Non-Regulatory Guidance
Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act

Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners

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U.S. Department of Education
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Secretary

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Delegated the authority to perform the functions and duties of Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education

October 2016

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Purpose of the Guidance

The U.S. Department of Education has determined that this document is significant guidance under the Office of Management and Budget's "Final Bulletin for Agency Good Guidance Practices," 72 *Federal Regulations* 3432 (Jan. 25, 2007). (See www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/fy2007/m07-07.pdf.) Significant guidance is non-binding and does not create or impose new legal requirements. The Department is issuing this guidance to provide State and local educational agencies with information to assist them in meeting their obligations under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*.

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Introduction

Over 50 years ago, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (*ESEA*) was signed into law by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who believed that "full educational opportunity" should be "our first national goal." Today, with the law's reauthorization through the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (*ESSA*), the U.S. Department of Education (Department) continues to build on the civil rights legacy of the original law by providing protections for our most vulnerable students and directing federal resources toward programs and strategies that help all students thrive. Early learning is woven throughout the *ESEA*, as amended by the *ESSA*,[1] as a means of addressing education equity in order to eliminate disparities in student achievement and support students' school success. With this reauthorization, the *ESEA* has been transformed from a K–12 education law to one which envisions a preschool through 12th grade (P–12) continuum of learning.

While expanding opportunities for high-quality preschool is important, early education is not a panacea; it must be followed by strong kindergarten through third grade programs, and education that prepares students graduating from high school to succeed in college and careers. The Department's strategic goal for early learning is to improve the health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes for all children from birth through third grade. This will ensure that all children, particularly those with high needs, are on track to graduate from high school college and career ready. This guidance is intended to remind State and local decision-makers about the importance of investing in early learning, highlight the opportunities available under the law to

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, references to the ESEA in this document refer to the ESEA as amended by the ESSA.

strengthen early education, and provide examples of how States and local communities may support young children's success in school.

The *ESEA* contains provisions across its programs to assist State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), outlying areas, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), schools, and community-based organizations to support early learning in these three main ways: (1) expanding access to high-quality early learning; (2) encouraging alignment and collaboration from birth through third grade; and (3) supporting educators. Although only a few programs under the *ESEA* require that funds be used to support early learning, others allow early learning as one of many uses of funds. In addition, there are areas where early learning is not explicitly mentioned, yet policymakers may consider it as an effective strategy that can further the stated goals of the provision within the law. Appendix A demonstrates the many opportunities that exist throughout the *ESEA*, by title, to support our youngest learners. While this guidance references opportunities for supporting early learning under the *ESEA*, it is not meant to be an exhaustive list of every opportunity, nor a comprehensive description of each program authorized in the law.

Benefits of High-Quality Early Learning

Early childhood is a critical period of learning and development, and young children's experiences lay the foundation for success in school and in life.[2] A robust body of research shows that high-quality early learning, starting at birth and continuing through third grade, can promote healthy social-emotional development, assist with English language acquisition, and help build a strong academic foundation.[3] High-quality early learning programs also help to narrow achievement gaps between children from low-income families and their more affluent peers, which are detectable as early as nine months of age.[4] A National Center for Education Statistics longitudinal study shows that children who attended center-based preschool programs in the year before kindergarten earned higher scores at the beginning of kindergarten on math, reading, cognitive flexibility, and for approaches to learning (e.g., attentiveness, persistence, and eagerness to learn) than their peers who did not participate in an early learning program the year before starting kindergarten[5] While all children benefit by participating in high-quality early learning programs, the achievement gains are largest for children from low-income families and others who have been traditionally underserved.[6]

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[2]National Research Council, *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers*, Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy, Barbara T. Bowman, M. Suzanne Donovan, and M. Susan Burns (Eds.), Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2001); National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips (Eds.), Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000).

[3] Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Christina Weiland, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Margaret R. Burchinal, Linda M. Espinosa, William T. Gormley, Jens Ludwig, Kathertine A. Magnuson, Deborah Phillips, Martha J. Zaslow, *Investing in our Future: The Evidence Base for Preschool Education. Policy brief, Society for Research in Child Development and the Foundation for Child Development*, Foundation for Child Development, (Society for Research in Child Development, 2013), http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Evidence%20Base%20on%20Preschool%20Education%20FINAL.pdf.

[4] Magnuson, K., Waldfogel, J., and Washbrook, E., "The development of SES gradients in skills during the school years: Evidence from the United States and England," in *From Parents to Children: The Intergenerational Transmission of Advantage*, J. Ermisch, M. Jantti, and T. Smeeding (Eds.), (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2012).State

[5] Rathbun, A., and Zhang, A., *Primary Early Care and Education Arrangements and Achievement at Kindergarten Entry* (*NCES 2016-070*). (Washington, DC:.National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education,2016), http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016070.pdf .

[6]National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*.

It is important to note, however, that preschool programs must be of high quality in order to have a significant effect on children's learning and development.

> "Young children thrive and learn best when they have secure, positive relationships with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their health, development, and learning and are responsive to their individual progress. Indeed, the science of child development and of how best to support learning from birth through age 8 makes clear what an important, complex, dynamic, and challenging job it is for an adult to work with young children in each of the many professional roles and settings where this work takes place."[7]

Attracting and retaining qualified and effective educators, however, depends upon ensuring that salaries for preschool teachers are comparable to those of elementary and secondary teachers[8] and that program standards are high. Studies show that inadequate teacher compensation negatively affects preschool program quality and results in poorer cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes for children.[9]

In addition to retaining high-quality teachers, program standards should include both *process* quality features, such as teacher-child interactions, as well as *structural* program features, such as small class size. Research shows programs that include both types of features result in stronger education outcomes for children.[10] Nationally recognized elements of a high-quality preschool program[11] include, at a minimum,

- high qualifications for teachers and other staff (e.g., a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related degree with specialized training in early childhood for, at a minimum, the lead teacher);
- ongoing practice-based professional learning (or professional development) in early childhood development and mentoring, coaching, or other professional development consultation for teachers, administrators, and other staff;
- small class sizes and low staff-child ratios;
- a full-day, full-year program;
- developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and assessments, as well as research-based curricula, that are aligned with State early learning and development standards;
- inclusion of children with disabilities;
- individualized accommodations and supports for children, including English learners (ELs);
- ongoing program evaluation used for continuous improvement;

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[7] Institute of Medicine and National Research Council , *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2015); National Research Council, *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers*.
[8] Ibid.
[9] W. Steven Barnett, "Low Wages = Low Quality: Solving the Real Preschool Teacher Crisis," *Preschool Policy Matters* 3 (2003): 1–8, http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/3.pdf.
[10] Yoshikawa et al., *Investing in our Future: The Evidence Base for Preschool Education*.
[11] See Appendix B under Program Quality (Nationally Recognized Standards).

- onsite comprehensive services[12] for children to address health, including mental health, and overall well-being;
- high-quality family engagement and involvement;
- health and safety standards; and
- lead teacher compensation set at or very near K–3 teacher compensation in a teacher's respective State.[13]

Importance of Engaging Families

Family engagement refers to the systemic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children's development, learning, and wellness, including the planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems. A growing body of research links meaningful engagement of families in their children's early learning experiences with kindergarten readiness and later academic success. The research indicates that families' involvement in children's learning and development impacts lifelong health, developmental, and academic outcomes. Engaging with families is especially crucial in the early years of learning since this is the stage during which young children acquire foundational competencies, such as language, literacy, and social-emotional skills that strongly affect their capacity for life-long learning.

See the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services' joint "Policy Statement on Family Engagement: From the Early Years to the Early Grades" for more information.

Children who attend high-quality early learning programs, and more specifically preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds, are less likely to need special education services or be retained, and are more likely to graduate from high school, go on to college, and succeed in their careers than those who have not attended such programs.[14]

Expanding Access to High-Quality Early Learning

Recognizing the impact of early learning on academic and life outcomes, States and local communities have made tremendous progress over the last several years in developing and expanding early learning programs to support children's readiness for school. In fact, between 2013 and 2016, States and the District of Columbia have allocated over $1.5 billion in new resources for preschool.[15] At the local level, voters have approved ballot initiatives to expand access to preschool in such cities as San Francisco, Seattle, and Denver.[16] Communities across the country have engaged public and private partners to establish or expand preschool programs,

[12] Comprehensive services may include screenings for hearing, vision, dental, health (including mental health), and development, as well as referrals and assistance obtaining services, when appropriate; culturally and linguistically responsive family engagement opportunities; nutrition services; services coordinated with entities providing services under part C and section 619 of part B of the *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act* (*IDEA*); physical activity services; partnerships with and linkages to community services to enhance family well-being; and additional support services, including addressing the impact of violence and other trauma.

[13] See Program Quality (Nationally Recognized Standards) in Appendix A.

[14] Yoshikawa et al., *Investing in our Future: The Evidence Base for Preschool Education*; Englund, M., White, B., Reynolds, A. J., Schweinhart, L., & Campbell, F. A., "Health outcomes of the Abecedarian, Child-Parent Center and High-Scope Perry Preschool Programs," in *Health and Education in Early Childhood: Predictors, Interventions, and Policies*, A. J. Reynolds, A. J. Rolnick, and J. A. Temple (Eds.), (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 257-285.

