

# Title I Preschool Fact Sheet

## Authorizing Statute

Public Law 107-110 (Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA))

## Target Population for Preschool – Early Learning

Eligible children below the grade at which an LEA provides a free public elementary education (ESEA section 1115(b)(1)(A)(ii); 34 C.F.R. (§ 77.1).

## Purpose

To improve cognitive, health, social-emotional outcomes for eligible preschool-aged children, especially those with high needs, and to prepare them with the prerequisite skills and dispositions for learning that will enable them to benefit from later school experiences.

## Preschool Eligibility

Children below the grade which the LEA provides free public elementary education are eligible. The following children are automatically eligible to participate in a Title I preschool program: children who participated in Head Start or a Title I preschool program at any time in the prior two years; children who received services under Part C of Title I (migrant education) in the prior two years; homeless preschool-age children; and children who are in a local institution for neglected or delinquent children and youth or attending a community-day program for these children.

## General Title I Preschool Program Description

**School Operated** - A school that receives Title I funds under ESEA section 1113 may use all or a portion of those funds to operate a preschool program for eligible children. The manner in which a Title I school would operate its preschool program would depend on the type of Title I school – i.e. a schoolwide program school or a targeted assistance school.

*Schoolwide program school:* A Title I school may operate a schoolwide program if a minimum of 40 percent of the students enrolled in the school, or residing in the attendance area served by the school, are from low-income families (ESEA section 1114(a)(1)). A schoolwide program is a comprehensive reform strategy designed to raise the achievement of the lowest-achieving students by upgrading the entire educational program in the school.

*Schoolwide program school:* A schoolwide program *must* assist preschool students in the transition from preschool to kindergarten and include a description in its continuous improvement plan.

*Targeted assistance program school:* A Title I school that is ineligible to operate, or has chosen not to operate, a schoolwide program may operate a targeted assistance program in which the school provides supplemental educational services to students with the greatest need for assistance – i.e., those identified as failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the State's academic achievement standards (ESEA section 1115(b)(1)(B)). Accordingly, if a targeted assistance school operates a preschool program, it may only serve preschool children who reside in its attendance area and whom the school identifies as at risk of failing to meet the State's academic achievement standards when they reach school age.

*Targeted assistance program school:* A targeted assistance program *must* coordinate with and support the school's regular education program, which may include transition from preschool to kindergarten.

**District Operated** – An LEA may reserve a portion of funds off the top of its Title I allocation to operate a preschool program for eligible children. The LEA may serve all eligible children in the district as a whole or those in just a portion of the district.

An LEA must describe how it will coordinate and integrate services in its LEA Continuous Improvement plan, including transition from preschool to kindergarten.

District operated preschool programs do not need to follow the ESEA parental involvement requirements except parents of preschool children must be included in their parental involvement policy.

*The district as a whole:* An LEA may serve preschool children who reside throughout the district and whom the LEA identifies as eligible because they are at risk of failing to meet the State's academic achievement standards when they reach school age. An LEA may not use Title I funds to implement a district-wide preschool program to benefit all preschool students in the LEA unless all the schools in the LEA are Title I schools operating schoolwide programs.

*A portion of the district:* An LEA may serve preschool children who reside in specific Title I school attendance areas. If, for example, an LEA does not have sufficient Title I funds to operate a preschool program for the district as a whole, the LEA may decide to serve only eligible children who reside in Title I participating school attendance areas.

### **Preschool Staffing**

Preschool teachers should meet the highest professional standards for teaching young children, which ideally include having earned a baccalaureate degree and received comprehensive education about child development.

In a Title I preschool program in a *Targeted Assistance school*, a paraprofessional paid with Title I funds must have earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; **and** must have (1) completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education; (2) obtained an associate's or higher degree; or (3) met a rigorous standard of quality and have demonstrated – through a formal State or local academic assessment – knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness (ESEA section 1119(c)-(d); 34 C.F.R. § 200.58(b)-(d)).

In a Title I preschool program in a *Schoolwide program school*, all paraprofessionals must meet the above requirements, regardless of how their salaries are funded.

A paraprofessional who is proficient in English and a language other than English and serves only as a translator to enhance the participation of preschool English Learners or who has instructional-support duties that consist solely of parental involvement activities must have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent but *does not* have to meet the additional requirements noted above (ESEA section 1119(e)-(f); 34 C.F.R. § 200.58(b)(e)).

A Title I preschool program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not permitted.

### **General Use of Funds**

Title I funds may be used to provide professional development for Title I preschool teachers and paraprofessionals.

It may be possible for Title I funds to be used to fund minor remodeling for a Title I preschool program.

Use funds to coordinate with other preschool programs and support eligible children in preschool programs such as Head Start.

Professional Development for Non-Title preschool teachers and paraprofessionals in a program jointly funded by Title I and Head Start.

School Program is required to follow ESEA and must allow parents to participate in appropriate professional development activities.

### **Application Process**

Non-competitive, formula-based applications are available in July, due to ADE in October. Amendments must be submitted by March 31. Completion reports are due 90 days after the end of the project.

### **Grant Period**

The grant year runs from July 1 to the following June 30. The fiscal year can be extended for districts and charter schools that operate year-round or offer summer school. Carryover funds may be spent over a period of 27 months but there is a 15% limitation on the amount of funds that can be carried over.

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**For more information about Title I Preschool Programs contact:**  
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