

Early Childhood Equity Grant Project Examples

This document features real examples of projects that were funded in previous rounds. Examples may have been edited slightly to assure anonymity. Examples may not feature all of the desired elements of a grant narrative. Providers should review the checklist above and the [Application Preview and Question Guide](#) to ensure their applications are complete. Note: two examples are provided for project goal C because of the variety of projects proposed in that category. No examples are provided for the “Other” category due to the facility-specific nature of those projects.

A.) Preventing racial disparities in disciplinary action, such as suspension and expulsion

Our childcare is currently serving in the heart of [City], Washington. We are located in a high-risk, low-income area where majority (93%) of our students are on subsidy. This allows us to serve and nurture children who are typically declared “not good fits” for other childcares. However, this also presents a challenge of being able to help those children reverse their mindset so that they don’t label themselves as “not good fits” and act out to try and prove what they may have been told when getting suspended or expelled from previous places. The NCPMI states that early learning children are three times more likely to be expelled than those in K-12. Of those 3 times more likely, boys are three times more likely than girls and African American students make up 50% of those suspended or expelled, even only making up 20% of the population(2). An article by the Center for American Progress states that of those preschool age that are suspended or expelled, 75% have a disability, (such as autism, ADHD, anxiety, developmental delays, etc.)(1).

Our goal is to create a space and experience where everyone belongs and feels welcome and loved. To do that our first call to action is to get our staff trained in handling big behaviors and also in recognizing mental disabilities or behavioral tendencies. To do this we need our staff to attend trainings online and in person. To attend online we would need support in purchasing equipment for them to use. We also would need assessment tools for staff to learn to recognize a child that may be behind and acting out because of this. In our classrooms we would need more sensory activities and tools or materials for the students to be able to process better when overwhelmed. We would also need a safe quiet area for the student to be able to decompress and take space away from other students if needed. We would also purchase books that talk about diversity and big behaviors so that students can read something that may relate to their feelings. Another thing we would purchase is office materials to help us to print and laminate pictures to hang around the room, such as calm down techniques and feelings charts.

With the help of these purchases and trainings we hope to help the students feel comfortable and safe when in our care so that they are less likely to act out but also our staff is more prepared to handle that acting out. By being prepared and well equip we can help combat the



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anxiety and stress of today's children and show them guidance, acceptance, and love and preventing suspension and expulsion.

(1)Novoa, Cristina, and Rasheed Malik. "Suspensions Are Not Support." Center for American Progress, 17 Jan. 2018, www.americanprogress.org/article/suspensions-not-support/#:~:text=The%20odds%20of%20being%20suspended%20or%20expelled%20were%2033%20times,for%20children%20with%20autism%2FASD.

(2)"Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood." National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations, 22 Aug. 2022, challengingbehavior.org/pyramid-model/suspension-expulsion/.

B.) Increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices

My project will focus on increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices. Social-emotional learning is a critical component to effective childcare, pre-pandemic and even more so now. We know that BIPOC children and children of poverty are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and its negative consequences resulting in housing instability and food insecurity. These children feel depressed, hopeless, and withdrawn or agitated. We started tracking misbehaviors and emotional outbursts by using incident reports in 2021. We were sad that at our center: 90% of outbursts have been BIPOC children and children claiming state subsidies, although they together only made up 40% of children under our care. As a response, we have started training our teachers on addressing social emotional needs of the children, and have asked a school psychologist to give workshops to our teachers about conflict resolution and building friendship, but we continue to see high misbehavior and outburst rates. We are also aware that, in addition to the racial and socio-economic disparities among the affected group, emotional outburst is highly disturbing to children and families and make them more overwhelmed by their daily burden. Our goal is to reduce misbehaviors and outbursts by 50% at the end of year one of the grant, and to 10% by the end of year 2.

