

A Synopsis of the 2005 Early Reading First Project Grantees

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Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education



U.S. Department of Education
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Summary of the 2005 Early Reading First Program

The ultimate goal of the Early Reading First Program, authorized by *No Child Left Behind, Title I, Part B, Subpart 2*, is to improve the school readiness of our nation's young children, especially those from low-income families, by providing support for early childhood education programs serving preschool-age children so they may become centers of educational excellence. This goal supports *Good Start, Grow Smart*, the President's Early Childhood Initiative to improve early childhood education and strengthen early learning for young children.

The Early Reading First Program brings a unique and bold approach to improving preschool programs for our nation's at-risk children, including children with disabilities and limited English proficiency. Early Reading First provides funding and support to turn preschool programs into centers of excellence by improving instruction and classroom environments through scientific research-based practices in language, cognition and early reading.

Many of America's children face daunting challenges as they enter kindergarten lacking the necessary skills to learn how to read. Early Reading First offers an exciting opportunity to meet this challenge by helping to ensure that children are provided with a high-quality preschool education.

Eligible applicants for Early Reading First include local educational agencies (LEAs) and public and private organizations that meet the following criteria:

1. One or more local educational agencies (LEAs) that are eligible to receive a subgrant under the Reading First program (*Title I, Part B, Subpart 1, The Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, as amended (*ESEA*)).
2. One or more public or private organizations or agencies (including faith based organizations) located in a community served by an eligible LEA. Unless the public or private organization is a preschool program applying on its own behalf, it must apply on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool-age children (such as a Head Start program, a child care program, a family literacy program such as Even Start, or a lab school at a university).
3. One or more of the eligible LEAs, applying in collaboration with one or more of the eligible organizations or agencies.

Specifically, Early Reading First grants will provide funds to:

- Support local efforts to enhance the early language, cognitive, and early reading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research;
- Provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and print-rich environments so that they can attain the

fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond;

- Use language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research to support the age-appropriate development of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabet knowledge;
- Use screening assessments or other appropriate measures to identify preschool-age children who may be at risk for reading failure, and to determine whether those children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success; and
- Integrate instructional materials and programs based on scientifically based reading research into existing preschool programs.

Through multi-year awards to eligible LEAs with at-risk children, and public and private organizations located in communities served by those eligible LEAs, the Early Reading First Program is intended to ensure that preschool-age children have the instruction, experiences, and environment that they need to ensure that they enter kindergarten prepared for continued learning. These grants complement the Reading First State Grants Program, which provides support for high-quality, scientifically based classroom-focused reading instruction for kindergarten through grade three.

For FY 2005, Congress appropriated \$104,160,000 for the Early Reading First program. Five hundred ninety-four (594) eligible pre-applications were received and reviewed by panels made up of expert reviewers in accordance with Department of Education regulations. Of these, 126 were invited back to submit full applications. The Department received 123 full applications that were again reviewed by experts. The Department is making 33 three-year awards. The following are abstracts for each project, containing a synopsis of what each project proposes to achieve with the Early Reading First grant funds, as well as details about project costs and contact information.

California

Project Name: Early Connections: A Bridge to Lifelong Learning

Project Director: Michelle A Green

Funding: \$3,064,641

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 12

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 300

Grantee: Lake County Office of Education

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Lakeport, CA 95453

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Lake County Office of Education (LCOE) Preschool Programs are located in Lake County, California. LCOE serves 300 preschool age children including English Language Learners, Special Needs students, and students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Services are provided to 3 through 5 year olds 180 days/year, 5 days/week, 3 hours/day. Children can receive preschool services two years prior to entering kindergarten. Four of the seven LCOE preschool sites have been selected and are ready to become Early Reading First Preschool Centers of Educational Excellence.

LCOE goals are to:

- Implement language and literacy activities based on SBRR to support the literacy development of preschool aged students.
- Incorporate print and language rich instructional tools into our learning centers.
- Provide parents with literacy training and print rich informative materials.
- Involve children in meaningful conversations and increase quality of activity time

LCOE teachers currently use Creative Curriculum to provide an effective yet limited literacy program for children and parents. The LCOE team is ready for the next steps to reading success for their students and their own development as educators and are ready to commit to a high quality, research-based program in which goals are aligned with the Early Reading First statutory guidelines. Through professional development, by implementing a rigorous program like Houghton Mifflin Pre-K: Where Bright Futures Begin (HM Pre-K), and with ongoing support from successful and established prekindergarten consultants and researchers, teachers will be able to provide a solid literacy foundation to all learners. The Houghton Mifflin Pre-K program is designed to develop oral language and vocabulary, phonological awareness, print awareness, comprehension, and alphabet knowledge through various instructional materials, activities, and explicit instruction.

Professional development will include the use of Early Reading First Mentor/Coaches to support instructional strategies and assessments and will be supported by experienced literacy consultants with extensive backgrounds in early childhood education. Valuable progress will begin with the teachers and advance by scaffolding practice for activities and continuous observation in each classroom. Mentor/Coaches will assist teachers to administer and understand assessment data in decision-making about their intentional teaching strategies providing a strong foundation for early readers and writers that support a bridge to lifelong learning.

California

Project Name: Centers of Instructional Excellence (CIE)

Project Director: Jane Nicholson

Funding: \$2,810,001

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 24

Number of School Districts Served: 2

Number of Students Served: 380

Grantee: Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)

1025 E. 2nd Avenue

Oakland, CA 94606-2212

Tel. #: (510) 879-8328

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JANE.NICHOLSON@SECMAIL.OUSD.

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Oakland Unified School District will create Centers of Instructional Excellence (CIE), a partnership with OUSD, Mills College, Alameda County First 5, McGraw-Hill, ScienceStart, Second Step, and Raising a Reader. CIE sites will serve over 380 children, all of whom are eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch. The cultural composition of the sites is diverse: 50% Latino; 21% Chinese; 19% African American; and 10% from Southeast Asia.

The goals of CIE are to:

- Create five Centers of Instructional Excellence (CIE) that will utilize a research-based literacy curriculum, innovative approaches to improving home literacy environments and parent support, and a proven approach to professional development to increase the reading- and kindergarten-readiness of 381 OUSD children and provide a venue to model excellence in instructional practice for teachers throughout the region.
- Develop models of print-rich environments coupled with instructional strategies that effectively use these resources during teacher-directed instruction, student choice activities, and at home.
- Build a site-based professional development system that can be replicated throughout the district;
- Develop among CIE teachers/IA's an explicit understanding of the relationship between early literacy acquisition and the specific instructional strategies deployed in the classroom;
- Nourish a highly collaborative culture that supports learning from data, and research; and
- Develop tools and protocols that create a framework for all future instruction and planning as a model for other OUSD ECE sites.

Teachers will use Open Court Reading Pre-K as the centerpiece to the CIE. ScienceStart and other supplemental science/math curricula were selected to complement OCR Pre-K, creating an integrated classroom framework. In addition, raising a Reader (RAR) will help families create literature rich home environments with materials available in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Finally, an evaluation led by Anne Cunningham (U.C. Berkeley) and Gibson & Associates will use a range of assessment data to inform program planning and help teachers design lessons and differentiate instruction. The evaluators will generate reliable and valid quantitative data on all CIE students and a matched cohort of students from comparison sites. Going beyond the three years of ERF funding, OUSD researchers will follow these students for seven years to measure the long-term impact of CIE.

Colorado

Project Name: Denver Public Schools ERF Program

Project Director: Cheryl Caldwell

Funding: \$3,564,304

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 20

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 180

Grantee: Denver Public Schools

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Denver, CO 80204-2601

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With Early Reading First (ERF) funds, Denver Public Schools (DPS) will create centers of excellence serving five elementary schools in Northeast Denver, focusing on improving preliteracy and literacy skills based on up-to-date SBRR of the Building Language for Literacy (BLL) curriculum. BLL is a research-based program, which helps children acquire school readiness skills in language and early reading in oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabetic knowledge. The schools selected for ERF represent a primarily non-Anglo, low-income demographic: 82.2% to 94.3% receive free/reduced price lunches. Together, the five schools in the ERF program (Ashley, Ford, Hallett, Philips and Smith) will reach 180 preschool children. Each school will have two, 18 student classrooms serving three- and four-year olds with intensive full-day, year-round services.

The primary project goals are to:

- Improve young children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabet knowledge to prepare them for reading success in kindergarten and within a continuum of excellent schools in their area.
- Ensure each ERF teacher supports oral language and early literacy among students through high-quality sustained professional development.
- Ensure that students in ERF will arrive in kindergarten with essential skills for reading success, the achievement gap between higher- and lower-performing students will be closed, and these students will have the opportunity for future educational achievement in Northeast Denver by combining project procedures and professional development.
- Establish a pre-K through high school continuum of excellence leading at-risk children to the DPS' best secondary schools (Smiley Middle School, Denver School of Science and Technology, and Denver School of the Arts).

