

FUNDING EARLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN WASHINGTON STATE WITH TITLE I, PART A

Birth to Age 5

April 2023



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

In December 2015, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized through Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The new act places special emphasis on early learning and prekindergarten education. Guidance issued in 2016 by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) reaffirmed the emphasis.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is providing this guide to advise Local Education Agencies (LEAs) of the possible uses of federal funds for early learning activities. This guide is not meant to require LEAs to implement early learning activities, but to make LEAs aware of the possible uses of federal funds for those considering early learning activities.

Current research on the impact of prekindergarten programs illustrates short- and long-term benefits of quality preschool and early intervention programs. On average, high quality preschool programs help children “gain about a third of a year of additional learning” in reading and math skills, (Yoshikawa, Weiland, et. al., *Investing in our Future*, p.1). In some programs, children gained as much as a full year of additional learning.

In addition to preschools, students experience benefits in other settings and activities. Small-scale, intensive programs and activities can also increase positive outcomes. These programs and activities benefit both middle-class and low-income children; however, the benefits for low-income children are greater. One of the most significant benefits is improved school readiness, which can lead to long-term societal benefits. Research points to better high school graduation rates, more years of education completed, and greater occupation-related earnings for children who participated in quality early learning programs. There is a reduction in crime and in teen pregnancy among those who participated in these programs.

From a long-term investment perspective, this upfront early learning spending saves three to seven dollars in academic and social interventions for every 1 dollar spent on quality early learning programs. (Yoshikawa, Weiland, et. al., *Investing in our Future*, and Phillips, Lipsey, et. al., *Puzzling it Out*).

The following information illustrates early learning activities, the funding possibilities, and examples from LEAs in the state that have already implemented some of those activities. The focus of this guide is narrowed to those activities supporting prekindergarten children from birth to age 5.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A needs assessment of your LEA and community will provide a framework for identifying which early learning activities would be most helpful in your area. As part of that assessment, communication, and cooperation with early learning stakeholders such as parents, families, childcare providers, and community leaders, could add significant support to the program. In the book, *"Making a Difference: 10 Essential Steps to Building a PreK–3 System"*, Linda Sullivan-Dudzic, Donna K. Gearns, and Kelli Leavell provide strategies for implementing a needs assessment and community collaboration. (*Sullivan- Dudzic, p.7-17*) The following questions can assist the LEA with an early learning needs assessment:

- What preschool and early learning programs (public and private) exist in your community?
- Do the children in your community have equitable access to early learning programs? What gaps exist?
- Are there effective programs that you may want to extend or replicate?
- What skills are children excelling at or lacking when entering kindergarten?
- How do you plan, and work with early learning and community leaders in your area?
- What resources and time can you put into this effort?

If the LEA decides to use federal funds, such as Title I, Part A for preschool or other early learning activities, these activities should support the objectives and goals of the LEA. These efforts should also be included in the LEA plan and the building level Title I, Part A programs.

Tip: It is imperative that leaders of high-quality early learning programs understand child development and appropriate instructional practices to effectively support teachers. It is also essential to understand the needs of parents and caregivers when considering PreK program development. Working families may need year-round, extended day programs.

OPERATING PRESCHOOLS

Preschools are operated at the building level, the LEA level, or in cooperation with community programs. LEAs and buildings operating a Title I, Part A preschool must comply with all Title I, Part A program requirements. When Title I, Part A funds are used for preschool programs, that program must meet Head Start education performance standards established *under section 641A(a) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9836a(a))*. Those standards can be found in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (Ages Birth to 5)*, (*ESSA, Section 1112 (c)(1)(G)*).

An LEA that receives Title I funds 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*). An LEA is also responsible for developing agreements with Head Start programs to coordinate services, such as establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU/MOA) outlining a plan to

share student information, data reporting and sharing, alignment of standards and curricula, and transition activities for children moving from Head Start into public school programs. Transition activities might include sharing assessment data, promoting summer learning programs, engaging families, and implementing joint professional development opportunities that involve both community-based providers and school staff.

- [Transition to Kindergarten: Policy Connections at a Glance](#)
- [Early Childhood Coordination Requirements Toolkit](#)

Building Level Programs

Targeted Assistance Program

Like a K–12 targeted assistance program, preschool children must be identified most at risk of failing to meet state academic standards when they reach kindergarten based on “multiple educationally-related objective criteria.” Those criteria may include data from parent interviews, teachers’ progress reports, and developmentally appropriate measures of child growth. When there are limited Title I, Part A funds, family income can be used to prioritize who to serve but should not be the only criterion used to identify eligible children. The LEA should use existing information or other funds to identify eligible children. However, if the LEA has no appropriate existing information or funds for identification, Title I, Part A funds can be used to identify eligible children (*Preschool NRG, p.21 (G-1)*). There are, however, **children who are automatically eligible** (*ESSA, Section 1115 (c)(2)*) (meaning that the LEA does not need to identify the child as most at risk of failing). These include:

- Children who, at any time in the last two years, attended a Head Start program, or Title I, Part A preschool.
- Children who, at any time in the last two years, received services under Title I, Part C (Migrant Education).
- Children in an institution for neglected or delinquent children and youth.
- Children who are experiencing homelessness. (*ESSA, Sec. 1115(c)(2)(B)-(E)*)

Tip: Targeted assistance schools can use Title I-A funds to provide eligible students with health, nutrition, and other social services that are not otherwise available to them if:

- The school has engaged in a comprehensive needs assessment and established a collaborative partnership with local service providers, if appropriate; and
- Funds are not reasonably available from other public or private sources.

