



High Quality Early Learning Grant FY22 Guidance Manual

Arizona Department of Education | Academic Standards-Early Childhood
using DES ARPA Funds



High Quality Early Learning FY22 Guidance Manual

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For additional statewide early childhood resources:

Early Childhood Education (ECE):

www.azed.gov/ece

High Quality Early Learning (HQEL):

www.azed.gov/ece/HQEL

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE):

www.azed.gov/ece/early-childhood-special-education

Additional resources are included in the electronic version of this Guidance Manual as hyperlinks.

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OVERVIEW

Summary of the High Quality Early Learning Grant

The [Arizona Department of Education](#) (ADE) [Early Childhood Education](#) (ECE) believes that every family should have an opportunity to choose a high quality early and care and education setting that promotes the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of their child. Scientists, economists, and educators recognize research suggests early care and education beginning at birth is an investment that pays dividends as children enter kindergarten, move through the early elementary grades, transition to college or a career, and become adult citizens in their community. Families that choose early care and education programs for their children do so for a variety of reasons and should have options for programs that are high quality, are available where families live and work, and are affordable.



ADE ECE has an opportunity to support early childhood programs in high needs communities (HNC) through the High Quality Early Learning Grant (HQEL). The purpose of the HQEL, offered through the [Arizona Department of Economic Security- Child Care Administration](#), is to support Arizona in developing and enhancing capacity to deliver high-quality preschool programming as well as implement and sustain quality preschool for eligible children, increasing the number of children who receive high quality early care and education services and improving young children's success in school and beyond. High-quality early childhood services that include comprehensive services have been strongly linked to both academic and life skills success among children. Research shows children who come from families with several risk factors show the most gain from access to high quality early childhood programs. HQEL offers an opportunity for children and families to access high quality early childhood programs by allocating funds to programs located in HNCs. Funding will support programming for those children who may not otherwise have access to high quality early care and education prior to kindergarten entry by either increasing the number of hours that children participate in a high-quality program or by increasing the number of children who are served.

High Quality Preschool

Programs eligible for this grant will meet the definition of High Quality Preschool. High Quality Preschool means an early learning program that includes structural elements that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality.

In Arizona, these elements of high-quality preschool programming are delineated in the [Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten \(PGHQ\)](#).

HIGH NEEDS COMMUNITIES

A High Needs Community (HNC) means a geographically defined area, such as a city, town, county, neighborhood, district, rural or tribal, or consortium thereof, with a high level of need as determined by the State Department of Education. HNC's are defined by regions (using census tracts and zip codes) in which data showed a high percentage of the student population participated in the Free and Reduced Lunch program; a high percentage of the student population are English Language Learners; and a child care desert of 25% or higher exist.

The grant is available statewide, and programs must be deemed eligible to apply based on eligibility indicators. Those programs determined eligible to apply will be awarded based on competitive application process in year one. Those awarded will continue with participation during the grant life cycle under the DES umbrella - **liquidation of funds by June 30, 2024**. Once awarded, programs must be licensed, and remain "in good standing or in substantial compliance" as defined by their regulatory agency throughout their participation in the grant. **A program being placed on enforcement action for any reason may result in the revocation of funding and revocation of program participation.**

Arizona prioritizes coordination and collaboration among early childhood service providers as critical to developing a seamless service delivery system for children and families. Coordination and collaboration are described as two or more organizations working together in the delivery of programs and services to a defined population. As a result of coordination and collaboration, services are often easier to access and are implemented in a manner that is more responsive to the needs of the children and families and may also result in greater capacity to deliver services because organizations are working together to identify and address gaps in service, which results in higher quality services and cost efficiency.

A sub-grantee is defined as an early learning provider serving at least one HNC that is receiving a sub-grant from the state and is participating in the state's ambitious and achievable HQEL. The providers may be public/charter school, private, public, for-profit programs, non-profit programs, faith-based, family childcare, Head Start, or tribal programs.

Sub-grantees must work with, and participate in, coordination and collaboration activities occurring within the HNC. This may include, but is not limited to, engaging with other partners delivering the same or similar programs and services; connecting families to comprehensive services; clarifying target populations and outcomes; and defining processes and plans to reach desired outcomes. There may be local collaborative meetings within the HNC hosted by the LEA as part of the [Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices](#) (ECQUIP) process. Every sub-grantee will designate a representative to attend ECQUIP meetings. Sub-grantees should plan the appropriate staffing and budget to support travel to and attendance at meetings within the HNC area or at statewide meetings, as appropriate. If the local LEA does not currently engage in or host ECQUIP meetings, the subgrantee will convene and host the ECQUIP meeting. Sub-grantees can choose to create an ECQUIP collab of other subgrantees who are located within the boundaries of non-participating LEAs.

The sub-grantees in the HNC will work in ongoing collaboration to assess additional comprehensive services needed and local support options. The HNC may have representation at their local [First Things First Regional Council](#) meetings to obtain greater resources, share knowledge, learn together and build consensus. Sub-grantees should collaborate with other early childhood education consultants including, but not limited to, [Quality First assessment and coaching](#) (coaches, Child Care Health Consultants (CCHC), Mental Health Consultants, Inclusion Coaches), Arizona Self Study

Project Specialists, ADE Early Childhood Program Specialists (ADE ECPS), Licensing Surveyors, DES Certification Specialists, and Institutes of Higher Education.

Mixed Delivery System

Mixed Delivery System is defined as a collaborative partnership between a LEA and community-based programs with the purpose of establishing a relationship that fosters a seamless system of early care and education, birth through grade 3. Inherent in the mixed delivery system strategy is the principle that all families have the right to access a high-quality early childhood program regardless of income, children's abilities, or other factors. HQEL



allows for family/household income eligibility up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level. In utilizing a mixed delivery system, families have access to a wide array of program types. All programs will participate in collaborative efforts with the various local early childhood education programs in the community for the purpose of providing families with continuity of services under this funding.

The mixed delivery system is based on methods by which early care and education programs work collaboratively to provide educational and comprehensive services to preschool age children in various settings. Financing early childhood education programs through a mixed service delivery model ensures that sufficient resources and standards are in place to support high quality through coordinated community efforts. A true mixed delivery system requires equal and equitable access to programs and funding across early care and education settings including public and private schools, Head Start programs, tribal programs, for-profit and non-profit preschools or centers, family childcare, and faith-based programs. A mixed delivery system offers parents a choice in where their child receives quality early childhood experiences. Each HNC should include in their mixed delivery system ways to:

- Work in collaboration to increase the number and percentage of eligible children served in their least restrictive environment within a high-quality preschool program.
- Develop and implement a written plan outlining how the programs will collaborate within their communities to combine resources and recruit families.
- Develop and implement a written plan to establish a system with a goal that ensures families on a wait list are placed in a HNC option that has the earliest opening.
- Ensure opportunities for collaboration and coordination to strengthen the preschool through elementary school continuum.
- Participate in local [Read On Communities](#) where applicable.

