

# Mindsets, Partnerships & Support: Resources for Building Local California PreK-3 Learning Communities

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“We can reduce inequality through the predistribution of skills rather than the redistribution of income.”

– Nobel laureate James Heckman

# What Is Preschool to Third Grade (PreK–3)?

Young children spend each day exploring the world, making connections, and discovering new ideas. These earliest learning experiences build the foundation for lifelong health, learning, and positive behavior.<sup>i</sup> There is significant evidence that confirms high-quality early care and education help children begin kindergarten ready to learn;<sup>ii</sup> however, there are indicators that the boosts in school readiness from these experiences can “fade out” or disappear when subsequent educational experiences fail to build on them.<sup>iii</sup>

A preschool to third grade (PreK–3) approach strives to ensure educational experiences in preschool through third grade are connected, cohesive, and build sequentially for children and their families. The PreK–3 approach does not view early care and education as a stand-alone approach that “inoculates” children from educational failure but suggests that for optimal impact early educational experiences must be integrated with kindergarten and elementary education.<sup>iv</sup> The PreK–3 approach can be tailored to meet local needs, and while there can be substantial differences in how communities implement PreK–3, it generally has six core components:

1. Visible, strong leadership dedicated to the vision of a continuum of education from preschool through third grade;
2. Aligned standards, curriculum, and assessments that build sequentially;
3. High-quality, developmentally responsive teaching;
4. Current, accessible, and relevant data used to improve schools, classrooms, instruction, professional development, and other systems;
5. Communities and families actively engaged as partners in supporting children’s learning and development;
6. Access to high-quality preschool, full-day kindergarten, and support for both children and families at key transition points.

The PreK–3 approach emphasizes early prevention over late and costly intervention. It is an investment in the future with cost savings realized in later years when special education and transportation costs are reduced; social and emotional development, cognitive skills, and academic achievement are strengthened; attendance is improved; and students and families are more engaged.<sup>v</sup> Bogard and Takanishi (2005) noted, “creating an intentionally aligned educational system for children 3 to 8 years old based on their developmental characteristics and abilities could be a major factor in sustaining public investments in education.”<sup>vi</sup>

Historically, early childhood education has been disconnected from the elementary school system, making collaboration and alignment of practices difficult.<sup>vii</sup> Funding streams, learning standards, teacher preparation pathways, and accountability systems differ greatly between preschool and elementary school. However, early learning leaders, principals, and school administrators are becoming increasingly aware of the tremendous impact of bridging together these two systems.

Implementing and sustaining an effective PreK–3 approach requires creative thinking, collaboration, and perseverance anchored by committed leadership with a clear vision. It also requires the ability to blend and braid multiple sources of funding: federal, state, local, and private monies, as well as in-kind support. Although school leaders may recognize the importance of implementing PreK–3, the challenge for many communities is identifying the financial resources to pay for it. Funding streams for early childhood and TK–12 (transitional kindergarten through 12th grade) education systems are complex as there is no single state or federal source that covers programs and services for children from birth to third grade.<sup>viii</sup> Funding levels can vary from year to year, and public funding priorities can shift with each budget cycle. Much of the large-scale systemic reform that is needed to bridge the gap and align the early childhood education and elementary school systems must be addressed in the state Capitol and Washington, D.C. However, there is significant work that can be done at the local level to bring these systems together and create an aligned learning continuum that results in better outcomes for students. School districts and communities can lead the way.

## Purpose

This guide is intended to help California educators identify strategies and resources to support the implementation of a PreK–3 approach. School leaders must be both creative and thoughtful when planning for any initiative, and our goal is to assist districts and sites to build and sustain a thriving PreK–3 learning community. This guide highlights strategies that require little or no new funding, and rely instead on shifting mindsets, collaborative partnerships, and in-kind support. This guide also explores state and local sources of potential funding and examines the enhanced possibilities for supporting early learning under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. This guide is not an exhaustive list, and some of the funding opportunities are appropriate for certain school districts and not for others. Unforeseen opportunities will arise, and schools and districts will find creative financing solutions that have not been thought of before. Building a PreK–3 learning community is a challenging and dynamic process filled with great promise for children, students, and families, and is best approached with an open mind and willingness to explore new possibilities.

