested steps for leveraging these programs for early learning include:

- Partner with Promise Neighborhoods and Full-Service Schools to ensure a focus on early learning.
- Working together with non-profit organizations, businesses, IHEs, etc., to pool resources and funds to focus on early learning.
- Using funding for developmentally appropriate early learning projects that are aligned with the programs' high needs students' requirement.
- 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.

Related Resources:

- [Jobs for the Future. Two-Generation Approaches. U.S. Department of Education \(May 2016\)](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)

States and districts should consider using the Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities funding to support PreK-3rd Grade settings. Suggested steps for leveraging these programs for early learning include:

- Partner with local organizations that focus on arts, which can lead to more detailed arts education classes, arts field trips, and exposure to art within local communities.
- Working together with non-profit organizations, businesses, IHEs, etc., to pool resources and funds to focus on early learning.
- Use funding for arts programs within preschools, including music education and arts classes.
- Using funding for developmentally appropriate early learning projects that are aligned with well-rounded educational programs, such as music, cultural competency, language, and other enrichment activities beneficial to young learners.

Title IV: SSAEG Block Grant, Charter Schools Program

ESSA Early Learning Provisions	Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance	Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources
<p>Ready To Learn Television.</p> <p>ESSA Sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4643 	<p>Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act (October 2016)</p> <p>These competitive grants are to promote school readiness through the development and dissemination of accessible instructional programming for preschool and elementary school children and their families.</p>	<p>States and districts should consider using the Ready to Learn funding to support PreK-3rd Grade settings. Suggested steps for leveraging these programs for early learning include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with video programming companies that can develop, produce, and distribute educational videos for preschool and elementary school children. • Working together with parents to ensure they are aware of the programming resources that are available, with a focus on those they can use at home.
<p>Supporting High-Ability Learners And Learning</p> <p>ESSA Sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4644 	<p>Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act (October 2016)</p> <p>This section of the ESSA addresses awards to promote support for high-ability learners and high-ability learning.</p>	<p>States should apply for the High Ability Learners and Learning Program funding and leverage its early learning focus. Investing early in children's learning development will positively impact their progress and success in multiple other areas of learning. Suggested actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting early language and literacy skills in the state adopted learning standards. • Supporting parents' engagement and capacity to develop their children's early learning skills through programs such as home visiting. • Developing comprehensive early learning assessment systems to track children's progress, inform instruction, and target high ability interventions as early as possible.

Title V: Rural Schools

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Rural Schools

- Review Relating to Rural Local Educational Agencies
- Small, Rural School Achievement Program
- Rural and Low-Income School Program

ESSA Sections:

- 5005
- 5211
- 5221

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

An LEA may use funding to carry out local activities authorized under any of the following provisions, including early learning activities to the extent they are authorized:

- Part A of Title I
- Part A of Title II
- Title III
- Part A or B of Title IV

An LEA may use funds for any of the following, including early learning activities to the extent they are authorized:

- Activities authorized under Part A of Title I
- Activities authorized under Part A of Title II
- Activities authorized under Title III
- Activities authorized under Part A of Title IV
- Parental involvement activities

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

Rural schools and districts are encouraged to find similar ways to use funding for rural education.

Please refer to previous columns regarding Title I, Title II, Title III and Title IV for further planning ideas and supplementary resources consistent with ESSA.

Title VI: Indian Education, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native Education

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Indian Education

- Indian Education Grants
- Demonstration Grants for Indian Children
- Indian Education—Professional Development for Teachers and Education Professionals

ESSA Sections:

- 3112
- 6115(b)(3)
- 6121(c)(7)
- 6122

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

American Indians. Many American Indians have been affected by poverty and scarce resources and therefore may greatly benefit from high-quality early learning programs. The ESSA explicitly includes early learning as an allowable activity in several Title VI programs that support these special populations.

Title VI, Part A (Indian Education Grants to LEAs) allows funds to be used for “early childhood programs.” This formula grant program allows for funds to be used for early childhood programs that emphasize school readiness. Further, grants are authorized to support preschool and kindergarten programs as long as those programs are effective in preparing children to make sufficient academic growth by third grade.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

Schools with populations of American Indian students should consider the following:

- Providing grants to IHEs to provide training to qualified American Indians to become teachers, administrators, social workers, and specialized instructional support personnel; and improve the skills of those qualified American Indians who already serve in these capacities. Note that professional development grants may be used to support early learning only if the State in which the grant participant is seeking teacher certification has a requirement that early learning teachers be certified.
- Funding can be used for family-based education centers, focusing particularly on services to parents and children from birth to age 3 and preschool programs.
- States can also position early learning as a key component of addressing school needs of American Indian students.
- Support schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development and family engagement strategies for early childhood educators, school leaders, and other educators.
- Establish family engagement as a primary goal/priority for American Indian students.

