

School Readiness for ALL Children

Ensuring that Children with Disabilities or Other Special Needs Are Included in California's School Readiness Efforts

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School Readiness Initiative Background

The First 5 School Readiness Initiative provides \$413 million in state and local matching funds over a period of four years to develop comprehensive school readiness centers/programs in communities across California.



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School Readiness Initiative Background

- Program eligibility is based on school performance, as measured by the Academic Performance Index (API).
- Communities in which schools are in deciles 1-3 on the API are eligible to participate.
- Schools with 'special factors' are also eligible (beyond API 1-3 for 13 counties)



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School Readiness Initiative Background

- The National Education Goals Panels delineated three primary components of “readiness”:
 - Children’s readiness for school
 - School’s readiness for children
 - Family and community supports that contribute to children’s readiness for school success



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School Readiness Initiative Background

- Community-based School Readiness Programs will address each of the following 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements.”
 - Early Care and Education
 - Parenting and Family Support
 - Health and Social Services
 - Schools’ Readiness for Children
 - Site Infrastructure, Administration and Evaluation



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School Readiness Initiative Background

- School Readiness programs must demonstrate how five elements are linked to provide a comprehensive continuum of services for children and their families.
- Fundamental improvements in the systems that service children are needed to help develop a responsive and effective system of care that addresses needs in a comprehensive, holistic manner.



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School Readiness Initiative Background

- School Readiness Programs must include principles developed by Advisory Committee on Diversity:
 - Including children with disabilities and other special needs
 - Including children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities



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Definition of Children with Disabilities and Other Special Needs

Children with disabilities and other special needs include children who:

- Are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or
- Have, or are at risk for, a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional condition and also require services and/or supports of a type or amount beyond that required generally.



Importance of Early Childhood Settings

- Early childhood professionals may be among the first to notice a disability or significant delay.



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Applicable Laws and Policies

- Civil Rights Laws
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - California Unruh Civil Rights Act
- Education Laws
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)



Applicable Laws and Policies

- Health Laws and Services
 - Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT)
 - Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP)
 - California Newborn Hearing Screening (NHSP)
 - California Children’s Services (CCS)



Applicable Laws and Policies

- Social Service Laws
 - Head Start Act



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Including Children with Disabilities and Other Special Needs in School Readiness Programs

The following sections will look at:

- the 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements” addressed by School Readiness Programs and
- how laws, research, information, resources and best practices for children with disabilities or other special needs fit into this model.



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Focus for each Element

- What do we know?
 - Research Information
- What does this mean?
 - Recommended Practices
- How can this be supported?
 - Print and Electronic Resources
 - Local Resources
 - State Resources



Early Care & Education

What Do We Know?

- Quality and Inclusive Early Care and Education (ECE)
 - What is Quality Inclusive Child Care?
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices
 - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
 - Age appropriate plus individually appropriate within social and cultural context.
 - Developmentally Appropriate Practices when correctly applied ARE inclusive.



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Early Care & Education

- What Does This Mean?
- Understanding and Knowledge of Inclusive Practices
 - Factors that Make Inclusion Successful
 - Key personnel passionate about inclusion
 - Shared vision
 - State and national policies
 - Training and outside support for child care programs
 - Support at program or district level in collaboration and communication
 - Passionate community support



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Early Care & Education

- How Can This Be Supported?
 - What's Best for Infants and Young Children? Guide
 - Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion (ECRII) Briefs, Books
 - State Training and Technical Assistance
 - All of Us Together
 - Beginning Together
 - CalStat
 - Map to Inclusive Child Care
 - SEECAP
 - SEEDS



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Early Care & Education

- Increasing inclusive Early Care and Education (ECE) options will require expanded collaboration and partnerships.
- For many communities, this will involve new partners and ideas.
- School Readiness Programs have an important role to play. So do families!



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Parent & Family Support

- What Do We Know?
 - The power of first encounters
 - Evolution of the parent movement
 - The value of the family voice at all levels
- What Does This Mean?
 - Parent to parent support
 - Family Centered Services
 - Family-Service Provider Collaboration



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Parent & Family Support

- How can This Be Supported?
 - Making the connections with:
 - Family Resource Center Network (California Early Start)
 - Family Empowerment Centers
 - Parent Training and Information Centers
 - Family ↘ School ↘ Community



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Health & Social Services

- What Do We Know?
 - Healthcare
 - Mental Health
- What Does This Mean?
 - Medical Home
 - Attention to vulnerable children and families
- How Can This Be Supported?
 - Infant Preschool Family Mental Health Initiative
 - Children with Challenging Behavior in Child Care



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Schools' Capacity

- What Do We Know?
 - Children under age 5 are receiving early intervention (EI) and early childhood special education (ECSE) services.
 - Programs, not children, have to be ready for inclusion.
- What Does This Mean?
 - Collaboration with Existing EI and ECSE services
 - Teamwork on transition to Kindergarten
- How Can This Be Supported?
 - Build partnerships
 - Coordinate transition efforts



Site Infrastructure, Administration & Evaluation

- What Do We Know?
 - New research is constantly providing information and resources about effective practices.
 - Children can grow to reach their full potential if we provide quality services
 - Program evaluation can be used to identify what works and areas that need improvement
- What Does This Mean?
 - Access to training and technical assistance on current research about child development and education
 - Using evaluation data for program improvement



Site Infrastructure, Administration & Coordination

- What Does This Mean?
 - Measure not only access and satisfaction, but also child progress
- How Can This Be Supported?
 - Opportunities for receiving training and technical assistance
 - Using evaluation data for program improvement
 - Quality evaluations that include child progress measures
- Tapping into the Grassroots Consortium, Head Start Governance, Family Resource Centers & Parent Training & Information Centers



Where are your strengths and gaps?

- Find local partners
- Who else can you talk to about these ideas?
- What will you do to identify how your School Readiness Program can better serve and include children with disabilities and other special needs?



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