Providing Services to Families Most in Need

Each HNC must effectively identify and recruit students most in need of services and coordinate a system of communication. Each sub-grantee will create and make available written policies and procedures for identification, recruitment or screening of participants most in need of preschool services including a description of how need indicators are weighted and ranked within the local

program. Most in need indicators include factors beyond the requisite income of 300% of the federal poverty level. Other factors in recruitment of families most in need may include:

- English Language Learners
- Children identified with a disability or at risk based on developmental screening
- [Foster care](#) (*automatic child qualifier*)
- Families experiencing [homelessness](#) (*automatic child qualifier*)
- Single parent family composition
- Family mobility
- Military deployment

There may be other indicators based on the uniqueness of the HNC. The goal of establishing a most in need protocol is to provide additional funding and supports to those children and families that are part of historically marginalized communities to help ensure that they have equitable access to high-quality preschool programming.

The HNC will work in collaboration to properly identify which program (Head Start, DES, Quality First, etc.) may serve a child and family most appropriately. Indicators of need are used to manage wait lists rather than using a first come/first served system. Programs are encouraged to use a variety of methods and resources for recruitment of eligible families.

Many more families are eligible for the HQEL than can participate, therefore, participants enrolled in the HQEL programs need to be families most in need of services.



A written plan for identifying the program's most in need population must be in place prior to enrolling families. Identifying which factors address a particular community's most in need group provides a framework for establishing a system for intake and enrollment. Once the most in need criteria have been determined by the HNC, the information will be used to make enrollment decisions as well as manage wait lists. Need related factors are identified during the intake process and used in a manner that allows programs to look beyond income eligibility. In this way, programs are consistently assuring that families most in need of services are the ones who are receiving them.

Child Recruitment, Enrollment, and Eligibility

Enrollment and eligibility requirements are intended to increase the number of slots for children to have access to high quality early care and education in the HNC. Sub-grantees are required to demonstrate that children served are age- and income-eligible to participate by obtaining, reviewing, and verifying documentation of age of child and family income.

Age Requirements – Children shall be 3 or 4 years of age before September 1st (and not yet enrolled in kindergarten) of the program year. Appropriate documentation should be obtained and kept on file to determine the child's eligibility (e.g., a copy of child's birth certificate, a copy of child's foreign passport).

Family Income – Families must meet all requirements listed below (this includes children with an IEP):

- *Family income must be at or below 300% of the [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\)](#). Poverty is defined as family income at or below 100%; low-income is defined as income at or below 200% of FPL, and 300% is defined as middle income.*
- *Acceptable documentation of income may include current pay stubs; written, notarized statement from employer; documentation of current receipt of unemployment insurance; documentation of receipt of public assistance such as KidsCare, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); eligibility for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program; or gross income as listed on the most current Federal Individual Tax Form 1040, Form 1099, or W2. (If self-employed, at least one of the tax forms is required.)*
- *Documentation of family income eligibility only needs to be verified and **does not need to be housed onsite** for HQEL. **Verification forms** must be kept in a secure area and be **maintained on site for at least 2 years**.*
- *Open enrollment is an acceptable option for children who do not live within the HNC boundaries and otherwise meet all established criteria.*

Additional Family Income Eligibility Information:

- **Foster children** who are age-eligible (**foster families are considered a family of zero income and are automatic child qualifiers**)
- *Preschool children who are age-eligible and qualify as **homeless** with [McKinney-Vento](#) (**families experiencing homelessness according to McKinney-Vento definition are considered a family of zero income and are automatic child qualifiers**)*
- *Preschool children with IEPs: All children participating in HQEL must meet the income eligibility guidelines.*
 - *A child on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) whose family does not meet the income eligibility may still be placed in a classroom with children funded through HQEL if it is identified as the child's least restrictive environment (LRE). The child may continue to have special education services paid for with IDEA Preschool funds rather than HQEL funding, or the child may receive both funding streams (braided) if IDEA only pays for part-time and HQEL will fund the other half of the day to create a full-time experience (if the child is deemed eligible).*

Families receiving HQEL services may not be charged a registration fee to attend the program. If a family requires before and/or after care outside of the HQEL hours, sub-grantees may charge a fee for those extra hours.

ALIGNMENT WITHIN A BIRTH THROUGH THIRD GRADE CONTINUUM

Arizona's ambitious and achievable plan is rooted in the quest to create quality preschool programs for children that support and align with the local K-3 system. This is a recognized necessity as Arizona continues the evolution of its high expectations and creates college and career ready students. Arizona supports the coordination of early learning programs among the birth to age 8 early childhood system

and acknowledges the need to link those efforts with K-3 through intentional communication brought about through the ECQUIP process.

Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (ECQUIP) Process

Effective programs recognize that building and maintaining quality requires an ongoing and iterative process. Each LEA (school district or charter school) within the HNC will facilitate the [Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices Process \(ECQUIP\)](#). LEAs are encouraged and sub-grantees within the HNC are required to participate consistently in the HNC ECQUIP process and shall conduct ongoing, reflective practices that continuously assess the quality and effectiveness of their programs. The program assessment is collaborative and conducted in partnership with the district's current ECQUIP.



ECQUIP is a self-assessment intended to provide Arizona programs working with young children a framework for evaluating program effectiveness and designing strategies for continuous quality improvement through a rubric and indicators. Upon completion of the rubric, an enhancement plan will be submitted by the LEA/ PEA into the **Educational Monitoring, Assistance, and Compliance (EMAC) Portal** by **September 30th** of the fiscal year. The EMAC portal is available through the [ADEConnect](#) system. If you do not have access you will need to request access through the [ADE HelpDesk](#). An [EMAC Portal User Guide](#) can be found on the [ADE ECE HQEL website](#). Program evaluation and improvement is most effective and long lasting when the program staff engages in a systematic process of self-assessment. Program staff is then able to identify both strengths and changes needed in order to bring about and/or maintain a high quality, comprehensive program. Ownership of the assessment results is established when staff is actively involved in the process.

Transition to Kindergarten

As part of ensuring effective community collaborations and providing children and families with seamless services as they transition to Kindergarten, each HNC will create and implement a written **Kindergarten Transition Plan** (a template can be found on the [HQEL website](#)). The transition plan shall include a clearly described partnership between the early childhood provider/school, parents, community, and the kindergarten program into which the children will enter, whether public or private.

Sub-grantees within the HNC are expected to create local transition plans that include preschool assessment data as well as information about the child's approaches to learning, social and emotional development, and preferences that make that child unique and individual. This transition plan will then be uploaded into the EMAC system as a monitoring component. Resources regarding transition plans can be found on the [ADE ECE Kindergarten](#) webpage.