DPS will implement the Building Language for Literacy (BLL) curriculum and will utilize the dialogic reading method. BLL was developed by Dr. Catherine E. Snow, who was a member of the National Research Council (NRC) Task Force to establish a research agenda for promoting language among minority children.

Connecticut

Project Name: Connecticut is Reading First (CRF)

Project Director: Tiffany Murasso

Funding: \$3,049,595

Grantee: Catholic Charities, Inc.

839-41 Asylum Avenue

Hartford, CT 06105

Tel. #: (860) 240-5680

Fax #: (860) 527-1919

tmurasso@ccaoh.org

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 14

Number of School Districts Served: 3

Number of Students Served: 300

CRF, a partnership between Catholic Charities (CC) and Educational Development Center (EDC) will exist of five centers of educational excellence in five urban early childhood settings serving low-income children. This will be accomplished by providing:

- Research-based professional development
- Literacy mentoring support
- Adopting agency-wide, systematic assessments and monitoring protocols
- Adopting a literacy curriculum based on SBRR
- Enhancing environments in early childhood centers.

CC currently provides high quality early childhood education to three- and four-year olds in Connecticut's urban cities with disproportionately high levels of school drop out rates, low income families, dual language learners, low academic performance and literacy rates, and underachieving schools. CC has worked with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDOE) and local education agencies (LEAs) since 1998 to provide all-day, full-year early education programs to ensure that children from low-income families are prepared to successfully enter kindergarten. CC will participate with CSDOE and LEAs to enhance these local efforts to improve literacy and reading readiness in preschool age children. EDC courses in literacy (LEEP) among others, use of validated screening and assessments for young children, and literacy mentoring and coaching will be used as strategies to create centers of educational excellence in existing high quality programs.

The resulting enhanced teacher knowledge, skills, and competencies will be integrated into classroom planning, daily activities, and interaction with children in age appropriate, print-rich and literacy enhanced environments through sustained training, supervision, and literacy mentoring. Connecticut is Reading First provides a unique opportunity for a partnership between CC, a community-based early childhood provider, and EDC, a nationally recognized educational leader to develop new best early childhood practices and make dramatic improvements in how we improve young children's literacy and school readiness skills.

Delaware

Project Name: Delaware Early Reading First Project (DERF)

Project Director: Carol Vukelich

Funding: \$3,300,655

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 24

Number of School Districts Served:

Number of Students Served: 220

Grantee: University of Delaware

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Newark, DE 19716-1551

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The Delaware Early Reading First project will serve 220 children in three New Castle County Head Start centers (12 classrooms) in northern Delaware. The area to be served borders the city of Wilmington, an enterprise community. The partnership will be led by the Delaware Center for Teacher Education at the University of Delaware in cooperation with colleagues from the University's Department of Individual and Family Studies and New Castle County Head Start, Inc. Further, the project has the strong support of the Reading First district in which the centers are located. Ninety nine percent of the children to be served come from families living below the poverty line.

The project's approach, grounded in SBRR, involves the implementation of a comprehensive system including the use of:

- An assessment system, applying the scientific method, an Assess-Plan-Teach model, to monitor children's progress and adjust instruction, within the classroom and through home or 'after Head Start' extended learning opportunities, to meet children's needs;
- A research-based and standards-based early literacy program, *Doors to Discover* (McGraw-Hill, 2002), to deliver instruction in the essential elements of language and early reading;
- An extended learning opportunities for 20% of the children not achieving as expected and for all children during a summer program where instruction will continue in the essential language and early reading areas;
- A powerful professional development program where teachers and paraprofessionals will participate in group sessions to build their knowledge base and classroom-based coaching to support their use of their newly-developed knowledge in their classroom;
- A family literacy program to build parents' understandings and acknowledge children's prior experiences; and
- A strong transition program to link NCCHS with the Reading First district.

Florida

Project Name: The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe (the Coalition)

Project Director: Phyllis Ditlow

Funding: \$2,045,947

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 10

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 302

Grantee: Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

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Miami, FL 33129-2712

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The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe (the Coalition), a novice applicant, respectfully requests \$2,045,947 to implement the Early Reading First Learning Educational Approaches to Reading Now Project in order to improve the early reading skills of primarily low-income, minority three and four year olds in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, Florida. Since 2002, the Coalition has had statutory authority for planning and implementing the coordination of early childcare and education services for up to 35,000 children receiving subsidized care throughout Miami-Dade, and in Monroe as of 2004. In collaboration with its partners, Miami-Dade and Monroe County Public Schools, Florida International University (FIU) and the Florida State University Florida Center for Reading Research, the Coalition is well qualified to lead five existing childcare centers that have the capacity and potential to become ERF preschool centers of educational excellence.

The proposed Learning Educational Approaches to Reading Now (LEARN) Project aims to:

- Integrate the scientific research-based Literacy Express curriculum into existing preschool programs to establish five demonstration preschool centers in Miami-Dade and Monroe County school districts in South Florida.
- Demonstrate the use of scientific research-based language and literacy activities that increase the age-appropriate development of children's pre-reading behaviors and skills in oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- Provide high quality language and literature-rich learning environments that support student attainment of requisite knowledge and skills for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.
- Provide scientific research-based professional development strategies to support implementation of the Literacy Express curriculum in the five demonstration preschool centers.

Its design stems from current scientific based research showing that early instruction in language and literacy development can predict subsequent success in reading during the primary years. These findings support the utilization of the research-based Literacy Express (LE) curriculum developed by the Florida Center for Reading Research, proposed for the LEARN Project. A comprehensive professional development plan will provide LEARN teachers with more than 500 hours of training plus mentoring annually.

Student and teacher progress will be monitored via a comprehensive continuous quality improvement plan as well as a detailed evaluation. Led by evaluation consultants who are experts in early reading research, valid and reliable process and outcome results of this Early Reading First program are expected to have the potential for statewide and national impact.

Florida

Project Name: The Building Emergent Language & Literacy Skills (BELLS)

Grantee: Nova Southeastern University
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314-7796
Tel. #: (813) 393-4451
Fax #: (813) 393-4450
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Project Director: Hilde Reno

Funding: \$1,535,910

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 27

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 180

The *Building Emergent Language & Literacy Skills* (BELLS) program is a partnership between the Mailman Segal Institute for Early Childhood Studies at Nova Southeastern University (MSI) and School District of Hillsborough County Head Start to build literacy competence and increase school readiness in nine classrooms serving a diverse population of 180 children from low-income families. Six of the nine classrooms are housed in Reading First schools, which will support coordination between BELLS and Reading First. The goal of BELLS is to:

- Build Centers of Educational Excellence through improvements in early childhood instruction, enriched classroom environments, and language supportive interactions that infuse literacy into every part of a child's preschool experience.
- Provide literacy-based SBRR college-level coursework while mentoring and coaching teachers to infuse the appropriate stimulation of literacy and learning into all activities, interactions, and environments. Using the *Opening the World of Learning* curriculum, teachers and aides will create an enriched learning environment that supports the essential elements of literacy.
- Provide SBRR professional development to 30 Head Start staff (3 Resource Teachers (RT), 9 teachers, and 18 para-professionals); experienced coach/mentors to support the planning and implementation of evidence-based emergent literacy activities in the classroom; and continuous progress monitoring to guide instruction.

The evaluation will be completed using IGDI and Galileo to continuously monitor child progress, ELLCO, ELBO, and a curriculum implementation checklist will evaluate program elements, and PPVT and PALS will measure child growth. Workshops on assessment and how to use the above instruments will allow teachers to appropriately assess children's learning and literacy development, individualize curriculum, and incorporate the results of a sound evaluative process into continuous program improvements.

Georgia

Project Name: The Building Early Language and Literacy Skills (BELLS)

Project Director: Sharon Contreras-Halton

Funding: \$1,168,918

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 12

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 175

Grantee: Clayton County Public Schools
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Jonesboro, GA 30236-3299
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The Building Early Language and Literacy Skills (BELLS) project will address the early literacy needs of at-risk preschool children by creating five Centers of Educational Excellence within the Clayton County Public Schools Prekindergarten and Special Education Preschool Programs. The purposes of BELLS are five-fold:

- Purpose 1 is to increase early literacy skills by integrating scientifically-based literacy instruction into their preschool curriculum.
- Purpose 2 is to address the critical early literacy and language skills of oral language, print awareness, phonological awareness, and alphabetic knowledge systematically and directly through a 2-tiered research based, instructional model. Tier one is the Building Language For Literacy Curriculum, a scientifically-based early literacy curriculum. Tier 2 consists of Teacher Initiated Practice Sessions providing struggling children with extra support.
- Purpose 3 is to develop literacy-rich classroom environments supporting the development of early literacy skills. This purpose will be accomplished through the careful analysis and design of classroom environments using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit.
- Purpose 4 is to attain fidelity of implementation for BELLS by employing scientifically-based professional development focusing on application, discussion, demonstration, active participation, practice, and feedback.

