

Early Learning

CHALLENGE

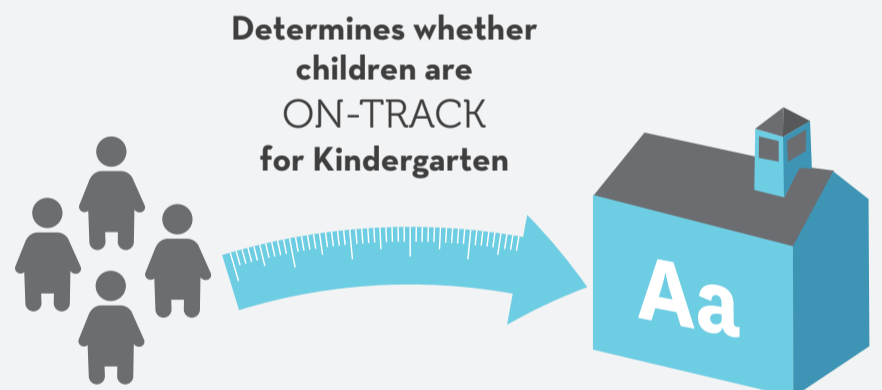
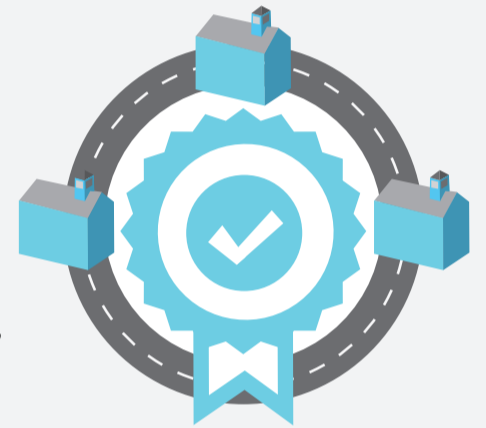
WHAT IS IT?

The Early Learning Challenge is a voluntary, competitive federal grant program to help states build more efficient and effective early learning systems. Applicants include 35 states along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Cumulative demand from all applicants exceeds \$2.1 billion, yet only \$500 million in Round 1 funding exists to be obligated before Jan. 2012. While only a fraction of applicants will be funded, the competition has catalyzed plans among all applicants for higher quality and greater coherence among disparate programs.

WHAT WILL IT DO?



ALIGNS DISCONNECTED PROGRAMS (Pre-K, Head Start, Early Head Start, IDEA, child care, home visiting, early intervention, Kindergarten, etc.)



WHY DOES IT MATTER?

QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING HAS PROVEN TO PRODUCE BETTER EDUCATION, HEALTH, FAMILY AND ECONOMIC OUTCOMES. IT'S KEY TO BOOSTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COLLEGE COMPLETION RATES, AS WELL AS ADULT WAGES, WHILE LOWERING SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS, GRADE RETENTION AND CRIME.



Amount of U.S. GDP growth by 2080 if all 3 and 4 year-olds were enrolled in preschool



7%-10% ANNUAL RETURN

Return on Investment over the lifetime of each child²

Sources: ¹Committee for Economic Development, The Economic Promise of Investing in High-Quality Preschool: Using Early Education to Improve Economic Growth and Fiscal Sustainability of States and the Nation, 2006, Washington, DC; ²University of Chicago economist James Heckman, via <http://www.heckmanequation.org>; ³Hart & Risley (1995)