

INVESTING IN EARLY LEARNING

The foundation of a thriving middle class is strengthened by access to a strong education for every child. Sadly, millions of children in this country are cut off from quality early learning. President Obama is committed to closing this opportunity gap and working with States and local communities to ensure quality early learning for every child so that 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 and help close the school readiness gaps that exist between children with high needs and their peers.

The 2014 Omnibus Appropriations bill, passed by Congress and signed by President Obama, provided funding for States to develop, enhance, or expand access to high-quality preschool programs for children from low- and moderate-income families. This represents a down payment on the Obama administration's vision for high-quality preschool for all 4-year olds. The President's 2015 budget request would bring us closer to this vision by creating a voluntary Federal-State partnership that would ensure universal access to high-quality preschool for all four-year olds from low-income and moderate-income families. The budget also includes support for other early childhood investments as part of a cohesive and well-aligned system of early learning for children beginning with prenatal care and continuing through third grade:

- **Preschool for All (\$1.3 billion in 2015 and \$75 billion over 10 years) and Preschool Development Grants (\$500 million).** A mandatory investment, Preschool for All, would support formula grants to States to improve and expand existing state preschool programs that are aligned with elementary and secondary education systems. The Department would partner with States to provide universal access to high-quality preschool for children from low- and moderate-income families. The program would also promote access to full-day kindergarten and encourage the expansion of high-quality programs to include children from middle-class families and children under four. The federal funding over ten years is \$75 billion. It is fully paid for by raising Federal tobacco taxes, which will also help to discourage youth smoking and save lives. In addition, the budget includes \$500 million in competitive Preschool Development Grants to pave the way for the successful implementation of Preschool for All by enabling States and localities to build the fundamental components of a high-quality preschool system or expand proven early learning programs. An additional \$250 million would be provided through the Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative, for a total discretionary investment of \$750 million.
- **Early Intervention Programs for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (\$442 million).** These formula grants help States implement statewide systems of early intervention services for all eligible children with disabilities and developmental delays from birth through age two and their families.
- **Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities (\$353 million).** These formula grants 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).** This program supports 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 and partnerships – 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 (\$184 million).** This program 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 would maintain significant 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 preschool-aged children:

- **College- and Career-Ready Students (\$14.4 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. In October 2012, the Department published non-regulatory guidance to assist States and local school districts in using Title I, Part A funds to implement high-quality preschool programs.
- **School Turnaround Grants (\$506 million).** This program provides support to States and districts as they implement rigorous interventions in their persistently lowest-performing schools. The Administration believes that implementing a high-quality preschool program designed to improve the cognitive, health, and social-emotional outcomes for children with high needs can be an important element of school reform.

The Department of Education, together with the Department of Health and Human Services, will continue to work to expand and improve the quality of services for young children and their families, and will work to disseminate the lessons learned to support the implementation of early learning reform across the Nation. Additionally, the Department of Health and Human Services is also requesting funding for the following programs:

- **Head Start (\$9.7 billion).** The program would continue to provide 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 continues to include \$25 million to support implementation of the Designation Renewal System (DRS), to minimize disruption of services to Head Start children and families during the transition period to new Head Start providers. The \$650 million in the base Budget and \$800 million in the Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative will provide for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships that support the creation of provider networks with center-based and family child care providers that meet Early Head Start Program Performance Standards to provide full-day, full-year high quality slots to a total of more than 100,000 children.
- **Child Care and Development Fund (\$6.1 billion).** The FY 2015 request for CCDF is \$6.1 billion, including \$2.4 billion in discretionary funding for CCDBG (+\$57 million) and \$3.7 billion (+\$750 million) for the mandatory Child Care Entitlement to States. It is an \$807 million increase above the FY 2014 enacted level. The request provides a total increase of \$6 billion over five

years, and \$19 billion over ten years for the Child Care Entitlement, representing a firm commitment to ramping up and then maintaining service levels while investing in quality improvements. This request will support 1.4 million children in FY 2015. The request also sets aside \$200 million in CCDBG funds to provide formula grants to states, territories, and tribes to improve the quality of child care, including the child care workforce and health and safety measures.

- **Evidence-based, voluntary home visiting services (\$15 billion over 10 years).** Home visiting programs have been shown to improve maternal and child health outcomes in the early years; leave long-lasting, positive impacts on parental skills; and enhance children’s cognitive, language, and social-emotional development and school readiness. The President proposes a long-term \$15 billion investment to extend the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) and expand evidence-based, voluntary home visiting programs.