Schoolwide Program

All preschool children residing in the attendance area of a schoolwide building are eligible to attend a preschool program at that building. A schoolwide building is not required to identify at-risk children. (*See Non-Regulatory Guidance: Early Learning in ESSA, Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners, January 2017, p. 9-10.*)

When LEAs are determining how to utilize their Title I, Part A funds in their early learning programs, they need to:

- Consider that all expenditures reflect allowable costs.
- Make sure they are supplementing and not supplanting existing state and local funding as detailed in the LEA's supplement, not supplant methodology.
- Use funds on activities that have been approved in their LEA's budget application to the state, and that expenditures are maintained for each Title area.
- Align all expenditures to the school's comprehensive needs assessment.

LEA Level Programs

LEAs may use Title I, Part A funds to operate a preschool program in the entire LEA or in a portion of the LEA.

Entire LEA

Preschool children identified as most at risk and who reside within the attendance area of the LEA are eligible to attend the LEA-operated preschool program. Unless all schools in the LEA are Title I, Part A schoolwide buildings, children must be identified as most at risk to be eligible for services. Even if the preschool is in a building with a schoolwide program, the children must be identified as eligible for services, because the attendance area for that preschool includes the entire LEA. *(Non-Regulatory Guidance: Early Learning in the ESSA, Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners, January 2017, p. 10)*



Portion of LEA

The LEA may choose to operate a Title I, Part A preschool program for children who reside in a specific portion of the LEA, such as within the attendance area of a high poverty school. These children must be identified as most at risk of failing state academic standards when they reach school age unless all schools within that entire attendance area have schoolwide programs. *(Non-Regulatory Guidance: Early Learning in ESSA, Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners, January 2017, p. 10)*

Community Programs

An LEA that chooses to use allowable ESSA funds to provide early learning services for children in a community-based preschool program may only do so if 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 ESSA 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 the requirements of the applicable program, other applicable federal

laws, and regulations (e.g., ensuring that the use of funds is reasonable and necessary and allowable according to program requirements).

3. The LEA maintains control of the federal funds, ownership of 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). Title I, Part A funds may be used to improve the quality, extend the day, or increase the number of days of a program in ECEAP, Head Start, child care, or other community-based programs. Title I, Part A funds may be used to provide preschool services for children who:
 - Are not eligible for Head Start services based on income requirements,
 - Are eligible for, but have not been served in a Head Start center due to unmet need.
 - Are enrolled in ECEAP, Head Start, child care, or a community-based early learning program and need additional services (e.g., extending the day, increasing number of days, etc.).
 - Would benefit from home visiting because they are most at risk of failing to meet the state's challenging academic standards.

(See Non-Regulatory Guidance: Early Learning in ESSA, Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners, January 2017, p. 8-10)

“Northshore will continue to support our Early Childhood Center where staff work to prepare students for entry into kindergarten by providing them with social and emotional skills as well as pre-kindergarten academics in a small setting with academic and behavior support. The district supports these goals through sharing information between Title 1 coordinators as well as providing staffing and support for family nights.”

-Northshore School District

Title I, Part A funds can be used to extend the length of a day, or number of days of the existing preschool program for eligible children. LEAs can use Title I, Part A funds to compensate preschool teachers or paraeducators for their time working with eligible children in early learning activities. Coordination between vertical teams (e.g., private preschools and public kindergarten teachers) and horizontal teams (e.g., LEA preschool teachers and Head Start teachers) can be a productive use of Title I, Part A funds (ESSA Section 1112 (a)(1)(B)).

“We continue to coordinate between the area preschools and daycare centers and MLSD's Early Learning Director to ensure awareness of necessary academic skills for students to be successful in entering kindergarten. Currently MLSD has nine integrated preschool classrooms that include ECEAP slots. School district sponsored professional development opportunities are available to outside teachers as space permits. Several district employees including, but not limited to, the executive and assistant directors of Teaching and Learning and the district's Early Learning Coach organize and take part in community forums that bring a variety of service providers together to coordinate existing community services and identify other areas of need in the transitional process from preschool programs to elementary school programs.”

-Moses Lake School District

When working with the community, consider the possibilities for partnerships with other early learning providers and community organizations. If an LEA does not have adequate space for a preschool, Title I, Part A funds can be used for minor repairs or remodeling on existing spaces. They can also be used for renting a more appropriate space (Preschool guidance, 2012, p. 27 and 34 CFR 77.1 (c)). One could also work with other facilities to use their gym space or the library to enrich the program.

Tip: *Collaboration across agencies and organizations could open doors for an LEA to disseminate information about the importance of quality early education, how the LEA serves families, and what their early learning program has to offer via community venues like farmers markets, fairs, celebrations, etc.*

Private Schools and Equitable Services for Preschool-Not Allowed

Because Washington state defines elementary education as beginning with kindergarten, LEAs cannot provide equitable services to private preschools (state-approved, non-profit, private, and religiously affiliated schools).

“A private school is a non-public school that conducts a program of kindergarten and at least grade one, or a program of any or all grades one through twelve. All private schools must be approved by the State Board of Education as offering a program that ensures a sufficient basic education to meet usual graduation requirements and that meets reasonable standards for the health and safety of private school students.”

-Definition provided by the Washington State Board of Education

Tip: *In an executive summary of Leading Learning Communities entitled [A Principal's Guide to Early Learning and the Early Grades](#), six competencies were identified that are essential to strong leadership of Early Learning Communities:*

1. Understand Child Development and Early Learning
2. Develop and Foster Partnerships with Families and Communities
3. Embrace and Enact a Pre-K–3rd Grade Vision
4. Ensure Equitable Opportunities
5. Share Leadership and Build Professional Capacity
6. Promote a Culture of Continuous Improvement

OTHER EARLY LEARNING ACTIVITIES

In addition to preschool, other early learning activities are still possible and can be helpful and productive. Some activities are required when using Title I, Part A funds and others are optional, but each of these can improve the academic and social success of prekindergarten children. As discussed earlier, when using Title I, Part A funds in early learning activities, an LEA or building must comply with the same regulations as a K–12 program. In a schoolwide setting, there is

more flexibility concerning who is eligible for services, but in a targeted assistance setting, only identified children are eligible for services.