# Start With the Basics

## Shift Mindsets

Implementing an effective PreK–3 approach cannot be seen as an “add-on” or new initiative to be undertaken. Instead, PreK–3 must be embraced as a new way to approach education. Before developing plans and investing resources, school districts must make a fundamental shift in philosophy and begin to envision their role in supporting children and families in the critical years before kindergarten registration, whether they operate a preschool program or not. Too often early learning programs are not at the table when strategic decisions are made, nor are early learning goals included in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). School districts wishing to support children and families through a PreK–3 approach should strive to give early learning programs a voice in the leadership or cabinet team. An important first step in this mind shift will be to convene a PreK–3 leadership team to formalize connections between early childhood and elementary systems and to collaboratively develop a vision for a PreK–3 learning community.

### PreK–3 Leadership Team

A PreK–3 leadership team pulls together stakeholders from across a district to develop the PreK–3 vision, set actionable goals, and build systems of support. The leadership team should include representatives from preschools (both public and private), parents, community partners, TK–3 teachers, site administrators, and at least one district administrator who will champion the effort and be able to reallocate resources.<sup>ix</sup>

A school district can make significant progress, with minimal cost, toward building an aligned and articulated learning continuum by publicly acknowledging and embodying the value of connecting with its early childhood system. One way to do this is to have the school board adopt a resolution formally identifying the district as a “preschool through 8th/12th grade” school district. A sample resolution developed by the nonprofit Children Now (available through its [Advocacy Toolkit](#)) can be adapted for local needs.<sup>x</sup> Another option is to develop and adopt a PreK–3 policy or plan aligned to school district priorities and based on the needs of the children and families in the community. It will be important to revisit the plan or resolution annually. This should be considered a living document that will change based on a school district’s goals, data, and progress. An annual report and presentation to the school board are also an excellent opportunity to celebrate and publicize achievements.

## **Build Partnerships**

Developing partnerships and sharing accountability among stakeholders are critical components of an effective PreK–3 approach. It is important to develop a broad base of support as no one school district or organization has the resources (both human and financial) to build a robust PreK–3 system and success requires buy-in from all partners. Some questions to consider include the following:

- Who are potential partners, and what can they bring to the table?
- What strengths can be leveraged?
- Where does alignment exist, and where can gaps be filled?

At the local level, communities offer a number of potential partners:

- Public preschool programs (The federally funded Head Start program and California State Preschool Program are required to invest in professional development and systems to support alignment and successful transitions to elementary school, as well as family engagement.)
- Private preschool providers, including faith-based and cooperative programs
- County Office of Education
- County and local governments
- Community college systems and other institutions of higher education
- Community organizations and social service nonprofits
- Local business community and service clubs
- Developers

Successful PreK–3 learning communities are not limited to school districts with oversight over their own preschool programs. High-quality preschool is an integral component of this approach, but it can be provided by public and private partners such as Head Start, California State Preschool Program (CSPP), faith-based organizations, cooperative nursery schools and private preschools, as well as school districts. Private and faith-based programs may have subsidized or no-fee slots for families in need, though qualifying families may not be aware of programs available to them. School districts can use their outreach networks to bring families and preschool programs together.

School districts that have facilities available can avoid the expense and oversight requirements of opening their own preschool by partnering with public or private programs to offer early learning classrooms on school campuses. For example, a carefully crafted memorandum of understanding and partnership agreement can lead to a fully aligned and integrated early learning experience.

