

Using Title I to Finance Early Childhood Programs: Lessons from States and Districts



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The Potential of Title I for Financing Early Childhood Programs



Why Look to Title I for Preschool Financing?

- Title I is a flexible source of funding
 - Title I funds may be layered with federal, state, or local funds to provide high-quality preschool services for additional children or to extend the day.
 - Funds may supplement or expand existing early education programs, including state-funded pre-kindergarten and Head Start, and may be used in conjunction with community-based child care programs.

Benefits of Using Title I for Preschool

- Serve children from birth through age at school entry
- Reach at-risk children in families with incomes above poverty
- Fund high-quality programs that meet Head Start educational standards
- Provide comprehensive services
- Serve children in community-based settings
- Fund teacher professional development



Background on Title I of No Child Left Behind and Title I-Funded Preschool



Title I Grants to States

- Title I funds are allocated to state education agencies (SEAs) who distribute funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) based on percentages of low-income children. Funds are then distributed to schools within Title I districts.
- Funding is based on the LEA's percent of low-income children ages 5 to 17.
 - LEA determines what measure of need to use from a composite of indicators
 - Most districts use the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price school lunches

Title I Funds Services at the District and School Level

- **Schoolwide programs:** Title I funds can be used schoolwide if at least 40% of children in a school are low-income.
 - 90% of children served in Title I preschool attend schoolwide programs
- **Targeted-assistance programs:** Title I funds must be targeted toward disadvantaged children if less than 40% of children in a school are low-income.
 - 9% of children served in Title I preschool attend targeted-assistance programs



How Can Title I be Used for Preschool?

- At the district level
 - Eligibility based on residence within district, or part of district, and assessment of risk for meeting state academic standards as determined by multiple, educationally-related, objective criteria determined by state.
 - Income is used to prioritize, not determine, eligibility.
- At the school level
 - **Schoolwide programs:** Eligibility based on residence within the attendance area of the school.
 - **Targeted-assistance programs:** Eligibility based on assessment of risk for meeting state's academic standards.

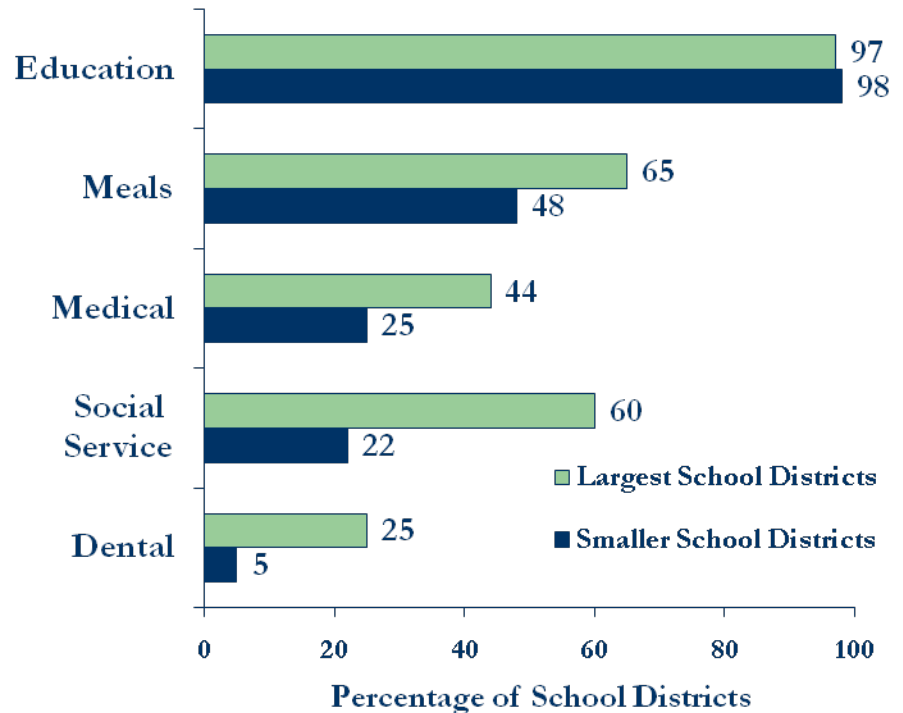
How Can Title I Funds Be Used for Preschool?

- Title I funds can be used for preschool or to supplement or expand other early childhood education programs, such as state-funded prekindergarten, Head Start, Even Start, or Early Reading First.
- Title I funds may be used in conjunction with existing programs, including community-based child care programs, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant.



How Can Title I be Used for Preschool?

- In addition to direct educational services, Title I funds can be used to fund:
 - Teachers' salaries
 - Professional development
 - Counseling services
 - Minor remodeling
 - Leasing or renting space in private facilities
 - Comprehensive services, including access to medical services
 - Diagnostic screening



Source: U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Title I Preschool Education: More Children Served, but Gauging Effect on School Readiness Difficult*.

Title I Preschool Requirements

- Meet Head Start Standards
- Include a parental involvement component
- Title I programs using an Even Start model must integrate ECE, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a family literacy program and must comply with Even Start requirements
- In some Title I preschools, teachers must meet the NCLB “highly qualified” standard

Which of the Head Start Performance Standards Must be Met?

