

# **The Early Learning Challenge Fund: Metrics and Data**



**CLASP**

policy solutions that work for low-income people

**Danielle Ewen**  
**dewen@clasp.org**

**January 11, 2010**

# HR 3221 Title IV – The Early Learning Challenge Fund

- This presentation analyzes the House Early Learning Challenge Fund legislation only.
  - A Senate version has not yet been introduced.
- It discusses data-based metrics only.
- There is much content in the legislation for regulation and guidance.
  - CLASP analysis is based on our interpretation of the current legislation.

# What is the Metric?

- House bill states that applications will include:
  - *“goals and benchmarks the State will establish to lead to a greater percentage of disadvantaged children participating in higher quality early learning programs to improve school readiness outcomes, including an established baseline of the number of disadvantaged children in high quality early learning programs.”*

# Which Means?

- A State receiving a grant...shall use the grant so as to **prioritize** improving the quality of early learning programs serving children from low-income families.
- A description of how the funds provided under the grant will be targeted to prioritize increasing the **number and percentage** of low-income children in high-quality early learning programs, including children—
  - in each age group (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers);
  - with developmental delays and disabilities;
  - with limited English proficiency; and
  - living in rural areas.

# More Definitions

- Greater percentage of disadvantaged children participating in higher quality early learning programs:
  - Disadvantaged: child whose family income is described in section 658P(4)(B) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990
    - Federal CCDBG law defines income eligibility as not to exceed 85 percent of State median income for a family of the same size
  - Child: birth through the day the individual enters kindergarten
  - Limited English Proficient: same meaning as described in section 637 of the Head Start Act.
  - Higher quality: not defined in legislation
  - Early Learning programs:
    - all center based child care programs,
    - family child care programs,
    - State-funded prekindergarten,
    - Head Start programs, and
    - other early learning programs, such as those funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or receiving funds under section 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

# Other Measures

- Grants can be renewed, based on the State's progress in:
  - increasing the percentage of disadvantaged children in each age group (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers) who participate in high-quality early learning programs;
  - increasing the number of high-quality early learning programs in ***low-income communities***;

# Financial Measures

- Maintenance of Effort (MOE): the aggregate expenditures by the State and its political subdivisions on early learning programs and services shall be not less than the level of the expenditures for such programs and services by the State and its political subdivisions for fiscal year 2006.
  - State matching and MOE funds for the CCDBG
  - State matching funds for the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care
  - State expenditures on public pre-kindergarten, Head Start and Early Head Start, and other State early learning programs and services dedicated to children (including State expenditures under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education)
- For grant renewal, states will be evaluated on commitment of State resources to support early learning programs and services.

# Data Requirements

- Application for grants includes a description of a coordinated data infrastructure that facilitates ***uniform data collection*** about:
  - the quality of early learning programs,
  - essential information about the children and families that participate in such programs, and
  - the qualifications and compensation of the early learning workforce in such programs
  - description of any disparity by age group (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers) of available high-quality early learning programs in low-income communities and the steps the State will take to decrease such disparity, if applicable
  - description of any disparity by geographic area (urban and rural) of available high quality early learning programs for low-income children and the steps the State will take to decrease such disparity, if applicable.

# State Reporting Requirements

- The State's progress in:
  - meeting its goals for increasing the number of disadvantaged children participating in high-quality early learning programs, disaggregated by child age.
  - The number and percentage of disadvantaged children participating in early learning programs at each level of quality, disaggregated by race, family income, child age, disability, and limited English proficiency status.
  - The number of early learning programs participating in the State quality rating system, disaggregated by setting, rating,
  - and the number of high-quality early learning programs available in low-income communities.
  - Information on how the funds provided under this title were used to increase the availability of high-quality early learning programs for each age group, disaggregated by race and limited English proficiency status, to the maximum extent practicable.

# State Reporting Requirements, cont'd

- Information on professional development and training expenditures, including—
  - the number of early learning providers and early learning programs engaged in such activities; and
  - the number of early learning providers enrolled in programs to obtain a credential or degree in early childhood education, disaggregated by the type of credential and degree.
- The change in the number and percentage of early learning providers with credentials or degrees in early childhood education, including the change in compensation given to such providers, in comparison to the prior fiscal year, disaggregated by early learning setting and the type of credential or degree.
- In the case of a State receiving a Quality Pathways Grant, the percentage of children receiving assistance under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 who participate in the highest quality early learning programs, disaggregated by program setting and child age.
- Barriers to expanding access to high-quality early learning programs for disadvantaged children.

# Secretary Reporting Requirements

- The Secretary of Education must report to Congress on:
  - The activities undertaken by States to increase the availability of high-quality early learning programs.
  - The number of children in high-quality early learning programs, and the change from the prior year, disaggregated by State, age, and race.
  - the number of early learning providers enrolled, with assistance from funds under this title, in a program to obtain a credential or degree in early childhood education and the settings in which such providers work.
  - A summary of State progress in implementing a system of early learning with the components described in section 403(c)(3).

# Where to Start with Data

- **CLASP DataFinder** helps advocates, policymakers and others download and synthesize data about various programs that impact low-income people and families. <http://www.clasp.org/data>
- **NCCP: Demographics Wizard**, create custom tables of national- and state-level statistics about low-income or poor children under the age of six. [www.nccp.org/tools/demographics/](http://www.nccp.org/tools/demographics/)
- **NCCP: Improving the Odds for Young Children** provides state-specific, regional, and National profiles that integrate data about an array of policies that affect early childhood development. [www.nccp.org/profiles/early\\_childhood.html](http://www.nccp.org/profiles/early_childhood.html)
- **Children in Newcomer and Native Families** presents a large number of indicators reflecting the characteristics of children from birth through age 17 in immigrant families by country or region of origin and in native-born families by race-ethnicity. [http://mumford.albany.edu/children/data\\_list\\_open.htm](http://mumford.albany.edu/children/data_list_open.htm)
- **FRAC's Federal Food Programs State Profiles** include information on state demographics, poverty, food insecurity, participation in federal nutrition programs, and state economic security policies. [www.frac.org/html/federal\\_food\\_programs/federal\\_index.html](http://www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/federal_index.html).
- **ZERO TO THREE's** Baby Matters searchable database contains resource information on state policies and initiatives that impact infants, toddlers and their families. <http://policy.db.zerotothree.org/policyp/home.aspx>.