Tip: During times of nontraditional instruction, such as school closures or after school activities, online supports are an allowable expenditure for Title I, Part A funds for preschoolers to include live instruction, synchronous intervention groups, and Parent and Family Engagement activities.

Transitional Kindergarten

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a kindergarten program for children not yet age five who do not have access to high-quality early learning experiences prior to kindergarten and have been deemed by an LEA, through a screening process and/or other instrument(s), to need additional preparation to be successful in kindergarten the following year. Because this program is considered kindergarten in Washington state, Title I, Part A funds can be used just as they would in any K-12 classroom or program. You can learn more about TK and the required elements on the OSPI website.



Tip: Title I, Part A funds can be used to support these best practices for administering a TK program:

- For required Early Learning Collaboration – identify an early learning/extended learning contact in the LEA to serve as a point person between the community and LEA-based early learning programs. Visit **[Child Care Aware of Washington](#)** to request a list of child care providers in your area.
- Design high quality TK instruction – to include behavioral support with [Washington Pyramid Model](#), Positive Behavioral Intervention Services, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).
- Hire teachers with backgrounds emphasizing child development and/or early childhood special education.
- Create an inclusive environment.
- Cultivate relationships with families.

Tip: An ideal ratio for TK classrooms is 1:10 staff/child with one certificated teacher (preferably in Early Childhood Special Education or PreK-3) and a paraeducator. LEAs can use this formula to calculate the required number of staff:

Total enrollment × student/staff ratio = number of teachers, aides, and other staff.

Infants and Toddlers

ED's "strategic goal for early learning is to improve the health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes for all children from birth through third grade (Early Learning guidance, 2017, p. 4)." (See also 20 U.S.C. 1003—Additional Definitions). Beginning at birth, infants and toddlers may be eligible for Title I, Part A services and may benefit most from services provided to their

parents and families. Activities and information that give parents and families the skills to support their child's early learning development are appropriate uses of Title I, Part A funds. The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages birth–5 provide details to support children's growth. Information packets, parental training sessions, play and learn groups, and the modeling of teaching activities are acceptable activities for eligible parents, families, and children.

“Sultan School District (SSD) coordinates with Snohomish County Early Head Start and SSD developmental preschool and Transitional Kindergarten programs to provide parent training. Title funds will support annual training and coordinate early learning activities in addition to other community preschool providers. Sultan Elementary school advertise preschool programs in monthly newsletters and gives out information to families when they enroll. Transition visits and meetings are held with kindergarten teachers at both schools in the spring. Parents, staff, and students tour and visit kindergarten classrooms in the spring. Developmental-preschool transition meetings involve members from the Student Assistance Team (Care Team), including parents, teachers, administrators, school counselor, and general education teachers. When there are cognitive or other disability concerns, special education staff also attend the meetings, including the school psychologist, special education teachers, SLP's, OT's, and PT's. Parents in local preschools and community members will be notified of all family nights, open houses, and school events that pertain to transition to kindergarten readiness.”

-Sultan School District

Transition Activities

Title I, Part A encourages transition activities between grade levels and identifies early learning transition as a priority (ESSA sections 1112, 1114 and 1115). Research shows coordination across early learning programs and elementary schools results in improved short-term initial school adjustment, long-term social and emotional development, and academic outcomes for children. Sharing preschool data with kindergarten programs is a great initial step for Title I, Part A funds. An LEA could also use Title I, Part A funds to support the alignment of prekindergarten and K–3 curriculum to improve the transition process (*ESSA Sec. 1119 and Early Learning in ESSA guidance, 2017, p. 16-19*). Trainings for those involved in the transition process, such as private preschool, child care providers, and public school kindergarten teachers are allowable. Title I, Part A funds can also be used to extend the day or number of days of an existing summer transition program or to implement a summer program such as JumpStart.

In a report entitled [*Cross Systems Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten: A Review of the Knowledge Base and a Theory of Change*](#), conducted by Head Start to Kindergarten Transition Project, participants emphasized innovative views on transition and practices strategies. The following table has examples of transition practices that may improve the overall outcome for students transitioning to kindergarten.

Family-Program/School	Child-Program/School	Head Start-Program/School	Community-Program/School
<p>*Collaborate on orientation events before and during the beginning of the kindergarten year to build relationships with children and their families in the new learning setting</p> <p>*Arrange for families to receive kindergarten registration materials in their home language; provide support for completing registration forms and enrollment requirements</p> <p>*Seek to understand and support the diverse cultural perspectives that families contribute and how they influence family expectations</p>	<p>*Organize visits to kindergarten classrooms and visits from kindergarten teachers</p> <p>*Incorporate familiar activities or routines from the early learning setting into the kindergarten year</p> <p>*Make books and interactive materials about kindergarten accessible to children, both at home and in the early learning environment</p>	<p>*Familiarize and comply with the Memorandum of Agreement or Understanding established between state early learning and K-12 education departments</p> <p>*Coordinate joint PD opportunities for education staff from Head Start programs and kindergarten classrooms</p> <p>*Participate in meetings between Head Start and kindergarten educators</p> <p>*Seek out and review strengths-based child progress data, including information provided by families</p>	<p>*Identify and promote the community's hopes and expectations for children</p> <p>*Engage in joint events and partnership activities between Head Start programs and receiving elementary schools</p> <p>*Identify and partner with community organizations, such as medical offices, grocery stores, libraries, popular restaurants, or meal programs, that could offer resources for families, children's books, or activities about kindergarten</p>

