

Goal 3. Early Learning:

Improve the health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes for all children from birth through 3rd grade, so that all children, particularly those with high needs, are on track for graduating from high school college- and career-ready.

Overview

The Department's strategy for sustaining the President's 2020 college attainment goal depends on improving learning in the earliest years. Participation in high-quality early learning programs will lead to both short- and long-term positive outcomes for all children, including increased school readiness and success and improved high school graduation and college attendance and completion rates.

Developing our nation's educational pipeline requires increasing both access to and the quality of early learning programs and services. This is particularly important for children with high needs, including Children with Disabilities and English learners, since these children have less access to high-quality early learning programs, and often enter kindergarten behind their peers.

In 2006–07, only 41 percent of three- to five-year-olds from low-income families were enrolled in center-based early childhood care and education programs, compared to 60 percent from families above the poverty line.

The Department prioritizes improving the health, social-emotional, cognitive, and educational outcomes for young children from birth through third grade by enhancing the quality of early learning programs, and increasing the access to high-quality early learning programs—especially for young children at risk for school failure.

The Department's role in promoting early learning is significant and includes: administering several early learning programs; collaborating and coordinating early learning programs, research, and technical assistance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; encouraging states and local school districts to target resources for early learning; promoting state and local education agency partnerships with other early learning agencies and programs in the state or community; conducting research on early learning; funding technical assistance on early learning domains, including early literacy and social-emotional development; and supporting the development of state longitudinal data systems that include early learning programs.

Goal 3: Details

| Early Learning Indicators of Success | Results | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| | FY 2007 | FY 2008 | FY 2009 | FY 2010 | FY 2011 |
| | Actual | Actual | Actual | Actual | Actual |
| 3.A. Increase in the number of states implementing a high-quality plan to collect and report disaggregated data on the status of children at kindergarten entry across a broad range of domains* | NA | NA | NA | NA | 2 |
| 3.B. Increase in the number of states that have developed and adopted common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems that reflect high expectations of program excellence and lead to improved learning outcomes for children | NA | NA | NA | NA | Estab. BL |
| 3.C. Increase in the number of states that have statewide coordinated systems of professional development for early childhood educators serving children birth through third grade | NA | NA | NA | NA | Estab. BL |
| 3.D. Increase in the number of states implementing a Comprehensive Assessment System that includes screening and referral processes, formative measures, kindergarten entry assessments, measures of classroom quality and adult-child interactions, measures of child outcomes, and program evaluation | NA | NA | NA | NA | Estab. BL |

* This indicator of success aligns with a Department Priority Goal.

NA = No data available for the period

Sources:

- 3.A.** U.S. Department of Education, Program and Policy Studies Service
- 3.B.** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) state plans, other publicly available data sources (Web searches)
- 3.C.** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) state plans
- 3.D.** Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Program data

Explanation and Analysis of Progress: Measures 3A-3D will establish a baseline using FY 2011 data. Data for measures 3A and 3D are collected from states or grantees and reported by the Department and measures 3B and 3C include data that are reported by a non-federal organization. Data for measures 3A-3D are influenced most by actions taken by state educational agencies or grantees in response to state and federal policy initiatives, but also are influenced by factors that are beyond the control of the local educational agencies, the states, or the Department.