

# Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Updates

## OSPI Resources for Braiding Federal and State Funds to Support Early Learning Programs

Providing high-quality early learning programs is a great opportunity for local educational agencies (LEAs) to begin serving children most in need of support in inclusive, developmentally-appropriate environments before they enter the K–12 system. Use the guide [Funding Early Learning Activities in Washington State...](#) to help support with improving, creating, and funding high-quality early learning activities. Included are strategies to support Washington state early learning initiatives such as transition activities, inclusive classrooms, Transitional Kindergarten (TK) guidance, creating a best practice learning environment, a Braided Funding Matrix, links to resources to support the implementation of the Pyramid Model, and more.

For additional information, review OSPI's [Unlocking Federal and State Program Funds to Support Student Success](#).

## Biden-Harris Administration Releases Resources to Support Preschool Expansion and Early School Success

The U.S. Department of Education recently released guidance for how states, local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools can use funds from Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to expand access to high-quality preschool for three- and four-year-olds in a range of quality settings including schools, Head Start, and community-based organizations.

This guidance will help ensure more children can experience early school success. It also encourages more schools across the nation to better set up kindergarten to be a sturdy bridge between the early years and the early grades.

The Biden-Harris Administration has secured historic educational investments, including an additional \$1.9 billion in annual funding for the Title I program since 2021.

- Revised [Non-Regulatory Guidance on Serving Preschool Children Through Title I, Part A \(Title I\) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#) that provides details about how states and local leaders can reach more young learners by using Title I funds to expand access to high-quality preschool.
- [Early School Success Dear Colleague Letter](#) that supports the Department's two track Raise the Bar early learning strategy:
  - Expand access to high-quality preschool with Title I funds and



- Ensure kindergarten is a more sturdy bridge between the early years and early grades.
- A [Dear Colleague Letter on Mixed Delivery Preschool](#) jointly released by the U.S. Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services lifts up available federal funds to expand access to high-quality preschool through a variety of settings to meet the needs of young learners and their families.

## ECSE Inclusion Champions' Featured Resources:

### My STEM Adventure

My STEM Adventure app is a born-accessible game that families and their children can explore together to learn about foundational science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) concepts. It's also a storybook maker that creates books for families to read again and again to promote positive STEM identity for young children.

[Available on Google Play](#)

[Available on the App Store](#)

### Reminder: ECSE Office Hours

During ECSE office hours, districts are invited to share current barriers and successes relating to Part C to B transition, Child Find procedures, data submission, and more. While not required, participants are encouraged to send questions or topics they wish to have addressed during office hours in advance. Register [here](#).

Questions or topics can be submitted to [Ryan Guzman](#).

## Key Strategies for Recruitment and Retention of Personnel Serving Young Children with Disabilities

Personnel shortages negatively impact all young children and their families. However, there is a disproportionate impact on young children from historically marginalized and underserved communities. A new webpage from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center, [Recruitment and Retention of Personnel Serving Young Children with Disabilities](#), offers six key strategies to address those personnel shortages.

### Transition to Kindergarten

Are you planning to open a TK classroom in the 2024–25 school year? OSPI is in the process of drafting permanent rules for TK programs. Visit the [OSPI TK website](#) for updated guidance and resources.

Please refer to the [Emergency Rules](#) for planning purposes. Permanent rules include additional requirements for notifying OSPI of plans to offer a TK program, a new process for determining community need before expanding or opening TK classrooms, as well as guidance on facilities, curriculum, and professional development. For specific questions, please contact the OSPI [Early Learning department](#).

## Professional Development Opportunities:

### 2024 Fatherhood Summit

Join us in person for the 2024 Fatherhood Summit where we will release findings from the [State of Fathers in Washington Study](#) and roll up our sleeves together to accelerate system transformation for fathers and families. This year's event theme is *Counting Fathers Because Kids Matter*. Click [here](#) to register.

### Save the Date: 2024 Northwest Early Learning & Pyramid Summit

The 2024 Northwest Early Learning & Pyramid Summit will take place November 13–14 in Portland, Oregon. There will be a day of pre-conference sessions on November 12 before the evening keynote to kick off the Summit.

Registration will open on May 15. Look for future updates with the registration link. We anticipate the Summit will fill up again this year and encourage early registration if possible.

There will also be evening virtual sessions in October and November for educators, providers, and home visitors. More information and registration will be available in September.

Please feel free to share this [flier](#) and encourage your colleagues to join the [mailing list](#) for updates.

### Infant and Early Childhood Conference 2024

Registration is open for this year's Infant and Early Childhood Conference. The Infant and Early Childhood Conference (IECC) plays a critical role in providing high-quality training opportunities in Washington State. The annual conference will offer a wide variety of topics covering many aspects of early childhood education and support. This year, the conference will continue to be held via a virtual platform to allow for a safe and flexible learning environment! The conference provides high-quality, evidenced-based workshops, and networking opportunities for families and providers to come together to learn, share, and advocate on behalf of all young children.

For more information on registration, schedule, etc., visit the IECC conference [website](#).