[15] The White House, *Giving Every Child a Fair Shot: Progress Under the Obama Administration's Education Agenda*," (Washington, D.C.: Department of Education), https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/giving_every_child_fair_shot_050316.pdf.

[16] Sarah Mead, "Top 5 in Early Childhood for 2016," *U.S. News & World Report*, (2016), http://www.usnews.com/opinion/knowledge-bank/articles/2016-01-07/5-early-childhood-education-stories-to-follow-in-2016.

and have implemented new early learning initiatives that address program quality and affordability.

This positive momentum is good news; however, challenges remain. At both the State and federal levels there are not enough funds to implement programs of sufficient size or scope to meet the demands and address the growing and diverse needs of all young children and their families. Many early childhood programs are unable either to serve all eligible children or do not provide the level of resources needed to support and sustain high-quality services.[17] In the 2014–15 school year, only 41 percent of 4-year-olds and 16 percent of 3-year-olds were enrolled in publically funded preschool programs (e.g., State preschool, Head Start, and programs serving children with disabilities).[18]

Federal education funds may help meet this critical unmet need. Under a number of federal education programs, an LEA may use funds to provide early education services consistent with applicable program requirements. LEAs may do so in public schools or in preschool centers operated by the LEA, as well as in community-based preschool programs. However, an LEA that chooses to use allowable *ESEA* funds to provide early learning services for children in a community-based preschool program may only do so as long as these conditions are met:

(1) The LEA provides the preschool services directly, or jointly with the community-based preschool provider (e.g., the LEA may not directly transfer *ESEA* funds to a community-based preschool program, for instance, by paying tuition, but instead must use funds to supplement or expand services).
(2) The LEA meets all of the requirements of the applicable program, and other applicable federal laws and regulations (e.g., ensuring that the use of funds is reasonable and necessary and allowable according to program requirements (*Title III* funds, for example, must be used to supplement, and not supplant, other federal, State, and local funds)).
(3) The LEA maintains control of the federal funds and title to materials, equipment, and property purchased with those funds, and ensures that funds are not used for religious purposes (20 U.S.C. 8306(a)(2), (5); 34 C.F.R. §§ 75.532, 75.702, 76.532, 76.702).

The *ESEA* offers SEAs and LEAs opportunities for expanding high-quality early learning through a number of specific provisions in the law. Some of these provisions existed under previous reauthorizations of the *ESEA*; others are new or have been strengthened to better enable SEAs and LEAs to make wise investments in early learning. These provisions are discussed in the following sections.

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[17] For example, Head Start only serves approximately 41 percent of preschool-aged children living in poverty and Early Head Start only serves approximately 4 percent of infants and toddlers living in poverty. Note that Head Start programs have additional eligibility criteria not considered in this estimate. Children can be eligible for Head Start services based on income (below the federal poverty level) or because they are homeless, in foster care, eligible for public assistance. All programs can serve 10 percent of their enrollment that are not low-income or otherwise eligible. Additionally programs that can demonstrate that they are serving all of the children who are low-income or otherwise eligible that wish to enroll can serve another 35 percent of participants with incomes from 100 percent to 130 percent of the federal poverty level. Source: Office of Head Start tabulations based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Estimates for States and DC and 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for Puerto Rico. Only 29 percent of 4-year-olds and 5 percent of 3-year-olds are enrolled in State preschool programs. Source: Barnett, W. S., Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Gomez, R. E., Horowitz, M., Weisenfeld, G. G., & Squires, J. H., *The State of Preschool 2015: State Preschool Yearbook*, (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research).State

[18] Note: enrollment of 3- and 4-year-olds in State preschool was 5 percent and 29 percent, respectfully; Barnett, W. S. et. al., *The State of Preschool 2015: State Preschool Yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

Title I *Preschool*

Title I, Part A of the *ESEA* 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. During the 2013–14 school year, 27,519 children from ages birth to 2 and 602,487 children ages 3 to 5 were served using *Title I*, Part A funds.[19] In 2012, the Department released revised non-regulatory guidance[20] for using *Title I* funds to support preschool, which is effective through the 2016–17 school year.

Title I preschool programs are intended to assist children most at risk of failing to meet the State's challenging academic standards based on multiple, educationally related, objective criteria.[21] Certain children are also "automatically eligible" to participate in a *Title I* preschool program (e.g., an LEA or school need not identify the child as most at risk of failing to meet the State's academic achievement standards), including

- children who participated in Head Start, received services supported by the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grants program within Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) (formerly known as Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program), or attended a *Title I* preschool program at any time in the prior two years;
- children who received services under *Title I*, Part C (migrant education) in the prior two years;
- preschool-age children experiencing homelessness; and
- children who are in a local institution or attending a community day program for neglected or delinquent children and youth (*ESEA* section 1115(c)(2)).

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 Table 1. 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. For example, a *Title I* preschool program may only include children who are most at risk of failing to meet a State's challenging academic standards when they enter elementary school *unless* the preschool program is part of a schoolwide program, in which case all children may attend. In addition, 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".[22] The program must also meet, at a minimum, the education performance standards of the Head Start

[19] Department of Education, "ED Data Express", http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/index.cfm

[20] Department of Education, *Serving Preschool Children Through Title I: Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended*, (2012),https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/preschoolguidance2012.pdf

[21] Multiple, educationally related, objective criteria may include data collected such as interviews with parents, teacher judgment, and developmentally appropriate measures of child development. The use of family income as one factor in determining eligibility is allowable, especially for the purpose of prioritizing when there are not sufficient *Title I* funds to serve all eligible preschool-age children, but children should not be identified as eligible solely on the basis of family income.

[22] Public Law 110-134 *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*, Sec. 641A. Standards; Monitoring of Head Start Agencies and Programs [42 U.S.C. 9836A].

Program Performance Standards[23] that are aligned with the *Head Start Child Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages Birth to Five (2015)*,[24] which the secretary of education must disseminate to LEAs.

Table 1. Mechanisms by which schools and LEAs can use *Title I, Part A* funds to support preschool programs

School-Operated: A *Title I* school may use all or a portion of its *Title I* funds to operate a preschool program for eligible children. • Schoolwide Program**:** 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*. • Targeted Assistance Program**:** A school may serve preschool children who reside in its attendance area and whom the school identifies as at risk of failing to meet the State's academic achievement standards when they reach school age.
District (LEA)-Operated: An LEA may reserve a portion of funds from its *Title I* allocation to operate a preschool program for eligible children in the LEA as a whole or in a portion of the LEA. • District (LEA) as a Whole**:** An LEA may serve preschool children who reside throughout the LEA and whom the LEA identifies as eligible because they are at risk of failing to meet the State's academic achievement standards when they reach school age. An LEA may not use *Title I* funds to implement a preschool program throughout the district to benefit all preschool students in the LEA unless all the schools in the LEA are *Title I* schools operating schoolwide programs. • Portion of the District (LEA): An LEA may serve preschool children who reside in specific *Title I* school attendance areas (e.g., its highest-poverty school attendance areas) served by some or all of its *Title I* schools if, for example, an LEA does not have sufficient *Title I* funds to operate a preschool program for the district as a whole.
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. *Title I* funds may be used to provide preschool services for *Title I* eligible children who • are not eligible for Head Start services based on income requirements; • are eligible for Head Start but not served in a Head Start center due to unmet need; • are enrolled in a State preschool, Head Start, child care, or community-based early learning program and are in need of additional services (e.g., extending the day, increasing number of days, etc.); or • would benefit from home visiting because they are most at risk of failing to meet the State's challenging academic standards.

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.

[23] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, (2016), https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/docs/hspss-final.pdf

[24] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five, (2015), http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ hs/sr/approach/pdf/ohs-framework.pdf

For example, in **Montgomery County, Maryland**, *Title I, Part A* funds are used to support eligible children's education needs prior to kindergarten entry through

- providing extended learning opportunities during the summer to improve transitions from early childhood programs to kindergarten;
- extending the length of the day of Head Start from part-day to full-day;
- expanding schoolwide family engagement activities in a two-generation approach; and
- providing coaching and training for early childhood teachers.

Title I funds may also be used, for example, to support children who are at risk of failing to meet the State's challenging academic standards by improving the quality of

- kindergarten (e.g., by extending a half-day program to full-day, providing professional development, supporting transitions from early learning to kindergarten, expanding family engagement), or
- first through third grade programs (e.g., by providing professional learning opportunities for staff on child development or expanding effective family engagement activities).

Charter Schools

High-quality public charter schools can play a strong role in promoting education equity for our youngest learners. *Title IV*, Part X of the *ESEA* 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 *ESEA* explicitly authorizes support for charter schools that enroll early childhood students (*ESEA* 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 determined under State law (*ESEA* 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.

The Department encourages CSP grantees and subgrantees to support expanding early learning opportunities, if appropriate, as part of the following charter school efforts:

- 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

Additional *CSP Guidance on the Use of Funds to Support Preschool Education*[25] continues to be valid in the 2016–17 school year.

[25] *CSP Guidance on the Use of Funds to Support Preschool Education* is valid through the 2016–17 school year.

Preschool Development Grants (PDG)

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. This program, to be jointly administered by the departments of Education and Health and Human Services (HHS), builds on the original Preschool Development Grants (PDG) program authorized in fiscal year 2014,[26] which currently funds 18 States developing and expanding high-quality preschool programs in more than 200 high-need communities. 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 served, as well as facilitate coordination and collaboration[27] (*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.

