



Early Childhood Education Program: Synopsis of Priorities - 2019

The vision of the Stranahan Foundation's Early Childhood Education Program is that:

All children birth to five, particularly low-income children, will experience high-quality learning in early childhood that puts them on a trajectory for success in school and life.

To this end, the Foundation makes grants to support high-quality teaching and learning in early childhood settings, through three distinct types of grants:

- We support exemplary early childhood **providers** by making grants to build the capacity of schools, childcare centers, and Head Start programs that directly serve children ages 0-5. While the majority of these grants focus on building the capacity of providers who already provide high-quality teaching and learning to grow their reach or share their effective practices with others, we also consider proposals from providers that have the potential and necessary conditions to provide high-quality teaching and learning but need additional support to achieve that potential.
- We support the expansion and replication of **proven professional development models** that improve the skills, knowledge, and practice of early childhood teachers and/or leaders. To be considered for grants in this category, organizations must have a clearly defined professional development model that has some evidence of effectiveness in improving the quality of teaching in early childhood settings, as well as accompanying tools and strategies to support fidelity of implementation of the model. We also consider proposals to test or pilot modifications of proven professional development models to enable them to scale or to be implemented in new types of early childhood settings.
- We support **innovative** strategies to improve quality of early childhood teaching. We consider proposals from early childhood providers, teacher and leader preparation programs, and professional development providers to develop, pilot, test, and refine innovative approaches to improve the knowledge, skills, and practices of early childhood educators. Applications for grants in this area must include robust strategies to evaluate the results of the proposed innovation.

Within the above categories, we are open to proposals from a variety of types of nonprofit organizations that serve children and families or work with early childhood educators, including (but not limited to) public school districts, charter school networks, childcare providers, Head Start grantees, institutions of higher education, teacher and leader preparation programs (both higher education based and those located outside of higher education institutions), child care resource and referral agencies, and other nonprofits that provide professional development, coaching, or training to early childhood educators. We support work that seeks to directly improve the knowledge, skills, or practice of early childhood teachers, as well as strategies that build the capacity of early childhood leaders and organizations to support effective teaching practice.

Across all areas of our grant-making, we seek grantees with the following characteristics:

- Track record of delivering quality professional development and training programs and/or producing positive results for children
- Strong organizational capacity and leadership to ensure quality and execute complex work
- Commitment and capacity to use data to inform ongoing improvement, including a clear strategy for tracking results of the proposed grant-funded activities and making changes or improvements in response to data
- Potential to impact on a larger scale