- [Early Learning Transitions Resources](#)
- [Supporting Transitions: Resources for Building Collaboration](#)

“The West Valley School District provides a variety of coordinated and integrated services from birth through high school. WVSD has a Kindergarten Center for all kindergarten students in the district. This supports specifically assessing social /emotional and academic supports for all incoming K students. The district provides a birth to three special education program; four sessions of integrated

preschool with “ECEAP and special education students; extended day programs for preschool and kindergarten age students on the Autism spectrum; a counseling assistant in each elementary school; family service liaisons from Children's Home Society; Spokane Valley Homeless Education and Resource Consortium. Transition services is a requirement of our ECEAP program and smooth and efficient transitions for all of our preschoolers both ECEAP and special education are a top priority. We have informational meetings with parents; individual conferences based upon need facilitated by our ECEAP Family Service Coordinators; transition plans for our special education students; transition meetings with the receiving school in the spring and follow up transition support during the first week of school in September. Our preschool classes start one week later than the elementary schools to help with the transition of our preschool students. Preschool Teaching Strategies Gold® assessment results are shared as we transition students to kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers are trained in WaKIDS, which aligns with Teaching Strategies Gold® and the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines so common language in our data that we use to drive our decision making.”

-West Valley School District



Professional Development (PD)/Training

Title I, Part A funds can be used for the PD of all those who work with eligible children in an early learning setting. For example, public preschool teachers, public kindergarten teachers, and paraeducators can receive PD and/or training related to the development and/or transition of prekindergarten children. Private child care and preschool providers can participate in that PD if the children they serve will attend kindergarten at a targeted assistance building and are identified as most at risk or will attend kindergarten at a schoolwide building when they reach that age. PD for early learning stakeholders could be as simple as early learning study groups, in which participants choose a book to read and discuss to improve the education of or transition of those students identified as most at risk of failing. (ESSA Sec. 1116 (a)(3)(D)(i))

***Tip:** As Washington implements Washington Pyramid Model, Title I, Part A funds can be used for systems-level and instructional coaching for Early Learning practitioners and administrators, in alignment with K-12 MTSS.*

“The Franklin Pierce School District will use Title I funds to supplement its existing Head Start program. Services will be enhanced by providing an additional preschool teacher to serve Title I eligible students who would otherwise be on a Head Start wait list. Title I funds will be used to support and transition preschool students to elementary schools by funding meetings between preschool staff and kindergarten teachers.”

-Franklin Pierce School District

Parent and Family Engagement

Parent and family engagement (PFE) has an increased emphasis in ESSA. Engaging parents and family can improve the early learning program dramatically, and Title I, Part A will support, and in some cases require it. Title I, Part A funds can be used for reasonable activities that bring families of eligible children into the building to participate in the learning/teaching process. They can also be used for strengths-based parenting groups to support the transition process. In some cases, Title I, Part A funds can be used to transport parents to these training meetings (*see Parent involvement guidance, E-7, p.* if these are parents of eligible children and the training includes an educational component (e.g., techniques for reading with children, home math activities, etc.). However, the availability of other sources should be considered before Title I, Part A funds are used for transportation. (*ESSA Sec. 1116*) Keep in mind that PFE is more than merely inviting families into the learning space. PFE is a meaningful and two-way conversation that leads to welcoming the family's voice and power.

Tips:

- Build relationships with families at the rate of trust
- Infuse classrooms and school with families' home languages and cultures, and embrace multiple modes of family involvement in the school community
- Intentionally coach parents and staff that families are full partners in their children's education
- Offer authentic family leadership opportunities
- Make space for family voice
- Create opportunities for two-way meaningful conversations
- Maintain a strengths-based approach. Each family and child has something valuable to share
- Learn more about [Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement](#)
- Find guidance about early learning classrooms partnering with families of Multilingual Learners: [Six Strategies for Partnering with Families of ELLs](#)
- Find more information on compliance, improvement, and ideas for using Title I, Part A for PFE Activities on our [PFE website](#).

“Peninsula partners with a community-based organization to provide parent and child play-to-learn programming in the Title I attendance area. Parents can participate with their children in a play-based learning experience. We also engage in professional development and transition activities with our community early learning partners, as well as provide a robust parent education model for parents of young children.”

-Peninsula School District

Family Visits

Visiting the families of eligible children has shown great success in the Head Start program, but can also be used under Title I, Part A, PFE (*ESSA, Section 1116 (c)(2)*). These visits are also expressly mentioned to support children and families in Title VI (*ESSA, Section 6304 (a)(3)(C)(i-ii)*)

for Alaskan Native children.

Family visits can promote school readiness and the transition to kindergarten and are especially helpful for providing information and support to parents and families in an environment in which they are comfortable. While “Family/Home visits” typically take place in a student’s home, the visit can take place anywhere that is convenient for everyone involved. The fundamental goals of home visiting are to build positive relationships between the school and families as well as learn how to best support student progress.

- OSPI’s [Home Visit Toolkit](#) provides practical tools to support classroom teachers and other educators in conducting home visits to increase collaboration with parents and families.
- OSPI’s [Funds of Knowledge Toolkit](#) is an excellent resource for putting home visits to the best possible use.

Social Services

Children learn best when they have all of their health and nutritional needs met. Title I, Part A provides a way to support those needs when other public or private sources of these services are not reasonably available. Title I, Part A can, as a last resort, provide basic medical equipment such as eyeglasses or hearing aids, compensation for a social services coordinator, family support services, integrated student supports and PD related to the students’ needs (ESSA, Section 1115 (e)(2)(A-B)).



