

## Overview: Response to Early Learning Challenge Grant

**Core Areas:** Must respond to all the sub-sections outlined in Section A and B of the grant.

- **Section A: Successful State Systems: Describe the systems of Early Childhood governance; articulating the State's rational for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals; align and coordinate early learning and development across the State; and develop a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.**

Response to Section A will include information that:

- Outlines the State's five years of financial investment with specific funding amounts associated with in Early Learning and Development Programs and how the funding investments relates to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs for the five year period.
- Recognizes the growth from previous five years to present on the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs.
- Identifies the key elements of the State's statutory and policy framework supporting quality Early Learning Development Plans such as setting high standards; expanding access to high-quality early learning and development; and building an integrated early care and education system.
- Outlines ambitious, but achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the educational gaps between Children with High Needs and their peers by: Increasing the number of high-quality Early Learning Development Programs for New York's children, especially those with high-needs, as measured by QUALITYstarsNY.
- Provides an overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans that will be included in the QUALITYstarsNY's infrastructure and Early Learning and Development Standards to include a comprehensive assessments that are clear, rigorous and developmentally appropriate,
- Defines how the State's workforce development system and Workforce Registry will allow New York to track professional development experiences of teachers and how the Early Learning Data System will allow New York to integrate data across all data systems to provide a true picture of how and where children are being served and to track children's participation and progress across a variety of early childhood settings and into the P-20 system.
- Identifies New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) as the Lead Agency, and State Education Department (SED), Department of Health (DOH), Office of Mental Health (OMH) as Participating State Agencies. In addition to the Participating

State Agencies, and identifies other state agencies and partners that will work together to facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability.

- Includes MOUs that demonstrate Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure and will effectively implement the State and letters of support from stakeholders
- Completes the required budget forums for the grant which will includes the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) set-aside and funding amounts from the Participating State Agencies that will be used to support the State Plan.

- **Section B: High-Quality, Accountable Programs: Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System:**

Response to Section B will include information that:

- Identifies standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence that corresponds with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children, linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.
- Summarizes the QUALITYstarsNY's history, field test, components (comprehensive program standards, professional development and technical assistance, financial incentives, parent/consumer education.
- Outlines the data collection that supports quality improvement activities to facilitate by two data systems: WELs program data system, and Aspire Workforce Registry.
- Describes how both data systems will be integrated with the statewide, cross-program early learning data system that will be connected to State Education's P-20 longitudinal data system as outlined in Section (E)(2).
- Identifies strategies to: (1) Expand QUALITYstarsNY in areas of high-need first with outreach strategies developed specific to high-need communities; (2) Allows 10 of the 35 Child Care Resource and Referral's (CCR&R) across the state to be selected to coordinate QUALITYstarsNY in each of the 10 Economic Development Regions; (3) Actively communicates the benefits of participating in QUALITYstarsNY; (4) Provides QUALITYstarsNY orientation sessions and readiness training across the state; (5) Provides targeted recruitment strategies for for UPKs, licensed and registered child care programs and homes, Part C and B, and Early Head Start and Head Start programs; (6) Completes the QUALITYstarsNY validation studies and outcome evaluation; (7) Proposes tax incentives for parents who choose to use a high-quality ELDP for their children and tax rebates for the Early Learning Program Development that achieve the highest levels

of quality; and (8) Communicate and share data amongst all the systems: Licensing – QUALITYstarsNY – Child ACFP – Parent Portal

**Focus Investment Ares:** Must respond to: Two or more sub-sections in Section C; One or more sub-sections in Section D and E. The State’s responses to the Focus Investment Areas are as follows:

- **C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children: (C)(1)Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards; (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness and (C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.**

It has been decided that New York will not respond to Section (C)(2) Comprehensive Assessment Systems.

Response to Section (C)(1), (C)(3), and (C)(4) will include information that:

- Demonstrates a deep commitment and the success of establishing high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards; how the High-Quality Plan is integrated into the standards and practice throughout all programs across the state, and provides families with access to relevant information and supports to enhance their children’s readiness for school; and how the Early Learning and Development Standards are designed to align with the State’s K-3 academic standards.
- Expresses how the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate starting at birth and extending through the fifth year of life with special attention given to promoting readiness for children with high needs and the sensitivity to the diverse population of young children and families found in New York State.
- Outlines the dissemination of the New York State Early Learning Guidelines and The New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core to all regulated early childhood programs across the state and to every early childhood faculty member at all institutions of higher education to insure that the expectations are integrated into all teacher preparation programs.
- Describes the Partners in Early Learning, a letter to parents and teachers, to support the relationship between families and programs.
- Outlines how the New York Works for Children, lays the foundation that will fully incorporate the Early Learning and Development Standards into the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and all professional development activities
- Describes how:
  - New York’s approach to promoting health in ELDP settings applies the strategic framework established by the federal Healthy Child Care America initiative of standards,

- training and consultation, that will be in alignment with the state's Core Body of Knowledge and Early Learning Guidelines;
- Resources will be invested in training and supports to enable Early Childhood Educators to meet health standards, including strong regulatory requirements and resources for training on health and safety as well as expanded resources for programs seeking to meet the progression of QSNY standards; and
  - New York State is committed to working across the early childhood system to promote healthy eating habits, good nutrition and physical activity for children and their families.
- Describes strategies to strengthen the Family Engagement Standards in QUALITYstarsNY standards and increase the number of family engagement related trainings available to Early Childhood Educators through the Aspire workforce and trainers' registry.
  - Outlines strategies for promoting family support and engagement statewide which will include: (1) Align family engagement policies and practices among early learning, home visiting and family support services using the Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework, (2) Develop Family Engagement training and support available to Early Childhood Educators, home visitors, and other family support providers; (3) Disseminate Parent Kit materials to parents through perinatal and early childhood programs.
- **Section D: A great Early Childhood Education Workforce: (D)(1): Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.**

It has been decided that New York will not reply to Section (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Response to Section (D)(1) will include information that:

- Aligns New York's existing statewide progression of credentials and degrees with the Core Body of Knowledge core competencies by continuing existing and investing in new activities such as conducting an inventory of early childhood higher education programs in the State and begin planning process to align postsecondary coursework and preparation with the Core Body of Knowledge.
- Develops a standardized course of training modules based on the content of the New York State Core Body of Knowledge.
- Outlines the steps for a statutory change that would shift the current professional development requirements for early childhood educators working in programs regulated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services from the current 9 training topic areas to the Core Body of Knowledge competency areas.
- Engages New York State's professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the Core Body of Knowledge through a variety of activities, including:

- Implements a requisite course for professional development providers that would instruct them in ways to ensure their learning objectives and training content target core competencies and meet the needs of their learners.
  - Develops and implements a short standardized course for family child care providers and center and school-based administrators about the Core Body of Knowledge and includes in-depth training experiences with a coaching component on how to use the Core Body of Knowledge for continuous quality improvement.
- Aligns the New York State Core Body of Knowledge core competencies with the Environmental Rating System (ERS) and the CLASS assessment tools.
- Increases the number of professional development activities that are aligned with the Core Body of Knowledge Core Competencies, and are made accessible to providers via the Statewide Training Calendar.
- **Section (E): Measuring Outcomes and Progress: Understanding the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry. (1) Understanding the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry.**

It has been decided that New York will not reply to Section (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

Response to section (E)(1) will include a proposal to develop a kindergarten readiness tool. Details on this proposal are forthcoming.