Advocating for Equity Across All Levels of Government

DIMENSION 8:
HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

ALLIANCE FOR RESOURCE EQUITY
Uniting advocates and education leaders to unlock excellence for every student
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HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

THE VISION: Each student — including students of color and students with higher needs — has access to high-quality preschool programs that meet their needs, so all students can reach high standards and thrive.

KEY QUESTION 8.1 Does each student have access to high-quality preschool programs?

Federal

- Congress can:
  - Set rules for implementing state early learning programs, including mandatory child care funding plans and related consultation
  - Require states to establish state advisory councils to include representation across state and local education and health agencies
  - Fund programs across federal agencies to support three- and four-year-old children in early learning settings
    - The Administration for Children and Families administers:
      - Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five
      - The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program
    - Head Start, which provides federal funding directly to localities
  - The US Department of Agriculture administers reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children enrolled in participating child care centers through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
  - The US Department of Education administers:
    - Funding for preschool through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
    - Competitive grants to colleges and universities for campus-based child-care services for student parents with low incomes through the Child Care Access Means Parents in School grant program
    - Competitive grants for “distressed communities” to provide early learning through the Promise Neighborhoods program
  - The US Department of the Interior administers the Family and Child Education program, which supports federally recognized tribal members
States, territories, and tribes administer the Child Care and Development Fund with support from the Administration for Children and Families.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Section 619, administered by state education agencies.

**State**

- **States** typically take **one of three approaches** to oversight of early learning:
  - Creating a new entity to oversee several Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs
  - Consolidating existing offices and programs into an existing entity
  - Coordinating multiple agencies

- **State legislatures and governors** can:
  - Fund early learning programs
  - Establish a standing source of revenue for early learning programs
  - Establish state early learning advisory councils to help coordinate and implement early learning programs
  - Establish a dedicated department of early learning
  - Create children’s cabinets or other oversight bodies that facilitate collaborative action or advise on policy across various governmental and nongovernmental agencies that deal with children’s welfare, education, and well-being

- **State early learning advisory councils** provide policy recommendations and statewide coordination for early learning programs

**School District**

- **Local education agencies**:
  - Distribute funding for early learning education
  - Collect local property tax revenues, sales tax revenues, soda tax or other local revenues for early learning programs

- **Local early learning advisory councils** can contribute to the state early learning advisory council’s activities and coordinate efforts at the local level

**School**

- **School leaders and educators** can:
  - Choose professional development topics and family engagement strategies
  - Partner with community organizations to provide early learning
  - Provide culturally- and linguistically competent professional development for all teaching professionals on:
    - Evidence-based strategies for supporting positive behaviors
    - Developmentally appropriate practice
    - Child development (including social-emotional development)
    - Screening and progress monitoring for students with learning and attention challenges
    - Supporting language-rich environments
    - Dual language learners
    - Collaborating with families