“Highline has a strong P-3 focus as part of our strategic plan. This includes full day kindergarten in all of our schools and significant outreach of our pre-K community. This work includes Kindergarten Jumpstart: a 3-5 day program for incoming kindergarteners where they learn routines of school before school starts and while there are no other students there, begin learning to read. Parents are also involved in this experience. Community meetings and support for pre-K providers to learn about our curriculum, assessments, and digital tools to possibly incorporate these tenets in their programs. Family outreach and engagement includes activities for 3 and 4 year-olds, including playtime in the school during the school day for younger children who will be attending our schools in the future.”

-Highline District

Inclusive Classrooms

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, even though under IDEA, children with disabilities

ages 3–5 are entitled to a free appropriate public education. Therefore, LEAs should examine their policies, procedures, and practices in supporting preschool children with disabilities in their systems and consider how funding can be used to ensure access and participation in inclusive preschool classrooms. Administrators can serve as a community-wide leader for inclusion, by convening a diverse coalition who can implement a culture of inclusion across entire communities. Title I, Part A funds can be used to purchase necessary supplies and provide PD for staff to implement an inclusive classroom. Inclusive classroom settings integrate each child's individual needs into the instructional setting. This includes adaptive supports, environmental modifications, and ongoing teaming to meet the individual needs of the child.

“ Inclusion is the belief that all students have a right to meaningfully participate in the general education setting, both academically and socially. Inclusion is realized when all students, regardless of their designation to receive special education services, are provided with targeted services, supports, and accommodations; allowing them to learn in the general education classroom, interact with peers, and engage the core curriculum. Inclusive instruction rebukes the problematic perspective that students receiving special education services need to ‘fit in’ or ‘earn their way’ into general education classes. The belief that general education instruction is not malleable and that students should be making adaptations to be included in the general education setting has contributed to the continuation of two parallel systems of education in which students receiving special education services are marginalized and devalued because of their environmental segregation.”

-Definition provided by OSPI’s Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project

For ideas on ways to create an inclusive setting consider these resources:

- [Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project | OSPI \(www.k12.wa.us\)](http://www.k12.wa.us)
- Understood.org-offers support for both families and educators. For educators, Understood.org provides information around understanding differences, partnering with families, connecting with children, and teaching strategies for learners with disabilities.
- [Research on Parent Involvement with Diverse Families](#)-includes a representative list of recent research literature on multicultural parent involvement and engagement, particularly those which address the interests and needs of educators.
- [ECTA Center: Inclusion](#)
- [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations NCPMI \(usf.edu\)](http://usf.edu) [Early Childhood Inclusion \(parastorage.com\)](http://parastorage.com)

Tip: *True acceptance of all students is the first step in creating a safe learning environment where children can learn to manage their emotions and behaviors.*

Creating a Best Practice Learning Environment

A requirement of **RCW 28A.150.315** is to establish Kindergarten learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and promote creativity.

While this is a requirement for full day kindergarten and TK classrooms, consider this when

developing and planning your program. Title I, Part A funds can be utilized to supply and establish a safe, child-centered early learning classroom. Children's environments are considered the "second teacher" where young learners are provided opportunities to experiment, explore, discover, inquire, challenge, and interact. You can find a list of suggestions for equipping, cultivating, and maintaining a best practice Early Learning classroom in the [Washington State Full-Day Kindergarten Guide, Section 3 *The Learning Environment*](#).

Tip: *Children learn through attitudes as well as content; therefore, attention should be given to methods, emotional climate, environment, and teacher-child interaction.*

Homeless Children

Children experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible to receive early learning services under Title I, Part A (ESSA, Section 1115 (c)(2)(E)) and the McKinney-Vento Act. These children are at a very high risk of failing to meet state standards and have many academic and social obstacles to overcome. As a result, the homeless liaison should determine the services needed by the child—both academic and non-academic. Because there is often a waiting list for participation in an early learning program, homeless students rarely have the ability to sign-up on those lists early enough to be able to participate. LEAs and early learning staff are encouraged to work with the homeless liaisons in their area to reserve participation slots for homeless students.

Recruitment and Enrollment

Affordability concerns of preschool programs, lack of transportation, enrollment requirements, need for nontraditional child-care hours, and/or a desire for family members to care for their children at home may serve as barriers to families enrolling in early learning programs. Additionally, parents may not know what signifies high-quality early care, that their LEA offers it, or the benefits of early childhood education for their children. The active recruitment of these families and students is essential in getting underserved populations enrolled in preschool programs, whether in LEA or community-based settings. Title I, Part A funds can be used to:

- Fund an LEA coordinator to recruit and help families enroll and partner with other community-based child care and preschool programs to develop referral plans and shared transition practices
- Provide training for parents of children who have enrolled in early childhood programs to act as ambassadors and reach out to other families via community events
- Provide interim services for families who are wait-listed e.g., weekly activities close to families' homes exposing adults and children to early childhood education activities like coloring, reading books, rhyming, etc.
- Advertise services through recruitment fliers, information packets, websites, videos etc.
- Pay staff to check-in and make regular phone calls to families who are new to the area and are waiting for their child to be eligible for enrollment.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

In addition, several other federal and state funds can be used in conjunction with Title I, Part A funds for early learning activities. As the LEA performs a needs assessment, the results can be used to help decide which of these funds should be used to support the entire early learning program and benefit the local prekindergarten children. An LEA could strategically examine the needs and possible funding sources, considering which sources overlap and develop a funding plan based upon those available sources. Below are some of the most common federal and state funding sources for early learning activities.



