ESSA Early Childhood Transition Requirements

Office of Federal Programs Guidance
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The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving Title I funds to develop agreements with Head Start and other early childhood providers to increase coordination. This guidance document consolidates requirements under ESSA for coordination with early childhood programs and additional requirements and supports for early childhood coordination. Coordinated kindergarten transitions support the goals of Ohio's strategic plan for education, *Each Child, Our Future*, as parents, caregivers and community partners work together with their schools to meet the needs of the whole child and expand quality early learning.

Coordination Requirements

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs

Local Educational Agency Plan – Plan Provisions[1]

Each LEA's plan shall describe, if applicable, how the local educational agency will support, coordinate and integrate services provided under this part with early childhood education programs at the local educational agency or individual school level, including plans for the transition of participants in such programs to local elementary school programs.

LEA Coordination with Head Start and Other Early Childhood Programs[2]

Each LEA receiving Title I funds, regardless of whether it operates a Title I preschool program, **must develop agreements** and carry out the following coordination activities with Head Start and, if feasible, other early childhood programs, including:

- Developing and implementing a systematic procedure for receiving **records** of preschool children;
- Establishing channels of **communication** between school staff and their counterparts to facilitate coordination;
- Conducting **meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers**, and Head Start teachers to discuss the developmental and other needs of children;
- Organizing and participating in **joint transition-related training** of school, Head Start, and where appropriate, other early childhood education program staff;
- **Linking the educational services** provided by the LEA with those provided by Head Start agencies.

Title III – Language Instruction for English Learners

Local Plan Requirements[3]

As part of the local plan, LEAs that receive Title III subgrant funds must coordinate activities and share relevant data under the plan with local Head Start and Early Head Start agencies, including migrant and seasonal Head Start agencies, and other early childhood education providers.

[1] ESSA 1112(b)(8)
[2] ESSA Section 1119
[3] ESSA Section 3116

LEA Activities to Support Effective Coordination Agreements

	Conduct a local-level self-assessment on coordination practices
	Discuss coordination at public school board meetings
	Involve teachers
	Coordinate with community-based childcare programs
	Engage other districts
	Draft coordination agreements
	Engage a broad coalition of local stakeholders
	Engage elementary school principals
	Engage Head Start
	Gather input from other community stakeholders
	Engage parents

Additional ESSA Early Childhood Education Provisions

- Student Success Strategies: Schools that receive Title I funding, whether through schoolwide programs or targeted assistance, can include early childhood education as a strategy to support student achievement.

- Joint Professional Development: In ESSA, Congress added a new provision allowing school districts to use their Title II funds to support joint professional development between early childhood educators and early elementary school teachers.

- State Family Engagement Centers: ESSA added a new family engagement grant program to support family-school partnerships. Ohio's Statewide Family Engagement Center provides schools, families and community partners with the tools they need to work together.

Additional Resources

- Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners
- New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Heading to Kindergarten – This initiative focuses on building partnerships between Head Start and public schools.