Purpose 5 is to effectively identify and monitor the progress of children at-risk for later reading problems. This will be accomplished through a combination of technically adequate formative and summative assessment instruments. Finally, BELLS' multi-tiered model is based on a similar model being used in Clayton County Reading First. The overlap in instructional approach and project assessments between the two projects will facilitate a seamless transition from Pre-K to K-3 literacy efforts.

Georgia

Project Name: DREAM (Developing Readers Early and Mightily) **Grantee:** United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta
Project Director: Sharen Hausmann
Funding: \$4,101,591

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Atlanta, GA 30303-3026

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Fax #: (404) 527-3560

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ATLANTA.ORG

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 30

Number of School Districts Served:

Number of Students Served: 328

Under the leadership of United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta (UWMA), Smart Start Georgia formed a coalition of five Atlanta preschool programs to create *DREAM (Developing Readers Early and Mightily)*. The program will focus on 328 low-income preschool children with special needs and risks for reading difficulties and will transform existing good programs into centers that exemplify best practices and produce measurable gains in language and literacy for young children. *DREAM* will incorporate the use of a literacy-focused, research-based curriculum, Opening the World of Learning (OWL). To provide the foundation for future reading and school success, program goals include:

- Improve children's *oral language skills* (expressive and receptive language and vocabulary development);
- Build *children's alphabet knowledge* (letter recognition);
- Develop children's *phonological awareness* (rhyming, blending segmenting);
- Increase children's *print awareness*;
- Implement and maintain a SBRR, language and print-rich preschool environment to provide abundant opportunities for children to use print and practice literacy skills; and
- Increase preschool teacher knowledge and use of SBRR to systematically address early literacy skills essential to future reading success including print awareness, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, and oral language.

Professional development methods include intensive in-class coaching, study groups, training institutes and seminars, and model classroom observation. Under the leadership of the Early Literacy Coaches, teachers will become skilled in gathering high-quality data from progress and monitoring tools and in using that data to inform instruction. Key assessment tools include the Preschool Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs); Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Third Edition (PPVT-III); Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALS) Pre-K; Get Ready To Read!; OWL curriculum-embedded assessment; and the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO).

Hawaii

Project Name: Learning Connections
Project Director: Dr. Barbara DeBaryshe
Funding: \$1,601,672

Grantee: University of Hawaii -- Center on the Family
2530 Dole Street, Sakamaki Hall D-200
Honolulu, HI 96822
Tel. #: (808) 956-4140
Fax #: (808) 956-4147
DEBARYSH@HAWAII.EDU

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 25
Number of School Districts Served: 1
Number of Students Served: 300

Learning Connections: Meeting the need of Hawaii's multicultural low-income preschoolers. This ERF project is a collaborative effort of three partner organizations: the University of Hawaii Center on the Family (UH), the Honolulu Community Action Program-- O'ahu Head Start (OHS) and the State of Hawaii Department of Education (HDOE). Learning Connections will serve ten Head Start classrooms, reaching an estimated 25 Head Start teachers and 300 three- to five-year-old children and their families. All of these children live in poverty, 24% are English language learners, 9.5% have special learning needs and 85% are of Asian American/Pacific Islander heritage.

Classrooms will implement *Learning Connections*, a locally-developed language, literacy and math enrichment curriculum that offers: (a) a firm base in current research, (b) two years of controlled evaluation outcome data, (c) developmentally sequenced and individualized instruction, (d) an extensive parent involvement component, and (e) cultural sensitivity to the needs of Hawaii's multicultural population.

Teachers will engage in 212 hours of professional development experiences yearly. Professional development activities include 6 credits of college coursework, formal in-service workshops, biweekly in-class coaching, and personal professional development plans. A transition team will support children and families in making a successful transition into the receiving elementary schools. Receiving schools will be Title 1 elementary schools located in low-income communities that offer a Reading First program. Sustainability of program components beyond the end of this ERF project will be addressed by building capacities within the OHS and HDOE systems.

The goals of Learning Connections are:

- Provide daily, developmentally-sequenced, and individualized instruction on ERF target skills (letter names and sounds, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and print awareness) and cognitive skills that support language and literacy development;
- Increase family involvement in children's learning of ERF target skills and supportive cognitive skills; and
- Improve children's language, literacy, and math skills.
- Provide a high-quality physical environment, including materials, environmental arrangement, and daily scheduling; and
- Provide a high-quality social environment including rich adult-child conversation and adult scaffolding of children's learning throughout the day.
- Increase teachers' knowledge of (a) developmental processes and sequences, (b) teaching strategies, and (c) the use of assessment to improve instruction in the areas of language, literacy, and cognitive development; and increase teachers' skills in individualizing instruction.

Illinois

Project Name: Chicago Early Reading First (CERF)

Project Director: Joan Berger

Funding: \$3,214,793

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 20

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 200

Grantee: Chicago Public Schools, District # 299

125 South Clark Street

Chicago, IL 60603-5200

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Fax #: (773) 553-2011

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The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) will transform five full-day Head Starts into Early Reading First centers of excellence. The resulting centers (two classrooms per site, 20 students per classroom) will serve as models for CPS preschools that enroll 30,000 children. Because more than

75% of the participating children receive Free Lunch.

The Chicago Early Reading First (CERF) project incorporates current research findings based on the following four cornerstones:

- *A comprehensive, research-based curriculum with intensive development of language and literacy skills:* Opening the World of Learning (OWL) will provide the educational core within language and literacy rich classrooms.
- *A three-year professional development model that links knowledge with practice and support:* Dr. Judith Schickedanz, co-author of OWL, will train project participants (teachers, assistants, mentors) on the curriculum's education foundations and classroom implementation. Dr. Molly Collins, Erikson Institute, will teach college-level courses for the same participants and also spend time in classrooms to model instructional language and strategies. The mentors will receive additional Erikson training and will provide classroom reinforcement of research and strategies.
- *A comprehensive, differentiating assessment system:* Four standardized instruments (PPVTIII, PALS-PreK, PALS-K, and PLS-4), the OWL observational tool (integrated with Work Sampling), and videotaped assessment of teacher/child interactions by Dr. Doris Johnson, Northwestern University, will provide screening, progress monitoring, and outcome data.
- *A seamless transition into kindergarten:* the five mentors will coordinate best practices with lead teachers in the kindergarten Reading First and Chicago Reading initiatives.

The CPS Office of Early Childhood Education will manage the project, under the leadership of Chief Officer Barbara Bowman. Evaluation by Dr. Stacie Hudgens, Research Associate at Learning Point Associates, will determine project effectiveness and contribute to current and future research.

Kentucky

Project Name: Get Ready to Read Early Reading First Program **Grantee:** Covington Independent Schools
Project Director: Lynda Jackson
Funding: \$3,770,799

25 East Seventh Street
Covington, KY 41011
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Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 10

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 317

Covington Independent Public Schools' *Get Ready to Read* Early Reading First Program will transform James E. Biggs Early Childhood Education Center, a high quality preschool center, into a national Early Reading First Center of Excellence. Building on the strengths of an award-winning, NAEYC-accredited preschool, recognized for an exemplary Family Literacy Program, and parent engagement program, *Get Ready to Read* will work to create a seamless transition for preschoolers to enter kindergarten in *Reading First* and Kentucky *Read to Achieve* literacy programs.

Biggs Early Reading First Center of Excellence proposes to serve 300 children (85% Free/reduced lunch, approximately 75% with disabilities) utilizing scientifically based reading research in an all day, full-year year preschool setting. The goal of Covington's *Get Ready to Read* initiative is to prepare children to enter the full-day kindergarten program with the strong language and early literacy skills necessary to become successful readers. This will be accomplished through the following goals to:

- Demonstrate language and literacy activities based on SBRR that support the age appropriate development of young children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge;
- Provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language, literature and print-rich environments;
- Provide all staff with systemic ongoing professional development based on SBRR;
- Use valid and reliable screenings, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcomes early literacy measures to identify students at-risk, guide instructional decisions and evaluate program effectiveness. By unifying classroom instruction, professional development, family literacy activities, and coordination with the existing elementary programs, Biggs Center will serve as a national model for the development of cognitive, language, and literacy skills in young children.

