

**Lower Kuskokwim School District Lower Kuskokwim Early Childhood Project**

**Alaska Native Education Program CFDA-84.356A**

**NEED FOR PROJECT:** The Lower Kuskokwim Early Childhood Project (LKECP) is seeking funds to provide five Yup'ik Eskimo villages with quality researched based literacy preschool programs with a home visiting component. This is in partnership with Yuut Elitnaurviat and local Native Tribal Councils. The project will target five Yup'ik village sites: Newtok, Nightmute, Kongiganak, Tununak, and Atmautluak serving approximately 275 Native Alaskan children and 102 families over a period of three years. Bethel, Lower Kuskokwim School District's (LKSD's) hub, has a population of 6,500 and the five villages to be served range in population from 220 to 462. Approximately 99% of the population is Alaskan Native. Yup'ik is the primary Native group in the region. The majority of children are at free and reduced lunch status and live in subsistence lifestyle communities. The special needs students of the five sites average 16% of the school populations. All of the villages to be served by this grant have not met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and are in need of improvement. Two of the schools are at Level 4 (corrective action), while the other three have been at Level 5 (restructuring), the most severe level, for multiple years. Four out of the five schools were targeted as the 40 lowest-performing schools in Alaska according to Moore vs. State of Alaska lawsuit. Due to high-poverty rates, these schools are eligible for and have chosen to operate Title 1 School-wide programs.

<b>2011 Statistics</b>	<b>Newtok</b>	<b>Nightmute</b>	<b>Kongiganak</b>	<b>Tununak</b>	<b>Atmautluak</b>
Native Alaskan	100%	98%	100%	98%	100%
Village Population	370	289	462	342	275
Economically	96.24%	88.42%	83.8%	96.03%	96.04%

Disadvantaged					
Kindergarten State Developmental Profile/Language Average	1.67	1.06	.68	1.82	1.61
Adequate Yearly Progress NCLB* Levels	5.4	5.6	5.5	4	4
Limited Eng. Proficiency Based on LEP Exam 3-10	86.4%	92%	84.9%	75.2%	94.1
Free and Reduced	94%	82%	79%	94%	96%

Life in the Kuskokwim Delta region is unique with the geography and climate posing extreme limitations. There are no existing roads linking the five villages or with Bethel, which is the hub of western Alaska. The five villages are accessible only by small aircraft, snow-machine, four-wheeler or by boat, depending on the season and weather. This rural isolation has allowed the villages to remain culturally rich in spite of the challenges of finding a balance between traditional and Western society. Walking is the primary mode of local transportation in the villages and preschool centers will have accessible locations for families. The sites will be linked to the public K-12 schools and have an inclusion model serving special needs and at-risk children. These five villages have no early childhood or Headstart Programs in place due to size and isolation. Preschoolers in these five villages will have equal access and opportunity for early education. This project will provide preschool experiences with a home visitor component to help ensure the children's readiness for school, and our school's readiness for children. This project is aimed at turning around persistently low achieving schools.

Brain research in the last decade, including that of Marian Diamond, has revealed that our

brains are customized to our homes and early environments. Language is learned first in the home and community where the child lives. The prekindergarten setting needs to reflect the literacy learning that occurs in that home plus provide opportunities for children to further develop their literacy. This grant will mirror the language model of the LKSD K-12 village school and will be Dual Language (Gomez & Gomez, 1999). Children who receive Two-Way Dual Language outscore other ELL models and become balanced bilinguals. Language will be taught explicitly and directly. Young bilingual children can acquire two languages easily and are mapping two distinct languages simultaneously (Patricia Kuhl, 2004). A two-way dual-language program approach allows English learners to help Native English speakers learn through a second language, while Native English speakers help English learners acquire the curriculum through English. Children are active constructors of their own learning, and language and literacy are tools for thinking and communicating. A goal is to blend scientifically research-based literacy curriculum emphasizing the critical elements of emergent reading with the existing Yup'ik "ways of knowing." Passed down from generation to generation, our children enter schools with this "learning." Traditional learning is having their own way of conceptualizing knowledge, and performing tasks. We will build new information on what children already know. Scientifically based researched instructional materials and resources will be the basis for the intentional teaching strategies and activities of this grant both in the preschool setting and during the weekly home visit. Anthropologists and psychologists have argued that the disproportionate school failure of minorities does not reflect a cultural difference. Rather, it is caused by cultural discontinuity. (Feuerstein, 1985) This discontinuity is either due to the failure of a community to maintain its culture, thus depriving young children from learning experiences at home. It also can be caused by a discontinuity of the cultures from

