

Early Childhood Education RFP: Early Childhood Teacher Professional Development in Language Acquisition and Literacy

Proposal Selection Criteria

Helios Education Foundation seeks well thought out, innovative and realistic proposals with promising ideas and the potential for impact. We have envisioned the ideal proposal(s), and described the characteristics and qualities of model proposals below. We also recognize that fundable proposals may not match all of the described criteria.

1. The project benefits early childhood educators, professionals and other providers who care for children in underserved, under-resourced centers of high need in low socio-economic areas in Arizona and/or the Florida Tampa Bay areas.
2. The project provides professional development focused on language acquisition and emergent literacy skills for Early Childhood Education teachers and/or practitioners and incorporates the following characteristics:
 - adult learning principles
 - an established, appropriate curriculum
 - a mentoring component
 - the opportunity to earn college credit
3. The program strategies demonstrate a thorough understanding of the specific needs of the target population. Examples include:
 - A curriculum designed with participants (teachers and/or practitioners) average academic proficiency level in mind
 - Services delivered in a language in which the recipient (teachers and/or practitioners) is fluent
 - The program is offered at a time, location and or mode that is accessible to the participant (teachers and/or practitioners).
 - Takes into account cultural norms of the participants (teachers and/or practitioners)
 - Addresses the specific needs and motivations in order to incent participation
4. The proposal reflects an applied understanding of age appropriate language acquisition teaching skills for early childhood educators with activities that include the following characteristics and an evaluation plan that measures the participants' changes in understanding, skill level and behavior in teaching practice that promotes language acquisition. Preferably, a validated, field-accepted, standardized tool would be used to measure the changes.
 - Addresses the nature and frequency of teacher-to-child communication

- Includes vocabulary building techniques for teachers and/or practitioners to use when communicating with children
 - Utilizes a professional development curriculum accepted in the field as either an evidence-based or promising practice and which includes a strong language acquisition focus or component
 - Reflects and emphasizes play as an age-appropriate teaching methodology
5. The proposal reflects an applied understanding of age appropriate emergent literacy teaching skills for early childhood educators with activities that include the following characteristics and an evaluation plan that measures the participants' changes in understanding, skill level and behavior in teaching practice that promotes emergent literacy. Preferably, a validated, field-accepted, standardized tool would be used to measure the changes.
- Child-shared storybook reading
 - Literacy-enriched play settings
 - Age-appropriate structured phonological awareness curricula reflects and emphasizes play as an age-appropriate teaching methodology
6. Collaborative relationships add value to the project. The proposal names these relationships, listing the partner(s), explaining the nature of the relationship and identifying how the relationship adds value to the proposed project. Letters of support are included with the proposal that substantiate the described relationships.
7. The activities include a well-defined plan to measure outcomes that are relevant to the needs being addressed. These outcomes are clearly articulated and are associated with an if-then progression demonstrating that they are logical, relevant and attainable. Associated, relevant indicators are identified to measure the change. The outcomes measured include the data source for the indicator and the manner in which the data will be collected.
8. The implementation timeline is realistic; the activities can be accomplished. The timeline includes a timeframe for all major activities and reflects any interdependencies. The proposed timeline reflects an awareness of the timelines of inter-related systems.
9. There is evidence of sustainability that is appropriate to the project's stage of development (see Helios' program design continuum in relation to the sustainability continuum, attached). Evidence of sustainability might include any of the following conditions:
- The proposal addresses sustainability and sustainability planning
 - There is an identifiable leave-behind at the end of the grant term
 - The relationships identified in the Collaboration section are relevant to future sustainability
 - There are other funding sources committed to the concept at the time of the proposal (requires evidence)
 - There are other funding sources with strong interest in the concept when it reaches a future stage (requires evidence)
 - The proposal includes a realistic concept for program replication and or taking the project to scale.

10. The proposed budget is a well thought out, balanced budget that describes all reasonable revenue and expenses that could be anticipated for the activities proposed within the context of the budget narrative and reflects an understanding from the field of realistic costs.