Massachusetts

Project Name: New Bedford Public Schools Preschool Program

Project Director: Martha Kay

Funding: \$2,039,310

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 24

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 280

Grantee: New Bedford Public Schools

455 County Street

New Bedford, MA 02740 5194

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Ingraham Integrated Preschool Center, Carney Academy and Hayden McFadden elementary schools are currently serve approximately 280 three-and four-year-old children who come from various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. More than 46% of the student body comes from homes whose native language is other than English. Children with mild and moderate disabilities represent 37% of the Pre –K population while children with more severe disabilities represent 6%. For the last nine years, Ingraham Integrated Preschool has operated full day and full year. This extended day (7:30-5:30) and extended year (6 week summer) program is optional and funded through the MA DOE Community Partnership for Children grant.

Ingraham Integrated Preschool Center aims to:

- Improving children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge within the context of language and literacy activities are fourfold: (1) implementing Open Court Reading Pre-K curriculum; (2) creating small groups for storybook reading; (3) implementing Language/Literacy Enrichment Groups (LEG's); & (4) investing in parents' abilities to support language development at home.
- Support parents' efforts to read to children and to engage in extended conversations with children outside the classroom and during extended vacations, through bimonthly parent literacy/language nights which focus on storybook reading practices, explaining new vocabulary, discussing texts, responding to children's questions, and making connections to curriculum, especially to build background knowledge.
- Implement its professional plan: (1) to provide comprehensive training on all parts of the OCRPK curriculum; (2) to invest in teachers' knowledge of SBRR in children's language and literacy skills through intensive, university coursework; (3) to provide sustained, intensive in-class modeling of instruction and observation of teachers' instructional practice through mentoring specialists; and (4) to provide sustained, quality training of mentors. Outcome will be measured by the PALS Pre-K, PPVT-III,, the DIVS benchmark testing, the Pre-K SRA Open Court Reading Program's observational assessments and the IIP's school-designed student profile rubrics.

Maryland

Project Name: The Read to Lead Preschool Literacy Project (RLPLP)

Project Director: Mrs. Gwendolyn Holland

Funding: \$3,415,347

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 25

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 200

Grantee: Prince George's County Public Schools

14201 School Lane, Sasscer Building

Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-9983

Tel. #: (301) 386-6182

Fax #: (301) 386-6186

GHOLLAND@PGCPS.ORG

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) aims to create high-quality, full-day pre-kindergarten in each of its 137 elementary schools by 2007. The first step in this vision was taken in 2004, when full-day pre-kindergarten was established in 57 schools. With 46% of its students qualifying for free and reduced meals (FARMS), PGCPS is seeking to provide all preschool children with the cognitive, language and literacy skills to be ready to succeed in kindergarten. Based on Maryland State data, only 40% of entering kindergarten students were fully prepared in literacy in 2003, and 41% in 2004.

The Read to Lead Preschool Literacy Project (RLPLP) will:

- Transform existing PGCPS pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and Early Childhood sites into five Centers of Excellence as models for the planned preschool expansion. The RLPLP will promote language and literacy through a model grounded in Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR).
- Promote language and literacy through a model grounded in Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR). It will implement the Maryland Essential State Curriculum, using the *Houghton Mifflin Pre-K: Where Bright Futures Begin!*, with enhancements where needed for more intensive intervention.
- Provide for systematic assessment to quickly identify children's needs. A major thrust of the project will be assisting teachers, most of whom are new to SBRR, through on-site coaching and a series of on-line and face-to-face tutorials, in collaboration with the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE).
- Provide strong family links and a six-week summer transition to kindergarten. An independent evaluator with significant experience in preschool assessment will complete a comprehensive evaluation of the goals and outcomes of the project

Maine

Project Name: Portland Early Literacy Collaborative

Project Director: Sue Reed

Funding: \$2,984,030

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 19

Number of School Districts Served:

Number of Students Served: 127

Grantee: University of Southern Maine

96 Falmouth Street

Portland, ME 04104-9300

Tel. #: (207) 780-5825

Fax #: (207) 780-5817

SREED@USM.MAINE.EDU

Maine Roads to Quality and the Center for Community Inclusion, both part of the University of Maine system and Portland Public Schools are seeking Early Reading First funds to create the Portland Early Literacy Collaborative and *transform* five existing early childhood programs into *centers of excellence* in order to ensure that children enter kindergarten with the language, cognitive and early reading skills needed for highly successful learning. The Portland Early Literacy Collaborative will 1) support reading success for at-risk preschoolers; and 2) significantly strengthen the partnerships between preschool programs and existing training and technical assistance. The Portland Early Literacy Collaborative will implement activities that improve:

- Classroom and home literacy environments for 127 children annually;
- Early childhood teachers' capacity to deliver research-based instruction and assessment (including regular, direct and explicit language and literacy activities that support oral language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge and print awareness); and
- Preschool children's transition to kindergarten programs.

The project will implement the research-based *Opening Worlds of Learning (OWL)* curriculum in order to support significant and sustainable changes in curriculum, instruction, classroom environment, parental involvement, professional development and child and program level assessment required to meet the proposed goal. The Early Literacy Specialist, Inclusion and Coaching Specialist and Early Literacy Coaches will work with Portland Public school staff and local literacy initiatives to ensure the successful delivery of this project.

Glenwood Research will conduct the assessment and evaluation. The goal of Portland Early Literacy Collaborative is to ensure all children will meet this goal as measured by significant improvements in their scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and the K Upper Case Alphabet Knowledge subtask on the PALS Pre-K assessment. The professional development system implemented in this project is a 2-tiered structure affecting both teaching and coaching staff. The overarching goals are: 1) to increase teacher's knowledge, skills and abilities to enhance early language, literacy and pre-reading development of preschool age children using scientifically based literacy curricula; and 2) to increase coaches' skills, knowledge and abilities to support teachers learning to implement program outcomes through a structured coaching process.

Mississippi

Project Name: Smart Start

Project Director: Dr. Joan Butler

Funding: \$2,717,092

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 34

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 313

Grantee: City of Starkville Housing Authority

101 Pecan Acres, P.O. Box 795

Starkville, MS 39760 0795

Tel. #: (662) 615-0033

Fax #: (662) 324-5011

JBUTLER@STARKVILLE.K12.MS.US

The Starkville Housing Authority, in conjunction with the Oktibbeha County Schools (85% of its students qualify for free and reduced lunches), Oktibbeha County Families First Resource Center (FFRC), Even Start, Emerson Family School, ICS Head Start and the Brickfire Project are seeking to develop preschool centers of educational excellence in Oktibbeha County (MS). The proposed ERF project, Smart Start, will improve the literacy outcomes of 313 low-income children, ages three-five, in three area preschools. The overall goal is to prepare children transitioning from the participating programs to kindergarten with the necessary skills to become successful readers.

Project goals for Smart Start are to:

- Improve the identified preschoolers' performance in the use of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabet knowledge, as measured by PALS, PPVT, and TROLL.
- Prepare the identified pre-school children to enter kindergarten by providing literacy rich environments that promote print awareness, oral language and background knowledge, as measured by ELLCO.
- Increase preschool staff knowledge about language and literacy instruction and assessment through at least 230 hours annually of ongoing professional development, college classes, and classroom mentoring.

Smart Start will utilize the use of *Doors to Discovery* in the three-year old classrooms and implement *Breakthrough to Literacy* curriculum with the four and five year old classrooms. Professional development for the 34 teachers and assistants will include literacy-specific workshops and ongoing training to support the use of SBRR strategies in the classroom. Literacy Coaches will be located at each center. FFRC and Even Start will involve families in ERF. Multiple assessments will be used to screen and monitor progress and measure the effectiveness of the program. They will include PPVT, TROLL and PALS, along with MS Benchmarks observation checklists. Environments will be monitored using the ELLCO. Smart Start will be evaluated by Mississippi State University of Educational Psychology, Dr. Linda Morse, serving as the evaluator.

New Hampshire

Project Name: Together We Can (TWC)
Project Director: Kathleen Skinner, Ed.D
Funding: \$3,073,389

Grantee: Manchester School District
196 Bridge Street
Manchester, NH 03104
Tel. #: (603) 624-6426
Fax #: (603) 623-5283
KSKINNER@MANSD.ORG

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 12
Number of School Districts Served: 1
Number of Students Served: 180

The Manchester Early Learning Team has brought together the public preschool, non-profit and for-profit private early care/education programs, public housing and the local institutions of higher education to provide quality supports for high-risk young children and their families. Working together, these programs have achieved much: the development of common student performance outcomes in early literacy and language development; program evaluation; shared professional development; successful start-up and operation of a family literacy program; use of a common assessment tool for tracking student performance and guiding instruction; planning and coordinating smooth transitions into public school kindergarten and first grade programs; and successful engagement of parents in participating in and supporting their child's literacy development.

