

Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program¹¹

Purpose of the Program

The Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program awards competitive grants for early childhood educators and caregivers working in high-poverty communities to participate in professional development activities that improve their knowledge and skills. The professional development activities focus on furthering children's language and literacy skills to help set them on the road to reading proficiency once they enter kindergarten.

New Program Improvements and Resources

The *No Child Left Behind Act* reauthorizes this program and will help to improve children's education by improving the language, cognitive, and early reading skills of young children so that they will be better prepared for elementary school.

Last year, President Bush signed legislation that increased funding from \$10 million in 2001 to \$15 million in 2002, an increase of 50 percent. President Bush has proposed maintaining this commitment to the program for FY-03.

Highlights for Individuals:

- The program will provide high-quality professional development for preschool educators.
- Many existing projects provide professional development opportunities that result in college credit or lead to a degree, credential, or certification in early childhood education. These projects can be expanded under this program.

Highlights for States and Partnerships:

- These grants are designed to improve the language, cognitive, and early reading skills of young children so that they will be better prepared for formal school experiences.
- These grants require cooperation between professional development providers and early childhood education programs.
- These grants result in the development of research-based models for professional development for early childhood educators that can be replicated in other communities with high percentages of disadvantaged young children.

¹¹ *Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by No Child Left Behind: Title II, Part A, Subpart 5*