“Two of our Title I schools offer Title I schoolwide preschools that are supported by Title I. Title I funds support an Assistant Director of Early Childhood who provides oversight of programming from Birth-3rd grade, with special focus on increasing seamless transitions in our Title I schools through collaboration with community partners. We have a strong partnership with the Opportunity Council and other community partners that serve preschool students in our district. Together, we participate in a transition night where we come together to analyze data, share information about students, and pass along a transition form from community partners to the kindergarten entering school with information about the family, student work samples, and the student’s specific abilities in fine motor, social emotional, literacy, and math. Community partner preschools are housed in all of our Title I schools. Our early childhood assistant director meets with them on a regular basis about our students, we share professional development for our teachers, and provide seamless programming. The Early Childhood Assistant Director meets with community partners monthly to determine needs for students most at risk and determine wrap around services. We also have strong partnerships with the Opportunity Council and other community partners that serve preschool students in our district and our district supports the coordination of transitions from all these preschool opportunities into our district for kindergarten. Transition activities include meeting with partners to exchange information about incoming students and families, and the student’s specific abilities in fine motor, social emotional, literacy and math. Community partner preschools, including Head Start, are located in all of our Title I schools. We meet regularly with teachers and early learning professional development to align our systems and provide seamless programming.”

-Bellingham School District

Title I, Part C (Migrant Education Program)

Title I, Part C, Migrant Education Program funds can be used to provide preschool services to eligible migrant students ages 3–5 not yet in kindergarten. Funds can also be used for training parents and families on strategies to support their children’s learning in the home and increase PD to enhance understanding of the migratory lifestyle.

Title II

Title II, Part A funds can be used to support PD activities for those involved in early learning activities. LEAs can use these funds to hone knowledge and skills in early childhood education among principals, other school leaders, teachers, and other professionals to meet the needs of preschool children. School leaders, elementary teacher, preschool teachers, and private preschool teachers can participate in PD that supports strategies to measure the progress of prekindergarten children, identification and instruction of gifted, talented, transition, and school readiness programs. (*ESSA, Section 2103 (b)(3)(G), and Sec. 2101(c)(4)(B)(xvi)*) Efforts and trainings to support English Learners, English language instruction, language support strategies, and dual-language programs can be funded through Title II, Part A. Coaching and training for early learning providers and administrators to support children with disabilities or challenging behaviors are also appropriate uses.

Title III

In Washington State, prekindergarten services cannot be funded with Title III because there is no state screener for prekindergarten English learners. However, Title III can fund PD for early learning educators who teach these English learners. Funds may be expended on PD that is specifically related to English Language Development for English learners.

Title VI

There are a variety of effective early learning activities and strategies that can have a positive impact in the education of Native prekindergarten children. Title VI funds can support those activities, but each Native group has specific differences. The chart below illustrates the most recent federal guidance can help understand the differences.



<p>American Indians and Alaska Natives</p>	<p>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 (<i>ESEA Section 6121 (b)(3)</i>). 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 (<i>ESEA Section 6121 (c)(7)</i>).</p>
<p>Native Hawaiians</p>	<p>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 (<i>ESEA Section 6205 (3)-(A), 6205 (3)-(B), and 6205 (3)-(C)</i>).</p>
<p>Alaska Natives</p>	<p>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 (<i>ESEA Section 6205 (3)(A), 6205 (3)(B), and 6205 (3)(C)</i>).</p>

Non-Regulatory Guidance: Early Learning in ESSA, Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners,

January 2017, p. 16. (ESSA Section 1119).

Rural and Low Income Schools (RLIS)

Rural and Low Income Schools grant funds may be used for any of the expanded opportunities allowed under ESSA in Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title III, and Title IV, Part A. This includes early learning services.

Head Start

Most Head Start programs use a variety of added funding sources to operate their early learning program. LEAs that receive Title I, Part A funds are required to coordinate with Head Start programs and with other early learning programs when practical. That coordination could

include sharing student information, transition activities, PD, family engagement activities and summer learning programs (ESSA Section 1119).

Learning Assistance Program (LAP)

LAP funds may support transition to kindergarten through a number of different strategies provided in the Menu of Best Practices and Strategies. LEAs are encouraged to set up data-sharing opportunities with early learning providers and families to identify the children who may need additional transition support prior to the start of the kindergarten year.

Please note Washington state statute starts LAP eligibility at kindergarten. As such, kindergarten transition strategies funded with LAP should start after a child has enrolled in kindergarten. They may start prior to the first day of school. Examples of allowable LAP funded options after a child has been identified as needing extra support are:

- In late spring/summer, conduct family engagement activities and home visits.
- In summer, before kindergarten starts, early start programming. This could be an earlier start to the year (extended time) or a more informal play and learning group held weekly.

LAP funds could be used throughout the year for professional learning between early learning providers (preschool and child care) and kindergarten teachers to focus on strategies to improve the academic readiness of students arriving at kindergarten. LAP funds for this professional learning should be focused on initial early skills alignment (social emotional, numeracy, and literacy) and focused on the providers serving students most in need of kindergarten transition support. WaKIDS has great resources for LEAs to use for transition to kindergarten and support for locating child care providers.

More examples of kindergarten transition and readiness support can be found in the [Menu of Best Practices](#). Because TK is considered Kindergarten in Washington, LAP funds can be used in the TK program.

Othello School District collaborates with the local Washington State Migrant Council in refining curriculum alignment between the Headstart program and the school district. The district preschool program is available to students who are identified through testing of not having the skills necessary to be academically successful in kindergarten. The skills needed to be successful in kindergarten are the major focus of our program. When children learn these skills, they transition easily into the kindergarten program. The kids' assessment is used in the transition process to help ensure a successful start to the K-12 experience and connect the key adults in the child's life.

