

## Investing in Early Learning for an America Built to Last

Over the past three years, President Obama has demonstrated extraordinary leadership in shepherding America's education system through the financial crisis and economic recession and in leveraging the change and reform we need to prepare our children for the challenges of competing successfully in the 21st century global economy. The Budget request includes a robust education reform agenda to achieve this goal by supporting a continuum of learning in the early years from birth through third grade. Significant evidence from research and evaluation demonstrate that high-quality early learning programs and services are the among the most cost-effective investments in improving health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes; increasing school readiness across a range of domains; and closing and even preventing achievement gaps. High-quality early learning programs are an integral component to creating an educational system that is internationally competitive, spurs innovation, and ensures every child reaches his or her full potential.

*"Education must be our national mission. All of us must work to give all our children the best education possible."*

*– President Barack Obama*

Because effective investment in early learning is so critical to children's ability to reach their full potential and the Nation's future economic health, the Budget maintains the historic expansion undertaken with Recovery Act funds Head Start and Early Head Start, and supports implementation of new regulations to strengthen Head Start by requiring programs to compete for funding for the first time.

The President's request similarly includes significant increases in funding for the Child Care and Development Fund, and provides additional investments to improve quality, and prepare children for success in school. It also proposes principles for child care reform that focus on improving quality, protecting health and safety, and strengthening early learning.

The Administration deepens its investment in Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge, a program that in 2011 awarded nine grants to States committed to ambitious efforts to build statewide systems of high-quality early learning and development programs intended to close the school readiness gap. Additional funds are also provided for the IDEA Infants and Families Program to provide the youngest children a good start. This Budget is a blueprint for how we can rebuild an economy built to last and a world-class education for our children.

To help ensure all children begin school with the strong foundation they need for lifelong learning and success, the President's Budget will:

### **Support New Early Learning Challenge Grants**

- Provides \$850 million for *Race to the Top*, which will include funding for the *Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)*, for 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.

### **Strengthen Head Start and Early Head Start**

- Increases funding for *Head Start and Early Head Start* by \$85.4 million to provide over \$8 billion in 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

### **Increase the Quality and Availability of Child Care**

- Invests an additional \$825 million over the previous year for the *Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)* for a total of over \$6 billion, 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. The request includes principles for reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act to reform the nation's child care system into one that provides healthy, safe, nurturing care and is focused on continuous quality improvement. The investment includes \$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.

### **Invest in Evidence-Based Home Visiting Initiatives**

- Includes \$400 million in mandatory funding for the recently enacted Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. These funds will go to states, territories, and Tribes for evidence-based home visiting programs for low-income families in at-risk communities. Effective home visiting programs provide crucial supports to new and expectant families and can have powerful and positive impacts on both children and families. Home visitors work one-on-one with families to improve

maternal and child health; prevent child maltreatment; improve parenting skills; promote children's cognitive, language, and social-emotional development; and assure school readiness. Under the MIECHV program, at least 75 percent of the funding must be used to support home visiting models that have been rigorously evaluated and shown to be effective. Up to one-quarter of the funds can be used to support promising approaches that will be rigorously evaluated to assess their impact.

### **Increase the Support to Infants, Toddlers and Children with Disabilities under IDEA**

- Provides \$20 million more than the FY 2012 enacted level for a total of \$463 million in formula grants for *Early Intervention Programs for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (IDEA Part C)*, to help States implement statewide systems of early intervention services for all eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth through age 2 and their families.
- Maintains \$373 million in formula grants for *Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities (IDEA, Part B, Sec. 619)* to help States make a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment available to all children with disabilities ages 3 through 5. This program provides over 730,000 young children with disabilities additional supports to help ensure that they succeed in school.
- Maintains \$11.6 billion in formula grants for *Grants to States for Education of Children With Disabilities (IDEA Part B, Sec. 611)* to support States and districts in providing special education and related services to an estimated 6.6 million children with disabilities aged 3 through 21 years.

### **Enhance Learning from Birth through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

- Provides \$14.5 billion in formula grants for *College- and Career-Ready Students (formerly Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies)*. The Administration encourages districts and schools to use existing flexibility to invest these funds in high-quality preschool programs for eligible children, joint professional development for school staff and other early learning educators, and coordination of early learning programs in schools and community-based organizations.
- Invests \$150 million for *Investing in Innovation*, which provides competitive grants for innovative and evidence-based practices, programs and strategies that significantly improve student achievement and close achievement gaps. Improving early learning outcomes is one of several priorities under consideration for the 2013 grant competition.
- Funds *Promise Neighborhoods* at \$100 million to support projects that provide a cradle-to-career continuum of 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.

- Supports State Education Agencies, alone or in partnership with other entities, by providing \$187 million in competitive grants to support comprehensive State and local efforts aimed at improving literacy instruction, especially in high-need schools for children and youth from preschool through grade 12 through the *Effective Teaching and Learning for Literacy* program.

### **Support the Early Learning Workforce**

- Expands and reforms the Campus-Based Aid programs – *Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), Federal Work-Study, and Perkins Loans* – to provide \$10 billion in student financial aid for use at those colleges that provide the best value to students by enrolling and graduating students from low-income families, restraining net prices, and demonstrating good value.
- Maintains the *Stafford loan* interest rate at the current low rate of 3.4 percent. The subsidized Stafford loan interest rate is set to rise to 6.8 percent beginning July 1, 2012. The Budget proposes to keep the interest rate at the current 3.4 percent for new loans issued through June 30, 2013.
- Continues the *Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program* to encourage individuals to enter and continue to work full-time in public service jobs. Under this program, borrowers may qualify for forgiveness of the remaining balance due on their eligible federal student loans after they have made 120 payments on those loans under certain repayment plans while employed full time by certain public service employers.

### **Promote School Reform**

- Provides \$534 million for *School Turnaround Grants*, which would make available formula grants 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.



For more information, go to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Overview/>  
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