The local needs and environment may be such that increasing access to preschool through a district-run program is an appropriate option. California's early learning programs rely on an array of local, state, and federal sources of funding, some of which will be explored in this brief. Federal funds from both the Department of Health and Human Services (i.e., Head Start) and the Department of Education (i.e., Title I, IDEA), as well as state funds (i.e., CSPP), local funds (i.e., First 5, local tax measures), and tuition may be blended and braided to support a program. Typically, each funding source has its own administrative and reporting requirements. These requirements may not be drastically different from the reporting that districts already submit. Navigating all the funding options for California preschools is beyond the scope of this guide, but more information is available in the recent report from the Learning Policy Institute, "Understanding California's Early Care and Education System."<sup>xi</sup>

### **The Big Lift in San Mateo County is an ambitious PreK-3 program**

Its aim is to transform early learning and ensure that all children in the county are reading proficiently by third grade. It combines high-quality and connected learning experiences from preschool to third grade, with a focus on reducing chronic absence and summer learning loss, and engaging families and the broader community to support learning in school and at home. The Big Lift was launched by a coalition of government, education, nonprofit, foundation, and business leaders. The team knew that this project would not be possible without a broad base of financial support from federal, local, and private sources, and strong, determined leadership. To date the team has brought together over 300 organizations committed to improving early learning outcomes for children in San Mateo County. Initial results indicate the program is promising and more children are starting kindergarten well-prepared and ready to learn.<sup>xii</sup>

In-kind support is a fiscally responsible means of building and supporting PreK-3 that cannot be overlooked. Once PreK-3 learning community partners are established, it is possible to identify existing resources such as curriculum materials, in-house expertise, and facilities that can be shared. If approached from a strengths-based perspective, possibilities often become apparent. Questions to consider include the following:

- Are there district or community facilities that could be used to increase available early childhood education classrooms?
- Could the district literacy coach visit preschool partners to assist with aligning curriculum?
- Is there a preschool teacher who could provide professional development in social and emotional learning for elementary teachers?
- Could early care and education providers be invited to attend district-sponsored professional development days?

# Leverage State and Local Resources

## **Local Control Funding Formula**

When the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), California's school funding law, was rolled out in 2013, it provided new opportunities to support PreK–3 learning communities. The planning, prioritizing, and budgeting activities of the LCFF and LCAP (Local Control and Accountability Plan) can be leveraged to expand access to programs and services that focus on preparing children for kindergarten and aligning instruction across the PreK–3 continuum.<sup>xiii</sup> LCFF provides districts with greater flexibility to tailor programs and approaches to meet the need of their students including components of effective PK – 3 systems such as:

- Access to high-quality preschool
- Kindergarten preparation and transition programs
- Full-day kindergarten and smaller class sizes
- Coaching and job-embedded professional development
- Data-driven instructional improvement
- Aligned standards and assessments

Using LCFF funds to support PreK–3 could mean reallocating existing resources. It is helpful to remember that a PreK–3 approach is a preventive measure and an investment in the future. The supplemental and concentration dollars allocated through the LCFF must be used to improve or increase services that target our most vulnerable children—low-income students, English learners, and foster youth—the very students in whom PreK–3 systems have shown the greatest impact. Children Now has developed a primer to assist communities in making the case for including early learning in the LCAP and leveraging the LCFF. The primer includes a list of resources and links to relevant research.

Children Now Advocacy Toolkit: Engaging School Districts and Leveraging the LCFF for Early Childhood <https://www.childrennow.org/issue-areas/education/preschool/ece-toolkit>

## The Pacifica School District in San Mateo County

The school district allocates a small percentage of its base and supplemental funding to operate a kindergarten preparation program for students who have not attended formal preschool. Priority enrollment is given to low-income students, English learners, and children with special needs. The four-week summer program began many years ago and was funded by an external grant. When the grant expired, the district recognized the value of the program and reallocated LCFF dollars to continue it. An independent study by Applied Survey Research found that students in the program experienced significant growth in kindergarten-readiness skills.<sup>xiv</sup> While this program does not replace two years of high-quality preschool, it does provide students with the fundamentals so they can arrive in kindergarten better prepared and ready to learn.