School Readiness

In collaboration with ADE ECE, sub-grantees will work within the HNC to set the expectation for School Readiness as identified in the [Arizona School Readiness Framework](#) (ASRF). The ASRF encourages collaboration between services and the numerous parts of the early childhood system.

The framework reflects the purpose of identifying readiness and builds on the state's efforts to establish a system in which all children have access to quality experiences leading to school success.

The four specific goals of the Arizona School Readiness Framework (ASRF) are to:

1. *Establish a common language around school readiness*
2. *Develop a clear outline of the readiness framework*
3. *Determine the roles of standards, effective instruction, and curriculum*
4. *Identify meaningful, well-aligned assessment of readiness to individualize instruction.*

In the ASRF, Arizona defines school readiness as:

Arizona's young children will demonstrate school readiness through the Essential Domains of Language and Literacy development, Cognition and General Knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development), Approaches to Learning (curiosity, initiative, persistence, creativity, problem-solving and confidence), Physical Well-Being and Motor Development and Self-Regulation of attention and emotion. Intentional development of skills and knowledge in these domains establishes a critical foundation for children to engage in and benefit from opportunities to learn.

A HIGHLY QUALIFIED WORKFORCE

Staff Compensation

As Arizona works to create a specialized early childhood professional workforce, it is the goal that those professionals be degreed, certificated, and be paid a wage comparable to the Kindergarten teacher with the same qualifications within the local school district. Improved expertise and compensatory pay in preschool classrooms will result in improved retention rates of highly effective teachers and continuity of care for young children enrolled in early care and education programs.

Additionally, because early childhood instructional support staff plays such a critical

role engaging children, it is expected that the preschool instructional aid's salary mirrors that of a comparable K-12 instructional support staff within in the local school district.



Staff Preparation and Planning Time

In addition to equal compensation, sub-grantees must provide consistent protected and paid instructional preparation and planning time for preschool instructional staff, when they are not directly responsible for the supervision of children (this includes nap time) to:

- Prepare lesson plans, materials, and curricular activities
- Complete ongoing progress monitoring (Teaching Strategies GOLD data)
- Attend professional development
- Attend IEP, ECQUIP, and/or QF meetings
- Conduct screenings

Staff Qualifications

Administration of this grant funding falls under certain statutory requirements. Specifically, any entity receiving the HQEL monies should make every effort possible to recruit and hire lead staff whose qualifications align to [Arizona Administrative Code R7-2-613](#) which requires either a provisional or standard early childhood education certificate for those individuals teaching in early childhood education programs (click [here](#) for certification requirements). Those with certification or endorsement will receive weighted points during the HQEL application review process.

Each lead teacher must either possess a Bachelor's Degree or higher or have a PD plan in place for obtaining this degree.

Arizona recognizes that our communities, families, children, workforce, and leaders are very diverse. We honor and acknowledge that our classrooms are microcosms of the communities in which they reside. The diversity, languages, and culture of these communities should be supported. HQEL programs should make every effort possible to recruit and hire qualified teachers who represent the community, families, and children they support. In addition, HQEL programs should make every effort possible to support dual language learners with recruiting and hiring a lead teacher who can offer dual language instruction and engage families of dual language learners. Refer to [PGHQ](#) for staff qualifications.

QUALITY PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Sub-grantees will have 60 days from the start of the fiscal year to become fully operational (Aug 30) or the date that your district begins school, whichever comes first. Fully operational is defined as having the specified number of children, based on allocation, enrolled, and participating in the identified program activities, which includes but is not limited to sub-grantees working to:

- Be licensed by applicable state, federal or Tribal licensing agencies.
- Be enrolled and participating in one of the following quality programming initiatives: Head Start, National Accreditation, Quality First, Alignment to the PGHQ
- Submit all necessary documents and be actively registered in the [ADE Connect](#) Applications, ADE EMAC, and [Teaching Strategies GOLD](#) (TSG).
- Collaborate and coordinate efforts to recruit eligible families within the HNC.
- Establish a waiting list to ensure that all sub-grantees maintain full enrollment and will enroll new children as slots become available.
- Collaborate and coordinate with other local programs to share wait lists in the effort to enroll families in the earliest opening available within the HNC.
- Ensure a research- or evidence-based developmentally appropriate curriculum is in place.

Empower Program

Sub-grantees will participate in the [Arizona Department of Health Services \(ADHS\) Empower Program](#) and pledge to adopt the 10 standards that encourage active play, practicing sun safety, supporting healthy eating, promoting good oral health habits, preventing exposure to second-and third-hand smoke, and providing staff three hours of professional development on Empower topics.

Sub-grantees will have a written policy for each of the ten standards as a statement of intent and commitment. The benefits of being an Empower program include: reduced licensing fees, state-issued Empower facility designation, an Empower Pack of ready-to-use resources, and an Empower Guidebook. The Empower Guidebook provides information on each of the standards and sample policies for centers to use or to adapt. Please visit the [Empower Learning Management](#) for additional training and resources.



Environment

A high-quality early education program recognizes and understands how children's goals for learning are framed within the context of learning standards and aligns planning of activities and design of environment to stimulate children's learning across content areas. Effective early education programs provide a wide variety of planned experiences within an intentionally designed environment that enables children to learn through interaction, exploration, manipulation and self-discovery. The environment should reflect, and be supportive of, the curriculum, standards, and assessment.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Programming

Language, culture, and identity are integral parts of children's lives. High quality early education programs show acceptance of, and value for, all children and families by integrating their languages and cultures into the ongoing experiences of the program and by finding ways to reach out to and communicate with families. Sub-grantees will help children to understand similarities and differences and to deal in a positive way with misconceptions based upon language, gender, culture, ethnicity, age, and ability. Linguistic and cultural needs are met by emphasizing strategies for integrating multi-cultural themes into all curricular areas:

- [NAEYC Position Statement: Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity: Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education](#)

Curriculum, Standards, and Instructional Strategies

The following are required to ensure curricular approaches are used that meet the individual **and** developmental needs of children while providing them with intentionally designed instruction and activities:

- Designed around children's interests, needs, and abilities.
- Aligned clearly and fully with the [Arizona's Early Learning Standards](#)

- Uses ongoing assessment data to inform instructional needs.
- Provides practice through [developmentally appropriate](#) activities.
- Looks for ways to apply reasoning, problem solving, and other cognitive skills

When choosing a curriculum, consider the following:

1. Refer to the agency's or organization's procurement process
2. Convene a review team that includes at least one preschool teacher and one parent
3. Provide the review team with information on choosing a curriculum. Some examples include: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) [Position Paper](#), National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL) [Choosing a Preschool Curriculum](#), the Head Start [Curriculum Consumer Report](#), and the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) [Preschool Policy Brief](#).
4. Choose or create a rubric to use to evaluate the curricula. Examples include: [Guideline to Comprehensive Curriculum](#) and [Sample Rubric](#).

