

## Elementary & Secondary Education Act Reauthorization

### *Background*

Schools must be ready each day to address the learning needs of all children just as much as children must come to school ready to learn. Title I of ESEA can play a significant role in helping to make this possible for disadvantaged children. NAEYC's recommendations are focused on how Title I and other provisions of the ESEA support positive development and learning of all eligible children from birth through third grade via a continuum of developmentally appropriate challenging standards, evidence-based curriculum, and comprehensive instructional assessments supported with comprehensive services and meaningful family engagement.

Local educational agencies have the option of using Title I funds for both academic and comprehensive services, such as developmental screening, for children as young as birth. When schools use Title I to provide preschool programs, they must comply with the Head Start educational standards. Title I also can be used in combination with Head Start and other programs and for professional development of early childhood educators. We strongly support and encourage the use of Title I for the provision of early childhood education programs delivered in schools and community-based settings, as well as the use of such funds for learning-related services for young children.

### *Recommendations*

#### **A continuum of developmentally appropriate standards, curricula, instructional assessments to support teaching and learning of all children birth through third grade**

- States should be required to review and revise K-3 standards to ensure that they address all domains including social and emotional development and approaches to learning, and at the district level, ensure that curricula and instructional assessments are developmentally appropriate and aligned to the standards. Further preschool and kindergarten/primary standards should be aligned moving forward with developmentally reasonable expectations at all levels.
- Schools using Title I funds for prekindergarten programs should be required to provide joint professional development between community-based early childhood providers and kindergarten and first grade teachers on the continuity of expectations for development and learning and curricula.

- Time for teacher planning and sharing within and across grades is paramount and so is high quality mentoring of teachers and the assignment of teachers to the grades for which they have specialized knowledge and preparation. Such considerations should be part of the reauthorization.

### **Specialized knowledge for effective teaching and learning for teachers, principals and other staff**

- The reauthorization should contain a definition of effective teacher that encompasses the specialized knowledge and skills for teaching and learning across all domains with children below third grade.
- The reauthorization should support the use of multiple assessments, including observational assessments to support improved instruction and learning and for improving professional development for more effective teacher-child interaction.
- For programs to be maximally effective there must be ongoing professional development for school principals and other administrators (e.g., special education directors) in child development and developmentally appropriate practices, family engagement, and a supportive school climate of diverse cultures, languages and special needs.
- Screenings, curricula, assessments, and other activities should support and be appropriate to children's home language or special needs.

### **Ready Schools assessment – It is not enough to ask children to be ready for school, it is just as critical that schools be ready for all children**

- Require elementary schools to assess themselves against indicators of their readiness for all children in each of the early grades, including processes for successful transitions.
- Create collaboration agreements and other mechanisms for ongoing communication between community-based early childhood programs and schools on issues of alignment, best practice, family involvement, and access to learning-related services.

### **Encouraging the use of Title I and other ESEA programs for children birth through third grade**

- The reauthorization should promote greater use of Title I funding for preschool aged children, not only to increase the availability of high quality programs but to bring about collaboration with other funding streams and community-based providers to create full day, full year preschool opportunities.
- Through Title I and its relationship to IDEA and Head Start, we should ensure that children receive a developmental screening when they enter kindergarten if they have not had such as screening, with referral to services as needed.