### Expanded Transitional Kindergarten

Another example of leveraging LCFF dollars to support PreK–3 is by investing in expanded Transitional Kindergarten (TK). The expanded TK program allows school districts to use state funding to support school readiness for children whose fifth birthdays fall after the TK eligibility window (turning 5 between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2). A 2015–16 trailer bill to the original 2012 state law permits school districts to enroll 4-year-olds in TK at the beginning of the school year and begin collecting ADA once a student turns 5. The nonprofit advocacy organization Early Edge California describes expanded TK as a “flexible and cost-effective way for school districts to offer school readiness opportunities to children who otherwise would not be able to enroll in TK, and who might not have access to any other prekindergarten programs in their community.”<sup>xv</sup> Recent research on the impact of TK found that students on average gained three to six months’ advantage in literacy and math skills and were more engaged in learning. The program was effective for all students, but the results showed particularly strong impact on low-income students —often the students who may not have otherwise had access to high-quality early learning programs. Expanding TK requires a small investment of LCFF base funds upfront, but the long-term cost savings for every child who enters kindergarten ready and eager to learn can be significant.

Getting Students Kindergarten Ready: Expanded Transitional Kindergarten <http://www.tkcalifornia.org/resource/files/150624-expanded-tk-brief.pdf>

## Long Beach Unified School District LBUSD

LBUSD is one of a handful of districts in California offering an expanded TK program. LBUSD is a pioneer in early kindergarten programs having piloted “Preppy K” classes as early as 2008. Recognizing the benefits of providing a developmentally appropriate school-readiness program for its youngest students, in 2017–18 LBUSD began offering Early Transitional Kindergarten (ETK) at four schools across the district. According to Brian Moskovitz, assistant superintendent of elementary schools, despite no immediate financial incentive to expand its program, the district is offering ETK because it will “support long-term student academic growth.”<sup>xvii</sup>

### California Transitional Kindergarten Stipend Program

Ensuring high-quality, developmentally appropriate teaching is a core component of PreK–3 learning systems. When Transitional Kindergarten was introduced, the state realized that teachers would need additional training and support to meet the needs of younger students. The California Transitional Kindergarten Stipend (CTKS) Program provides funds to help TK teachers appointed after July 1, 2015, to obtain the minimum of 24 Early Childhood Education (ECE) credits, or a Child Development Teacher Permit. The program reimburses teachers for educational and professional development expenses and is available until March 2019. For more information, contact your local Child Care Partnership Council.

CTKS Program – <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/profile.asp?id=3683>

### Parcel Taxes and Construction Bonds

With local sources of revenue limited for education funding, some districts are turning to parcel taxes to support general operating expenses and construction bonds to fund infrastructure and technology. Revenue from both of these sources can be used to support PreK–3 efforts. As part of the general operating budget, school districts have the flexibility to use parcel tax revenue to support all components of PreK–3: vision and leadership, alignment of standards, curriculum and assessments, developmentally responsive instruction, effective use of relevant data, family and community engagement, and access to high-quality early learning. Construction bonds may be used to build and improve early learning facilities, allowing districts to create or incorporate space for early learning classrooms on campuses. In order to maximize the potential benefits of a construction bond, districts must consider the facilities needed for early learning classrooms at the outset of the construction process, and include these critical spaces in their facilities master planning. Districts wishing to leverage parcel taxes or construction bonds in support of PreK–3 initiatives will need to consider their vision and goals when crafting the language of the measure.

## Bayshore Elementary District

Bayshore is a small district just outside of San Francisco. Unduplicated foster youth, English learners, and low-income students make up 79% of the student population. Recognizing the need in her community for high-quality early learning and an aligned, articulated curriculum starting with preschool, Superintendent Audra Pittman aspired to build a learning community from PreK to eighth grade. Faced with aging facilities and a lack of space to house a preschool program, the district elected to leverage funding from two bond measures and the sale of the middle school property to build a new school building, complete with learning spaces for the new preschool classroom.