Programs for Special Populations

The *ESEA* includes several programs that serve special populations of students—children who are homeless,[28] in foster care, from migrant families, ELs, American Indian, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian. These students often need the support that high-quality early learning programs may provide to level the playing field and address opportunity gaps between them and their peers. There are specific funds available to support the early learners in these populations, as described below. Because programs serving children with disabilities are funded through the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (*IDEA*), and not the *ESEA*, they are not included in this section on special populations. Please see the Office of Special Education Programs[29] website for more information.

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. The *McKinney-Vento Act* ensures that children and youths who

[26] Sections 14005 and 14006 of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*, as amended by section1832(b) of division B of the Department of Defense and *Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011* (Pub. L. 112–10), *the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2012* (*Title III* of division F of Pub. L. 112–74, the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012*), and the *Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2014* (*Title III* of division H of Pub. L. 113–76, the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014*).

[27] This aspect of the program is discussed in greater detail under the "Ensuring Alignment, Collaboration, and Coordination" section of this guidance document.

[28] Although the *McKinney-Vento* program was amended by the *ESSA*, it is not an *ESEA* program.

[29] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html

are homeless are able to access the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths (*McKinney-Vento Act* section 721(1)). It also requires that SEAs and LEAs 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 (*McKinney-Vento Act* section 721(2)).

In order to promote greater stability for children who are homeless and have moved, the *McKinney-Vento Act* requires that LEAs presume that keeping these children in their schools of origin is in their best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the child's parent or guardian (*McKinney-Vento Act* section 722(g)(3)(B)(i)). "School of origin" means the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool. (*McKinney-Vento Act* section 722(g)(3)(I)(i)). If it is in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, transportation to the school of origin must be provided, if needed (*McKinney-Vento Act* section 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)). If it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child immediately must be enrolled in a new school, and the new school promptly must contact the school of origin to obtain relevant academic and other records. (*McKinney-Vento Act* section 722(g)(3)(C)(i)-(ii)). The *McKinney-Vento Act* also requires all LEAs to appoint local liaisons (*McKinney-Vento Act* section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii)) who are tasked with identifying and supporting children who are homeless (including those in preschool to the extent that an LEA offers a free public education for preschool children) and connecting them with supportive services (see *McKinney-Vento Act* section 722(g)(6)(A)).

Title I of the *ESEA* 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 (*ESEA* section 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.

Children in Foster Care

Children in foster care are another highly mobile and vulnerable population of students who experience frequent school and residential placement changes. Children who change schools frequently make less academic progress than their peers, and each time they change schools, they may fall further behind. Young children in foster care, in particular, need structured and stable school environments, with nurturing teachers and caregivers, to help them overcome the stress and trauma of abuse and neglect and lay the foundation for healthy social and emotional development.

Under the *ESEA*, SEAs and LEAs must now ensure that a child in foster care enrolls or remains in his or her school of origin, unless it is not in the child's best interest to attend the school of origin. If it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child immediately must be enrolled in a new school, and the new school must promptly contact the

school of origin to obtain relevant academic and other records (*ESEA* sections 1111(g)(1)(E) and 1112(c)(5)(B)). If an LEA offers a public preschool education, it must meet these 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 on the implications of the *ESEA* for children in foster care, please see *Ensuring Education Stability for Children in Foster Care* guidance, which was released jointly by the Department and HHS in June 2016.

Migratory Children

Children from families that are migratory because the parents or guardians work in the agricultural or fishing industry are especially underserved in preschool. In particular, the high mobility of these children creates significant challenges for both students and the school systems serving them, including education disruption and lack of stability. Further, migratory children tend to live in poverty, be identified as ELs, and belong to families that are likely to experience food and job insecurity, and poor health and housing conditions. To help address these unique needs, the Migrant Education Program (MEP), authorized under *Title I*, Part C of the *ESEA*, provides funds to States to offer high-quality education and supportive services. These funds help to ensure that migratory children meet the same challenging State academic standards as all other children and are able to graduate from high school or earn a certificate of high school equivalency. States may use MEP funds for preschool instruction, as well as other activities, including supplemental instruction in reading, math, and other academic areas; family literacy; high school credit accrual; and support services, including counseling, health and nutrition services, and transportation. Historically, a significant portion of the population served by MEP has been between the ages of 0 to 5. Data for 2014–15 indicate that the MEP served 3,832 children ages birth through 2 and 19,033 children ages 3 through 5, out of a total of 232,166 students served through MEP.[30]

English Learners and Immigrant Children

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.[31] 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.[32] 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. Dual language programs have been shown to be effective models to promote language development and academic achievement for ELs. One recent study found significant positive outcomes for ELs who participated in a dual language program; specifically, the study found that such students far exceeded their peers in English/language arts and reading

[30] U.S Department of Education, "Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR)," SY 2014-15, http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/consolidated/index.htmlState

[31] Virginia Buysse, Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, Mariela Páez, Carol Scheffner Hammer, and Meagan Knowles, "Effects of Early Education Programs and Practices on the Development and Learning of Dual Language Learners: A Review of the Literature," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (2014): 765-785, doi: 10.1016/j.ecresq.2013.08.004; William T. Gormley, "The Effects of Oklahoma's Pre-K Program on Hispanic Children," *Social Science Quarterly* 89, no. 4 (2008): 916-936, doi: 10.1111/j.1540-6237.2008.00591.x.

[32] Halle, T., Hair, E., Wandner, L., McNamara, M., and Chien, N., "Predictors and Outcomes of Early vs. Later English Language Proficiency among English Language Learners," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2012): 1–20.

achievement.[33] Research has further demonstrated that dual immersion programs have the benefit of supporting bilingual and biliterate development, and the commensurate cognitive, social, and economic benefits associated with bilingualism and biliteracy.[34] The departments of Education and HHS' joint *Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs* provides recommendations for States and local communities to promote the development and learning of young children, from birth to age 5, who are dual language learners (DLLs).

Title III of the *ESEA* includes a strengthened focus on providing services to support young ELs and immigrant children. SEAs that receive *Title III* funds and LEAs that receive *Title III* subgrants may use these funds to provide professional development for early childhood educators who teach ELs ages 3 and up. (*ESEA* sections 3102(4), 3111(b)(2)(B), 3115(c)(2)). LEAs may also use their subgrants to strengthen or develop effective language instruction for ELs in early childhood programs, as long as that use is consistent with *Title III*'s non-supplanting requirement. (*ESEA* section 3115(d)(4), (g)). Additionally, LEAs must coordinate activities and share relevant data with Head Start and other early learning providers, if applicable, in order to create a better continuum of services for young ELs. (*ESEA* section 3116(b)(4)(D)). The Department issued *Non-Regulatory Guidance: English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* in September 2016 to help SEAs and LEAs support ELs, including young DLLs.

American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians

Many American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians have been affected by poverty and scarce resources and therefore may greatly benefit from high-quality early learning programs. The *ESEA* explicitly includes early learning as an allowable activity in several *Title VI* (Indian Education) programs that support these special populations. However, the types of activities that can be supported with *Title VI* grant funds vary by program. For example, *Title VI*, Part A (Indian Education Grants to LEAs) allows funds to be used for "early childhood programs;" *Title VI*, Part B (Native Hawaiian Education) allows funds to support services for children starting at birth; and *Title VI*, Part C (Alaska Native Education) supports "early childhood … education activities" and "programs for … infants…" See Table 2 for more information.

[33] Jennifer L.Steele, Robert O. Slater, Gema Zamarro, Trey Miller, Jennifer Li, Susan Burkhauser, and Michael Bacon, *The effects of dual-language immersion programs on student achievement*, EDRE working paper 2015-09, (University of Arkansas, 2015), http://www.uaedreform.org/downloads/2015/11/edre-working-paper-2015-09.pdf.

[34] Vitello, V., Downer, J., and Williford, A., "Preschool classroom experiences of dual language learners: Summary findings from publically funded programs in 11 States," in *Dual language learners in the early childhood classroom*, C. Howes, J. Downer, & R. Pianta (Eds.), (Maryland: Brookes Publishing Company, 2011): 45-68; Farver, J., Lonigan, C., and Eppe, S, "Effective early literacy skill development for young Spanish speaking English language learners: An experimental study of two methods," *Child Development* 80, 3 (2009): 703-719; W. Steven Barnett, Donald J. Yarosz, Jessica Thomas, Kwanghee Jung, Dulce Blanco, "Two-way and monolingual English immersion in preschool education: An experimental comparison," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 22, 3 (2007): 277–293; Rachel A. Valentino, and Sean F. Reardon, "Effectiveness of four instructional programs designed to serve English Learners: Variations by ethnicity and initial English proficiency," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, (2015), doi: 10.3102/0162373715573310.State

Table 2. Supports for Children who are American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians

American Indians and Alaska Natives	Under the *Title VI*, Part A Indian Education Grants to LEAs formula grant program, funds can be used for early childhood programs that emphasize school readiness (*ESEA* section 6115 (b)(3)). Also in *Title VI*, Part A, the Indian Education Demonstration Grants program authorizes the use of grant funds to support preschool and kindergarten programs as long as those programs are effective in preparing children to make sufficient academic growth by third grade (*ESEA* section 6121 (c)(7)).
Native Hawaiians	Under the Native Hawaiian Education program (*Title VI*, Part B) funds 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 ages birth –3, preschool programs, and research on such programs (*ESEA* sections 6205 (3)(A), 6205 (3)(B), and 6205 (3)(C)).
Alaska Natives	The Alaska Native Education program (*Title VI*, Part B) allows funds to be used to support early childhood and parent education programs that improve the school readiness of Alaska Native children (*ESEA* sections 6205 (3)(A), 6205 (3)(B), and 6205 (3)(C)).