Early Literacy

Arizona is committed to supporting and improving the literacy skills of all of our children. Arizona will be leveraging the High Quality Early Learning Grant opportunity to provide a comprehensive and systemic approach to advancing literacy skills among disadvantaged children in early childhood, including children living in poverty, English learners, children with disabilities, and those belonging to a subgroup that is otherwise underrepresented.

With intentional coordination and collaboration between and among early childhood education programs and system partners, targeted evidence-based strategies will be deployed and HQEL sites to produce measurable gains in language and literacy outcomes.

These strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Access to high-quality preschool programming
- Practitioner training in the [Science of Reading](#)
- [Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling \(LETRS\)](#)
- Literacy coaches, supports, and resources
- Research and evidence-based curricula

Child Screening

Early identification of children's needs ensures that young children receive the services and supports necessary to maximize their opportunities for healthy development and learning. Screening activities are a first step in the identification process. Therefore, it is imperative that a screening procedure be in place to ensure children are identified and receive the supports they need. All children participating in HQEL will receive developmental, hearing, and vision screenings within the first 45 calendar days of the first day of attendance in the program. Please click here to find a [Sample 45-day Screener](#).

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

One of the outcomes of HQEL is to increase the number of children with special needs in their LRE. Therefore, sub-grantees will serve no less than 10% of children with identified special needs

in the HQEL classrooms (at least 2 children with identified special needs for every 20 children). ADE will support sub-grantees with meeting this goal in these specific ways:

- **ADE ECE Technical Assistance (T/A):** Sub-grantees will be able to access T/A from an ADE ECPS assigned to their HNC. This T/A may include assistance needed with making modifications to the environment to enable meaningful participation for all students, assistance with instructional strategies or modalities to meet the learning needs of students, and/or professional development on how to make accommodations or adaptations along a continuum to meet the needs of children with various types of disabilities and levels of severity.
- Additional inclusion resources are available on the [Early Childhood Special Education Related Laws](#) webpage under the “Resources” tab and the [Early Childhood Technical Assistance \(ECTA\) Center](#). In addition, please refer to the Early Childhood Inclusion [Joint Position Statement](#) of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Local Attendance Policy

Children’s consistent attendance leads to maximum learning opportunities; therefore, attendance policies must support consistency and ongoing participation. Sub-grantees will:

- Put written policies in place to determine when a child shall be excluded from participation due to non-attendance. These policies must be in writing and given to families at time of enrollment.
- Put written policies in place for suspension and expulsion protocol (See “[Early Childhood Expulsion](#)” section.)
- Document all decisions regarding children’s continued participation.

Early Childhood Expulsion

Children in early learning environments are expelled from programs at an alarming rate. Sub-grantees of HQEL should consider that they are providing a critical early experience for young children. Children should not be expelled for behavioral issues; instead, sub-grantees should work collegially with families, QF technical assistance providers, and other community specialists in order to provide children and families resources and connections to the services they need to successfully participate.

- [United States Department of Education Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension in Early Childhood Settings](#).
- Southwest Human Development [Expulsion Prevention Training Opportunities](#)
- [The Head Start Expulsion and Suspension Policy Statement](#).
- [NAEYC Joint Statement](#)

Ongoing Progress Monitoring and Child Assessment

Ongoing progress monitoring of children’s progress for the purpose of more effectively guiding interactions and making instructional and programmatic decisions is a critical part of high-quality. HQEL sub-grantees will:

Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG)

- Register with Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) under the Arizona Department of Education's license. TSG is the early childhood assessment instrument approved by the Arizona State Board of Education.
- Activate portfolios through TSG for the specified number of slots funded by HQEL: <https://teachingstrategies.com>. Every child funded by HQEL is required to have a portfolio in TSG.
- Obtain an [Arizona Education Data Standards \(AzEDS\)](#) number for each eligible child to link assessment data to the state's longitudinal data system (SLDS). To produce AzEDS numbers, the program representative needs to be given an application on an ADE Connect account called "AzEDS Identity". Please contact the ADE HelpDesk for assistance with this. Help Desk Quick Guides can be found here <https://www.azed.gov/finance/helpdesk-quick-guide>.
- Collect and maintain ongoing child assessment data using TSG
- Finalize and submit TSG data by the ADE ECE checkpoint dates. Checkpoint Dates are available in TSG under the "Assess" icon then under the "[Checkpoint Dates](#)".
- Attend Introduction to TSG and/or TSG Administrator trainings, participate in the online trainings available through TSG, become interrater reliable through TSG, and attend other early childhood assessment professional development as applicable.
- Develop a written comprehensive assessment protocol.

The written comprehensive **assessment protocol** must include information regarding the HQEL program's:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ <i>Use of 45-day screeners</i> | ✓ <i>Process for how data is shared with families</i> |
| ✓ <i>Involvement in Child Find</i> | ✓ <i>Process for how data is shared with the Kindergarten program</i> |
| ✓ <i>Role in the evaluation process</i> | ✓ <i>Process for how data is used for quality improvement efforts</i> |
| ✓ <i>Process for ongoing progress monitoring</i> | |
| ✓ <i>Submission of TSG data</i> | |

For further guidance, please refer to [The Assessment Continuum Guide for Pre K-Grade 3 in Arizona](#).

Program Hours of Operation

Sub-grantees are required to enroll children for a minimum number of hours per day, a minimum number of days per week and for a minimum number of program days per year.

- **Months of Service** – Program services must be provided for a minimum 9 or 10 months and outlined in the sub-grantee application. HQEL funds are to be used May 2022 – August 30, 2024. Students must be served by August 30, 2022. The time frame between May- August 2022 may be used for teacher recruitment, child/family recruitment, program set up and development. The service schedule should align with the local school district's K-3 calendar.



- **Days/Hours Per Year** – Beginning in year two, sub-grantees should offer a scheduled *minimum of 180 days* or the equivalent of a *minimum of 900 hours per school year* for a full day program to maximize opportunities for learning.
- **Days/Hours Per Week** – Children must be enrolled in a full day of service based on the following:
 - A full day of service for children is defined as a minimum of 4 days a week, 6 hours per day for a total of at least 24 hours per week.
 - Sub-grantees must run at least 24 hours per week over at least 4 days to meet the requirements of this grant.
 - Sub-grantees may combine a HQEL part-time slot with other funding sources to enhance to a full-time slot of at least 24 hours per week over at least 4 days.

Quiet Time/Napping

A site should have supplies available in case a child requests to lie down or rest. For more information: [Code R9-5-511: Sleeping and Napping](#). Sub-grantees should also note that *ECERS-R*, Indicator 11 addresses a nap/quiet time for children in a program for four hours or more. Since all HQEL children must attend at a minimum 6 hours per day, this indicator will affect the schedule of the day. Quiet time can consist of the children being on mats to listen to a story or an appropriate chapter book. Some children may fall asleep during this time, while others will engage in play activities after the reading; the needs of each child should be honored. According to the definition of a “High-Quality Preschool Program,” structural element (h) states “individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities should be provided.” For some children (especially at the beginning of the year), this may mean quiet time/nap.