Related Resources:

- [Native Language Preservation, Revitalization, Restoration, and Maintenance in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. Information Memorandum, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services \(2015\)](#)

Native Hawaiian/Alaska Native Education

- Native Hawaiian Education Program
- Alaska Native Education Program

ESSA Sections:

- 3112
- 6205(3)(A), (B), (C)
- 6304(a)(3)(C)

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Title VI, Part B (Native Hawaiian Education) allows funds to support services for children starting at birth. Funds under this section can be used to support a Statewide Native Hawaiian early education and care system, and to operate family-based education centers, including those that provide services for parents and children from birth to age 3, preschool programs, and research on such programs.

Schools with populations of Native Hawaiian/Alaska Native students should consider the following:

- Providing grants to IHEs to provide training to qualified Native Hawaiians and Alaska Natives to become teachers, administrators, social workers, and specialized instructional support personnel; and improve the skills of those qualified Native Hawaiian/Alaska Natives who already serve in these capacities. Note that professional development grants may be used to support early learning only if the State in which the grant participant is

Title VI: Indian Education, Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native Education

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

Title VI, Part C (Alaska Native Education) supports “early childhood . . . education activities” as well as “programs for infants.” Under this section, funds may be used to support early childhood and parent education programs that improve the school readiness of Alaska Native children.

Note: Recipients of discretionary grants under Title III, section 3112 (programs serving American Indian/Alaska Native children who are ELs) may use funds to support early learning.

Allowable/Possible Opportunities (Appendix A). Nonprofit or other organizations and agencies may use funds to support a Statewide Native Hawaiian early education and care system, and to operate family-based education centers, and for research.

Allowable/Possible Opportunities (Appendix A). Nonprofit or other organizations and agencies may use funds to support early childhood and parent education programs that improve school readiness.

seeking teacher certification has a requirement that early learning teachers be certified.

- Funding can be used for family-based education centers, focusing particularly on services to parents and children from birth to age 3 and preschool programs.
- States can also position early learning as a key component of addressing school needs of Native Hawaiian/Alaska Native students.
- Establish family engagement as a primary goal/priority for Native Hawaiian/Alaska Native students.
- Support schools and nonprofit organizations in providing professional development and family engagement strategies for early childhood educators, school leaders, and other educators.

Related Resources:

- [Native Language Preservation, Revitalization, Restoration, and Maintenance in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. Information Memorandum, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services \(2015\)](#)

Title VIII: Private Schools and Homeless Students

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Participation Of Students Enrolled In Private Schools.

SEAs, LEAs, or other entities receiving federal financial assistance under applicable programs must provide equitable services to eligible private school participants in elementary and secondary schools. This includes preschool children in States that consider preschool to be part of elementary education under State law. Applicable programs include:

- Title I, Part C, Education of Migratory Children
- Title II, Part A, Supporting Effective Instruction
- Title III, Part A, English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
- Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
- Title IV, Part B, 21st Century Community Learning Centers

ESSA Sections:

- 1117
- 4106(e)(2)(B)
- 8501-8504

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

Allowable/Possible Opportunities

(Appendix A). Although preschool children generally are not entitled to receive equitable services, if preschool children attend a private elementary school in which school-age children are entitled to equitable services, the preschool children, their teachers, and other educational personnel may receive services. Whether such preschool children, their teachers, and other educational personnel will receive services is based on timely and meaningful consultation between the LEA and private school officials, taking into consideration the needs of preschool children and eligible educational personnel in the private school and the amount of funding available to provide services.

[Title IV, Part A Guidance - Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants \(October 2016\)](#)

Local Application Requirements for Grants. LEAs must also consult with private school officials to identify the needs of eligible private school students and teachers consistent with the requirements in Section 8501 of the ESEA. This process is different from the consultation related to the development of an LEA application described above.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

Private schools should consider the following:

- Ensuring that preschool children are able to receive services by ensuring consultation with the LEA to receive the full extent of the funds available. This will require the consultation to specifically address and request funds for early childhood education/preschools.
- If the school is located in a State that does not consider preschool to be part of elementary education, continue to search for support and ways to receive alternate funding.

Title IX: Preschool Development Grants and Other Laws

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

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:

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

ESSA Sections:

- 9212

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

The ESSA includes a new discretionary grant program for States to expand access to and improve the coordination and quality of early childhood education programs for children from birth to age 5. The new PDG competitive grant program, as authorized in ESSA section 9212, supports States through two types of competitive grants: initial grants and renewal grants. Initial grants support States in assessing their overall needs regarding the availability and quality of existing early learning programs in the State and the number of children as well as facilitate coordination and collaboration (ESSA section 9212(c)). Renewal grants—for States that have received an initial grant under ESSA section 9212(c) or received a PDG grant as initially authorized in FY 2014, or as determined by the secretaries of ED and HHS—support States in the improvement or expansion of existing early learning programs. Renewal grants also provide funds for developing new programs to address the needs of children and families that are eligible for, but not served by, early learning programs (ESSA section 9212(g)). These grants will help States to reach more children with high-quality preschool programs.

[Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program \(July 2016\)](#)

McKinney-Vento Subgrant Fund Activities. LEAs must use McKinney-Vento funds to assist homeless children and youths in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. (See, e.g., Sections 722(g)(6), 723(d)). In particular, the funds may support developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs for preschool-aged homeless children that are not provided through other Federal, State, or local funds. (Section 723(d)(6)).

Strategies to Identify Homeless Children Under the Age of Five. Local liaisons can identify preschool-age homeless children by working closely with shelters in their area. In addition, liaisons should work with federally qualified health centers and social service agencies, as well as early childhood education providers and school personnel to identify homeless preschool-age children. The local liaison should also collaborate with the school district's early intervention and special education programs. See pages 41-42 in the guidance document for more information.

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

Planning and Transition with Preschool Development Grants:

- 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.
- 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).

Related Resources:

- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)
- [CCSSO. Advancing Equity through ESSA: Strategies for State Leaders \(2016\)](#)

Homeless Students

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Sections:

- Title VII-B

Strategies for Homeless Children, specifically under the age of 5:

- Use funds for developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs, paying close attention to the use of funds from other sources.
- Fund programs where local liaisons can provide services to young homeless children, including funding programs and professional development activities to help in the identification of homeless students under the age of 5.
- Work closely with local organizations, local social service agencies, and local shelters to help identify homeless students under the age of 5.
- Use local liaisons to enroll homeless children in preschool.
- SEAs and LEAs should review and revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, and success of children who are homeless, including those in preschool.

Title IX: Preschool Development Grants and Other Laws

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

Local Liaison Assistance. Even in districts without universal preschool, local liaisons should make every effort to enroll preschool-age homeless children in preschool if they are not already enrolled. See page 42 of the guidance document for more information.

Special Considerations For Determining Whether a Homeless Child Should Remain in Public Preschool of Origin. For children under five, the unsafe living conditions and poverty that accompany homelessness may have a negative impact on their brain development and impact learning, behavior, and both physical and social-emotional well-being. Nurturing and stable relationships with adult caregivers is critical to the healthy social-emotional development of young children. An early childhood program may be the one stable and structured environment that young children who are homeless can depend on, and as such, school and program stability is of the utmost importance for this vulnerable population. For further information, see pages 42-43 in the guidance document.

McKinney-Vento Act Requirements and Homeless Children Attending Preschool. To the extent that an LEA offers a public education to preschool children, including LEA administered Head Start programs, an LEA must meet the McKinney-Vento Act requirements for homeless children in preschool, including ensuring that a homeless child remains in his or her public preschool of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest. (See sections 721(1), 722(g)(1)(F)(i), 722(g)(3)(I)). This also includes a requirement that an LEA provide transportation services to the school of origin, including public preschools (section 722(g)(3)(I)(i)).

[Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(October 2016\)](#)

Children Who Are Experiencing Homelessness. Children whose families are homeless often experience high mobility; as a result, they have a lower rate of preschool enrollment when compared to other populations. Yet, high-quality early learning experiences can be extremely beneficial to this population, who often lack stability outside of school. The Education for Homeless Children and Youths program, authorized by Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act), and most recently amended by the ESSA, includes several new provisions related to preschool-age children. See pages 12-13 in the guidance document for further information.

Related Resources:

- [National Association of State Boards of Education. Opportunities in ESSA for Improving Early Education \(2016\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of HHS, Department of HUD. Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and at Risk of Homelessness](#)

Title IX: Preschool Development Grants and Other Laws

ESSA Early Learning Provisions

Non-Regulatory ESSA Guidance

Planning Ideas and Supplementary Resources

Title I of the ESSA also supports the needs of children who are homeless by expanding the use of funds reserved for homeless children and youths to encompass all children who are homeless, not just those in non-Title I schools (ESSA sections 1113(c)(3)(A)(i), (c)(3)(C)). In addition, under section 722(g)(6)(A)(iii) of the McKinney-Vento Act, local liaisons must ensure that eligible infants and toddlers and their families who are homeless can access early intervention services under Part C of the IDEA, and eligible preschool children with disabilities who are homeless can access special education and related services under Part B of the IDEA. For more information on serving homeless children from birth to age 5, please see the early childhood homelessness section in the updated Education for Homeless Children and Youths guidance, which the Department of Education released in July 2016.