home to school, depriving children from using at school what they already know and can do. (Spindler, 1987) With this premise, the LKSD preschools will use the knowledge and wisdom of the parents, Elders in the village, support of village councils, and Native Yup'ik staff to raise students' achievement and language levels. Many children from lower Socioeconomic Status (SES) backgrounds are at risk for not learning to read because they have a lower level of literacy skills. Research documents that 60% of poor children show up at school unable to learn optimally. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Research tells us that illiteracy is intergenerational. This may lead to what Stanovich (1986) termed a "Matthew effect," (i.e., the rich get richer while the poor get poorer). Gaps in pre-reading skills for low-income preschoolers are due to the amount and type of words that they hear at home according to the *Meaningful Differences* study by Hart and Risley. The children from village sites traditionally score lower in all areas except motor skills than children in the rest of the state on the Alaska Developmental Profile. In general, our children have fewer well-developed oral language skills, less phonological sensitivity and experience, and less growth in their language skills during the preschool period as compared to their higher SES counterparts. LKSD has collected data shows kindergarten PPVT-4 scores this past year were substantially lower for those children not attending preschool than for those children attending preschool programs.

Preschool literacy classrooms and a home visiting component supporting literacy learning are the heart of this grant proposal. Effective instruction allows children to hear language used for a variety of purposes and in a variety of contexts. Children are involved in teacher-directed activities that involve rhyming, oral blending, identifying letter and sounds, and learning high-frequency sight words. Staff will use sheltered instruction techniques such as Total Physical Response to discuss and support meaning of vocabulary words before, during and after reading

stories. Oral language and comprehension are developed by using engaging and integrated activities. The classroom furniture, resources and equipment will have both Yup'ik and English written labels. The entire day will be literacy focused with times of intentional direct instruction both small and large groups, story time, independent activities and practice, supported intervention time, centers and transition activities. We will have an inclusion model for students with disabilities and will work with LKSD Special Education staff for identification and collaboration through Child Find, developing Individual Education Plans, and providing services and support.

LKECP project will provide the research-based curriculum, professional development, effective coaching and mentoring that will support emergent literacy foundations. These are necessary for children to grow in vocabulary, alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, and cognitive skills to succeed in school and life. Interventions in the preschool period need to focus on emergent literacy skills because children are not yet engaging in conventional forms of literacy. Given the predictive significance of emergent literacy skills, it is clear that children who are at-risk of later difficulties in learning to read can be identified and are candidates for emergent literacy interventions. This identification should precede any problems they may experience in kindergarten and/or first grade, when formal reading instruction commences (Christopher Lonigan, *Presentation at the Emergent Literacy Development Conference*, 2004). This project will result in student's readiness for school and promote better literacy teaching practices both by parents and preschool leaders.

**QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN:** Preschoolers in these five villages will have equal access and opportunity for early education at the preschool classroom and home.

**Goals and Objectives:** The specific needs of individual preschool children and their families

will be met with respect to the following goals and objectives:

*Goal 1:* Improve student's oral language abilities, receptive language, phonological awareness skills, print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and motivation to learn to read.

*Objective 1.1:* Children three to five years old served by the project will demonstrate a significant increase ( $p < .05$ ) in oral language abilities, phonological awareness skills, print knowledge, alphabet knowledge as measured by the PPVT-4 (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test) and PALS (Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening).

*Objective 1.2:* Children participating in the project will demonstrate a decrease in the number of measured "areas of need" on the Ages and States Questionnaire (ASQ).

*Baseline:* The fall 2012 assessments on the PPVT-4, PALS, DIAL-3 and ASQ will be used as baseline and compared to spring results.

*Activities:* •Teachers will have on-going courses/professional development in developmentally appropriate literacy/readiness teaching strategies.

- Staff will be trained in Gomez-Gomez Dual Language model.
- Implementation of Literacy *Storytown* and *Read Together Talk Together*, which emphasizes oral language and vocabulary, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge and print awareness.
- Staff will be trained as Home Visitors and in *Parents As Teachers* (PAT) curriculum.

*Outcomes:* Where reading and listening to stories is a natural occurrence in literacy rich preschool classrooms, homes and community environments:

- Teachers use effective strategies that engage children in conversations and take advantage of large group, small group and informal personal exchanges to promote literacy skills.
- Classrooms will have compelling evidence of positive interactions and a climate that actively

engages children in conversations and promotes the mutual exchange of ideas and opinions.