-Othello School District

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

Washington state ECEAP can provide prekindergarten services for 3- and 4-year-old children. To be eligible, a child must fit in one or more of the following categories:

- Qualified by a school district for special education services;
- Currently experiencing homelessness as defined by the federal [McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act](#);
- participated in Early Head Start (EHS) or a successor federal program providing comprehensive services for children from birth through two years of age, the early support for infants and toddlers program (ESIT) or received class C developmental services, the birth to three early childhood education and assistance program (Early ECEAP), or the early childhood intervention and prevention services program (ECLISPE);
- From a family with income at or below 36% of the state median income (SMI) or is a tribal child as defined in rule by the Washington State's federally recognized tribes and DCYF and at or below 100% SMI; or
- From a family with income that exceeds 36% of the SMI and impacted by specific prioritization factors such as receiving Child Protective Services or similar tribal services, Indian Child Welfare or Family Assessment Response (FAR) services.

Tip: *Braided Classrooms - If an LEA chooses to braid funding (which is the coordination, not blending of funds), the classroom could include in-kind staff from Head Start or ECEAP and several Head Start or ECEAP students in addition to certificated Early Childhood Special Education teachers for an inclusive placement option. The following matrix can guide LEAs braiding funds, this is taken from pg. 117 of [Unlocking Federal and State Program Funds to Support Student Success](#).*

Funding Matrix

LEA Level Activities	Title I, Part A	Learning Assistance Program (LAP)	Title I, Part C	Title III	Special Education Funding IDEA, Part B	Career Technical Education & GRADS	Head Start	Child Nutrition Program	ECEAP	Working Connections Child Care Subsidy	State Special Education Allocation	Student Transportation	Private Pay/Parent Tuition	Small rural schools and REAP
Classroom and Instructional Supplies	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	
Child Transportation Services	*	X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Computer/Information Services	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	X		X	X
Consultants, Training, and Professional Development	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	
Facilities: Rental and Leases - Land and Building	*				*		X		X	X	*		X	
Facilities: Rental and Leases-Repairs, Alterations and Maintenance	*						X		X	X			X	
Family Support Services	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	
Food and Kitchen Supplies		X				X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Furnishings and Equipment			X		*	X	X		X	X	*		X	
Health and Nutrition	*		X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Home Visits	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X
Information Packets	X		X				X		X	X			X	X
Library Resources	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	
Medical Equipment	*		X		X				X	X	X		X	X
Parenting Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Salaries/Benefits: Classroom Teacher	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Salaries/Benefits: Paras/Support Staff	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Salaries/Benefits: Admin Support	X	X			X		X		X	X	X		X	

LEA Level Activities	Title I, Part A	Learning Assistance Program (LAP)	Title I, Part C	Title III	Special Education Funding IDEA, Part B	Career Technical Education & GRADS	Head Start	Child Nutrition Program	ECEAP	Working Connections Child Care Subsidy	State Special Education Allocation	Student Transportation	Private Pay/Parent Tuition	Small rural schools and REAP
Salaries/Benefits: Comprehensive Services							X		X	X			X	
Salaries/Benefits: Cook, Kitchen Staff							X	X	X	X			X	
Salaries/Benefits: Psychologists, Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, etc.					X		X		X	X	X		X	
Salaries /Benefits: Mental Health Consultant	*						X		X				X	X
Transition Activities: Between Grade Levels. Preschool-Third Grade	X		X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	
Transition Activities: Part C to Part B Transitions for Students with Disabilities turning 3					X						X		X	X
Transition Activities: Sharing Preschool Data with Kindergarten	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	X		X	X
Travel	*		X		X		X		X	X	X		X	X

Cells with asterisks indicate that an LEA considering using federal funds for this activity should consult with OSPI, as it may require preapproval and may have a cost threshold.

Reporting

Beginning in 2020–21, all students enrolled in and receiving preschool education/services must be reported to CEDARS with a valid value that describes the funding sources used in the Attributes and Programs File (I). If multiple funding sources are used, a unique record of each must be submitted to Attributes and Programs File (I). This includes preschool students with IEPs.

The following will be required when submitting data for prekindergarten students to CEDARS:

- LEA and school enrollment
- Ethnicity and Race
- PreK program funding sources in Student Attributes and Programs File (I), Element 106–Program Code, valid values 56-66, respectively
- All other appropriate program information

LEAs will not be required to submit student course, student/staff schedule or staff file information.

CEDARS PreK Programs Reporting Codes

CEDARS Program Code	CEDARS PreK Program Types	Fiscal Reporting Information
56	Special Education Preschool	Exclude from Per Pupil Expenditure (PPE); 0-2 Sped PreK FTE is already reported in P223H
57	ECEAP	Included in PPE (88)
58	Head Start	Included in PPE (61)
59	Title I	Included in PPE (88–Federal Fund)
60	GRADS (Parenting Teen) Preschool	Included in PPE (88)
61	Family and Consumer Science Preschool	Included in PPE (88)
62	Private Pay/Tuition-Based	Included in PPE (88)
63	Grant-Funded	Included in PPE (88)
64	Working Connections Child Care Subsidy	Included in PPE (88)

65	Parent Cooperatives	Included in PPE (88)
66	Play & Learn Groups	Included in PPE (88)

Transitional Kindergarten

Students in TK should be enrolled in the LEA's Student Information System (SIS) and enrollment, ethnicity/race, program, and attribute data must be captured/entered in the same manner as all other students.