In addition, 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 (*ESEA*, section 3112).

Ensuring Alignment, Collaboration, and Coordination

Alignment and collaboration between early childhood education programs and the K–12 system is a recurring theme throughout the *ESEA*. The law stresses greater coordination, at both the State and local levels, of programs that serve young children, and encourages a more seamless learning experience from preschool through the elementary grades. In order to accomplish these goals, the Department encourages States and LEAs to consider both the horizontal and vertical alignment of programs. *Horizontal alignment* is the consistency or connectedness of program and professional standards across programs and settings that serve a particular age or grade. *Vertical alignment* addresses the progressive development of standards from birth through third grade that provide a continuum for children's knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it is important that both schools and early childhood programs coordinate their outreach efforts to families, so that they are aware of enrollment options and processes for their children. Community-based organizations can play an important role in this regard as they often have existing, trusting relationships with families. Table 3 includes examples of ways that SEAs and LEAs are required to or may support the alignment, collaboration, and coordination of programs.

Table 3. Examples of Alignment, Coordination, and Collaboration of P–12 Programs

	LEA	SEA
Requirements of *ESEA*	• If in receipt of *Title I* funds, develop agreements and carry out coordination activities with Head Start agencies and other early childhood programs, if feasible. • 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. • Include on LEA report cards the number and percentage of children enrolled in preschool programs.	• As part of its *Title I* State plan or its consolidated State plan, a State must coordinate with other programs that provide services to children, including Child Care Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG), Head Start, and *IDEA*. • Describe in the *Title I* State plan how the State will provide assistance to LEAs and schools choosing to use *Title I* funds to support early childhood education programs. • Include on State report card the number and percentage of children enrolled in preschool programs.[35]
Other Possible Activities	• Share data (consistent with applicable privacy laws), summer learning programs, family engagement activities, and joint professional development opportunities that involve both community-based providers and school staff. • Examine policies, procedures, and practices to support preschool children with disabilities and consider how funds can be used to ensure access to inclusive preschool classrooms. • Partner with Promise Neighborhoods and Full-Service Schools grantees to ensure early learning is part of a coordinated system of supports for families. • Align curriculum and instruction from preschool through elementary school as part of a LEA's school improvement efforts.	• Develop State plans that address the comprehensive needs of all young children (e.g., children with disabilities, children in poverty, ELs, immigrants, homeless, etc.). • Use State advisory councils (SACs) to ensure coordination of early childhood programs and services. • Apply for a PDG initial grant to coordinate existing federal, State, and local program delivery models and funding streams across a mixed delivery system of services. • Integrate early education data with State longitudinal data systems. • Implement strategies, including high-quality early learning, to improve struggling schools. • Align State early learning guidelines and K–12 standards.

Coordinating and Collaborating Across Programs

[35] The Department intends to provide additional guidance on these new data requirements.

Under the *ESEA*, through State plans for *Title I*, SEAs are required to coordinate with other programs that provide services for young children, including programs administered by HHS (i.e., under the CCDBG and *Head Start Act*) as well as *IDEA* (*ESEA* section 1111(a)(1)(B)). 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. Authorized under the *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*, SACs are charged with ensuring coordination and collaboration of early childhood programs and services in the State, and include representatives from a diverse range of stakeholder groups.[36] SACs are well positioned at the State level to inform early childhood priorities, drive policy and legislative change, and administer public spending on early childhood-relevant programs. For more information on the SACs, please see the joint Department and HHS Statement, *State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care: Advancing Work Beyond Federal Financing*.

LEA Coordination with Head Start and Other Early Childhood Programs

Each LEA receiving *Title I* funds, *regardless of whether it operates a* Title I *preschool program*, **must develop agreements** and carry out the following coordination activities with Head Start and, if feasible, other early childhood programs:

- ✓ Developing and implementing a systematic procedure for receiving records of preschool children
- ✓ Establishing channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts to facilitate coordination
- ✓ Conducting meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers, and Head Start teachers to discuss the developmental and other needs of children
- ✓ Organizing and participating in joint transition-related training of school, Head Start, and where appropriate, other early childhood education program staff
- ✓ Linking the educational services provided by the LEA with those provided by Head Start agencies

See ESEA *Section 1119*

In addition, the newly authorized discretionary PDG grant program offers States assistance, through *initial grants*, to facilitate the coordination and collaboration of existing federal, State, and local early learning programs in the State. This aligns and strengthens programs, coordinates delivery models and funding streams across a mixed delivery system of services, improves program quality, and increases the overall participations of young children in programs (*ESSA* section 9212). The PDG grant program specifically encourages partnerships among Head Start providers, State and local governments, Indian Tribes and tribal organizations, private entities, and LEAs to improve coordination, program quality, and delivery of services. States may also wish to consider ways of partnering with entities that serve young children with disabilities (See *Supporting Children with Disabilities on page 18*).

[36] The SACs were required by law to include representatives from the following as members: the State agency responsible for child care, SEA, LEA, institutions of higher education in the State, local providers of early childhood education and development services, Head Start agencies, including Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs, as well as American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs, Head Start State Collaboration Office, State agency responsible for the programs under Part B, section 619 or Part C of the *IDEA*, State agency responsible for health or mental health, any other agencies determined to be relevant by the governor.

Collaboration with Head Start

An LEA that receives *Title I* funds under the *ESEA* is ***required*** to coordinate with Head Start programs and, if feasible, other early learning programs that serve children who will attend the LEA, regardless of whether the LEA uses *Title I* funds to operate an early education program (*ESEA* section 1119). Now as part of the *ESEA*, 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. (See text box.) 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.

For example, the **Kai Ming Head Start program** in San Francisco and the **San Francisco Unified School District** **(SFUSD)** have an ongoing partnership illustrative of how schools and community-based providers can work together to ensure children enter kindergarten ready for success. Kai Ming and SFUSD have a *memorandum of understanding* to work together to align curricula and desired outcomes. This partnership ensures that local schools are aware of the incoming child's exposure to the dual language teaching model and other early childhood experiences, helps to improve information sharing from Head Start agencies to SFUSD at the time of transition to kindergarten, provides opportunities for joint professional development trainings with both Kai Ming and SFUSD teachers, and gives Head Start providers important information for continuous program improvement in preparing children for kindergarten.

Supporting Children with Disabilities

One area in particular for States and LEAs to consider is how to promote greater coordination and collaboration for children with disabilities receiving services under the *IDEA*. Research and experience have demonstrated the developmental, learning, and social benefits of inclusion for children with and without disabilities.[37] As LEAs plan to expand the availability of high-quality preschool programs, special attention should be paid to how preschool children with disabilities will be identified and meaningfully included. Children with disabilities and their families continue to face significant barriers to accessing inclusive high-quality preschool,[38] despite the fact that under *IDEA*, children with disabilities ages 3–5 are entitled to a free appropriate public education.

The Department and HHS' joint *Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs* States that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations. For inclusion programs to be successful, staff need to intentionally promote children's participation across all learning and social activities, facilitated by

[37] Samuel L. Odom, Joann Vitzum, Ruth Wolery, Joan Lieber, Susan Sandall, Marci J. Hanson, Paula Beckman, Ilene Schwartz, and Eva Horn, "Preschool Inclusion in the United States: A Review of Research from an Ecological Systems Perspective," *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 4, no. 1, (2004): 17-49, doi: 10.1111/J.1471-3802.2004.00016.x; Mary Wagner, Jose Blackorby, Renee Cameto, Kathleen Hebbler, and Lynn Newman, *A Summary of Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students*, (Menlo Park, CA: SRI International, 1993), http://nlts2.org/reports/nlts_report/TransitionExperiences_December1993.pdf.State

[38] U.S. Department of Education, "IDEA Section 618 Data Products: Static Tables," 2014 Part B Child Count and Educational Environments, http://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html.

individualized accommodations. Therefore, LEAs should examine their policies, procedures, and practices in supporting preschool children with disabilities in their systems, and consider how *ESEA* funding can be used to ensure access and participation in inclusive preschool classrooms. This could include providing professional development to increase preschool teachers' competencies in instructing children with disabilities; ensuring that appropriate accommodations are in place, such as assistive technology, so that children can access the curriculum or participate in assessments; implementing schoolwide models of positive interventions and supports to promote healthy social, emotional, and behavioral development; and supporting the universal design of the environment or instructional materials.

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 *ESEA*. This program provides a continuum of coordinated supports, services, and opportunities for children and families, including early learning programs.