Staff-to-Child Ratio and Class Size

Although Code R9-5-404 of [ADHS childcare licensing rules and regulations](#) (p. 24) establishes teacher child ratios, the Program Guidelines for High Quality Education: Birth through Kindergarten (PGHQ) establishes a higher level of quality as a 1:9 teacher-to-child ratio for 3-year old children and 1:10 teacher-to-child ratio for 4-year old children. The [PGHQ](#) also recognizes that these ratios may be lowered based on the needs of children with disabilities to ensure appropriate, meaningful inclusionary practices are being implemented. In addition, *PGHQ* establishes the group size maximum to be 20 children enrolled per group of 4-year old children. ADE ECE will closely monitor ratios and group sizes of sub-grantees as it is truly reflective of what is needed to provide high-quality experiences for children ([PGHQ](#), pp. 10-11). Sub-grantees must maintain ratio and class size during HQEL hours or risk losing funding.

Age of Children	Teacher-to-Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
3-year-old children	1:9	18
4-year-old children	1:10	20

Primary Home Language Other Than English (PHLOTE)

Many children in Arizona live in households where a language other than English is spoken. The HQEL HNCs were specifically identified as communities with high levels of English Language Learners (ELL). The HQEL is expected to provide an opportunity for children to access quality interactions, academic vocabulary, and robust language experiences in their home language and

English. As part of the registration packet for enrollment in the HQEL program and to better understand the linguistic needs of the children and families, programs may ask families to complete a [PHLOTE](#) form, which can also provide information for children's portfolios in TSG. This form becomes part of the child's record and should be used as part of the Kindergarten Transition information. ADE will collect data from sub-grantees regarding the number of children who had a language other than English as identified on the state home-language survey. The PHLOTE form cannot be conducted until two weeks prior to the child's start date at the program.

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Comprehensive services expand access to information, services, and supports families need to help their young children achieve their fullest potential. To make the best choices, families need access to information that educates them about what their child is learning and doing, how to optimally support early childhood development and child health, and what resources or programs are available in their community. Families also need opportunities to connect with other families in their community. High-quality programs link families with supports in a comprehensive, collaborative, culturally and linguistically responsive manner that best meets the needs and preferences of families. Sub-grantees will leverage available resources and involve families in the program development and implementation. The ADE ECPS for each community will support the collaboration effort to acquire services needed by facilitating meetings between programs in the community, coordinating outreach to service providers, collaborating with the QF coach, and encouraging community participation in ECQUIP.

At the local level, providers in the community will collaborate and build on community services that are meeting families' needs. Sub-grantees and community partner agencies must see collaboration as a primary benefit to families and act as a bridge to unify families and children with additional support services. Comprehensive service needs and availability will vary based on the uniqueness of the community. Sub-grantees will develop and implement a written continuum of comprehensive services including LRE, Child Find, and Family Engagement:

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Programs will be required to serve no less than 2 children with identified special needs within a classroom of 20. This will require IEP teams to work together with families to intentionally find the most-appropriate LRE environment placement for the child within the community. The grant will support programs to meet this goal through participation with a QF Inclusion Coach along with technical assistance from an ADE ECPS as needed. For more information, please refer to the [Help for Early Learning Professionals \(HELP\) Manual](#) and the [Dear Colleague Letter on LRE](#).

Child Find:

It is imperative that a screening procedure be in place to ensure children with special needs are identified and receive the supports they need. Sub-grantees within the HNC must create local procedures to conduct routine, collaborative Child Find system. All sub-grantees must understand how to connect with service providers operating under Parts B (619) & C of the IDEA, as appropriate. In addition, local IDEA Part C and Part B (619) providers must work together to ensure that IDEA regulations are implemented with fidelity and in accordance with state and federal laws. For more information, please visit [Child Find / AZ Find](#).

- Early learning providers should coordinate screening opportunities for all children within the community. This will assist with Child Find efforts, but it will also identify children who may benefit from additional resource supports from programs such as home visitation or Early Head Start/Head Start. ADE will intentionally work with the community to create relationships between sub-grantees, Early Head Start/Head Start Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) coordinators, FTF staff and resources, LEA leadership, and other community partners.
- Follow-up referrals and activities that are initiated to secure appropriate services will be documented and tracked to ensure that families receive the necessary information and/or services. Community programs will work in partnership with the LEA to ensure and maintain coordinated and seamless efforts. Hearing and vision screening performed on children must be conducted by those who have been trained to administer the screening instruments. This may require some coordination between the early learning providers in the community. If no such person is available at the community program site, the community program can collaborate with their LEA or their QF CCHC to conduct these screenings.
- For more information, please visit the [ADE Early Childhood Special Education \(ECSE\) website](#).

Family Engagement:

The family plays a central role as the most influential caregivers in a child's life. Sub-grantees must create and implement plans for family engagement and keep a copy of the written plan available on-site. Family engagement activities shall include a focus on involving the family as key decision makers and assessors of the program. Sub-grantees must:



- Engage families in meaningful, culturally, and linguistically responsive ways
- Intentionally help families be partners in their children's education.
- Implement ways to continually identify family needs and garner their feedback.
- Create procedures to coordinate resources and services for families and children.
 - Connect with appropriate local businesses, family resource centers, agencies and other local groups relating to health/mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, adult literacy, financial asset building, food pantry, and other services.
 - Other activities outlined in the plan may include but are not limited to the following:
 - ✓ Home visits (initial or ongoing)
 - ✓ Family conferences
 - ✓ Classroom visits with options for parents to participate
 - ✓ Parent satisfaction surveys
 - ✓ Child progress reports

Community Partnerships and Resources

Providers in the HNC will work in ongoing collaboration with local partners to assess additional comprehensive services needed for children and their families, and local support options. The HNC will develop a working relationship with the local [First Things First \(FTF\) Regional Partnership Councils \(RPC\)](#) and other education, business, and philanthropic community partners to obtain greater resources, share knowledge, learn together, and build consensus. The following are examples of FTF Strategies that fund comprehensive serves, *in regions where they are funded by the FTF RPC*, and availability is dependent on the unique needs of the community:

- **Local Family Resource Centers** serve as community hubs for connecting families with children birth to age 5 to the information, resources, and services they need to support their child's optimal health and development. The expected results of access to a Family Resource Center are improved parenting skills and social supports for families; increased knowledge of child development; and support for school readiness.
- The **Food Security** strategy works to provide food and other healthy living information to meet the nutritional needs of families that lack access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. Information is also provided on age-appropriate feeding schedules and food content standards for food boxes, food backpacks, or food vouchers. The expected result is access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for children birth to age 5.
- The **Parent Kits** give families of every infant born in birthing hospitals in Arizona critical information about healthy parenting practices and how to support their baby's early learning. In the parenting kit, families receive 6 DVDs about good parenting practices, a resource guide, and a book to encourage early literacy.
- The **Family Outreach and Awareness** strategy works to increase families' awareness of positive parenting; child development including health, nutrition, early learning and language acquisition; and, knowledge of available services and supports to support their child's overall development. The expected result is an increase in knowledge and a change in specific behaviors addressed through the information and activities provided.
- The **Reach Out and Read** strategy expands children's access to reading by promoting child literacy as a part of pediatric primary care. Training is provided to pediatric practitioners on how to engage parents and young children in early literacy activities and provides books to pediatricians or their staff to distribute to families with young children.
- The **Care Coordination/Medical Home** strategy embeds a care coordinator into a clinical practice to assist at-risk families with young children to navigate the complex health care and social services systems. The expected result of effective care coordination is that children receive services they need (i.e., well-child visits) and families receive efficient assistance to avoid duplication of services or demands on their time, and unnecessary stress. An important component of care coordination is its association with a medical clinic that is designated as a "medical home" for the child and their family.
- The **Oral Health** strategy provides best practice approaches on enhancing the oral health status of children birth through age 5. The expected results are prevention of tooth decay and reduction in the prevalence of early childhood tooth decay. Tooth decay puts children at risk for pain and infections that can lead to lifelong complications of their health and well-being. The approaches for this strategy include: oral health screening for children and expectant mothers with referrals to oral health providers for follow up care as needed; fluoride varnishes for children; oral health education for families and other caregivers; and, outreach to families,

other caregivers including early learning and care providers, and oral health and medical professionals.

Sustainability

At the local level, sub-grantees will collaborate and build on existing community services, resources, and local, state, and federal funding sources to increase access and sustain high quality early childhood services for young children and their families. Sub-grantees will work towards creating sustainable programs by coordinating existing early learning funds and using federal grant dollars and other matching funds to support their efforts.

Sustainability efforts may include the planning, coordination, and implementation of local and statewide strategies that focus on building partnerships through collaboration, engaging stakeholders and advocating for support, and finding applicable funding.



Sustainability planning resources may include:

- Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children (AzAEC): [AZ Toolkit: Resources to Improve Quality and Business Practices](#)
- Build Initiative: [Shared Services: A Support Strategy](#)
- ECTA Center: [Financing Strategies and Collaborative Funding](#)
- ELCTA: [Shared Services as a Strategy to Support Child Care Providers](#)
- National Center for Education Statistics: [SLDS Sustainability Toolkit: Best Practices & Resources](#)

GRANT APPLICATION AND FISCAL REQUIREMENTS

HQEL is a competitive grant in year one and continuation grants through June 2024. Eligible providers that wish to participate must:

- Submit an application that outlines the number of children they *propose* to serve, as well as their service opportunities (full-day, or part-day combined with other funds to complete a full-day, and number of months)
- Be determined eligible and of sufficient quality to participate in the funding; and
- Have the capacity to meet grant deliverables including programmatic, fiscal, and infrastructure capacities.

Applications

Applications are submitted via the Department of Economic Security Child Care Administration (DES CCA) [Grant Portal](#). Funding will be distributed based on the eligible programs who submit proposals for the upcoming fiscal year. There is the possibility that not all eligible programs will be chosen for participation nor may applications be fully funded.

Award Letters

All applicants will receive notification of award or non-award of HQEL. Award letters will be sent via email to awarded sub-grantees which will indicate total program funding award as well as the total number of children that can be served with the funding.

Allocations

Allocations are allotted as a total award sum and are calculated based on if they are center based care or a licensed home provider.

- Center-based providers will be awarded with the initial base award allocation will be approximately **\$200,000 per center / year**, with the understanding that each site/classroom must serve a **minimum of 20 FTEs** (Full Time Equivalent).
- Licensed home providers will be awarded an allocation based on a per child expenditure of **\$10,000 per FTE**. The annual amount will be paid out in monthly increments.

Budget Requirements

The ADE Budget Report in the HQEL application includes acceptable categories of expenditures for funds. ADE ECE will review and approve for budget expenditures or will send back grant applications that do not meet the necessary, reasonable, or allocable definitions as listed below. Sub-grantees should budget for quality, and the budget line items should reflect the needs and goals of the sub-grantee. Budgeted items should be correctly coded, including any applicable "Project Time (FTE)" percentages or cost-allocations based on other funding sources, in the grant application. Moreover, the total budgeted amount should match the allocated award as indicated in the sub-grantees current HQEL award letter.

For more information, sub-grantees should refer to the Uniform Systems of Financial Records (USFR) Chart of Accounts, Section III-E-2.1 through III-E.3.9 or the [Uniform Systems of Financial Records for Charter Schools](#) (USFRCS).

Allowable Expenditures

Allowable expenditures for the HQEL funds must advance a high quality educational program for preschool and promote early learning achievement using developmentally appropriate practices. All costs must be necessary, reasonable and allocable:

- **Necessary:** Is the cost a type generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of the HQEL program?
- **Reasonable:** Do I really need this? Is it required in the HQEL classroom to meet the definition of high quality? If I were asked to defend this purchase, would I be able to? Did I pay a fair rate?
- **Allocable:** Is the cost allocable to HQEL? Does the cost benefit the HQEL program?

Allowable Costs will be aligned with the definition of [High Quality Preschool](#) as indicated in the “Overview” section of this Guidance Manual:

- ✓ Personnel employed by the program who have responsibilities that are *specific* to the HQEL program.
- ✓ Contract services when the service is specific to the HQEL program.
- ✓ Supplies and materials needed to implement the definition of High Quality preschool program.
- ✓ Equipment needed to implement the HQEL program.
- ✓ Printing materials such as HQEL parent handbook, HQEL staff handbook, HQEL newsletters, HQEL assessment reports, etc.
- ✓ Parent training activities related to the HQEL program.
- ✓ Professional Development (meals, transportation, lodging and conference registration fees)
- ✓ Printer for the HQEL classroom.
- ✓ Tablets/computer for teacher documentation.
- ✓ Teaching Strategies GOLD portfolios
- ✓ Rent and cleaning of the HQEL classroom
- ✓ Field trips, up to 3 per year.
- ✓ Family engagement activities
- ✓ Licensing fees



Acceptable expenditure categories for the HQEL include, but are not limited to:

- Meeting and maintaining developmentally appropriate practices as set forth in the [Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten](#)
- Meeting and maintaining programming that clearly aligns with the [Arizona Early Learning Standards](#), Quality First, and/or national early childhood accreditation standards
- Providing opportunities for family engagement such as family training activities related to HQEL
- **Direct Instruction:** teacher salaries and benefits; supplies such as manipulative, books, other classroom items such as a small printer for HQEL classroom, field trip admissions, ongoing progress monitoring tool subscriptions, substitute teachers, etc.
- **Support Services:** such as contracted services when the service is specific to HQEL, proportional salaries and benefits for HQEL support staff, supplies for family trainings or workshops, workshop or training opportunities for teaching staff, travel expenses to attend approved trainings, or Teaching Strategies GOLD portfolios.
- **Administrative Costs** **may not exceed 5%** of the total allocation awarded.
- **Capital Outlay** (e.g., classroom furniture and equipment needed to implement HQEL, classroom computers aligned with developmentally appropriate practices or for use in collecting evidence for Teaching Strategies GOLD, etc.)
- **Other Expenditures** such as rent, cleaning, or licensing fees cost-allocated for HQEL classroom(s); outreach for the open HQEL slots; printing materials such as HQEL family handbooks, HQEL newsletters, HQEL fliers.