- Parents will read interactively to their children with books provided by the project.
- Parents will be trained in *Parents As Teachers* and attend monthly Parent Events/Meetings.
- Children will improve their oral language abilities, phonological awareness skills, print knowledge and alphabet knowledge.
- More children will be prepared for kindergarten.

*Goal 2:* Increase the level of literacy knowledge and skills of all staff by providing comprehensive professional development in the area of early literacy, assessments, and cognitive development and learning.

*Objective 2.1:* Early childhood educators served by the project will demonstrate a significant ( $p < .05$ ) improvement in their ability to apply research-based approaches to early childhood pedagogy and child development and learning: including establishing literacy-rich classrooms as measured by the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) and Comprehensive Early Childhood Educators' Skills Assessment (CECESA).

*Baseline:* To be established during the first year of the project.

*Activities:* • Pre/posttest assessments on the ELLCO, CECESA

- Initial training in all curriculums, assessments, and language and cognitive development and learning.
- On-going college courses/professional development either by travel to Bethel or via polycom.
- Supervision, coaching and direct support to teachers by the Specialist and Coordinator.
- Non-certified staff will actively pursue a BA in early education.

*Outcomes:* ECE educators in village schools will effectively implement the new curriculum, administer assessments, and provide instruction based on assessment results.

- ECE Preschool Leaders will apply research-based approaches to early childhood pedagogy and child development and learning.

*Goal 3:* Implement age appropriate screenings, progress monitoring, diagnostic (when appropriate), and outcome assessments for children to inform instruction.

*Objective 3.1:* Early childhood educators served by the project will improve their ability to implement age appropriate screenings, progress monitoring, diagnostic (when appropriate), and outcome assessments for children to inform instruction as evidenced through observations and interviews.

*Current Baseline:* Data will be collected during year one of project.

*Activities:* • Staff will be trained in assessments and calibrated across sites.

*Outcomes:* Teachers/staff will conduct pre/post and progress monitoring assessments to guide instruction and measure student progress.

- Data will be collected, interpreted and used to drive curriculum and needs of students.
- 20% of student assessment will be rescored at the district level for reliability.

*Goal 4:* Involvement of the parents, community members, and village Elders in the daily acquisition of early literacy skills in the preschool setting and the village.

*Objective 4.1:* Parents, community members, and Elders will participate in early literacy acquisition activities in the preschool setting and the village as evidenced by lesson plans, sign in logs, home visiting logs, interview schedules, community meeting notes, and survey results.

*Baseline:* A current baseline will be established during the first year of the project.

*Activities:* • All assist in read alouds, storytelling, interactive shared readings and retellings.

- All will provide Yup'ik and English conversations at the preschool during academic and nonacademic time, in the home and the community.

- Parents will participate in weekly home visits through Parents As Teachers curriculum.
- Once a month “Family Events” based on literacy will be held for families.

*Outcomes:* Children will be exposed to “Print” through village environmental print and books.

*Objective 4.2:* Parents served by the project will demonstrate a significant increase (p<.05) in support for their children’s learning in the home environment as measured by the Parent Education Profile (PEP) and home visiting Log.

*Activities:* • Pre/Post assessments on the PEP.

- Parents will receive modeling of “reading” and educational activities in the home environment and practice new skills.

*Outcomes:* Parents will acquire a variety of materials for teaching reading and writing that are accessible to their children.

- Parents will use television as a learning tool.
- Parents, elders, and community members will make use of “teachable moments” with their children.
- Parents, elders, and community members will create learning opportunities from everyday activities.

*Training Timeline*

<u>When</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>How</u>
Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Dual Language Model</li> <li>•PPVT-4 and PALS Assessments/data</li> <li>•Lesson Plans</li> <li>•Storytown, Splash into Pre-k</li> <li>•Parents As Teachers</li> </ul>	24 hr. initial Quarterly training  Initial Training Program  Phase 1-vendor will provide  Program Specialist -will	Method of Delivery:  Face to Face  training in