> For example, the **Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)** was founded to permanently close the achievement gap and end generational poverty in North Minneapolis by creating a single comprehensive system of support for families that moves children through a "cradle-to-career" pipeline. The system is composed of a collection of partners, including parents, community-based organizations, schools, private and public funders, governmental organizations, and faith-based institutions. In 2011, NAZ was awarded a Promise Neighborhood implementation grant to dramatically scale up its cradle-to-career strategy for ensuring that every child born within the neighborhood boundary finishes school college-ready. NAZ began building its cradle-to-career continuum of services by investing in children in the zone ages birth to 5. Recognizing that parents are their children's first and primary teachers, NAZ implements a two-generation approach by supporting parents with the skills and tools needed to strengthen the stability of their families and support the academic success of their children. Recent findings suggest that NAZ enrolled students who had participated in a high-quality early learning program tended to enter kindergarten more ready than their counterparts who did not receive NAZ services.

Full Service Community Schools, for which grants are also authorized under *Title IV* of the *ESEA*, have often relied on strong partnerships with early childhood providers or have intentionally scaled-up preschool services as a critical component of their model for school and community improvement.

Vertical Alignment From Preschool to Third Grade

Evidence suggests that students benefit from a system of early learning from birth to age 8 that includes aligned standards, curricula, instruction, and assessments. Young children often experience discontinuities in these elements as they move through the early grades, especially during the

transition from preschool to kindergarten.[39] Vertical alignment from preschool to third grade (P–3) provides greater continuity and better organization of student services and school-family partnerships.[40] In addition, the ability to link individual student preschool data to K–12 data allows elementary teachers to have more complete information about students' learning trajectories and better tailor instruction to meet students' needs.[41] If well implemented, a strategic P–3 approach can help to align expectations between programs and foster a greater sense of a continuum across the early elementary years.

On May 31, 2016, the Department published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the *Federal Register* to amend the Department's regulations on State accountability systems and reporting requirements, including provisions related to accountability indicators, under *Title I* of the *ESEA* as amended by the *ESSA*. The NPRM also updates the current *ESEA* general regulations to include requirements for the submission of State plans under *ESEA* programs, including engaging in timely and meaningful consultation with stakeholders when developing, revising prior to submitting, and when amending the optional consolidated State plans. The comment period for the NPRM closed on Aug. 1, 2016. The Department intends to provide further guidance when the regulations are final.

The *ESEA* provides States increased flexibility to design their accountability systems and implement strategies to improve struggling schools with the appropriate federal guardrails to protect their most vulnerable students (*ESEA* section 1111(c) and (d)). These changes offer opportunities for each State to think about the role of early education in its *Title I* State plan or consolidated State plan. Specifically, the *ESEA* requires a State to describe in an individual *Title I* program plan how it will provide assistance to LEAs and schools choosing to use *Title I* funds to support early childhood education programs. Under the *ESEA*, each State plan must also describe in either an individual *Title I* program plan or consolidated State plan a Statewide accountability system that includes at least one indicator of school quality or student success. While a State has flexibility to choose such an indicator, it must include one that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance and is valid, reliable, comparable, and Statewide, with the same indicator or indicators used in each grade span (e.g., an early learning measure) (*ESEA* section 1111(c) and (d)). A State is required to use its Statewide accountability system to identify schools for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement, and to notify each LEA of any school served by the LEA that is identified as such. LEAs with schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement must complete, in partnership with stakeholders, including principals and other school leaders, teachers, and parents (which may include early childhood educators and experts), a needs assessment for the school. They must also develop and implement a comprehensive support and improvement plan to improve student outcomes in the school. The plan must include one or more evidence-based interventions, such

[39] Rebecca New, Sharon Palsha, and Sharon Ritchie, *Issues in PreK–3rd Education: A FirstSchool Framework for Curriculum and Instruction #7*, (Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, 2009).
[40] Reynolds, A. J., and Temple, J. A., "Cost-effective Early Childhood Development Programs from Preschool to Third Grade," *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 4 (2008): 109–139, doi: 10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.3.022806.091411.
[41] Donald J. Hernandez, "PreK–3rd: Next Steps for State Longitudinal Data Systems," *PreK-3rd Policy to Action brief no. 8*, (New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development, 2012), http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED542862.pdf; Kristie Kauerz, and Julia Coffman, *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK–3rd Grade Approaches*, (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, College of Education, 2013), http://depts.washington.edu/pthru3/PreK-3rd_Framework_Legal%20paper.pdf.

as, in the case of an elementary school, increasing access to high-quality preschool as part of its turnaround strategy (*ESEA* section 1111(d)(1)(B)).

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.[42] 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.[43] 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.

For example, as part of its early childhood initiative, **Boston Public Schools (BPS)** aligned curricula, instructional practices, and professional development used in preschool through third grade. BPS developed a new kindergarten curriculum, added elements, such as storytelling, to the preschool curriculum, and piloted a new first grade curriculum, with the goal of aligning instruction across preschool through the early grades. These efforts help ensure that teachers focus on developing skills that students need to master to succeed in later grades, incorporate student-centered instruction, and use developmentally appropriate practices by incorporating the cultural development of the child in preschool and early elementary classrooms.

New Data Requirements

The *ESEA* requires States and LEAs to include on their report cards the number and percentage of children enrolled in preschool programs. Such timely information will help to identify potential gaps in access to preschool services and facilitate greater awareness about the continuum of learning between early learning and the elementary grades (*ESEA* section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii)(II)(aa), (2)(C)). The Department intends to provide additional guidance on these new data requirements.

Supporting Educators

Developing early educators' skills and knowledge is essential to ensuring that children enter kindergarten prepared and that gains from high-quality preschool are sustained throughout elementary school and beyond. Research has shown that teachers of young children from birth through the early grades require specialized knowledge and skills focused as much on the science

[42] Multiple domains of learning include language and literacy development; cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development); approaches toward learning (including the utilization of the arts); physical well-being and motor development (including adaptive skills); and social and emotional development.

[43] For more information on student privacy considerations, please see the Early Childhood Data Privacy website.

of child development as on the sequence of learning across multiple domains of learning.[44] Supporting the learning and development of young children requires a complex and sophisticated understanding of how to integrate learning across multiple domains[45] and individualize instruction for children with varied experiences. Early educators also need a clear understanding of what happens before and after the specific grade or age level they teach.

As noted, children benefit when there is a continuous approach to learning from preschool through third grade and beyond, including aligned standards, curricula, instructional approaches, and assessments. Without alignment, young children experience discontinuities and disruptions in learning and support. To achieve better alignment of systems, professional development needs to focus on early educators and other personnel working in schools, Head Start, or other community-based early learning programs, as well as early elementary school teachers and principals.

States and LEAs, working with other professional development providers, can use funds available under titles *I*, *II*, and *III* to support high-quality teaching and learning in schools and other early childhood settings. Under each title, program funds have specific uses and limitations and must be used to serve eligible children, but these resources can help districts to support early learning teachers, administrators, and other staff, learn new skills, and improve their instructional practices.

For example, the **Minnesota Department of Education** **(MDE)** is working in partnership with the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association and the Minnesota Association of School Administrators to provide a comprehensive P–3 professional learning series, which launched in fall 2015. *The Minnesota PreK–3 Professional Learning Model* focuses on three drivers for change to improve the results for all children: leadership (administrators and teachers), competency (professional practice), and organizations (systems). MDE first prioritized developing principal leadership competencies. Principal-led teams participate in five full-day sessions given by national and State leaders and innovators on P–3 approaches to develop strong principal competencies for building P–3 systems in their communities. Concentrating on building P–3 educator competencies, P–3 regional liaisons participate in online courses and face-to-face meetings. District/community-based leadership teams are headed up by superintendents to gain the skills needed to support a P–3 system.

Title I

In general, *Title I* funds may be used to support ongoing professional development for any teacher in a *Title I* preschool program so long as the training is related to the *Title I* preschool program and is designed to meet the education needs of *Title I*-eligible children. *Title I* funds may also be used for professional development for teachers in a preschool program that does not receive *Title I* funds (including a community-based program) provided that the children attending the program are likely to attend a *Title I* elementary school when they enter kindergarten. In this case, the purpose of the professional development must be to improve coordination between the

[44] Multiple domains of learning include language and literacy development; cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development); approaches toward learning (including the utilization of the arts); physical well-being and motor development (including adaptive skills); and social and emotional development.
[45] Ibid.

non-*Title I* preschool and the *Title I* elementary school or to facilitate children's transition from preschool into elementary school. Consistent with the LEA's needs assessment and plan, *Title I* funds also may be used to improve early learning and develop the knowledge and skills of kindergarten through third grade teachers and administrators. This will help ensure that the gains made in the preschool years are likely to be sustained across the early grades and enable at-risk students to meet challenging State academic standards.

Title II

Title II, Part A funds may be used to support the professional development of early educators. The Department issued *Non-Regulatory Guidance for Title II, Part A: Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Leading* in September 2016 to help SEAs and LEAs support teachers, including early educators. These funds have a wide variety of possible applications for early educators and the *ESEA* explicitly includes new ways SEAs and LEAs may use *Title II*, Part A funds to support early learning. These include:

- 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 8 (*ESEA* section 2103(b)(3)(G))
- Supporting LEAs to increase teachers', principals', or other school leaders' knowledge base regarding instruction in the early grades and strategies to measure whether young children are progressing (*ESEA* section 2103(b)(3)(G))
- Providing LEA training to support 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 (*ESEA* 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 participate in joint efforts to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness (*ESEA* section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xvi))

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 (*ESEA* sections 2222-24) (formerly known as Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program). 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 (*ESEA* section 2223). The overall purpose of the program is to improve student academic achievement in reading and writing for children from birth to grade 12 by providing subgrants to LEAs, early childhood education programs, and their partners to implement evidence-based programs that ensure high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction for students most in need.

