

Coordination between School Systems with Title I, Part A Programs and Agencies with Early Childhood Development Programs

COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 1119, states that each local educational agency (LEA) receiving assistance under Title I, Part A, shall carry out the following activities with Head Start agencies and, if feasible, other entities carrying out early childhood development programs. Each LEA shall develop agreements with such Head Start agencies and other entities to carry out these activities to increase coordination between the LEA and the entities carrying out early childhood education programs serving children who will attend the schools of the LEA:

- developing and implementing a systematic procedure for receiving records regarding such children, transferred with parental consent from a Head Start program or, where applicable, another early childhood education program; [For example, an LEA may establish an agreement to share information (and students records, with parental consent) between the LEA and identified early childhood programs such as: Head Start, private preschools, home- or center-based childcare programs, and other community-provided programs (e.g. home visiting programs, positive parenting programs).
- establishing channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts (including teachers, social workers, and health staff) in such Head Start agencies or other entities carrying out early childhood education programs, as appropriate, to facilitate coordination of programs; [For example, hosting PK/K Eligibility and Enrollment sessions with community program staff, identifying opportunities for reciprocal early childhood PD, collaboration between programs and LEA to identify students through Child Find, aligning on learning goals and “benchmarks” in early childhood]
- conducting meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers, and Head Start teachers or, if appropriate, teachers from other early childhood education programs, to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children; [For example, inviting enrolling families and community program staff to PK/K open house and round-up events, LEA staff may join community program-hosted Parent Cafes to discuss eligibility, enrollment, or school readiness directly with parents and families, hosting transition meetings with families and early childhood programs to identify and provide supports such as National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), etc. and opportunities for parental involvement such as PK engagement activities, Campus Site-Based Decision-Making Committee,]
- organizing and participating in joint transition-related training of school staff, Head Start program staff, and, where appropriate, other early childhood education program staff; [For example, joint-planning events to align learning goals between LEA and community programs, collaborating with early childhood programs to develop summer learning activity packets for families]; and
- linking the educational services provided by the LEA with the services provided by local Head Start agencies. [For example, coordinating with early learning programs to identify students’ home language and any necessary supports to develop and retain the home language, including parent and family engagement, while also supporting English proficiency and fluency.]

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ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

In general, eligibility for a Title I preschool program depends on the type of Title I program an LEA or school is operating.

- **School operating a Title I Schoolwide Program:** A preschool that is part of a Title I school operating a schoolwide program is not required to identify particular children as eligible to participate in the Title I preschool. Rather, all children under six years of age are eligible to participate in the Title I preschool program. (ESEA section 1114(c)).
- **School operating a Title I Targeted Assistance Program:** Preschool-age children residing in the attendance area of a school operating a targeted assistance program who are identified as most at risk of failing to meet the challenging State academic standards, are eligible to participate in a Title I preschool program on the basis of criteria, including objective criteria, established by the LEA and supplemented by the school. (ESEA section 1115(c)(1)(B)). The use of family income as one factor in determining eligibility is allowable, but children should not be identified for a Title I preschool program solely on the basis of family income.
- **District-operated Title I Preschool Program:** An LEA may reserve a portion of funds from its Title I allocation to operate a preschool program for eligible children in the district as a whole or in a portion of the district. In general, when an LEA reserves funds to operate a districtwide Title I preschool program, it must select children who are eligible to participate in accordance with a Targeted Assistance program by identifying preschool children most at risk of failing to meet the challenging State academic standards based on criteria, including objective criteria, established by the LEA and supplemented by the school. The use of family income as one factor in determining eligibility for a districtwide Title I preschool program is allowable, especially for the purpose of prioritizing when there are not sufficient Title I funds to serve all eligible preschool-age children. However, children should not be identified as eligible for a Title I preschool program solely based on family income. An LEA may not use Title I funds to implement a districtwide preschool program to benefit all preschool children in the LEA unless all the schools in the LEA are Title I schools operating schoolwide programs.

An LEA may also reserve funds to operate a preschool program for eligible children in a portion of the district — i.e., attendance areas served by some or all of its Title I schools. Under this approach, the LEA would select specific Title I school attendance areas in which to provide preschool programs with Title I funds (e.g., its highest-poverty school attendance areas, its attendance areas for schools operating schoolwide programs). Because this approach is based on Title I participating school attendance areas, which children are eligible depends on the nature of the Title I program the school serving the attendance area is operating. Accordingly, all preschool children residing in the attendance area of a school operating a schoolwide program are eligible; in the attendance area of a school operating a targeted assistance program, eligible preschool children would be those who are identified as most at risk of failing to meet the challenging State academic standards based on criteria, including objective criteria, established by the LEA and supplemented by the school.

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Certain children are automatically eligible to participate in a Title I preschool program, including —

- Children who participated in Head Start, received services supported by the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grants program under Title II, Part B, Subpart 2 of the ESEA, or attended a Title I preschool program at any time in the prior two years;
- Children who received services under Part C of Title I (migrant education) in the prior two years;
- Preschool-aged children experiencing homelessness; and
- Children who are in a local institution for neglected or delinquent children and youth or attending a community-day program for these children.

If a preschool child is automatically eligible to participate in a Title I preschool program by virtue of being in one of these categories, an LEA or school need not identify the preschool child as most at risk of failing to meet the challenging State academic standards to participate in a Title I preschool program. However, the amount of Title I funds available may not be sufficient for the LEA or school to serve all eligible children. In that case, consistent with ESEA section 1115, from the universe of eligible children, the LEA or school selects those children who have the greatest need for special assistance to participate in a Title I preschool program. These selections are difficult because they inevitably result in some children being selected before other children who may also have significant needs. An LEA's or a school's staff, based on a review of all the information available, should use their best professional judgment in making these selections, often balancing the needs of different populations. An LEA or a school may decide, for example, that English learners have the greatest need for preschool services in order to learn English prior to entering school or that among the Title I eligible children, those children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, or children with disabilities may have the greatest need.

[[Non-Regulatory Guidance: Serving Preschool Children Through Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended](#), pp 10-12]

TEMPLATE AVAILABLE

The following template has been developed for LEA use to ensure that all the Title I, Part A coordination requirements related to early childhood development programs are addressed in the agreement(s) between the LEA and other agencies. The LEA may incorporate the template information into a format of its choice, provided that the result reflects a formal agreement between the LEA and the early childhood development agency to carry out the activities listed.

[Template for Early Childhood Agreement](#)

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RESOURCES

[Non-Regulatory Guidance: Serving Preschool Children Through Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended](#)

[Early Learning Public-Private Partnerships](#)

[High-Quality PreKindergarten Family Engagement](#)

[Transition to Kindergarten Best Practice Guidance](#)