### Private Foundations and Grants

Many aspects of a PreK–3 approach can be built through a shift in mindset and a strategic reallocation of resources; however, it can be necessary and helpful to seek outside grant support or partner with private foundations in the community. This type of funding can be particularly helpful for seed money to kick-start programs and maintain the momentum and vision. Local community foundations and First 5 commissions can be excellent starting points. Grant funding may also be available from federal and state sources. The California Department of Education offers a searchable database on currently available funding (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/af/>).

## Federal Funding Possibilities: Every Student Succeeds Act

In December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and replaced the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. ESSA has transformed the federal education act from a law focused on K–12 education to a new model that spans the learning continuum from preschool through 12th grade.<sup>xviii</sup> Early learning is woven throughout the titles of the act. Most importantly, ESSA provides important provisions that encourage districts to use the flexibility inherent across the law to create evidence-based interventions that will meet the needs of students, families, teachers, and schools.<sup>xix</sup> The act offers a number of opportunities to support efforts to implement a Pre–3 approach, including the following:

- Increasing access to high-quality early learning, including preschool and full-day kindergarten
- Promoting collaboration and coordination across the PreK–3 continuum
- Building early learning workforce capacity and providing joint professional development
- Engaging families and communities

### **Increase Access to High-Quality Early Learning**

Title I of ESEA provides school districts and schools with opportunities to expand access to high-quality preschool programs and support eligible children’s educational needs prior to kindergarten entry.<sup>xx</sup> While specific conditions must be met, a Title I school or district may use some or all of its Title I funds to support a district-operated preschool program or a school-operated preschool program,<sup>xxi</sup> or for coordination with other early childhood programs (i.e., a district may use Title I funds to improve the quality or extend the day or number of days of a state preschool, Head Start, or other community-based early learning programs). Schools may also use Title I funds to provide expanded learning opportunities such as summer kindergarten preparation programs, or extend a half-day kindergarten program to full-day.<sup>xxii</sup>

The ways in which a school district or school may use Title I funds for direct preschool services are described in the guidance document **“Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act Guidance—Expanding Opportunities to Support Our Youngest Learners.”** School districts or schools that use Title I funds to operate a preschool program must also comply with Title I requirements.

The Charter School Program (CSP), authorized by Title IV, Part C, and the programs outlined in Title VI (in particular Part A, Indian Education), permit federal funds to be used for early learning programs. School districts are advised to consult guidance documents from the Department of Education on the requirements of each provision of the act: **“CSP Guidance on the Use of Funds to Support Preschool Education”** and **“Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act Guidance—Expanding Opportunities to Support Our Youngest Learners.”**

### **Collaborate and Coordinate Across the PreK–3 Continuum**

The heart of a PreK–3 approach is the establishment of shared expectations, practices, and information systems across the learning continuum. ESSA stresses this approach at the local level and encourages districts and schools to use funds from Titles I, II, and III to develop a seamless learning experience from preschool through third grade and beyond. As part of school improvement efforts, districts can adopt strategies such as developing and implementing developmentally responsive curriculum and/or providing job-embedded training and coaching that span the continuum.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The ESSA offers educators considerable flexibility in using federal funds to partner with community-based providers and tailoring programs to ensure children enter kindergarten ready to learn. Some examples of effective collaborations and coordination activities that can be funded with federal dollars are:

- Creating data “loops” to share information and strengthen programs
- Providing summer learning and kindergarten-readiness programs
- Coordinating transition activities such as orientation events and classroom visits
- Facilitating transition meetings between early learning and elementary school staff
- Developing policies and practices to ensure children with disabilities have access to inclusive preschool classrooms
- Implementing effective preschool language instruction programs for English learners that are coordinated with other relevant programs and services<sup>xxiv</sup>

### **Coordination with Early Learning Partners**

ESSA requires districts that receive Title I funding to coordinate with their local Head Start program and, if possible, other community-based early learning programs. Activities must include the following:

- Systems for sharing information and school records
- Transition plans for children moving from preschool to public school programs
- Channels of communication between teachers and staff
- Joint professional development related to transitioning between systems
- Coordination of educational support services

The Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Head Start Association have released a [toolkit](#) to assist school districts in collaborating and coordinating with local Head Start and early childhood programs. The guide includes suggested activities, checklists, sample Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and more.

The Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAEG) Program outlined in Title IV, Part A of the ESEA, can also be used to support learning across the PreK–3 learning continuum and promotes partnerships with local organizations. Districts could use SSAEG funding for developmentally appropriate early learning projects that are aligned with the program’s well-rounded educational focus. Examples of such projects include STEM (science, technology, education, and mathematics), music cultural competency, language, and other enrichment activities beneficial to young learners.<sup>xxv</sup> More details on activities and suggestions for effective implementation can be found in **“Non-Regulatory Guidance Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants.”**

### **Build Workforce Capacity**

Districts and schools can use Title I, II, and III funds to provide professional development for high-quality teaching across the PreK–3 continuum in schools and early childhood settings. Each title has its own guidelines and the program funds must be used to serve eligible children—but there is considerable flexibility in how these funds can be used to support early learning teachers, administrators, and other staff.<sup>xxvi</sup> For example, Title I, Part A funds may be used to support professional development for teachers in a community-based preschool program provided that the children attending the program are likely to attend a Title I elementary school when they enter kindergarten and the purpose of the training is to improve the transition from preschool to kindergarten. Title II, Part A allows school districts to provide joint professional learning activities designed to increase the ability of principals or other school leaders to support teachers, early childhood educators, and other professionals to meet the needs of students through age 8.<sup>xxvii</sup> To ensure English learners receive effective language instruction in educational programs from the youngest age possible, the purpose of Title III, Part A (outlined in ESEA Section 3102) includes preschool teachers and school leaders. Detailed and informative examples of how Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A; and Title III, Part A funds can be used to support early learning professional development can be found in **“Expanding Opportunities to Support Our Youngest Learners”** from the Department of Education.

## Pajaro Valley Unified School District

When Director of Early Childhood Education Kathy Lathrop joined the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, the district-operated preschool program was struggling to provide a high-quality early learning experience. Desperate to begin a quality improvement process but lacking resources, she pursued Title I funds for the program. With the support of district administrators and principals, \$25,000 in Title I funds were allocated to the preschool program. The funds were initially used to provide much-needed learning materials and equipment for the classrooms. Today Title I funds are used for professional development for PK and TK teachers as well as focused resourcing, including assessments. By including TK teachers in professional development and providing opportunities for networking and collaboration between PK and TK, PVUSD has created a symbiotic relationship. The TK teachers have a stronger foundation in early learning, the PK teachers benefit from a greater understanding of the elementary system, and ultimately children and families are better prepared for kindergarten.

“This is the best investment a district can make, because every child we send ready is on a trajectory for success. Our data and our program show it. We make a huge difference when we can provide children with a high-quality program.” – Kathy Lathrop, director of ECE, PVUSD

Schools and districts adjust their budgeting needs throughout the year, and sometimes those adjustments create a balance that carries over into the next fiscal year. Carry-over balances in Title I are a great source to fund one-time spending needs (e.g., professional or curriculum development). Carry-over balances can be difficult to rely on as they are unknown until the start of the new school year. However, schools can develop an annual wish list of activities and purchases aimed at implementing a PreK–3 approach, so that they have a plan when carry-over balances become available.

### **Engage Families and Communities**

The ESSA recognizes that family engagement in a child’s first years of school is critical and contributes to future success. School districts are encouraged to find strategic ways to use their Title I funds to support the education needs of eligible children and their families before and after they enter kindergarten. Title I requires families to be engaged in the development of district plans, which must specifically address how to involve parents in school activities.<sup>xxviii</sup>

These activities may include the following:

- Including early childhood educators in professional development on effective parent and family engagement
- Developing a family engagement curriculum or toolkit
- Creating and disseminating information regarding kindergarten readiness and effective transitions
- Collaborating with community-based organizations
- Supporting family resource centers and family education events<sup>xxix</sup>



Family engagement is included in other areas of the law as well. Title II funding supports training for educators (including for early childhood) on strong family engagement practices and effective transitions. Title III supports transition activities for English learner children and their families, and the new SSAEG Program (Title IV, Part A) can finance family engagement strategies under the Supporting Safe and Healthy Students section.