TK students must be submitted to Student & Attributes Program File (I):

- Element I06–Attribute or Program Code a valid value of 67–TK-Transitional Kindergarten
- Element I07–Start Date, identifying the date the TK services began

If a student exits TK services during the school year, in addition to being reported as exited from school/LEA you will need to submit the following to Student & Attributes Program File (I):

- Element I08–Exit Date
- Element I09–Exit Reason Code

TITLE I, PART A PRESCHOOL TEACHER & PARAEDUCATOR MINIMUM QUALIFICATION

Teacher Minimum Employment Requirements

Teachers assigned to Title I, Part A targeted assistance programs and all teachers assigned to a Title I, Part A schoolwide building must meet applicable state certification and licensure requirements. A teacher assigned to Title I, Part A may be out-of-field or out-of-endorsement as long as they hold an eligible certificate type, and the school board approved the placement (per WAC 181-82-110 or WAC 392-172A-02090). School board approval must be in place prior to the date the teacher was assigned to a Title I, Part A program.

Paraeducator Minimum Employment Requirements

All preschool paraeducators (instructional assistant teachers, paraeducators, or paraprofessionals) in a Title I, Part A funded preschool program must meet the new preschool requirements by the beginning of school year 2020–21. (*ESSA Section 1111(g)(2)(J)*)

In a Title I, Part A preschool program in a **Schoolwide program school**, all paraeducators must meet the requirements below, regardless of how their salaries are funded.

In a Title I, Part A preschool program in a **Targeted Assistance school**, a paraeducator paid with

Title I, Part A funds must meet the requirements below.

(Note: If instructional assistant teachers, paraeducators, or paraprofessionals, in ECEAP and Head Start programs are paid out of Title I, Part A funds, they must also meet minimum requirements below.)

Effective school year 2020—21 all K-12 paraeducators (instructional assistant teachers, paraeducators, or paraprofessionals) must meet the following minimum employment requirements:

- Be at least eighteen years of age and hold a high school diploma or its equivalent. In addition, a paraeducator must meet one or more of the following:
 - Have received a qualifying score on the Education Testing Service paraeducator assessment (461); or
 - Hold an associate degree or higher from an accredited college or university; or
 - Have earned seventy-two quarter credits or forty-eight semester credits at the one hundred level or higher at an accredited college or university; or
 - Have completed an apprenticeship as a paraeducator, in a program registered with the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council.

RESOURCES

Federal

- ED, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, [*Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act: Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners*](#), Washington, D.C., 2017.
- ED, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, [*Serving Preschool Children Through Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended, Non-Regulatory Guidance*](#), Washington, D.C., 2012. This guidance is valid through the 2016–17 school year, but schools and LEAs may find it useful in regard to family engagement, examples of supplement not supplant, and resources.
- ED, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, [*Parent Involvement: Title I, Part A, Non-Regulatory Guidance*](#), Washington, D.C., 2004.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2018). [*Relationship-based competencies to support family engagement: A guide for early childhood professionals who work with families*](#).
- Council of Chief State School Officers and The National Head Start Association, [*New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) A Toolkit for State and Local Educational Agencies, Head Start Programs, and the Early Childhood Field*](#), Washington D.C., 2017.
- *Federal Register*, Vol. 61, No. 78 / April 22, 1996, 17794-17795 (Head Start standards)
- [*2 CFR 225, Appendix B \(37\)*](#), page 171. (Renting private facilities)
- [*34 CFR 77.1\(c\)*](#) (minor repairs or remodeling)

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

- [Transitional Kindergarten](#)
- [Early Learning and Development Guidelines](#)
- [Early Learning State-Funded Full-Day Kindergarten](#)
- [WaKIDS](#)
- [Learning Assistance Program \(LAP\)](#)
- [Early Numeracy Pathways](#)
- [Early Literacy Pathways](#)
- [Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program Guidance](#)

Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF)

- [Early Childhood and Assistance Program \(ECAEP\)](#)

Head Start

- [Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework](#)

Third Party

- Sullivan-Dudzic, Linda, Gearns, Donna K., and Leavell, Kelli, *Making a Difference; 10 Essential Steps to Building a PreK-3 System*, Corwin, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2010.
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- Deborah A. Phillips, Mark W. Lipsey, Kenneth A. Dodge, Ron Haskins, Daphna Bassok, Margaret R. Burchinal, Greg J. Duncan, Mark Dynarski, Katherine A. Magnuson and Christina Weiland, [Puzzling It Out: The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects](#), Brookings, 2017.
- Kauerz, K., Ballard, R., Soli, M., & Hagerman, S. (2021). *Leading learning communities: A principal's guide to early learning and the early grades (Pre-K–3rd Grade)*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals. (A Principal's Guide to Early Learning and the Early Grades)
- Ehrlich, Stacy B., Kyle DeMeo Cook, Dana Thomson, Kristie Kauerz, Mitchell R. Barrows, Tamara Halle, Molly F. Gordon, Margaret Soli, Andrew Schaper, Sarah Her, Gabriella Guerra (2021). *Understanding cross-systems transitions from Head Start to kindergarten: A Review of the knowledge base and a theory of change*, OPRE Report # 2021-128, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (Head start to kinder Resource).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank all the education leaders throughout the state who provided feedback and information for this guide. Their valuable input and examples increased the quality of this guide:

- Debra Hampton from Bellingham School District
- John Sander from Franklin Pierce School District
- Cassie Zizah from Highline School District
- Jean Sawyer from Moses Lake School District
- Doreen Milburn and Amity Butler from Northshore School District
- David Spencer from Othello School District
- Lisa Reaugh from Peninsula School District
- Michael Merrin from Sultan School District
- Heather Awbry from West Valley School District
- Josie Komorowski from ESD 113

We are also grateful to OSPI staff from federal and state programs for their input on various aspects of early learning in ESSA and review of the drafts.

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