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Classroom Management-Part 1</li> <li>•Your Prek Coach and college enrollment</li> <li>•Standards</li> <li>• Mikelnguut Pitekluki</li> </ul>	<p>provide</p> <p>Ed. Spec will follow up in classroom, coaching assisting where needed</p>	Bethel
Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Print and Literacy Rich Environments</li> <li>•ESL Strategies/Meeting the Needs of Special Children</li> <li>•Coaching</li> </ul>	<p>2 hrs. Training</p> <p>6 hr. support by Education Specialist</p>	<p>Polycom</p> <p>(satellite)</p> <p>On site</p>
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Effective instructional strategies in Phonological Awareness</li> <li>•Storytown</li> <li>•Oral Language Development</li> </ul>	<p>2 hr. training</p> <p>6 hr. support by coach</p> <p>2 hr. training</p>	<p>Polycom</p> <p>On site</p>
Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Classroom Management-Part 2</li> <li>•Cognitive Development</li> <li>•Read Alouds and Dialogic Reading</li> </ul>	<p>14 hr. Quarterly training</p> <p>In-depth training</p>	<p>Face to Face</p> <p>Bethel site</p>
Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Follow up- Cognitive Development,</li> <li>•Read Alouds/Dialogic reading-</li> </ul>	<p>2 hrs. Training</p> <p>6 hr. support by coach</p>	Polycom
Mar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Classroom Assessments-Part 2</li> <li>• Data –Part 2</li> </ul>	<p>2 hrs. Training</p> <p>6 hr. support by coach</p>	<p>Polycom</p> <p>On site</p>
Apr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Motivational Strategies</li> </ul>	<p>14 hr. Quarterly training</p> <p>Training/vendors</p>	<p>Face to face</p> <p>in Bethel</p>
Ma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Parent Involvement</li> <li>• Dual Language</li> </ul>	<p>8 hrs. Training/support</p>	Polycom
Jun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Effective strategies in Phon. Awareness</li> <li>•Oral Language Development</li> <li>•Transitions-working together</li> </ul>	<p>2 hrs. Training</p> <p>6 hr. support by coach</p>	Polycom

Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Year 2-Curr. and Assessments-Part 3</li> <li>•Transitions •Program/Self Evaluation</li> </ul>	14 hr. Quarterly training	Face to Face training
Sep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Literacy Strategies/research</li> </ul>	6 hr. support by coach	Polycom
Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum Training</li> <li>•PPVT-4 and PALS assessments (follow up/updates)</li> <li>•Transitions...continue PD</li> </ul>	2 hrs. Training- 6 hr. support by coach Based on Teacher need	Polycom

Included in the topics for professional development are Gomez and Gomez Dual Language, Preschool Curriculums, Sheltered Instruction/SIOP, technology, assessments, and Alaska Prekindergarten Standards. Our goal for staff is to be highly qualified and able to implement best practices. As transportation and weather are the biggest challenges in our area, the majority of professional development will be provided through polycom. Face to face trainings will occur at our partner Yuut Elitnaurviat Training Center. District staff will provide the initial and ongoing training in cooperation with the University of Alaska Fairbanks providing certification courses, which will begin in October in year one and continue throughout the scope of the grant.

Curriculums will be researched based *Storytowns' Splash into Pre-k, Everyday Math and Read Together Talk Together* and enhanced classroom libraries of high quality children's literature. These curriculums support the early literacy components as stated by Reading First. LKECP's goal is to teach these skills in a direct, coherent, preplanned, explicit and systematic format. Native culture can be integrated with the units of study by tapping into the wealth of knowledgeable Elders and parents in each village, utilizing the knowledge and resources that the local teachers have and using *Mikelnguut Pitekluki: For the Children Yupik resource (from*

*this point known as MP*). The Dial-3, PPVT-4 and PALS-Prek assessments will be used in preschool programs as yearly pre/post assessments. The ASQ and PEP will be used with the Parents as Teachers Curriculum. Preschool Leaders will be trained in and show proficiency in all student assessment tools before use. The PPVT-4 is a receptive language test and it is highly reliable with preschool children where vocabulary acquisition is so important. The PALS assessment reflects skills that are predictive of future reading success and measure name writing ability, upper and lower-case alphabet recognition, letter sound and beginning sound production, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness and nursery rhyme awareness. Baseline data will be established for the children and program in Year 1 of the project. Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) will be used for teacher's progress monitoring and outcome evaluation. ELLCO is a field-tested observation toolkit that specifically addresses the role of environmental factors in early literacy and language development. The Education Specialist will provide intensive classroom support through mentoring and coaching instructional strategies, classroom management, curriculum implementation, assessments and interventions. LKSD will also provide classroom support with their district traveling dual language coaches.