Disallowable Expenditures

- Overtime
- Refrigerators, copiers/ printers exceeding \$1,000 in cost, food preparation equipment
- Animals
- Attorney fees
- Custodial care; before and after school care (Families receiving HQEL scholarships may not be charged a fee or registration to attend the program. If a family requires before and after care outside of HQEL hours, programs may charge for those extra hours).
- Entertainment
- Religion
- Alcohol
- Fingerprint Clearance Cards
- Membership Fees
- Program wide PD not specifically directed at meeting the identified academic or developmental needs of the HQEL students
- Out-of-state travel
- General expenditures that will generally benefit all students in a program
- Vehicles
- Permanent fixed classrooms units
- Construction, modernization, or renovation of permanent installations (sunscreens, playground structure, ramps, bathrooms, carpets, etc.)
- Non-Instructional items, office equipment, office furniture
- Any allocations that do not benefit the HQEL program or do not advance the quality of the HQEL program

Duplicate Funding

Children participating in HQEL may not be receiving duplicate programming through other funding available from State, Federal or Tribal sources such as: Department of Economic Security (DES) child care subsidy, Title I, Special Education Programs, Head Start, or FTF childcare scholarships. Children eligible for these resources but who are currently on waiting lists for these programs are eligible to participate. A child receiving part-time funding from any of the above sources may be eligible to receive a part-time HQEL scholarship in unduplicated time periods to provide a full-time experience.

Supplanting

Supplanting of HQEL funds is prohibited— that is, replacing state, local, or agency funds with HQEL funds. This means that existing funds for a project and its activities may not be displaced by these funds and reallocated for other organizational expenses. For example, if a sub-grantee is already paying for a Director Salary with other school funds, it cannot use HQEL funds to pay Director Salary and use the “savings” for other purposes. Since the Director was already paid with local sources, it is not legitimate to transfer that position's salary under the funding of the new grant.

Direct/Indirect Costs

Code 6910 Indirect Costs - Indirect costs are those expenditures that incurred for the joint benefit of more than one project and cannot be readily and specifically identified with the particular project without effort disproportionate to the resolves achieved, such as rent, utilities, phone service, insurance, use of copier machine.

Administrative Costs/Indirect Costs are general or centralized expenses of overall administration of an organization that receives grant funds and does not include particular program costs. Those are for activities or services that benefit more than one project. Their precise benefits to a specific project are often difficult or impossible to trace.

Direct Costs are those for activities or services that benefit specific projects (e.g., salaries for teachers, aids, paraprofessionals and materials required for a particular project). Because these activities are easily traced to projects, their costs are usually charged to projects on an item-by-item basis.

Sub-grantees must choose option A, B or option C, based on their applicable allowance for indirect costs, and provide proper justification for expenses in the grant application.

- **Option A – Federally Approved Indirect Rate:** If your organization has an approved indirect cost rate agreement in place, you must use that rate for this grant.
- **Option B – If the organization does not have an Indirect Cost Rate agreement:** The Sub-grantee may charge the 10% provisional rate for up to 90 days and must submit an indirect cost proposal to the Arizona Department of Education within 90 days after the grant award is issued and, if it does so, may continue charging the 10 percent provisional rate until the cognizant agency has provided the Sub-grantee with a negotiated indirect cost rate; and if after the 90-day period, the Sub-grantee has not submitted an indirect cost proposal to the Arizona Department of Education, the Sub-grantee may not charge its grant for indirect costs until it has negotiated an indirect cost rate agreement with the Arizona Department of Education; or
- **Option C – Direct Charge:** With proper justification, Sub-grantee may include an allocation for administrative costs up to 5% of the total funds awarded. Administrative costs may include: cost of auditing, accounting, financial, payroll, salaries and benefits of the program director and other administrative staff.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

ADE ECE Quality and Compliance Monitoring

Monitoring of program sites is a proactive approach to ensuring HQEL sub-grantees are following guidelines and providing high quality and comprehensive educational programs that promote improved student achievement. A formal monitoring visit (compliance validation) will occur annually.

The compliance validation will be pre-scheduled by ADE ECE with the sub-grantee. The monitoring of the sub-grantee will include:

- Classroom visitations
- Interviews with program teachers, administrators, and/or families
- Fiscal review
- Review of implementation of standard, curriculum, and assessment records such as portfolios/work samples and teacher anecdotal observation notes (ongoing progress monitoring data)
- Review of program compliance information for *PGHQ* and HQEL deliverables as identified by HQEL

- Review of program documentation and requirements such as ECQUIP meeting results, documentation of family income, licensure, accreditation information (if applicable), and collaboration documentation
- Review of child find system, community partnerships, family engagement strategies, kindergarten transitions and others as identified in the *PGHQ*
- Review of program documentation and scope of work documents related to the written wait list policy, selection criteria, suspension/expulsion policy, etc.

The formal monitoring will conclude with ADE staff meeting with sub-grantee administrator(s) or staff to discuss observations and to provide T/A as needed. The monitoring form and other monitoring resources can be found within the EMAC system.

Program Reporting

Sub-grantees will maintain detailed evidence of all HQEL programmatic and fiscal efforts which may be reviewed by ADE ECE at any point during or after the funding period. This includes, but is not limited to, any demographic, assessment-related, and implementation documents and other HQEL deliverables.

Both to engage in self-evaluation to improve the quality of the program's preschool services and to support the ADE ECE local, state, and federal funding reporting, sub-grantees will submit scope of work (SOW) documents related to HQEL implementation through the EMAC system by **each** fiscal year.

- Family Engagement Needs Self-Assessment
- Family Engagement Assessment Action Plan
- Kindergarten Transition Plan
- Most-In-Need
- Wait List Sharing Protocol
- Attendance Policy
- ECQUIP
- Teacher Recruitment Plan
- HQEL Data Collection and Verification (age verification, facility information, income verification, etc.)
- Child/Family Recruitment Plan



Additionally, to ensure successful implementation and documentation of quality improvement efforts, ADE ECE will collect information in a variety of ways from sub-grantees. Examples are listed below. ADE ECE may request additional reporting as necessary.