Title III

An important purpose of *Title III* of the *ESEA* is to help ELs and immigrant children and youths attain English language proficiency and meet the same challenging State academic standards as their non-EL peers. The Department issued *Non-Regulatory Guidance: English Learners and* Title III *of the* Elementary and Secondary Education Act *(*ESEA*), as amended by the* Every Student Succeeds Act *(*ESSA*)* in September 2016 to help SEAs and LEAs support ELs, including young DLLs. 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 (*ESEA* 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 (*ESEA* 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. All uses of *Title III* funds must meet the requirement in *ESEA* section 3115(g) that *Title III* funds be used to supplement, and not supplant, the level of federal, State, and local funds that, in the absence of *Title III* funds, would have been expended for programs for ELs and immigrant children and youths. The National Professional Development Project, a competitive grant program authorized under *Title III*, provides grants to institutions of higher education (in partnership with LEAs) to improve pre-service and in-service support for all educators who serve ELs. Grants support professional development activities that will improve classroom instruction for ELs and assist educational personnel to meet high professional standards and improve their qualifications and skills. Funds may be used to support strong transitions for ELs from Head Start and other preschool programs to elementary school.

Table 4. Examples of how *Title I*, Part A; *Title II*, Part A; and *Title III*, Part A funds can be used to support early learning professional development and capacity building.

Use of Funds **(All examples are for illustrative purposes only. SEAs and LEAs must ensure funds are used according to their expressed purposes, conform to all the requirements in the specific title, and support the students for whom they are intended.)**	***Title I* (disadvant-aged students)**	***Title II* (teachers and leaders)**	***Title III* (English learners)**
Align the early learning and K–12 systems at the State level			
• Use the *Title II* State activities funds and the optional 3 percent set aside from LEA subgrants to build capacity of preschool through third grade principals and other school leaders.		✓	
• Design school districts' *Title II* applications to encourage the use of *Title II* funding for building early learning capacity.		✓	
• Update and align certification and licensing standards for early childhood educators, including administrators working with young children from preschool through third grade.		✓	
Build early learning capacity through SEA efforts			
• Support joint training for teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, early childhood education program directors, and other early childhood education program providers to develop strong strategies to help children transition to elementary school.	✓	✓	
• Build early learning capacity of school and district leaders.	✓	✓	
Build teacher capacity to support ELs in ways consistent with the program's non-supplanting requirement			
• Train early learning teachers to support ELs in developing English language proficiency and academic readiness, including training in instruction strategies, the use of appropriate language support services, and use of curricula.	✓	✓	✓
• Support efforts to increase the number of effective bilingual teachers in early learning programs.	✓	✓	✓
• Develop and implement new English language instruction educational programs for early learning, including dual-language programs, or supplement existing ones.	✓	✓	✓
• Improve coordination between early childhood programs and elementary school for ELs by aligning EL-related curricula and instruction, conducting transition activities for ELs entering kindergarten, and implementing two-way data sharing on ELs between the school district and Head Start or other early childhood programs, consistent with privacy laws.	✓		✓

Use of Funds **(All examples are for illustrative purposes only. SEAs and LEAs must ensure funds are used according to their expressed purposes, conform to all the requirements in the specific title, and support the students for whom they are intended.)**	***Title I*** **(disadvant-aged students)**	***Title II*** **(teachers and leaders)**	***Title III*** **(English learners)**
Support the inclusion of children with disabilities or address challenging behaviors			
• Provide coaching for early learning providers and school administrators to promote children's social, emotional, and behavioral development and appropriately address challenging behaviors.	✓	✓	
• Provide ongoing professional development for early learning providers on how to individualize instruction, and provide the necessary accommodations and services to meet the learning needs and support the participation of children with disabilities across all learning opportunities.	✓	✓	
Increase the skills of early educators in schools and community-based settings supported by LEAs			
• Focus on effectively supporting children's language/reading, math, social, and emotional development; and on differentiating instruction for young learners.	✓	✓	
• Provide support and ongoing training to early learning teachers on the interactive use of technology for enhancing classroom instruction and reaching out to families.	✓	✓	
• Ensure regular observations of classroom practices to assess and improve teachers' effectiveness in creating high-quality instructional, social, and emotional climates.	✓	✓	
• Develop partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish early learning teacher training programs that provide prospective and novice teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty.	✓	✓	
• Provide professional development for local agency and school personnel, including early childhood educators, parents, and family members, regarding parent and family engagement strategies.	✓	✓	
Build early learning capacity at the LEA level			
• Facilitate the sharing of research-based, effective professional development that brings preschool through grade three teachers, principals, staff, and program leaders together for joint professional learning and collaboration.	✓	✓	
• Provide programs to increase the knowledge base of principals, K–3 teachers, or other school leaders on appropriate instruction in the early grades and on strategies to measure whether young children are progressing.	✓	✓	
• Provide annual joint professional development related to the learning and development of children from birth through age 8.	✓	✓	
• Establish and implement effective induction programs and ongoing supervision/evaluation of site administrators and teachers who work in preschool through third grade settings.	✓	✓	
• Provide compensation for additional responsibilities and activities related to teacher leadership, such as peer-led professional development, mentorship and induction, recruitment and retention, curriculum design, and advising on public policy.	✓	✓	
• Provide training for educators on how to develop a comprehensive plan to support and engage families in the education of their children.	✓	✓	

Conclusion

Over the last several years, an impressive coalition of education, business, law enforcement, military, child advocacy, and faith-based leaders have joined together to support the expansion of high-quality early education. The new education law brings with it a fresh vision for how we may address the education gaps that continue to persist, especially for our most vulnerable children. Many SEAs and LEAs around the country have already begun the transformation from systems focused exclusively on K–12 education to those that recognize that learning begins prior to kindergarten. Schools and LEAs play an important role in increasing access to high-quality, equitable early learning opportunities for children from birth through third grade so that no matter the zip code in which a child is born, he or she will have the chance for success in school and in life.

Appendix A
Early Learning Requirements and Opportunities in the *ESEA* and Related Programs

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of early learning opportunities under the ESEA, *nor does it include all of the specific requirements for each program. It is a summary of some of the areas in which funds may or must be used to support early learning.*

Title/Section	Instance	Required	Allowable/Possible[46]
***Title I*, Part A Sec 1111(a)(1)(B)**	SEA Plan[47]	SEAs must coordinate with other programs that provide services for young children, including the *IDEA*, CCDBG, and Head Start, among other programs.	
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1111(c)**	SEA Plan		In its State plan, an SEA must describe a Statewide accountability system that includes not less than one indicator of school quality or student success, which State may be of the State's choosing. This indicator must allow for meaningful differentiation in school performance and is valid, reliable, comparable, and Statewide (e.g., an early learning measure).
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1111(g)(1)(A)**	SEA Plan	SEAs must describe in their State *Title I* plans how the State will provide assistance to LEAs and schools choosing to use *Title I* funds to support early childhood education programs.	
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii)(II)(aa), (h)(2)(C)**	SEA and LEA Report Cards	SEAs and LEAs must include on their report cards the number and percentage of students enrolled in preschool programs.	
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1112(b)(8)**	LEA Plan	LEAs must describe in their *Title I* plans, if applicable, how they will support, coordinate, and integrate *Title I* services with early childhood education programs at the LEA or school level, including plans for the transition of children to elementary school.	
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1112(c)(7)**	LEA Assurances	An LEA's *Title I* plan must provide an assurance that the LEA will, if it uses funds to provide early childhood education, ensure that programs comply with the Head Start education performance standards.	
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1113(c)(5)**	Eligible School Attendance Areas		An LEA may reserve funds to provide early childhood education programs for eligible children.
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(V)**	Schoolwide Program Plan		A school operating a *Title I* schoolwide program must develop a comprehensive plan that includes a description of the strategies that the school will be implementing. This may include strategies for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to local elementary school programs.

[46] All competitive grants are voluntary, and SEAs, LEAs, and other eligible entities are not required to compete for a competitive grant.
[47] The Department has published proposed regulations on this topic and intends to provide further guidance when the regulations are final.

