

INVESTING IN EARLY LEARNING

President Obama is committed to an early learning agenda that strives to ensure all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life. A robust body of research demonstrates that high-quality early learning programs and services can improve young children's health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes; enhance school readiness; and help close the school readiness gap that exists between children with high needs and their peers at the time they enter kindergarten.

To help all children begin school on a level playing field, the Administration is working to strengthen the quality of early learning programs. The President's 2013 budget request includes key investments in a number of programs that seek to improve outcomes for young children, especially for those with high needs:

- **Race to the Top (\$850 million)**, which will include funding for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC). The Early Learning Challenges provides competitive grants to States to establish model systems of early learning that promote high standards of quality and a focus on outcomes across all early learning settings to ensure that more children enter kindergarten with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions toward learning they need to be successful. This request would continue financial incentives for system-wide education reform and innovation, especially those which are designed to improve outcomes for young children.
- **\$463 million for Early Intervention Programs for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities**, \$20 million more than the FY 2012 amount, in formula grants to help States implement statewide systems of early intervention services for all eligible children with disabilities from birth through age two and their families.
- **\$373 million for Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities**, in formula grants to help States make a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment available to all children with disabilities ages three through five to help ensure that young children with disabilities succeed in school.
- **Promise Neighborhoods (\$100 million)**, to support projects that significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children by providing a birth-to-career continuum of rigorous and comprehensive education reforms, effective community services, and strong systems of family and community support – with high quality schools at the center. The Secretary may give priority to applicants that propose to expand, enhance, or modify an existing network of early learning programs and services to ensure that they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.

- **Effective Teaching and Learning for Literacy (\$187 million)**, which would provide competitive grants to State Education Agencies, alone or in partnership with other entities, in order to improve comprehensive State and local efforts aimed at improving literacy instruction, especially in high-need schools for children and youth from preschool through grade 12.

In addition, the Department is proposing investments in programs that can be used to improve the outcomes for young children and lay the foundation for school success. Funds from the following programs may be spent on children from birth through third grade:

- **College- and Career-Ready Students (\$14.5 billion)** (formerly Title I Grants to local education agencies). Since the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965, Title I funds have been available to provide services to eligible children birth to school entry. The Administration encourages districts and schools to use existing flexibility to invest Title I funds in high-quality preschool programs for eligible children, joint professional development for school staff and the early learning workforce, and coordination with early learning programs and services.
- **School Turnaround Grants (\$534 million)**, which would make formula grants available to States to support States and districts as they implement rigorous interventions in their persistently lowest-performing schools. The Administration believes that implementing a high-quality preschool program that is designed to improve the cognitive, health, and social-emotional outcomes for children with high needs can be an important element of school reform.
- **Investing in Innovation (\$150 million)**, which provides competitive grants that expand the implementation of, and investment in, innovative and evidence-based practices, programs and strategies that significantly improve student achievement and close achievement gaps. The Secretary may give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs designed to improve outcomes for young children with high needs from birth through third grade by enhancing the quality of early learning programs.

Additional investments for young children include:

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers (\$1.2 billion)
- Assessing Achievement (\$389 million)
- Effective Teaching and Learning for a Complete Education programs (\$427 million)
- English Learner Education (\$732 million)
- Excellent Instructional Teams programs (\$2.5 billion)
- IDEA Grants to States (\$11.6 billion)

- Indian Education - Demonstration Grants for Indian Children (\$19 million)
- Indian Education - Professional Development Grants (\$19 million)
- Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant program (\$53 million)
- Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students (\$196 million)

The Department of Health and Human Services is also investing in young children by requesting significant increases in funding for the following programs:

- **Over \$8 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start**, which provides grants to local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to disadvantaged children and families. This request maintains the historic expansion undertaken with Recovery Act funds, allowing the program to serve approximately 962,000 of our nation's most vulnerable children and families.
- **Over \$6 billion for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)**, which provides grants to States for child care subsidies for low-income families who are working. This request would increase funding over the previous year by \$825 million, allowing the Administration to continue to maintain child care for 1.5 million children, improve the quality of care, and support state systems that empower parents to select high-quality care.
- **\$300 million for a new Child Care Quality Initiative**, which will provide formula funds to states to support their efforts to use quality indicator systems to improve child care quality and help families make informed decisions when choosing child care providers. In addition, the initiative will provide funds for competitive grants to States and Tribes that demonstrate a strong commitment to making large strides in their development and use of quality indicator systems, such as quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS). The initiative will also provide funds to evaluate which quality indicators are associated with improvements in child care quality and child outcomes.