We want to use the grant funding to extend our efforts to implement the [Curriculum Name] curriculum at our daycare center. I evaluated five different SEL curricula and chose [Curriculum Name] curriculum for implementing evidence-based practices to: promote the social and emotional outcomes of all children; promote the skill development of children with social, emotional, and behavioral delays to prevent the need for more intensive supports; and intervene effectively when children have persistent challenging behavior. [Curriculum Name] offers online trainings and annual virtual conferences. The [Curriculum Name] program also fulfils guidelines established by CASEL (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning). We are specifically interested in the infant-toddler and pre-school curriculum kits with materials for children. Their online professional development modules will provide consistent and systematic SEL training to our teachers. To assist in our learning, we also want to send a few staff members

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to their annual conference remotely to learn more about implementing the Supporting Adult-Child Interactions and anti-bias Learning Environment, which is related to the [Curriculum Name] curriculum. The conference is for early childhood educators. It will be held in person or online in July 2024.

As part of implementing the [Curriculum Name] curriculum at our daycare, we want to engage more with the families of children in our program. We also want to involve families in implementing supports for children exhibiting challenging behaviors. We plan to start sending home [Curriculum Name] resources for families, like the Home-School Connection newsletters, home with children in the language(s) that are appropriate for their parents. We need to hire translators to help our translation. This work to reform our school climate, provide additional training for teachers, and increase engagement with families, combined with the steps we have already taken, will help us strengthen our capacity to improve children's social emotional well-being by the end of the grant period. We will have annual teacher surveys, children assessment, and parent focus groups to assess our efforts. The assessments for teachers, children, and parents are based on Clark McKown's book published in 2019, "Assessing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Guide to Meaningful Measurement."

C.) Increasing the use of culturally and linguistically responsive practices and decreasing bias in the classroom

Project Example 1:

Our nature-based preschool in [City] has close ties to the [Name] Indian Tribe through both student enrollment and community involvement. We would like to create a Tribal Garden on campus: a garden that focuses on plants used by native peoples of the Puget Sound area and upholds traditional ecological knowledge. We will grow and harvest traditional plants, vegetables, berries, and fruit trees, such as camas, salmon berries and mountain huckleberries. Tending this garden will teach students the gifts these plants provided (and still provide) to the local native peoples: food, medicine, utility, clothing, and ceremonial uses. It will also increase access in our local community to culturally relevant foods.

Project Example 2:

[Facility Name] would like to create more meaningful experiences for children and families by seeking Dual Language Designation and expanding current curriculum resources. We will focus on the outcome areas of increasing the use of culturally and linguistically responsive practices and decreasing bias in the classroom, connecting families to services and supports that meet health, mental health, financial or other needs, and increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices. The funding will be used to hire specialized staff to support multilingual education and continue the duties of a family service worker, plus expand our current curriculum resources with the purchase of online curriculum resources, professional development, and family engagement resources through [Program].

Hiring a specialized staff member will help our project meet its outcomes by qualifying our center for Dual Language Designation and adding diversity to our staffing. This person will give daily instructions in English and Spanish, and bring awareness to cultural blind spots. In addition to supporting multilingual education, [details redacted]. We plan to support our existing staff with our curriculum by expanding our prior purchase to include supporting online resources through [Program]. This purchase equips our staff with online resources and training that will allow for effective implementation of [Curriculum Name]. This purchase also provides teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities, the [Name] assessment tool for child assessments, digital resources in the CLOUD for planning, and [Program] for enhanced family engagement.

Research shows high-quality early learning opportunities are key to ensuring children start school ready to succeed. We are located in a community impacted by poverty. All of our families qualify for state childcare subsidies, with 90% of children enrolled having a Hispanic heritage. Our families are pregnant and parenting teens pursuing their high school diplomas or GED completion. Providing the highest level of childcare and a culturally diverse environment helps our young parents to achieve their learning goals. This also allows us to assist our families in accessing post-secondary opportunities. We believe our project addresses potential gaps in our program and that by having diverse cultures represented in daily instruction by highly-qualified staff, we will create confident learners at the earliest stages of life. We will know our project has been successful after securing Dual Language Designation and by increases in daily attendance and participation in family engagement activities and events. We also intend to track progress and growth of our children using [Assessment Tool] which will help us better align with our district preschool program.

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D.) Offering ongoing child assessment and developmental screening

Our goal for this Equity Grant funding would be to purchase teaching strategies [Name] Assessment program as well as their [Curriculum Name] “social-emotional” additional resource program for children and families.