A subset of this group - Head Start, YMCA Early Learning Center, and the Visiting Nurse Association Childcare (VNA) - have the infrastructure to become early childhood centers of excellence and models for other early childhood providers. They have formed a partnership with the Manchester School District preschool program (serving Title 1, Even Start, and special education students) to apply for this grant. Under this Early Reading First grant, TWC will create centers of excellence by targeting resources to staff from 10 early childhood classrooms, directly impacting 180 low-income, English language and/or special education learners. TWC can serve as a replicable model for 211 early care / education programs in the greater Manchester area.

Together We Can, will coordinate the existing system of early learning centers to: implement a comprehensive curriculum (*Curiosity Corner*, a comprehensive, cohesive curriculum from *Success For All Foundation*) that offers strong support for English language learners and children with special needs utilizing master teachers as Literacy Coaches; create language- and literacy-rich environments; expand the number of intensive, full-day-full-year programs; guide the use of common assessment tools to inform instruction and measure student achievement; and provide intense, systematic learning opportunities for parents as well as early education staff.

The goals of *Together We Can* are:

- Implement a research-based early childhood instructional curriculum that integrates learning experiences for extensive language and literacy development in all domains;
- Create high-quality language and print-rich learning environments that integrate and intensify literacy development;
- Build educators' capacity to apply the principles of scientifically-based pre-reading research to instructional practices;
- Employ a system of ongoing continuous assessment to inform instruction, monitor student progress, and evaluate program effectiveness; and improve communication and alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment between early learning centers and the public K-12 system to ensure seamless transitions

New Mexico

Project Name: West Las Vegas School
Project Director: Mary J. Archibeque
Funding: \$2,290,323

Grantee: West Las Vegas School
179 Bridge Street
Las Vegas, NM 87701
Tel. #: (505) 426-2671
Fax #: (505) 426-2665
ARCHIBEQUEMARYJO@
HOTMAIL.COM

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 24

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 315

West Las Vegas School District in rural Northern New Mexico proposes a 3-year Early Reading First project that will serve 315 low-income. 90% of the schools are below the federal poverty level, 100% are Free/Reduced Lunch eligible – with poor English language skills – 80% are English Language Learners (ELL). The project revolves around three interrelated goals:

Goal 1: Curriculum, Materials, Instructional Strategies: Equip preschool children with language and literacy skills necessary to be successful readers, so they enter kindergarten at benchmark at the rate of 70% after Year 1, 80% after Year 2, and 90% after Year 3, as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).

Goal 2: Physical Environment: Improve preschool classrooms by developing high-quality print- & language-rich environments, which achieve Adequate scores of 32-36 by the end of Year 1, Exemplary scores (37-41) by the end of Year 2, and maintain Exemplary scores in Year 3, based on the ELLCO Literacy Environment Checklist.

Goal 3: Professional Development: Provide intensive, ongoing professional development on the HMR program, SBRR & effective instructional practices, & assessment to develop teacher knowledge, skill, and practice, so that:

- A. Preschoolers enter kindergarten at benchmark at the rate of 70% after Year 1, 80% after Year 2, and 90% after Year 3, as measured by DIBELS; and
- B. Instructional practice in 90% of classrooms improves by the end of Year 1, 100%

of classrooms score in the exemplary range by the end of Year 2, 100% exemplary scores are maintained in Year 3, as measured by the Language, Literacy, & Curriculum Subscales of ELLCO's Classroom Observation & Literacy Activities Rating Scale.

Nevada

Project Name: Preschool Achievement Centers of Excellence (PACE)

Project Director: Diane Reitz

Funding: \$4,017,656

Grantee: Clark County School District

832 E. Flamingo Rd.

Las Vegas, NV 89121

Tel. #: (702) 799-5443 F

Fax #: (702) 799-8499

DPR422@INTERACT.CCSD.NET

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 12

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 188

The Clark County School District proposes to create Preschool Achievement Centers of Excellence (PACE) that promote language and literacy at four existing school sites. PACE will use grant funds to serve 188 preschoolers with a full day, extended year program including systematic and explicit instruction in oral language, phonemic awareness, vocabulary and alphabetic principle. The goals of the CCSD PACE program are to:

- Integrate research based instructional materials into existing preschool programs; Increase the use of evidence-based instructional strategies and activities for enhancing oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge;
- Raise the level of environmental support for language and early literacy development; Increase teachers' and assistants' understanding of scientifically based reading principles as they relate to teaching reading, utilizing materials and strategies, customizing instruction, managing a full-day program, and linking instruction with home experiences and;
- Increase the use of reading assessments that will effectively identify children at-risk for reading failure and lead to improved instruction for individual children.

The PACE program will build on the alignment in curriculum, strategies, professional development, and assessment established by the District's Reading First initiative. Instructional materials and activities will be facilitated through the use of the Harcourt *Trophies Pre-K* curriculum. Professional development in scientifically based reading principles will adhere to a model of presentation, demonstration/modeling, guided practice, feedback and coaching. Screening and outcome tools including the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III* and the *PALS Pre-K*, will be implemented along with *Get It Go It Go!* to determine skill level, monitor progress, and individualize instruction.

New York

Project Name: Malone Early Reading First Partnership

Project Director: Marice Bright

Funding: \$2,773,325

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 10

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 129

Grantee: Malone Central School District

42 Huskie Lane P.O. Box 847

Malone, NY 12953-0847

Tel. #: (518) 483-9487

Fax #: (518) 483-3071

MBRIGHT@MAIL.FEHB.ORG

Malone Early Reading First Partnership will support Early Childhood Centers of Excellence. The centers comprise public school, community-based pre-school, Head Start, and Even Start Family Literacy Partnership. The goals of the Malone Early Reading First Partnership are:

- Increase the capacity to provide full day pre-kindergarten to 3 and 4 year-old students for 6.5 hours a day for 46 weeks per year by certified classroom teachers and teaching assistants.
- Provide low-income children in our rural community with a comprehensive research-based early literacy curriculum that includes oral language development, cognitive development, and early reading skill development. Informational literacy in the content area subjects of math, art, and music will also be part of this comprehensive curriculum.
- Provide an engaging, print rich learning environment for the children to develop early literacy skills, social awareness, organizational routines, language acquisition, and listening skills.
- Provide ongoing research-based professional development activities to improve the partnerships knowledge of early literacy reading research practices, assessment and data collection analysis, and implementation of a core pre-k curriculum program to improve and monitor student achievement.
- Create and foster positive home/school connections. The family literacy specialists will provide parent education, books, games, and activities to increase the parent's knowledge of early reading and language development. The activities will correlate with core curriculum and also improve the home literacy environment.

The Malone Early Reading First Partnership will adopt the Scott Foresman Pre-K Literacy Curriculum. Family Literacy Specialists will be trained in the Parents as Teachers curriculum and work closely with parents to read and talk to their children. Professional development will include demonstration teaching, professional study groups, summer workshop/institutes, and required state and federal training.

The Get Ready to Read! Get it Got it Go, Peabody Picture Vocabulary – III, and the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) tools will be used to screen and identify students who are behind in their acquisition of literacy fundamentals. Individual student progress will be addressed in monthly case management meetings. Literacy Coaches and teachers will use this diagnostic information to match their reading instruction to the specific literacy needs of individual students. The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) tool will screen print-rich environments to document environmental factors and strengthen classroom quality.

New York

Project Name: New York City Early Reading First Centers of Excellence

Project Director: Sheila Smith, Ph.D

Funding: \$2,991,436

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 33

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 240

Grantee: New York University

15 Washington Place, #1H

New York, NY 10003

Tel. #: (212) 998-5014

Fax #: (212) 995-4358

SHEILA.SMITH@NYU.EDU

This project will create Centers of Excellence in five New York City early childhood programs that serve 240 preschool-age children from low-income families. The programs receive support from New York State's Universal Prekindergarten Program, Head Start, and publicly subsidized child care. The NYC Department of Education's Office of Early Childhood Education and the NYC Agency for Child Development are partners in this project.

New York University's Child and Family Policy Center will provide intensive support to the five preschool programs to help staff implement a comprehensive early literacy program that provides exceptional support for children's language and literacy development. This program includes:

- A content-rich, theme-based curriculum, *Discovering Paths to Reading*, developed at NYU;
- Daily letter and phonemic awareness activities from *Fee, Fie, Phonemic Awareness* and *Letter Links*; and
- A dialogic reading program, *Read Together, Talk Together*.

Literacy coaches from NYU's Center will provide five yearly group-training sessions for program staff and weekly classroom-team training and coaching.

Training will focus on ensuring full implementation of the project curriculum, effective teaching strategies, print and language-rich classroom environments, effective monitoring of children's early literacy growth, and individualized support for children's learning. The project will also implement a parent involvement component (lending library, take-home parent-child activities, and a workshop series) and evaluate the project's impact on children's language and literacy outcomes. Evaluation and monitoring instruments include the PALS-PreK Screener, PPVT, Early Literacy Skills Assessment, and Pre-CTOPP.