Title/Section	Instance	Required	Allowable/Possible[46]
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1114(c)**	Schoolwide Program Preschool Programs		A school that operates a schoolwide program may use funds to establish or enhance preschool programs for children under 6 years of age.
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1003**	School Improvement		An LEA may, for example, address the needs of children from birth through third grade as a school improvement strategy to improve student achievement, instruction, and schools.
***Title I*, part A Sec. 1115(b)(2)(C)**	Targeted Assistance School Program		A targeted assistance school may use funds to assist preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to elementary school programs.
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1116(a)(3)(D)(i)**	Parent and Family Engagement		An LEA may use funds reserved for parent and family engagement to support schools and nonprofit organizations in providing family engagement professional development. This may be provided jointly to elementary school staff, early childhood educators, and parents and family members.
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1117**	Participation of children enrolled in private schools	LEAs receiving *Title I* funds must provide equitable services to eligible private elementary and secondary school children and their teachers and families. This includes preschool children in States that consider preschool to be part of elementary education under State law. In a State that does not consider preschool to be part of elementary education, however, children in a private preschool are not receiving elementary education and, thus, are not entitled to receive equitable services under *Title I*.	Although preschool children generally are not entitled to receive equitable services, if they reside in a participating *Title I* school attendance area and attend a private elementary school in which school-age children are entitled to equitable services, the preschool children and their teachers and families may receive *Title I* services. Whether such preschool children 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 other eligible children in the private school and the amount of funding available to provide services.
***Title I*, Part A Sec. 1119(a) and (b)**	Coordination with Early Childhood Programs	Each LEA receiving *Title I* funds must develop agreements and carry out coordination activities with Head Start agencies and, if feasible, other early childhood development programs.	
***Title I*, Part C Sec. 1304(c)(4)**	Migrant Education	The State must provide an assurance that it has and will address the unmet education needs of preschool migratory children.	
***Title II*, Part A Sec. 2101(c)(4)(B)(xvi)**	State Uses of Funds Activities		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.
***Title II*, Part A Sec. 2103(b)(3)(G)(i) and (ii)**	LEA Uses of Funds Activities		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.

Title/Section	Instance	Required	Allowable/Possible[46]
***Title II*, Part A sec. 2103(b)(3)(J)**	LEA Uses of Funds Activities		LEAs may 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.
***Title II*, Part B, Subpart 2 Sections 2222-2224**	Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grants Under the Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN)(formerly known as Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program)	States receiving these competitive grants must use 15 percent of subgranted funds for State and local programs and activities to support high-quality early literacy initiatives for children from birth through kindergarten entry and 40 percent of subgranted funds for State and local programs and activities to support children in kindergarten through grade five.	
***Title II*, Part B Sec. 2226**	Innovative Approaches to Literacy		LEAs, BIE, and nonprofit organizations may use funds for literacy programs, including early childhood literacy, in low-income communities.
***Title III*, Part A Sec. 3112**	Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program		Grants may 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 III*, Part A Sec. 3115**	Subgrants to Eligible Entities		Grants may be used to develop and implement effective preschool, elementary school, or secondary school language instruction educational programs that are coordinated with other relevant programs and services. Use of funds must be supplemental to other federal, State, or local funds.
***Title III*, Part A Sec. 3131(c)(1)(C)(6)**	National Professional Development Project .		Institutions of higher education or public or private entities (in consortia with SEAs or LEAs) may use funds to support professional development strategies that promote school readiness of ELs and their transition from early childhood education programs to elementary school.
***Title IV*, Part A**	Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants		Grants may be used to improve students' academic achievement by increasing the capacity of States, LEAs, schools, and local communities to (1) provide all students with access to a well-rounded education; (2) improve school conditions for student learning; and (3) improve the use of technology in order to advance the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students. Grants may support students in all grades.
***Title IV*, Part B**	21st Century Community Learning Centers		Grants may be used to provide opportunities for communities to establish or expand activities in community learning centers that (1) provide opportunities for academic enrichment to help students meet the challenging State academic standards; (2) offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities; and

Title/Section	Instance	Required	Allowable/Possible[46]
			(3) offer families opportunities for active and meaningful engagement in their children's education. Grants may support students in all grades.
***Title IV*, Part D Sec. 4407(a)(3)**	Magnet Schools Assistance		Grant funds may be used by an LEA, or LEA consortium, for the compensation, or subsidization of the compensation, of elementary school and instructional staff to conduct programs in magnet schools.
***Title IV*, Part C Sec. 4302(a)**	Charter School Program		A charter school may serve early childhood, elementary school, or secondary school students.
***Title IV*, Part F Sec. 4611**	Grants for Education Innovation and Research		Grants may, for example, be used to support early learning, and must be used to (A) create, develop, implement, replicate, or take to scale entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement and attainment for high-need students; and (B) rigorously evaluate such innovations.
***Title IV*, Part F Sec. 4624(d)(2)**	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.	
***Title IV*, Part F Sec. 4625(e)(1)**	Full-Service Community Schools		Grants must be used to coordinate not less than three existing pipeline services, and provide not less than two additional pipeline services at two or more public elementary schools or secondary schools (pipeline services selected may include high-quality early childhood education programs).
***Title IV*, Part F Sec. 4642**	Assistance for Arts Educators		Awards may, for example, be used to promote school readiness through the development and dissemination of accessible instructional materials and arts-based educational programming.
***Title IV*, Part F Sec. 4643**	Ready to Learn Television	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.	
***Title IV*, Part F Sec. 4644**	Supporting High-Ability Learners and Learning		Awards to promote support for high-ability learners and high-ability learning.
***Title V*, Part B, Subpart 1, Sec. 5211**	Small, Rural School Achievement Program		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: (A) Part A of *Title I*. (B) Part A of *Title II*. (C) *Title III*. (D) Part A or B of *Title IV*.
***Title V*, Part B Subpart 2, Sec. 5221**	Rural and Low-Income School Program		An LEA may use funds for any of the following, including early learning activities to the extent they are authorized: (1) Activities authorized under Part A of *Title I* (2) Activities authorized under Part A of *Title*

Title/Section	Instance	Required	Allowable/Possible[46]
			II (3) Activities authorized under *Title III* (4) Activities authorized under Part A of *Title IV* (5) Parental involvement activities
***Title VI*, Part A** **Sec. 6115 (b)(3)**	Indian Education Grants		LEAs may use funds to support early childhood programs that emphasize school readiness.
***Title VI*, Part A** **Sec. 6121 (c)(7)**	Demonstration Grants for Indian Children		Grants may be used to support early childhood education programs that are effective in preparing young children to make sufficient academic growth by the end of grade three, including kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs, family-based preschool programs that emphasize school readiness, screening and referral, and the provision of services to Indian children and youths with disabilities.
***Title VI*, Part A** **Sec. 6122**	Indian Education - Professional Development for Teachers and Education Professionals		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. Professional development grants maybe 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.
***Title VI*, Part B** **Sec. 6205 (3)(A), (B), and (C)**	Native Hawaiian Education Program		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.
***Title VI*, Part C** **Sec. 6304 (a)(3)(C)**	Alaska Native Education Program		Nonprofit or other organizations and agencies may use funds to support early childhood and parent education programs that improve school readiness.
***Title VIII*, Part F, Subpart 1** **Sec. 8501- 8504**	Participation of Children 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. In a State that does not consider preschool to be part of elementary education, however, children in a private preschool are not entitled to receive equitable services under applicable programs. 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; and *Title IV*, Part B, 21st-Century Community Learning Centers.	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/Section	Instance	Required	Allowable/Possible[46]
Title VII-B* of the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	*McKinney-Vento* Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program	SEAs must use funds to help ensure that homeless children, including preschoolers, have equal access to free, appropriate public education.	
Title IX*, Part B Sec. 9212 of the *ESSA	Preschool Development Grants	These competitive grants support States to develop, update, or implement a strategic plan that facilitates collaboration and coordination among early childhood education programs and improves transitions to elementary school; encourage partnerships among early childhood education providers; and maximize parental choice.	

Appendix B
Resources by Topic Area

This appendix includes federal policy Statements and resources, and a sampling of external tools from the field. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any non-federal product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication, and specifically in this Appendix B, is intended or should be inferred. The U.S. Department of Education does not guarantee the timeliness or accuracy of the information contained at these external resources.

Assessments

Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How, from the National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, looks at how assessments that are well designed, effectively implemented, developed in the context of systematic planning, and interpreted and used appropriately can inform teaching and program improvement, and contribute to better outcomes for children.

Case Studies of the Early Implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments presents findings from a descriptive study that examined the development and early implementation of kindergarten entry assessments in 12 districts across four Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grantee States (Maryland, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington) as part of their comprehensive assessment systems. The goal of the study was to help educators identify gaps in children's competencies, target instruction to children's individual needs, engage parents to better support their child's learning, and identify needs for expanding and improving early learning opportunities.

Children With Disabilities

Children with disabilities and their families continue to face significant barriers to accessing inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, and too many preschool children with disabilities are only offered the option of receiving special education services in settings separate from their peers without disabilities. The "Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs," released jointly by ED and HHS, States that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations.

Chronic Absenteeism

Frequent absences from school can be devastating to a child's future. Children who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are much less likely to read on grade level by the third grade. ED's *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism* may help support coordinated community action that addresses the underlying causes of local, chronic absenteeism affecting millions of children in our nation's schools and early learning programs each year.

Dual Language Learners

The Department issued *Non-Regulatory Guidance for Title II, Part A: Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Leading* in September 2016 to help SEAs and LEAs support ELs, including young DLLs.

This ED and HHS joint "Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs" provides recommendations for States and local communities to promote the development and learning of young children, from birth to age five, who are DLLs. The Statement also provides support to tribal communities in their language revitalization efforts within tribal early childhood programs.

ED's *English Learner Tool Kit* is designed to help SEAs and LEAs meet their legal obligations to ELs and provide all ELs with the support needed to attain English language proficiency while meeting college- and career-readiness standards. The tool kit is intended primarily for State, district, school administrators, and teachers, but may also inform other stakeholders concerned with the education of ELs.

HHS' *Dual Language Learner Toolkit* provides resources for early childhood program leaders, educators, and families on how to best support the learning and development of dual language learners.

ED's *Newcomer Tool Kit* can help U.S. educators and others who work directly with immigrant students—including asylees and refugees—and their families.