- The law states that Title I early childhood services must meet the standards in 641A(a) of the Head Start Act.
- ED's 2004 non-regulatory guidance on using Title I funds for early childhood notes that the specific Head Start standards applicable to Title I preschool programs are in regulations at 45 CFR 1304.21.
- NCLB was passed in 2001, and the law and the guidance were written before the passage of the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization. The Office of Head Start is expected to provide additional guidance or support on the revised section 641A. Additional guidance may be forthcoming from the Department of Education around this issue as well.

Highly Qualified Pre-Kindergarten Teachers?

- Requirements “do not apply to early childhood or pre-K teachers unless a state includes early childhood/pre-K as part of its elementary and secondary school system.”



The Opportunity of Title I to Support High-Quality Preschool: Stories from Districts



What Are the Components of High-Quality Preschool?

- Include requirements for how a program should operate in order to create the conditions and context for early childhood learning and development
- Sufficient funding to attract and retain well-trained and qualified teachers
- Professional development and training for teachers
- Access to comprehensive health services, including diagnostic screenings, for children who need them
- Infrastructure supports to ensure quality
- Strategies to help children manage transitions
- Full-day/full-year options to support working families

Title I Stories: Every District is Unique

District	Children Served	Title I Funds Used	History of Investment
Chicago, IL	1,360 3- and 4-year-olds and their parents	\$6 million in 2007 (2%)	1967-2007
Detroit, MI	2,800 4-year-old children in HS and state pre-k classes, which include Title I funds	\$13 million in 2006 (9%)	Unknown-present
Pittsfield, MA	120 families of 2- and 3-year-olds; 72 4-year-olds	\$500,000 in 2005 (25%)	1970-2007
Houston, TX	131 full school-day classes in 76 schools and early childhood centers	\$17.4 million in 2006 (21%)	2004-present

Title I Can Solely Support a Program

- The **Chicago-Child Parent Centers** provide comprehensive educational and family support services to low-income children at 13 sites in high-poverty neighborhoods. Title I has supported all program components since 1967.

CHICAGO
PUBLIC 
SCHOOLS

Resourceful school leaders—layering Title I with other funding sources

- Full-school-day programs
 - **Asheville, NC City Schools** funds two full-day, full-year classrooms for 4-year olds who qualify—supported by Title I, More at Four, Head Start, and child care subsidy funds.
 - **Houston, TX** layers Title I with state pre-kindergarten and local dollars to provide full-school-day preschool to all eligible 4-year-olds in the district.



Resourceful school leaders—layering Title I with other funding sources

- Full school day programs (layering funds)
 - **Montgomery County, MD** uses Title I to extend the day for Head Start classes in Title I schools. Title I also supports the Extended Learning Opportunities summer program for entering Kindergartners.

Resourceful school leaders—layering Title I with other funding sources

- Birth to five initiatives (layering funds)
 - Children from birth to age five attend all-day, early childhood learning centers in **Davenport, Iowa**. Title I supports infant and toddler classrooms. State grants, special education, Head Start funding and tuition support integrated preschool classrooms in the Children's Villages.



Title I Supports Components of High-Quality

- Home-based services
 - **Roseburg, OR** uses Title I to support a home-based early education program, modeled after Head Start, for 4-year-olds who do not qualify for Head Start or other programs.
 - Title I funded the Parent-Child Home Program in **Pittsfield, MA** for 2- and 3-year olds from 1970-2007. Currently, it is supported through local dollars.



Title I Can Support Components of High-Quality

- Screening and assessment
 - **Melrose, MA** uses Title I to offer comprehensive screening to all 4-year-olds in the district, to identify at-risk children. One hundred percent of Title I funds are used for early childhood.
- Professional Development
 - **Mesa County School District 51, CO** layers state Special Education, state pre-kindergarten, and Title 1 funds to support their preschool program. Title I pays for a portion of teachers' salaries, professional development and some materials.

Partnerships and Collaboration—Title I Supports Transition to Kindergarten

- Title I requires LEAs to have a plan to coordinate and integrate Title I with Even Start, Head Start, and other preschool programs, *“including plans for the transition of participants in such programs to local elementary school programs.”*
- **Gwinnet County, GA** funds a district Title I transition specialist and transition teams in 25 Title I elementary schools. A SPARK grant and Title I funds support the transition work.



Lessons Learned and Policy Implications



How'd They Do That?

The Story Behind Title I Investments

- Resourceful school leaders
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Research and data to make the case for investments
- Capitalizing on changes in state policies and funding opportunities
- Leveraging all available funds



Title I Stories: Lessons Learned

- Build relationships with early childhood partners
- Champion early education using research and data
- Dollars are flexible
- Build on existing resources in communities
- Invest in coordinated district-wide solutions
- Invest in early diagnostic assessment and program evaluation
- Link vulnerable children and families to family supports and health services
- Leverage state and federal funds—and capitalize on funding opportunities.

CLASP Resources on Title I Preschool

- *Title I and Early Childhood Programs: A Look at Investments in the NCLB Era*
http://www.clasp.org/publications/ccee_paper2.pdf
- *Recommendations to Support High-Quality Early Education Programs Through Reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act*
http://www.clasp.org/publications/nlcb_ee_recs.pdf
- *Missed Opportunities? The Possibilities and Challenges of Funding High-Quality Preschool Through Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act*
http://www.clasp.org/publications/missed_opp.pdf