## **ESSA Resources**

### **U.S. Department of Education:**

Expanding Opportunities to Support Our Youngest Learners: Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act - <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaelguidance10202016.pdf>

Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Leading: Non-Regulatory Guidance for Title II, Part A - <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiipartaguidance.pdf>

English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act: Non-Regulatory Guidance - <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiinguidenglishlearners92016.pdf>

Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a Schoolwide Program: Non-Regulatory Guidance - <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaswpguidance9192016.pdf>

### **First Five Years Fund:**

What Early Learning in ESSA Can Look Like for States and Districts - <https://ffyf.org/resources/early-learning-essa-can-look-like-states-districts/>

Summary and Analysis of the Early Learning Provision of the Every Student Succeeds Act - [https://ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ESSA\\_ECE\\_ProvisionsNarrativeSummaryAnalysis\\_020316.pdf](https://ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ESSA_ECE_ProvisionsNarrativeSummaryAnalysis_020316.pdf)

### **National Association of Elementary School Principals:**

Principals Action Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act: Providing All Students With a Well-Rounded and Complete Education - [https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/ESSA\\_Action\\_Plan.PDF](https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/ESSA_Action_Plan.PDF)

### **The Council of Chief State School Officers and National Head Start Association:**

New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) - <https://www.nhsa.org/files/resources/toolkit-new-early-childhood-coordination-requirements-in-the-essa.pdf>

PreK–3 alignment holds great promise for supporting our youngest learners and ensuring all children have a strong foundation for future learning. When educational experiences in preschool through third grade are connected, cohesive, and build sequentially, children, their families, and our communities benefit. This guide is designed to serve as a helpful resource for schools and districts as they embark on the adventure of building PreK–3 learning communities. The potential impact of combining efforts to identify, develop, and nurture collaborative partnerships along with blending, braiding, and leveraging multiple sources of funding is significant and noteworthy. Communities can ensure a sustainable and dynamic learning environment and strong start for our youngest learners.

“The best way to predict the future  
is to create it.”

– Peter Drucker

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<sup>i</sup> Phillips, Deborah A. et al (2017), Puzzling It Out: The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects. A Consensus Statement. Retrieved December 2017 from [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/consensus-statement\\_final.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/consensus-statement_final.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> Kauerz, Kristie. (2006) Ladders of Learning: Fighting Fade-Out by Advancing PK–3 Alignment. Retrieved November 2017 from <https://static.newamerica.org/attachments/2795-ladders-of-learning/Doc File 2826 1.85e0d87f695a44ed84fbc9b5f00d3988.pdf>; Phillips, Deborah A. et al (2017) “Puzzling It Out: The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects. A Consensus Statement.” Retrieved December 2017 from [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/consensus-statement\\_final.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/consensus-statement_final.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Stipek, Deborah et al (2017). PK–3: What Does It Mean for Instruction?, Social Policy Report 30, Washington, D.C. Society for Research in Child Development Social Policy Report, 30(2), 1-23.

<sup>iv</sup> Bogard, K. and Taknishi, R. (2005). PK–3: An Aligned and Coordinated Approach to Education for Children 3 to 8 Years Old. Society for Research in Child Development Social Policy Reports, 19(3), 1-23.

<sup>v</sup> Graves, Bill (2006). Pk-3: What Is It and How Do We Know It Works? Foundation for Child Development Policy Brief Advancing PK–3, No. 4; Institute for Child Success. (2017). What Works for Third Grade Reading: NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Working Paper. Retrieved August 2017 from [http://buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Pathways-High-Quality-Education\\_Draft.pdf](http://buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Pathways-High-Quality-Education_Draft.pdf); Sullivan-Dudzic, L., Gearns, D. and Leavell, K. Making a Difference: 10 Essential Steps to Building a PreK–3 System. Corwin, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2010; U.S. Department

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