Children take their first critical steps toward learning to read and write very early in life (Newman, Copple, & Bredecamp, *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children*, 2000). Emergent literacy skills begin developing in early childhood through participation and interactions with adults in meaningful activities involving talking and print material (Torgesen, *Guiding our Course Conference*, 2004). Emergent literacy involves the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, *Child Development*, 1998). Bilingually

schooled students outperform comparable monolingually schooled students in academic achievement in all subjects, after 4-7 years of dual language instruction (Thomas & Collier-*A National study of school effectiveness for language minority students long term academic achievement...* 2002). The School Readiness goals of the LKECP Project are: (1) Improve students' oral language abilities (vocabulary and grammar), phonological awareness skills, print knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and motivation to learn to read; (2) Increase the level of literacy knowledge and skills of all staff by providing comprehensive professional development and college courses in the area of early literacy, language acquisition, assessments, and cognitive development and learning; (3) Implement age appropriate screenings, progress monitoring, diagnostic (when appropriate), and outcome assessments for children to inform instruction; (4) Involve the parents, Elders, community in the acquisition of early literacy skills in the preschool setting, home and the village; (5) Implement program evaluation that will guide ongoing quality improvement, measure child outcomes, and assess efficacy of professional development. The ultimate goal is to provide, implement, sustain and eventually replicate a scientifically research based high-quality, language and literacy rich preschool environment and establish school readiness involvement of parents.

The work of cognitive psychologist, Reuven Feuerstein, states that all children can learn, and that intelligence is not static, but can be learned. A child's abilities are passed on through their culture. Based on the modified learning experience or FIE- Basics, a meaningful adult in a child's life prepares the child for an experience, observationally shares that experience, and afterwards helps the child put the experience into a cultural context. *Storytown, Splash into Pre-k* is designed to teach young pre-readers concepts, language and knowledge that will be helpful to them in the classroom setting as they are learning to read. It also teaches oral

language skills and supports those children for whom English is their second language. It uses an explicit instructional approach and focuses on vocabulary development both expressive and receptive, fluency and social interaction skills. Comprehensive, explicit, systematic instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness is included daily. Explicit and systematic phonological awareness instruction is crucial (Alexander et al., *Annals of Dyslexia*, 1991; Torgesen et al., *Journal of School Psychology*, 2002). The teacher models and explains, provides guided practice, provides supported application and the children have independent practice. Differentiated instruction is provided to accommodate individual student needs. Print and book awareness are reinforced using literature selections, big books, pre-decodable take-home books, with books in Yup'ik and English. As with phonological awareness, children who lack print awareness are unlikely ever to become successful readers (Morrow, O'Connor, & Smith, *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 1990). By seeing print and by observing how adults use print, children begin to focus attention on its different forms and to see that it has purpose (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, *Starting Out right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*, 1999). Teachers will incorporate daily reading of books. The *Storytown* curriculum places the letters in a context that allows children to see and understand the purpose and value of the letters. Emergent writing is a part of the curriculum and it is well documented that reading programs containing a writing component usually produce higher reading achievement.

Reading aloud to children has been called, "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for success in reading" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, *Becoming a Nation of Readers: the Report of the Commission on Reading*, 1985). Grover J. Whitehurst, developer of *Read Together, Talk Together*, states that the way we read to children is just as important as how frequently we read to them. When the child is an active participant in the

reading experience, the child will show greater language gains than when an adult simply reads a book to the child. When children are read to dialogically at home and school, they improved both their vocabularies and their expressive language. All forms of interactive shared reading interventions produce positive effects on children's oral language skills as measured by standardized tests. Students will be involved in dialogic reading, which has been validated as an effective intervention to enhance children's oral language skills (Whitehurst & Lonigan, *Child Development*, 1998). It is the talk that surrounds the book that gives it power. *Read Together, Talk Together* (RTTT) will be a part of small and whole group time. In addition, Elders will teach the storytelling tradition of the culture, while parents will have the resources and skills to read to their children. The dialogic technique encourages the child to become the storyteller over time.

All literacy components will be addressed through daily implementation of curriculums as seen on the chart below.

Oral Lang Voc. Skills	Phonological Awareness	Print Knowledge	Alphabet Knowledge	Motivation	Comp. Skills	Problem Solving
Storytown (Splash), Enhanced Libraries, RTTT,MP, PAT, EDM	Storytown, RTTT	Storytown, Enhanced Libraries, RTTT, MP, PAT	Storytown, RTTT, PAT	Storytown, Enhanced Libraries, RTTT, MP, PAT	Storytown, Enhanced Libraries, RTTT, MP, PAT	RTTT, MP, PAT, EDM