This funding will allow our center to start our assessment program with a strong, accredited program to help ensure early identification of developmental delays, detecting and addressing these delays allows for support from us and the families.

We will be able to tailor our curriculum and daily interactions and curriculum with all children by conducting comprehensive assessments upon enrollment and throughout their years in our classrooms to help us individualize our curriculum. Having a strong individualized curriculum that meets their delays and developmental level will allow us to have a strong school readiness program so we can identify any gaps early to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten.

Lastly, if we are offered this funding, we will be able to have an effective parental involvement and guidance program. Our centers future strong developmental assessments will provide an opportunity for parents to become aware of their child's developmental strengths and weaknesses. It will empower them with valuable information about their child's development and will help guide them in supporting their child's growth at home, which will foster a positive and supportive learning environment for their child.

This funding will be crucial for our program; since our program has high majority of families, and children struggling with developmental delays, language and communication delays and socioeconomic disparities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States, “approximately 15% of children aged 3-17 years have at least one developmental disability”. With our centers population we can safely say that 30% of our enrolled students and families are facing one of the delays or disparities mentioned above. Our goal and hope is that with our new stronger assessment program our center will be able to support and close that percentage gap with a strong assessment program to help families and children earlier.

E.) Connecting families to services and supports that meet health, mental health, financial, or other needs

As far as we are aware, [Organization] is the only Play and Learn host in [Location] that provides a fully outdoor, all seasons, early learning program that is free of cost to the public. Over the past year, we have been thrilled to experience a significant increase in attendance at our Play and Learn classes. Our Play and Learn groups have grown into an amazingly supportive and inclusive community. We are led by dedicated caregivers and educators who see the need to

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provide children in our community with more opportunities to play, unhurried and unstructured, in the natural environment. Our organization's mission to connect young children and their caregivers to the splendor of nature is in alignment with the growing body of research indicating that time spent outdoors increases children's resiliency and is protective of their health and social-emotional well-being. Humans, especially children, from all cultures and backgrounds benefit from time spent in nature and should have access to safe, healthy outdoor spaces where they can recharge and thrive. Our Play and Learn classes are designed to support the developing social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of all young children.

Over the past decade of providing nature immersion opportunities for families, the two most common obstacles we have witnessed that prevents young children and their caregivers from enjoying and benefiting from being outdoors is 1) the high cost of nature-based early learning program tuitions and 2) the lack of knowledge and access to proper outdoor clothing. Our proposed project for the Early Childhood Equity Grant would strive to minimize the latter challenge. We are striving to revive and improve upon a project we call Boots For All. The project goal for Boots For All is to ensure that our Play and Learn attendees are dressed to be comfortable, dry and protected from the elements so they may have the greatest opportunity to receive the full benefits of outdoor learning during our classes and beyond. We will use our expertise in nature-based learning to create a "Gear Library" by acquiring high-quality outdoor clothing layers and gear in a range of children's sizes for our Play and Learn community members to have access to. The clothing and gear provided will be based on a family's needs in order to achieve success in our classrooms. These items will not be gifted just for simply being present at a class. We will also focus on educating our Play and Learn attendees on how to dress appropriately for all seasons and weather by hosting regular mini lessons and providing reference materials (paper and digital) in multiple languages, as needed.

Our project will have accomplished its goals if we can achieve the following over the next two years: 1) Increase the average attendance and the demographic diversity of the children that attend our two [Location] Play and Learn locations by minimizing a common deterrent and making our outdoor classroom experience more accessible and inclusive. 2) Increase the amount of time our families spend in nature with the children they care for beyond our normal class times by providing education and assistance with dressing for the outdoors. 3) Connect at least 20 children with needed high-quality outdoor clothing/gear. We will utilize on-site questionnaires to determine the specific needs of our families and to assess the overall success of the project. Families will be asked to share about their experiences with dressing for the outdoors and what obstacles they have encountered. To further support the success of this project, we believe it would be beneficial for our current Play and Learn facilitators, who will also be leading the project, to attend the Wilderness Awareness Nature Instructor Training course. This course will expand our educators' knowledge and skills necessary for mentoring youth in an outdoor class environment.

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