New York

Project Name: Step Up To Reading

Grantee: Supreme Evaluation, Inc.
1575 McDonald Avenue,
Brooklyn, NY 11230-5512

Project Director: Neil Maron

Funding: \$3,765,791

Tel. #: (718) 375-1460

Fax #: (718) 375-4104

nmaron@supremeevaluation.net

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 11

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 200

Supreme Evaluation, Inc.'s Early Reading First project, *Step Up To Reading*, is a partnership with two high quality preschool programs: Bedford-Stuyvesant Early Childhood Development, Inc. and Sesame Sprout, Inc. Sesame is adopting *The Creative Curriculum* and Bed-Stuy will continue using utilized *High Scope*. Together the two sites will serve approximately 200 students, many with disabilities, in eleven classrooms. The *Step Up to Reading* program will:

- Provide children with high quality oral language and print rich environments which support their development in: oral language; phonological awareness; print awareness and alphabet knowledge;
- Provide activities, curriculum resources and instructional materials based on scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) to help children gain the language, cognitive and early reading skills and knowledge which are critical to success in school and throughout life;
- Acquire, administer and interpret screening tools and other reading/language assessments based on SBRR to measure what children know at the program's onset, differentiate instruction for students and quantify student progress; and
- Integrate new instructional materials, systematic and explicit teaching methods, language and literacy enhancing activities, tools and measures into [Bed-Sty Head Start/Sesame]'s overall standards-based and developmentally-appropriate early childhood program.

Professional development will include intensive coaching of all classroom staff (one day per week per classroom) by Master-level Reading/Literacy Teachers and additional structured training sessions (fifty or more hours annually) so teachers and assistants know exactly why, when and how to use SBRR strategies and interventions. Speech-Language Pathologists and Special Education Teachers will be available for regular consultations. Staff training and project implementation will be coordinated with public and non-public Reading First programs to bolster student outcomes and foster continuity.

Assessment tools will include: screening, outcomes - *Get Ready to Read!*, *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening*, *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III*; progress monitoring - *Early Literacy Skills Assessment*; assessing classrooms and instruction - *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit*. The curriculum programs directing both explicit and contextualized instruction and practice (group/individual formats) will be: *Growing Readers Early Literacy Curriculum*; *Literacy: The Creative Curriculum Approach*; *Read Together, Talk Together*.

Ohio

Project Name: Providing Early Opportunities for Pre-School Literacy Enrichment (PEOPLE)

Project Director: Valdia P. Burns

Funding: \$4,027,964

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 26

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 250

Grantee: Family Intergenerational Day Care

966 East 146th Street

Cleveland, OH 44110

Tel. #: (216) 851-1853

Fax #: (216) 851-1865

INTERGEN01@SBCGLOBAL.NET

Providing Early Opportunities for Pre-School Literacy Enrichment (PEOPLE) is a collaboration between the Family Intergenerational Day Care, Allemas, Bright Star, Richmond Heights Academy, and Cleveland Municipal Schools, the local educational agency (LEA) in a consortium of day care centers throughout Cuyahoga County. The project will serve 250 children, per year, 80% of whom are eligible for free/reduced meals, including students with special needs and English language learners. The goals of the project are to:

- Use Scientific Based Reading Research (SBRR) explicit classroom instructions and professional development to enhance pre-school-age children mastery of phonological and print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and oral language from low-income families;
- Assist teachers, most who are new to SBRR, through on-site coaching and a series of face-to-face tutorials, with their university partners;
- Transform existing child care centers into five Centers of Excellence as models for the planned pre-school expansion; and
- Introduce and use assessment-monitoring tools to effectively identify students' literacy needs as well as share results with stakeholders.

The PEOPLE Project is designed to perform intensive language and foundational literacy skills through a model rooted in SBRR for pre-school-age children. It will implement the Ohio Essential State Curriculum and the National Reading Panels performance measures, using the Breakthrough to Literacy Curriculum and other educational materials, with enhancements for supplementary rigorous intervention. Students will be systematically assessed to identify levels of performance.

Oklahoma

Project Name: Project ROAR (Rural Oklahoma Advocates Reading)

Project Director: Ruthie Tate

Funding: \$3,992,263

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 32

Number of Paraprofessional/Aides Served: 12

Number of School Districts Served: 3

Number of Students Served: 449

Grantee: Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc.

502 West Duke Street

Hugo, OK 74743-3215

Tel. #: (580) 326-7581

Fax #: (580) 326-7584

RTATE@LDCAAHS.ORG

Little Dixie Community Action Agency is a private, nonprofit organization that operates Head Start classrooms in three rural counties (Choctaw, McCurtain, and Pushmataha), which have some of the highest poverty rates in Oklahoma. All three counties are included in the territory of the Choctaw Nation Indian Tribe and have large Native American populations. Little Dixie Head Start requires that 90% of its enrolled preschoolers must meet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines, which are more restrictive than Free and Reduced Lunch guidelines.

Through Project Rural Oklahoma Advocates Reading (ROAR), Little Dixie Head Start will turn five rural Head Start centers into model Centers of Excellence. Assisting Little Dixie Head Start in this endeavor are: the public schools in these areas, Head Start families, the University of Oklahoma, and the University of Memphis.

Project ROAR will implement:

- Instruction emphasizing oral language production and emergent literacy;
- Letter learning activities that foster the alphabetic principle, letter shapes, names and sounds;
- Supports for intentional instruction;
- Screening and assessment of students to determine those at risk of reading difficulties;
- Program adaptability to meet the needs of specific students and sub-groups; and
- Sustained training, coaching and mentoring to build each participating teacher's capacity.

The existing High Reach Learning curriculum (providing a framework for the Head Start domains) will be integrated with intensive professional development and with explicit, research-based literacy through the Wright Group/McGraw-Hill's Breakthrough to Literacy program. Project ROAR includes an equal balance of professional development, improved classroom environment, and family involvement. The comprehensive research-based literacy-focused professional development provided through Project ROAR will prepare Head Start teachers to facilitate low-income children's language and literacy learning to prevent them from encountering reading difficulties once they enter school. Literacy mentors will provide teachers with onsite coaching on a weekly basis. Parent/Head Start/Public School Partnerships will be established to build bridges between Head Start, parents, and public schools. Monthly family literacy meetings at each site will provide families with family literacy training and information. Family Literacy Advocates will work directly with parents to improve home literacy practices. Summer school programs will be established at the targeted Head Start centers.

Oklahoma

Project Name: Starting Right

Project Director: Dr. Susan Kimmel

Funding: \$ 3,930,809

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 69

Number of School Districts Served: 2

Number of Students Served: 500

Grantee: The Board of Regents of the
University of Oklahoma
Office of Research Services
731 Elm Avenue, Room 134
Norman, OK 73019-3032
Tel. #: (405) 799-6383
Fax #: (405) 799-7634
SKIMMEL@OU.EDU

Starting Right is collaboration between the University of Oklahoma's Center for Early Childhood Professional Development in the College of Continuing Education (OU-CECPD) and the Department of Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum in the College of Education on behalf of the two community preschools and three Head Start programs in the target audience.

Starting Right will target the children, teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, and families in five programs. These programs 1) meet the two invitational priorities [intensity and low income]; 2) represent rural and urban settings; public, private, university, and faith-based sponsorship; small to large centers; Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Coyle LEAs; and diverse racial and ethnic communities; and 3) meet the conditions of readiness to become centers of educational excellence.

The *Starting Right* design consists of six program components: 1) scientifically-based professional development; 2) scientifically-based early childhood literacy curriculum and activities; 3) language- and literature-rich environment; 4) early literacy screenings, assessment, diagnosis, and progress monitoring; 5) coordination with community, school, state, and federal resources; and 6) family literacy.

Professional development to support the entire program components will reflect the needs of the target audience as identified in a needs assessment and through ongoing interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations. Literacy mentors will link professional development with teacher behavior in the classroom as they demonstrate, support, and guide. Project evaluation will determine program progress and efficacy.

As a result of *Starting Right*, at-risk children will develop prerequisite literacy skills and understandings, including oral language, phonological awareness, concepts about print, and alphabetic knowledge; transition successfully to kindergarten; learn to read with minimal difficulty; believe they are readers and writers, and enter kindergarten with literacy skills to be successful throughout their education. Teachers and administrators will be able to design and deliver appropriate early literacy instruction, administer assessments, and use the assessment data to make instructional decisions.