- Monthly absenteeism, suspension, and expulsion reports for the awarded HQEL slots
- Grant application and revisions, which outline the proposed budgeting of the total award sum for the sub-grantee, due into GME as "SEA Director Approved" by the ADE ECE specified date.
- End-of-year demographics report.
- Completion report, which outlines the budget actual expenditures, due into GME within 45 days of the end of the funding period
- Reimbursement requests with supporting documentation of expenditures submitted through GME
- On-site monitoring as indicated in the "[ADE ECE Quality and Compliance Monitoring](#)" section

- Participation in and on-time submission of early childhood assessment data through Teaching Strategies GOLD as indicated in the “[Ongoing Progress Monitoring and Child Assessment](#)” section

PROFESSIONAL Learning (PL)

All program staff will participate in continuing education to remain current in ECE research and methods and continually update skills and knowledge through professional development (PD) based on local program professional development needs.

For upcoming Arizona Department of Education (ADE) professional learning opportunities and to view a list of ADE Early Childhood professional learning opportunities visit the [ECE Professional Learning](#) website. For additional early childhood PD visit the [Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry](#).

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM SPECIALISTS (ECPS)

An ADE Early Childhood Program Specialist (ECPS) working within the HNC will be assigned to work with the sub-grantees and to support quality improvement efforts and facilitate collaborative relationships.

Primary Responsibilities of the ECPS include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting in the development of an infrastructure to ensure sustainability of the collaborative relationship of ECE within the high needs community to improve outcomes for children.
- Providing technical assistance and professional development/training to participants with the purpose of supporting the implementation of strategies and approaches that are developmentally appropriate
- Developing and working with existing implementation plans with participants to achieve improved levels of quality and improved outcomes for young children
- Attending meetings, conferences, workshops in the community to continually seek ways to bridge theory and practice for project participants
- Collecting, developing, and providing informational and educational materials to project participants
- Conducting applicable training and PD sponsored by ADE ECE.
- Visiting the school/community partner sites and conferring with the principal/director on a prescribed basis
- Assisting the local school district and community partners within a high needs community in writing and implementing a robust kindergarten transition plan
- Assisting the preschool programs within the high needs community to see how they align with the district literacy plan.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (T/A)

Programmatic Questions

For questions related to program implementation, requirements, monitoring, etc. please contact the Arizona Department of Education Early Childhood (ADE ECE) ECEInbox@azed.gov. The sub-

grantee's Early Childhood Program Specialist, assigned to local regions and HQEL HNCs around the state, can provide support, T/A, and PD as necessary to support HQEL efforts.

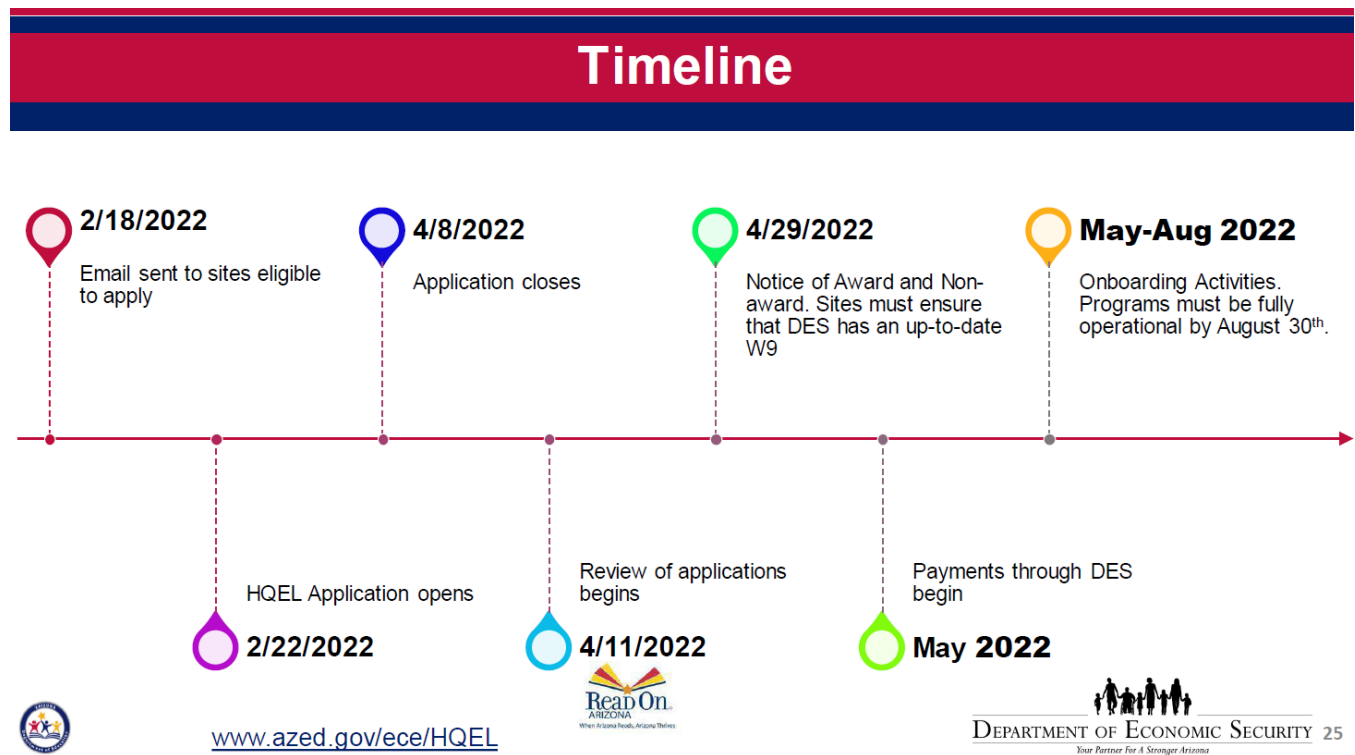
Funding Questions

For questions related to funding, grant application status, payments, etc. please contact the Department of Economic Security's Child Care Administration (DES CCA) office. DES CCA: ChildCareGrants@azdes.gov

TIMELINE

General HQEL Dates

Dates are subject to change. Additional dates for awarded programs will be updated in this document and posted on the [HQEL](https://www.azed.gov/ece/hqel) website throughout the duration of the grant program.



**The Arizona Department of Education
Early Childhood Education**
1535 W. Jefferson St., Bin #15
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Email: ECEInbox@azed.gov

Main Line: (602) 364-1530

ECE Homepage: <https://www.azed.gov/ece>

HQEL Website: <https://www.azed.gov/ece/hqel>

ECE Team Contacts: <https://www.azed.gov/ece/contactus>

Notes

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