
Ohio's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant

September 2011

What is the Early Learning Challenge?

- Voluntary federal initiative that helps states build more efficient and effective early learning systems for young children--infants, toddlers & preschoolers—and their families
- Not about program expansion
- Focus is on improving, linking & aligning
- Honors gubernatorial leadership

What is the Early Learning Challenge? Quality as Basis for Public Investment

- Strengthen infrastructure (standards, assessment, data system)
- Support quality/accountability through Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
- Link professional development to QRIS to build a quality workforce
- Addresses needs of most vulnerable children



Ohio's Vision: Why Quality Early Learning Matters

- Produces better education, health, family and economic outcomes
- Key to increasing school readiness, academic achievement, college graduation, good citizenship and a productive workforce
- Help states get the most out of investments in education, health, public safety and economic development—helping to reduce deficits through better outcomes and greater productivity

Ohio's Focus

- Assure children are ready for kindergarten, with an emphasis on improving the readiness of high need children.
- Include academic, health, and social-emotional preparedness in the readiness definition.
- Require different state agencies and sectors in Ohio to break down the silos to ensure that children, especially high need children, receive seamless and high quality programs or services from birth to kindergarten.

How It Works

- States compete for the Early Learning Challenge
- Federal government, through the US Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, sets guidelines
- States are free to creatively build early learning systems that best meet the needs of local families and communities
- Challenge funds can supplement but not supplant

How It Works: Timeline and Funding Levels

- **Grant period:** December 31, 2011 to December 31, 2015.
- **Funding Levels:** Ohio is eligible for \$70 million
- **Timeline:** Applications due October 19, 2011
- **Total Funding Available for the Challenge:** \$500 million

Race to the Top (RTT) Early Learning Challenge Grant

Absolute Priority:

1. Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs

Competitive Priorities:

1. Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System
2. Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry

Invitational Priorities:

1. Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades
2. Encouraging Private-Sector Support

RTT: ELC

Five Areas to be Addressed

Successful State Systems: demonstrated commitment to early learning and development; rationale for reform; aligned and coordinated system; and sustainable budget.

High-Quality, Accountable Programs: statewide, validated QRIS and access to high quality programs for children with high needs.

Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children: through early learning and development standards, comprehensive assessment system, screening and addressing health, behavioral and developmental needs and family engagement.

RTT: ELC

Five Areas to be Addressed

A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce: that includes a clear ladder of knowledge and competencies and support for providers to move up that ladder.

Measuring Outcomes and Progress: including kindergarten entry assessment and/or building an early learning data system.

Ohio's Process

- Planning team: Governor's office, state agencies, Ohio Business Roundtable
- ODE is the lead agency with organizational and grant management support from Battelle
- ECAC engaged in the stakeholder process
- Working with Early Learning Challenge Collaborative as a Tier 2 state
- Access to a network of national experts
- Grant writing and facilitation support available with private foundation resources

Ohio's Approach

- Increase the number of high need children with access to high quality early learning and development programming
- Include all state and federally funded programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS)
- Tie the TQRIS to child outcomes and kindergarten readiness results
- Support educators to improve their credentials, knowledge and skills

Ohio's Approach

- Implement a kindergarten readiness assessment that includes all readiness domains
- Expand and align Ohio's early learning and development standards to include all readiness domains birth to kindergarten entry
- Develop a comprehensive and common assessment system at the child, classroom and program levels
- Create a data system that links child, professional and program data across state agencies and sectors

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