Oregon

Project Name: Project EXCEL
Project Director: Dr. Steffen Saifer
Funding: \$2,990,938

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 13
Number of School Districts Served: 2
Number of Students Served: 256

Grantee: NW Regional Educational
Laboratory
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204-3213
Tel. #: (503) 275-9150
Fax #: (503) 275-9152
SAIFERS@NWREL.ORG

Project ExCEL in Head Start will use *Building Language for Literacy Plus* (BLL+) curriculum will provide systematic, intensive, and on-going training to the staff of full-day classrooms of five high-quality Head Start programs (13 classrooms at 11 sites) in Oregon through a blend of two strong research-based programs: *Building Language for Literacy* (BLL) (Scholastic, Inc.) and *Tools of the Mind* (TOM) (Leong, 2004). BLL+ integrates the research-based best practices in literacy development with those in the development of self-regulation and effortful control, to assure that effective literacy content instruction is well implemented. Training on BLL+ will give teachers the skills to use a variety of effective instructional strategies such as the use of explicit alphabetic instruction in one-on-one interactions through scaffolding. BLL+ training will also include the effective use of screening and on-going assessment data to individualize instruction, the development of print-rich environments, among other topics.

Educators will receive intensive, on-going training, technical assistance, and support through annual institutes (6 days per year), site visits from a literacy coach (3 visits per month), videoconference meetings, and electronic communications, materials and resources. Extensive use of videotape analysis of classroom instruction will be used as a key instructional strategy. At least 45 hours of formal instruction and 75 hours of individual mentoring/coaching for each teacher will occur annually. In addition to curricula continuity assured by the approach used, collaboration activities with local schools and districts will provide continuity with early elementary reading practices. Multi-method, quasi-experimental research will be conducted to provide evidence of the project's effectiveness.

Project goals are:

- To expand and deepen each child's literacy knowledge. Teachers do this by adjusting the challenge provided to children throughout the year so they are always learning new skills and concepts and solidifying existing knowledge and abilities.
- To train teachers to develop self-regulation and other underlying cognitive skills in children while teaching literacy content. Teachers learn how to integrate child-choice with explicit instruction so that children will develop effortful control over their thinking (Perry, 1998). One-on-one interactions are orchestrated so that specific literacy skills are taught explicitly to children. Whole group activities are modified to maintain levels of attention and deliberate memory, aligned with the growing developmental levels of self-regulation that the children are acquiring.
- To scaffold training for the teachers. To be effective, training has to be organized so that the teachers implement activities in a way that adjusts to the child's developing skills, but teachers must also know the reasons for making these changes.

Oregon

Project Name: Portland Early Reading First
(ERF) Initiative

Project Director: Susan Enfield

Funding: \$3,008,191

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 6

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 180

Grantee: School District No. 1J,
Portland Public Schools
Multnomah County
PO Box 3107
Portland, OR 97208-3107
Tel. #: (503) 916-3231
Fax #: (503) 916-3111
WEIWEI@PPS.K12.OR.US

The Portland Early Reading First (ERF) Initiative will establish five Centers of Excellence serving 180 preschool children from low-income families within the boundaries of Portland Public Schools, Oregon's largest urban school district. The project will expand and enhance prekindergarten programs for children ages 4-5 at four elementary schools which are also participating in Oregon Reading First. The fifth Center, serving children ages 3-5, is operated by Albina Head Start, a local nonprofit community-based organization. ERF Centers will offer full-day preschools (6.5 hours), five days a week, 46 weeks a year.

Project goals are to:

- Accelerate development of children's language, cognitive, and literacy skills;
- Enhance classroom learning environments;
- Improve teachers' knowledge, skills, and ability to provide intentional, systematic, and explicit early literacy instruction; and
- Improve screening assessment and progress monitoring.

Between 18-20 preschool staff will participate in over 300 hours of professional development, to include summer institutes, workshops, and weekly in-class work with mentor coaches (2 FTE). The *High Scope* curriculum will provide a guiding philosophy of developmentally appropriate early childhood education. Centers will implement the core literacy preK curriculum that aligns with the adopted K-3 core reading curriculum at the four elementary schools: *Houghton-Mifflin* or *Open Court*. Multnomah County Library will provide its *Early Words* parent training program. Dr. Ruth Kaminski and the Dynamic Measurement Group will organize professional development using the *Steps To Achieving Resilience (STAR)* framework.

Assessments will include *Get It! Got It! Go! Preschool Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)*; the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III*; *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS Pre-K)*, and the *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)*. Dr. Scott McConnell of the University of Minnesota Center for Early Education and Development will conduct an independent evaluation.

Pennsylvania

Project Name: Community Services for Children (CSC)

Project Director: Patricia W. Levin

Funding: \$3,386,921

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 14

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 137

Grantee: Community Services for Children, Inc.

1520 Hanover Avenue

Allentown, PA 18109-2360

Tel. #: (610) 437-6000

Fax #: (610) 432-8800

PLEVIN@CSCINC.ORG

Community Services for Children (CSC) is proposing to transform three Head Start centers in Allentown, Pa., into full-day, full-year Early Reading First centers of early learning excellence. The classrooms serve 137 3- and 4-year-olds, 100% of them from low-income families. The majority are Latino, and more than one-quarter speak Spanish as their primary language. The project is intended to prepare all participating children to enter kindergarten with the skills necessary for reading success; a major focus will be to improve the English-language and early literacy skills of children with limited English proficiency (LEP), who research and local experience have shown to be at significantly increased risk for reading difficulties. To support state-of-the-art, research-based LEP programming, CSC will consult with Adele Miccio, Ph.D., a nationally known expert in early literacy among bilingual (English-Spanish) children. CSC is proposing to provide full-day, full-year (52-week) services in all classrooms; average hours children attend will be 6½ hours / day in six classrooms, while the seventh is and will continue to be open 11½ hours / day. Each year of the program, 50% of the children will be children who are two years prior to kindergarten. During the three years of ERF, a total of 137 children will receive the full two-year intervention. The project goals are to:

- Prepare children to enter kindergarten with the language, cognitive and early reading skills necessary for reading success.
- Adopt the research-based curriculum Opening the World of Learning (OWL) as its primary language and literacy curriculum. Assessment tools will include PPVT-III and PALS-PreK, Individual Growth and Development Indicators, the Home Literacy and Language Scales, ELLCO, progress monitoring tools included with OWL, and an assessment tool for English-language learners to be identified with Dr. Miccio's assistance.
- Provide parents with additional support in fostering their children's language and literacy development, via group programs such as View, Do and Read Together! and on home visits. Topics will include creating a print- and literacy-rich environment in the home, and using dialogic reading, a technique that has been found particularly effective in low-income children's language development.

In addition, sustained, intensive, classroom-focused professional development will be provided via a sequenced combination of: curriculum and assessment specific training; two college-credit courses; the Literacy Environment Enrichment Program (LEEP) and Supporting Preschoolers with Language Differences, both provided by Education Development Center's Julie A. Hirschler, Ed.D., in collaboration with East Stroudsburg University; ongoing support by three full-time literacy mentors; and ongoing consultative support from Dr. Miccio. Lehigh University will serve as the external evaluator, utilizing a between-group, quasi-experimental design.

Texas

Project Name: Bryan Independent School District

Project Director: Mary Blackburn

Funding: \$2,713,317

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 10

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 450

Grantee: Bryan Independent School District

101 N. Texas Ave.

Bryan, TX 77803

Tel. #: (979) 775-9294

Fax #: (979) 823-8724

MBLACK@BRYANISD.ORG

Bryan Independent School District proposal represents a partnership between Bryan Independent School District and Texas A&M to address the five purposes of Early Reading First in preschool classrooms that serve predominantly Spanish-speaking and low-income children. Over the 3-year period, seven preschool classrooms will be prepared through ongoing professional development to implement a prevention-based, three-tiered early language and literacy model educating approximately 450 children in full-time/full-year services. The comprehensive level of preparation is designed to address the early language and literacy development of children who citywide are at significant risk of later reading difficulty.

Bryan Independent School District seeks to integrate within existing and new preschool programs, a model that incorporates systematic screening and progress monitoring, a trio of SBRR curriculums, and scaffolded professional development to enhance the quality of instruction and outcomes for preschool children enabling them to attain state-articulated standards.

The project will:

- Provide literacy rich environments that support student achievement in phonological awareness, concepts of print, alphabetic knowledge and oral language while preparing them for successful transition to kindergarten and beyond.
- Support the efforts of existing and new personnel to achieve the guiding principles of the ERF through nationally recognized professional development from Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE) designed to build local capacity within the preschool center.

Evaluate the effects of this program on preschooler outcomes through longitudinal time series pre/post-test designs screening preschoolers at entry to the classroom as they enter and exit kindergarten, and at the end of grade 1. Program evaluation information will be used to modify and support program implementation.

