



# States leverage federal dollars to deliver local innovation:

Leading the way when it comes to making sure that children are ready for school.

Each state is supporting early childhood education in their own unique way, while leveraging federal, state and private investments to reach the needs of families and their children. Through ESSA, State leadership will have the opportunity to efficiently coordinate their early childhood systems, developing a plan to improve and expand upon what they are already doing. Specifically, ESSA will provide states the opportunity to do such things as:

- Conducting needs analysis examining availability of services;
- Improving parent engagement and dissemination of knowledge to families about existing programs;
- Sharing best practices between providers and federal, state, and local programs to increase collaboration and efficiency of services to disadvantaged children;
- Encouraging partnerships between program providers, including school districts; and
- Over time supporting improving quality and increasing access.

Take a look at some of the good work that's happened just this year alone to see the range of what efforts are being led at the state level. ESSA support will help to better coordinate across the state and as part of existing efforts on the ground.

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## ALABAMA

*First Class: Alabama's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (FCVPK) boosted Early Childhood to more students through its mixed-model delivery system by 12% over three years in 200 new classrooms. In addition to increasing access for children across every county, FCVPK delivers high-quality early childhood education.*

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## **FLORIDA**

Florida's *Office of Early Learning* (OEL) partners with local programs to target multiple areas that work to bolster a comprehensive set of early childhood services. These services include voluntary pre-kindergarten for four-year-olds, funneling support into the development of workforce competencies in partnership with local universities, and making financial assistance available to low-income families to encourage program enrollment to ensure school readiness.

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## **GEORGIA**

*Georgia's Pre-K Program* (GPK) led the country in being the first state-funded universal preschool program for four-year-olds, and served 81,453 children across every county in 2014. GPK demonstrates significant improvement of school readiness skills across multiple areas of learning.

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## **KENTUCKY**

*The Kentucky Early Childhood Advisory Council* (KECAC) works with 109 out of 120 counties to elevate and expand capacity to serve early childhood initiatives. In addition to laying the foundation for developing a unified data system to inform systems level decision-making, KECAC has also worked to define and implement a Core Knowledge and Competencies Framework for child care providers, as well as to pilot a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that can inform state practices for achieving school readiness for more children.

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## **MINNESOTA**

The *Early Learning Council* (ELC) regularly works to organize and coordinate federal, state and local program efforts to enable access to high-quality programs for children from low-income households. ELC has tailored its efforts in its rural communities to track and meet the needs of children in rural areas.

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## **NORTH CAROLINA**

Targeting support for the communities with the highest need, the *North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council* has implemented cross-sectional interventions that focus on family engagement, high-quality child care and early literacy programs to improve outcomes. North Carolina has used federal competitive funds to supplement its work with community colleges in securing national accreditation of early childhood teacher preparation programs.

## **OKLAHOMA**

*The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Board (OPSR)* facilitates early childhood education systems level building efforts at the state level to promote school readiness. OPSR has worked to expand existing half-day programs into full-day pre-kindergarten classrooms by 15% across the state over a three year period. To develop quality alongside increasing access, OPSR has worked to implement a QRIS system, engage family voices, roll out developmentally appropriate early learning standards, and coordinate across programs to build a unified data system in order to hone in on areas for improvement.

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## **OREGON**

*The Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten (OHSP)* program delivers comprehensive child and family development services for eligible three- and four-year-olds. Children receive OHSP services in various settings that include community action agencies, colleges, government agencies, public schools, private agencies and universities, and 18% of enrolled children receive special education services in an inclusive setting. By collaborating with the Region X Office of Head Start, the state of Oregon has been able to provide high-quality early childhood education that meets widely accepted quality standard benchmarks.

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## **PENNSYLVANIA**

*Pre-K Counts* is Pennsylvania's state-funded program that currently provides several early learning services to over 12,000 children. Pre-K Counts supports students with special needs, English Language Learners, complies with high-quality practices related to professional development and adult-child ratios, and delivers high-quality instruction that encompasses teacher-child interactions, formative assessments and data-driven decision-making.

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## **WEST VIRGINIA**

*West Virginia's Universal Preschool* program is comprised by the collaboration of private pre-kindergartens, childcare centers and Head Start programs in all 55 counties. More than 16,800 children are able to access high-quality early childhood services.

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## **WISCONSIN**

*The Wisconsin Early Childhood Advisory Council (WECAC)* harnesses a combination of federal, state and local funds to address the gap between need and available services for young children. These efforts have resulted in a 45% increase in state QRIS-aligned pre-kindergarten programs for four-year-olds at the district level.