Early Learning Data

Through the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) program, ED has supported the development of early learning data systems to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies. This includes encouraging the development of Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems (ECIDS) that collect and maintain data from early childhood programs across multiple agencies. A few key resources related to early childhood data and data systems include:

- The *IDEA* Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy) Center's data systems framework to assist *IDEA* Part C and Part B, Section 619 programs in developing and enhancing high-quality State data systems and in improving the quality of their *IDEA* data
- The SLDS program's ECIDS toolkit, developed to be used by any State regardless of where it is in the process of developing an ECIDS
- The QRIS Resource Guide, a tool for States and communities to explore key issues and decision points during the planning and implementation of a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS). States are involved in various activities to improve the availability and quality of early and school-age care and education programs. Most often these activities are supported by quality set-aside funds from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). States increasingly use CCDF funds to create QRIS or elements of QRIS.
- The Privacy Technical Assistance Center's (PTAC) resources about privacy and data sharing in early childhood programs, designed to assist States, communities, and local providers who are using data to serve the needs of children and families participating in early childhood programs (e.g., Head Start, child care, preschool). Data sharing can support efficient, effective services for children. However, the benefits of data sharing and use must be balanced with the need to support privacy.

***Every Student Succeeds Act* Resources**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, and represents good news for our nation's schools. This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. ED has created key ESSA resources, including guidance and regulatory information such as this publication, *Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*.

Family Engagement

The ED-HHS "Policy Statement on Family Engagement: From the Early Years to the Early Grades" provides guidance and recommendations to early childhood systems and programs on family engagement practices from the early years to the early grades. Family engagement refers to the systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children's development, learning, and wellness, including in the planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems.

Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Children Ages 0–8 from the National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine examines the State of the science with respect to parenting knowledge, attitudes, and practices that support positive parent-child interactions and healthy development of children ages 0–8; strategies for supporting parents and helping them engage in parenting practices associated with healthy child development; barriers and facilitators to strengthening parenting capacity and parents' participation in effective programs and services; and gaps in research on parenting. The report is intended to serve as a roadmap for the future of parenting and family support policies, practices, and research in the United States.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework is a research-based approach to program change designed to help Head Start and other early childhood programs achieve outcomes that lead to positive and enduring change for children and families.

Two Generation Approaches is a publication, prepared for the Department by Jobs for the Future, that considers the needs of both vulnerable children and parents, together, in the design and delivery of services and programs to

support improved economic, education, health, safety, and other outcomes that address the issues of intergenerational poverty.

Language/Literacy
The Early Learning Language and Literacy Series of professional development modules on early literacy learning from birth to kindergarten is designed to support the work of early education initiatives across the 50 States and the territories to support the language and literacy development of young children.

Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade Practice Guide
This practice guide provides four recommendations for teaching foundational reading skills to students in kindergarten through third grade. Each recommendation includes implementation steps and solutions for common obstacles.

Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children
This National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine study provides a summary report that examines research findings to provide an integrated picture of how reading develops and the importance of high-quality preschool and kindergarten environments and their contribution to providing a critical foundation to facilitate children's acquisition of essential reading skills.

ED and HHS created tip sheets for families, caregivers, and early learning educators. The "Talk, Read, and Sing Together Every Day" resources can help enrich a child's early language experiences by providing research-based tips for talking, reading, and singing with young children every day beginning from birth.

Neuroscience
From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development, from the National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, presents the evidence about "brain wiring" and how kids learn to speak, think, and regulate their behavior. It examines the effect of the climate—family, child care, community—in which the child grows. *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: An Update: Workshop Summary* is based on the original study released in October 2000.

Preschool – Third Grade
The *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK–3rd Grade Approaches* provides a vision for approaches designed to improve the quality and coherence of children's learning opportunities, from preschool through third grade. Ultimately, comprehensive P–3 approaches hold the potential to improve child outcomes and prevent or close achievement gaps. This framework is intended to be referenced and used over an extended period of time for reflection, self-evaluation, and improvement of P–3 efforts. It is designed primarily for use by schools, school districts, early learning programs, and other community partners.

Developed by a panel of leading practitioners, *Leading Pre-K-3–Learning Communities: Competencies for Effective Principal Practice (Executive Summary)*, from the National Association of Elementary School Principals, defines new competencies, and outlines a practical approach to high-quality early childhood education that is critical to laying a strong foundation for learning for young children from age three to third grade.

This series, *Principal's Corner: Perspectives on Teaching and Learning in PreK–3rd Grade*, from New America is based on focus groups of elementary school principals conducted in five U.S. cities. The six briefs take a closer look at principals' perceptions of what should take place in pre-K and early grade classrooms, while offering recommendations for States and school districts in regard to building principals' expertise in this area.

Private School Consultation and Equitable Services
ED's Office of Non-Public Education (ONPE) provides resources to help SEAs and LEAs meet their obligations to ensure the provision of equitable services to eligible private school students and teachers in applicable programs. Information on *ESSA* and the participation of private school students, teachers, and other education personnel are located on ONPE's *ESSA* webpage.

Program Quality (Nationally Recognized Standards)
The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) at the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)'s *DEC Recommended Practices* were developed to provide guidance to practitioners and families about the most effective ways to improve the learning outcomes and promote the development of young children, from birth through age 5, who have or are at risk for developmental delays or disabilities.

Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers, from the National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, includes research findings on how children's early experiences lay the foundations for their later social and emotional behavior, as well as their literacy and cognitive development.

The newly revised *Head Start Program Performance Standards*, aligned with the *Head Start Child Early Learning Outcomes Framework Ages Birth to Five (2015)*, encourage the use of data for programs to ensure a continuous quality improvement process, reducing administrative burden and allowing grantees to focus on outcomes over process.

Lessons from Research and the Classroom: Implementing High-Quality Pre-K that Makes a Difference for Young Children, a series of research papers commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2012, address whether pre-K programs produced gains in student achievement that persisted into the early elementary grades; whether high-quality programs could be cost sustainable; and what program features contribute to strong interactions between teachers and children, the central ingredient in high-quality programs. The research was iterative; therefore, conclusions about the components of high-quality—including the importance of bachelor's degrees for lead teachers—evolved based on new information.

The *National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation Standards and Criteria* were updated in 2006 to (1) include explicit program standards for early childhood programs serving children birth through kindergarten; and (2) make the standards more evidence-based and aligned with the profession's knowledge of best practices.

The *National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) State Preschool Yearbook* is an annual publication that has tracked the funding, access, and policies of State-funded preschool programs since the 2001–02 school year. The yearbook seeks to improve the public's knowledge and understanding of State efforts to expand the availability of high-quality education to young children.

Screenings
By expanding screenings and awareness to identify early delays and link families to support options, we can permanently alter the life trajectory of these children. Visit the ED/HHS Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! resource page to learn more.

State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care (SACs)
The purpose of this policy Statement, "State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care: Advancing Work Beyond Federal Financing," is to provide guidance to SACs on sustaining federal and State investments, and advancing work that supports the coordination of quality, comprehensive systems of early care and education at the State level.

Suspension & Expulsion
This joint ED and HHS "Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Practices in Early Childhood Settings" is intended to assist States and their public and private local early childhood programs in preventing and severely limiting expulsions and suspensions in early learning settings. Recent data indicate that expulsions and suspensions occur with regularity in preschool settings, a problematic issue given the well-established research indicating that these practices can influence a number of adverse outcomes across development, health, and education. Additional information about federal efforts to improve school climate and discipline can be found here.

School Turnaround
Incorporating Early Learning Strategies in the School Improvement Grants (SIG) Program: How Three Schools Integrated Early Childhood Strategies into School Turnaround Efforts to Improve Instruction for All Students, from the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) and the Center on School Turnaround (CST),

highlights three selected schools that have, with the support of their districts, promoted the use of early childhood programming (P–3) as a key strategy in their schools' turnaround models.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
The "Let's Talk, Read, and Sing about STEM!" resources provide fun, concrete resources and recommendations for families, caregivers, and infant, toddler, and preschool educators on easy ways to incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) concepts and vocabulary into everyday routines.

The book, *Mathematics Learning in Early Childhood: Paths Toward Excellence and Equity*, provides information about the critical areas that should be the focus of young children's early mathematics education, explores the extent to which they are currently being incorporated in early childhood settings, and identifies the changes needed to improve the quality of mathematics experiences for young children.

This practice guide, *Teaching Math to Young Children*, from the Institute of Education Sciences offers educators specific, evidence-based recommendations that address the challenge of teaching early math to children ages 3 to 6.

Technical Assistance Centers
ED and HHS have invested in technical assistance to strengthen the quality and availability of early learning programs. Many of the technical assistance centers offer resources for SEAs, LEAs, providers, administrators, and families.

***Title I* Preschool Guidance (2012)**
In 2012, ED released revised non-regulatory guidance *Serving Preschool Children through* Title I, *Part A of the* Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, *as Amended*. The guidance is valid through the 2016–17 school year, and schools and districts may find it useful in regards to family engagement, examples of supplement not supplant, and resources.

Workforce
Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation
This report from National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine offers recommendations to build a workforce that is unified by the foundation of the science of child development and early learning and the shared knowledge and competencies that are needed to provide consistent, high-quality support for the development and early learning of children from birth through age 8.