Texas

Project Name: MPISD's Community of Readers

Project Director: Deborah H. Cody

Funding: \$2,723,012

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 40

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 325

Grantee: Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD)

P.O. Box 1117

Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456-1117

Tel. #: (903) 575-2092

Fax #: (903) 575-2077

DCODY@MPISD.NET

The *Community of Readers* project is a collaborative effort designed by the Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) to transform 20 preschool classrooms in a rural Texas county which, because of the booming poultry industry, is considered one of the fastest growing Hispanic communities in the state of Texas. MPISD's *Community of Readers* partners include Texas A&M University at Texarkana (TAMU-T), the State Center for Early Childhood Development (CIRCLE), the parents of each participating child and the Titus county community at-large. The project will serve 325 three and four-year old children yearly, 97% from low-income families, and 20 teachers. The Child Development Center (CDC) is an integral part of MPISD's overall literacy program which also includes Reading First (K-3) and was established to provide preschool for any child in Titus County identified as "at-risk" for not succeeding in school.

The goals of this early literacy project are:

- Improve school readiness of MPISD children by providing a high-quality preschool education through explicitly planned instruction and rich classroom environments.
- Utilize highly qualified personnel who have relevant training and experiences representing a broad diversity.
- Leverage and provide adequate resources from all stakeholders to implement the project including human, fiscal, and material resources.
- Execute a strong and effective management system that will include feedback and continuous improvement strategies.
- Implement a project evaluation system to assess the progress and effectiveness of the project.
- Establish a preschool center that will result in new best practices and effective strategies associated with the field of early literacy.

The *Community of Readers* will feature a high quality evaluation design, a strong commitment to sustain the project activities beyond the grant period, a state of the art online professional development model, hand held computers to assist child assessment and classroom planning, side-by-side mentor coaching to ensure teacher support, and parent involvement activities that extend literacy into the home.

Texas

Project Name: Ready to Read (R2R)

Project Director: Dr. Harry Baker

Funding: \$4,500,000

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 14

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 260

Grantee: South San Antonio Independent School District

2515 Bobcat Lane

San Antonio, TX 78244

Tel. #: (210) 977-7000

Fax #: (210) 977-7013

HBAKER@SOUTHSANISD.NET

SSAISD is a large suburban school district with a total student count of 9,928. Of these students, 95.7% are Hispanic. Further, 93.1% of all elementary school students in the District are economically disadvantaged as measured by the number eligible for the Title I Free and Reduced Lunch Program. The R2R Project will work with 5 existing SSAISD pre-school programs, each of which is a State of Texas accredited, multicultural site that is primed to become an Early Reading First (ERF) center-of-excellence. Athens, Kindred, Neil Armstrong, Palo Alto, and Royalgate (see Appendix A) currently serve three and four-year old children all day, with 98.9% attendance. Of the 375 children, 2.9% are African-American, 94.7% Hispanic and 2.4% White; 94.8% are low-income; 31.0% are limited English proficient; and 13.3% are identified as needing special education services. Each site and program has State Pre-K funding for children “at-risk”, is a learning center with literacy domains and each aligns with the Texas Early Reading First Initiative.

Using guidance from The National Reading Panel and implementing scientifically-based reading research (SBRR), District leaders will reduce and/or eliminate the need for extra support programs in later grades by reaching vulnerable children before kindergarten via the Ready to Read (R2R) program. The model presented by the SSAISD has 6 major components:

- Intense professional development, including: hands-on workshops addressing classroom environment; assessment; use of standards; and weekly classroom demonstrations in oral language development, phonological/phonemic awareness, print awareness and alphabetic knowledge. The professional development is designed to build capacity, not dependence upon consultants, within the teaching staff. This is done by providing extensive professional development in Year 1; coaching in Year 2; and in Year 3 allowing the teachers to become trainers;
- Classroom environments rich with books, real-life print, and student work;
- Integration of *Open Court Reading* (OCR) with Texas Pre-K guidelines and SBRR into SSAISD’s existing Reading First, Early Childhood Education and Pre-K Programs.
- Research-based assessment with predetermined achievement benchmarks;
- Partnering with parents for increased home reading and early literacy skills; and
- Seamless Kindergarten transition: Extend the Pre-K school year from 37 weeks to 41 weeks.

These components build long-range capacity and sustainability.

Utah

Project Name: Let's Get Started with Early Literacy Skills (Let's Get Started)

Project Director: Brenda Broadbent

Funding: \$4,833,076

Number of Teachers/Assistants Served: 27

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served: 300

Grantee: Granite School District --
Preschool Services Department

2500 South State

Salt Lake City, UT 84115-3110

Tel. #: (801) 646-4674

Fax #: (801) 646-4671

BRENDA.BROADBENT@

GRANITE.K12.UT.US

The *Let's Get Started* project will impact 300 of GSD's most at risk for school failure three and four-year-old children currently attending five of the district's most in-need schools, two of which are Reading First schools and all of which are Title I designated schools. Given the geographic proximity of the two Reading First schools (West Kearns and David Gourley), and that only one preschool class is offered at Gourley, the preschool classrooms from these two Reading First schools will be consolidated and housed within a single site at West Kearns Elementary School. In total, the *Let's Get Started* project will provide 15 preschool classrooms at four sites, offering programming intensity of 46 weeks per year, 5 days per week for 6 hours per day.

All existing GSD preschool services that provide comprehensive developmental services to low-income, limited English proficient preschool children and their families will be offered to *Let's Get Started* preschoolers; the developmental information gathered through these services and then used to measure children's individual progress, adjust classroom practices, and determine whether more specialized services are necessary from the more than 48 Granite community resource centers, including referrals for GSD services.

Let's Get Started will:

- Build upon existing preschool services, instructional materials, and literacy activities by integrating coherent and comprehensive scientifically based reading research (SBRR) supplements, programs, interventions, and instructional best practices.
- Provide continuous, integrated, multi-level professional development, support, and evaluation to ensure a strong tie to all ERF goals, materials, and practices used daily by teachers in the classroom; an intensity likely to change teacher and staff behavior; and the ability to make routine, informed project course corrections across project years so that positive child outcomes are not only realized, but are substantial.
- Create four preschool centers of educational excellence that comprehensively address oral language, cognition, and early reading, and that provide replicable and effective instructional improvement and professional development strategies for preschools across the nation.

While Creative Curriculum highlights the importance of materials in the environment and provides guidance on the teacher's role in addressing content in various areas, it does not provide an intensive SBRR focus on language and literacy development. Early Reading First (ERF) funds will significantly enhance current efforts by introducing *We Can!*

Washington

Project Name: Educational Service District 105 (ESD)

Project Director: Jane M Gutting

Funding: \$2,531,038

Number of Teachers/Assistant Teachers Served: 7

Number of School Districts Served: 1

Number of Students Served:

Grantee: Educational Service District 105 (ESD)

33 South Second Avenue

Yakima, WA 98908-3486

Tel. #: (509) 575-2885

Fax #: (509) 575-2918

JANEG@ESD105.WEDNET.EDU

Educational Service District (ESD) 105 Diverse Partnership for Literacy creates a partnership to enhance the learning environments and instructional practice at four preschool sites in the towns of White Swan, Toppenish, and Wapato. As a result, participating children will enter kindergarten with strongly developed cognitive, language and literacy skills that will provide the foundation they need for reading and school success.

Project goals are to:

- Offer rich oral language and print environments and developing children's literacy.
- Provide ongoing assistance to staff through professional development and other support.
- Provide services and integrating instructional materials, and activities into preschool and family literacy.
- Use of assessments and other measures to determine skills children are learning.
- Help children, especially those experiencing difficulty, transition to kindergarten.
- Involve parents meaningfully in their children's early education

Educational Service District 105 will act as the fiscal agent for the project, and will provide training and technical assistance for all four sites. ESD 105 is uniquely qualified to manage this project, as it is one of nine regional public education agencies in Washington providing varied services to school districts and educational agencies. ESD 105 has been providing family support services for over 30 years through its special education early childhood, KidScreen, migrant education parent leadership, and prevention programs. The three participating districts are part of the ESD 105 service area. An agreement with Puget Sound Educational Service District's (PSESD) Head Start program of Seattle has also been developed. PSESD will create access to a larger community of early childhood specialists who will help build capacity among staff employed in the four rural and remote sites.

- The national *HeadsUp!Reading course* will provide the foundation for staff training. SRA curriculum, *Open Court Reading Pre-K* and *Creative Curriculum.net* will form the basis for classroom instruction. Through on-site training, coaching, and modeling, teachers will develop the skills to implement the curriculum, integrate intentional language and literacy teaching into all aspects of the program, and to adapt teaching strategies for children with special needs. Three sites are operated by the Yakama Nation Head Start in partnership with Toppenish, Wapato, and Mt. Adams School Districts and one preschool site operated by the Wapato School District.