Each classroom will be richly filled with print (both English and Yup'ik), literacy and language play, storybook reading and writing. Children will incorporate literacy into their

dramatic play, daily routines and other subjects. The physical environment will be arranged to promote time with books and literacy experiences. Students will have immediate access to various types and genres of books. Highly visible labels (both in Yup'ik and English), environmental print, signs, and bulletin boards will demonstrate the uses of print. Most young children are very aware of environmental print. Southwest Alaska has no billboards, no plethora of signs depicting stores or advertisements so the teacher will call attention to the environmental print that does exist such as airplane logos, pilot bread and popular snow machine names and other cultural print. Children will be made aware of different forms and purposes of print by having daily experiences in the classroom involving print in both languages based on Gomez & Gomez Dual Language Model. Children's knowledge of print concepts is a predictor of achievement in literacy (Clay, McCormick & Mason, 1986 and National Early Literacy Panel, 2004). Environments for young children must be responsive to their needs and to the items that are personally meaningful to them. (Isbell, R. and Exelby, B., "Early Learning Environments that Work", 2001). Cultural knowledge will also be integrated into learning new concepts. The classrooms will have sufficient furniture and space for large group, small group time, and learning centers that support literacy learning and social and emotional growth. Books that relate to the current theme will be accessible to the children both in Yup'ik and English. A listening center will be provided in every classroom. Many varieties of paper and writing tools will be available at a specific writing center and also in other areas such as blocks and dramatic play for children's use. Daily use of technology will support literacy learning in the classroom using *Storytown*, *Splash into Pre-k* interactive curriculum as well as other software that provides practice in a fun and engaging way. As vocabulary is the strongest predictor of later reading and literacy ability (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990),

teachers will plan sufficient time for conversations with students and encourage them to use oral language to share stories, discuss daily events, and problem solving. Most vocabulary is learned through indirect means, everyday activities and experiences. Intentional efforts are made to expand student's vocabularies, as this can be effective as well. The teacher's role in promoting language development will include: serving as a model for language, providing interesting experiences so that they have something to talk about, repeating and reinforcing new words, paying close attention to what a child is saying using and modeling the "rules of conversation," talking frequently to the children as "language does not flourish in silence," using open-ended questions, including songs, rhymes and finger-plays during the day (especially at transition times), and sharing books daily. Parents, local Elders and community members will be frequent visitors modeling conversational skills, playing with, reading to, and sharing stories and values thus increasing children's understanding of their own culture and vocabularies in both languages.

School district data shows that K-12 student performance in language skills continue to be low. Data also shows that at existing LKSD Preschool sites, student receptive and expressive language skills have improved through preschool experiences. Student and programmatic data have been compiled over the last four years showing a marked difference in Alaska Developmental Profile and third grade SBA's comparing those attending a preschool program and those not attending programs. Additionally, as teachers have received training and coursework, student scores have increased. The prekindergarten curriculum and programs are tied to the State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines and supports the LKSD curriculum. Preschool Leaders will meet monthly to collaborate and develop congruent transition plans to link preschool to school with defined outcomes for children, families and staff. Having

opportunities to share information on the children by participating in transition activities will enhance communication between preschool and kindergarten staff. Rous, Hemmeter and Schuster, (1994) stated transition should occur, as a life-long process and that there should be collaboration between preschools and elementary schools. LKECP project will collaborate with preschool projects already implemented: state funded preschools in Bethel, Association of Alaska School Boards, LKSD District Office Preschool Program, Kuskokwim University Campus University of Alaska Fairbanks (KUC UAF), and local Headstart Agencies.

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN:** The management of the LKECP Project will follow LKSD policies and procedures. The Project Coordinator will: be responsible for directing and monitoring the project; coordinate and present Early Childhood Development classes and training sessions throughout the grant; assist LKECP staff in developing and organizing working resources and materials; create opportunities for staff to network and share knowledge; assist and support LKECP staff in presenting to their peers specific topics they learn through courses, workshops and conference participation; coordinate training opportunities for parents and community; coordinate with the state university system and assist LKECP staff in scheduling and signing up for coursework; and coordinate all efforts to meet or exceed project goals and objectives. The Coordinator and the Specialist will model and coach effective strategies, assist each site with appropriate curriculum and instructional support, and train, and support home visiting component. On-going evaluation will occur throughout the project to ensure that the professional development needs of the staff are being met and that this transfers into improvement of direct services to children and their families. Mary Beth Green holds a BAE in Art Education, a MAE in Elementary Education with a specialty in Early Childhood, has 38 years of experience as a teacher and administrator of programs. She holds a

Type A and B certification in Alaska and will have 31% commitment to the project. For more information see resume.

The Educational Specialist will be a direct link to the classroom staff as support for implementing the preschool program and grant with fidelity. The Certified Specialist will visit sites and assist with applying theory into practice and provide coaching to staff. They will assist in administration of assessments and gathering data. They will help with establishing routines; skills and habits of mind that will help our preschool staff become effective educators. The Education Specialist will assist in the design, coordination and implementation of professional development and with Parent Community Meetings/Trainings. They will serve as a coach and mentor to preschool staff as they work with students and work toward certification. They will have 70% commitment to this project.

Preschool Leaders Each of the five preschools served by the project will have a Preschool Leader that will be bilingual in Yup'ik and English and live in the village/community. The leader will have the goal of furthering their education in the field of Early Education by attending college credit classes throughout the grant which will ultimately improve student learning. They will attend professional development provided by program. The Preschool Leader acts as an immediate liaison to the parents, local village Advisory School Boards, the Site Administrator, and any other group or activity concerning the needs of preschool and families of the preschool children. Preschool Leaders coordinate with parents and local Elders for their participation in the program. He/she will also oversee the timely completion of classroom reports, assessments and paperwork. Their main responsibility will be as the lead teacher at the preschool, working with the children and conducting home visits each week. The Preschool Leaders will submit weekly lesson plans to the Coordinator showing that all learning

areas are covered.

Secretary will have part time commitment to this project and will be responsible for compiling data for the Coordinator and Evaluator, ordering supplies, correspondence, making travel arrangements, completion of timesheets and requisitions, helping prepare all reports and other general office procedures. They will be the contact point for all student registrations and attendance.

External Evaluator: To ensure objectivity in the evaluation of the project, we will contract with a qualified External Evaluator (budgeted under contractual). Dr. Guillermo Duron is experienced in evaluating federal projects, having experience in the unique challenges of evaluating grant projects in Alaska. He has evaluated projects for the U. S. Department of Education, as the evaluation team leader for universities, state education agencies, regional consortia, and local school districts. His primary evaluation responsibilities will include working with the project from its inception to designing data processes, instruments, and procedures for using evaluation results to improve the project, observing and documenting project implementation and outcomes, interviewing project teachers, administrators, university staff, parents, and other stake holders, participating in the project leadership team, analyzing data, preparing a draft and final evaluation report, and contributing data to the project coordinator for use in the performance report. It will also be expected for the grant Evaluator to meet monthly via telephonic, Skype or polycom with the Coordinator on timelines and progress monitoring. District RFP procurement procedures will be met in hiring.

Site Administrator will support the grant through: providing a classroom space; custodial; services; actively participating in family events; including the Preschool Leader in site professional development and activities; supporting and assisting them in daily work.

Yuut Elitnarviat will provide the facility for trainings/courses and housing staff when they come to Bethel for training. They will help coordinate and work with project members to schedule trainings and instructors.

To ensure community and local input, the local Advisory School Board (ASB) and Tribal Council will be involved in the project. The Coordinator and local Preschool Leader will submit written reports and attend meetings when applicable to the project. All evaluation data will be made available to the local and the district board to allow for data-driven decisions though confidentiality will be maintained. The Parent as Educators Profile (PEP), the Dial-3 Parent Questionnaire and the Parent Satisfaction Survey will be administered at the beginning of each year and again at the end of the program year to gather data that will guide decisions on program quality. LKECP will provide high-quality early learning opportunities to support the goals of Lower Kuskokwim School District.

Milestones of the project are listed below. Meeting these milestones will be noted and feedback gathered.

- All LKECP Project preschools and home visits will be up and running in year one.
- Preschool Leaders will have training in Dual Language which supports the LKSD model of Language Acquisition in year one.
- Preschool Leaders will be trained in Curriculums and Assessments starting in year one through professional development.
- There will be a participation of 90% or more with age appropriate children in year one.
- All sites will have hosted at least two Early Childhood Parent/Community Meetings/Conferences yearly.
- All staff will be taking college credit courses and working on their career paths by the end of

year one.

- Professional Development will be ongoing throughout the grant to meet the needs of the program and staff.
- A significant percent of children will show ( $p < .05$ ) improvement on the assessments by the end of year three.

**ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES:** The requested Alaska Native Education Program funds will be combined with other resources in place to support the full project. The space for classrooms and administration will be provided by the Lower Kuskokwim School District. The project will be supported through collaboration and partnership with the local Tribal Agencies, Yuut Elinaurviat Learning Center and local schools and communities. The Curriculum/Bilingual Department of LKSD, the Association of Alaska School Boards, local and statewide Headstarts, Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers will also be resources for this project. Staff salaries and hourly wages will be based on the LKSD certified and classified contracts and reflect scale wages for the area. The isolation of the area must be considered when viewing the budget, salaries, travel, equipment and shipping costs (average is about 35% of total amount of costs of materials). Shipping and gas costs may appear high to most in the lower states. These prices may seem excessive but as we are not accessible by road, all goods are shipped by plane or barged in the summer months. The cost of delivering services throughout western Alaska far exceeds the individual community and school district's ability, without the funds from this grant. The commitment of each local and state partner is such that all are focused on helping our children be successful in schools. Local organizations and communities are willing to help with time, local expertise and support to establish quality preschools. Start-up costs are limited because infrastructure is already in place for programs.

Early Childhood is essential if educational handicaps are to be overcome in our low performing schools. The budget is sufficient along with local resources to perform the activities described in this proposal. Our budget is realistic and based on experience from recent fiscal years.

**QUALITY OF PROGRAM EVALUATION: (i) Appropriate to goals, objectives, and outcomes-** The evaluation for the project is process oriented with a design that is both practical and built for accountability. The evaluation is integrated with the project to produce quality results. Evaluation is viewed as being an essential component, not an add-on. As such, an external evaluator has been involved in the design of the project and the evaluation helping to ensure its appropriateness, validity and reliability.

Inherent in the evaluation plan is the periodic assessment of progress toward achieving the intended outcomes of the project. This will occur through the collection of both implementation and performance data as described below. Caution was taken in designing the evaluation to ensure that each evaluation strategy was perfectly aligned with project goals, objectives and outcomes as indicated in the following table.

<b>Ob</b>	<b>Assessment Tool</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<b>1.1</b>	PPVT-4, PALS	Pre/Posttest Mean Gains, t-tests
<b>1.2</b>	ASQ	Percent of children with “needs”
<b>2.1</b>	ELLCO, CECESA	Pre/Posttest Mean Gains
<b>3.1</b>	Documentation of assessments, staff surveys	Analysis of documentation & surveys
<b>4.1</b>	Documentation of contacts and meetings with parents, community members, and elders	Review/analysis of documents showing monthly direct involvement by an elder
<b>4.1</b>	Documentation of involvement by community members, Advisory School Board (ASB),	% of activities involving community members, Advisory School Board,

	Tribal Council, and elders in project activities	Tribal Council, and elders
4.1	Attendance Records –parent conf., meetings and group activities	% of parents attending monthly
4.2	Parent Education Profile (PEP)	Pre/Posttest Mean Gains, t-tests

(ii) **Objective performance measures related to intended outcomes-** To achieve the highest quality project evaluation both implementation and performance evaluation methods will be integrated. The evaluation will utilize standardized assessments, surveys, structured interviews, contact logs, and project records. The evaluation of implementation and performance will measure project success over the 3 years of the grant to answer evaluation questions such as:

- How well is the project implementing activities that promote the children’s cognitive, emotional, and social development within the context of the family and community? To determine student cognitive, emotional, and social development growth, project students will be assessed on a pre and posttest basis using the PPVT-4, PALS and DIAL-3.
- How successful has the project been in supporting and encouraging parents to be their children’s primary nurturers, educators, and advocates? To determine success, PEP results, ASQ, parent surveys, and interviews with parents will be analyzed.
- How successful has the project been in involving the local community, including elders, Advisory School Boards, and tribal councils in improving the well being of its children and families? To determine success, documentation of involvement including project records, parent surveys, and interviews with community members will be analyzed.
- How successful has the project been in increasing the staff’s knowledge base of child development and early childhood models and processes? To determine success, LKPPE will

participant in pre and post assessment using the *Comprehensive Early Childhood Educator's Skills Assessment (CECESA)*. This assessment measures participants' knowledge of early childhood education concepts and focuses on student needs and teacher practices in the areas of cognitive, social/emotional, physical, language and literacy, math, and science. The CECESA was found to be a valid and reliable instrument when used with a population similar to that of the proposed project staff.

To ensure the successful achievement of each objective, outcome and effectiveness of corresponding implementation activities, the project evaluator and the project staff will develop (during the first month of the project) a Fidelity of Implementation Index (FII). The FII will identify each activity, outcome, and deliverable and incorporate the organizational process categories to assess the extent to which the project is being implemented as planned. The evaluator will assess the project with the FII at least monthly and share the results with project staff along with recommendations for keeping the project on track to meet its objectives.

The greatest results will come from the focus on school readiness and family/community involvement. As educators of young children become more aware of language, learning styles and cognitive development through college courses and professional development, the children will have a more successful entry into kindergarten. Parents will be supported as the child's first teacher and primary nurturer, and the community will have ownership in the preschool activities and progress. Our Preschool Leaders will continue on their educational path towards courses applicable for teacher certification and becoming highly qualified early childhood teachers. This leads us to preschools of excellence. Overwhelmingly, research supports effective teachers and quality preschools as having a positive effect on student achievement.