

that the Early Reading First project will support.

Each applicant must then use *no more than a total of 10 additional double-spaced pages* to address the following selection criteria. (Pre-Application Competitive Priority 1—Children from Low-Income Families, and Pre-Application Competitive Priority 2—Novice Applicant, are addressed by separate forms in the Pre-Application package.)

#### *Selection Criteria*

(1) *Vision* (up to 25 points): Starting from the context of the existing early childhood education program(s) that the Early Reading First project would support, applicants must describe their vision for what those programs would look like if they were to become centers of educational excellence. Applicants must tie their vision to the scientific reading research upon which that vision is based, and state the overall goals for their proposed Early Reading First project based on that vision and research.

In evaluating the response to this first Pre-Application selection criterion, the Secretary will consider the information in the 2-page context description, as well as the information in the 10-page narrative. The Secretary will evaluate the clarity, creativity, comprehensiveness, and feasibility of the overall vision, and the capacity and potential of the project to achieve that vision. The Secretary also will consider how well the goals are tied to the vision, and the extent to which those goals incorporate high expectations, based on scientific research, for improvements in the early learning environment, curricula, teacher instruction, and will enhance children's development of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.

(2) *Key Research and Program Design* (up to 40 points): Applicants must discuss the key scientifically based research in the areas of language, cognitive, and early reading development for preschool-age children, and include citations to the sources of that research. Applicants must tie their program design to that research, by explaining the research-based strategies they would use, and the changes they would make to the existing program, which will appropriately address the needs of all children in the project, including children with special needs, in each of the following core areas: classroom environment, professional development, curricula and instruction, and on-going screening assessment or other appropriate measures to monitor the children's progress. Applicants must

explain any changes that they would make in the amount of time the program spends on developing children's language, cognition, and early reading skills, and how they would engage parents in helping with their children's development in those areas.

In evaluating the response to this second Pre-Application selection criterion, the Secretary will consider the relevance and rigor of the research cited, and how well the program design clearly links the proposed strategies with the major findings of up-to-date scientifically based reading research about best practices in language, cognitive, and early reading development. These best practices may include, for example, how the Early Reading First project will do the following: create high-quality oral language and print-rich environments; use strong, intensive, sustained, and classroom-focused professional development for preschool staff; support the diverse needs of all children's learning through the seamless integration of curricula, materials, and instructional approaches, including the use of explicit, contextualized, and scaffolded instruction in phonological awareness, oral language skills, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge; and use continuous screening assessments to monitor children's progress.

The Secretary also will consider the clarity and feasibility of the overall program design, including the extent to which, in the case of center-based early education programs for preschool-age children, the number of centers to be supported by Early Reading First is limited enough (generally, to no more than five (5) centers) to achieve the project goals with the amount of funds requested.

(3) *Continuity and Coordination with Formal School Instruction* (up to 10 points): Applicants must indicate whether or not their State has preschool standards in the cognitive domain, and if it does, briefly describe those standards. Applicants must explain how their proposed Early Reading First project would prepare young children to meet their State's preschool content standards (if any) and their State's reading or language arts content standards for kindergarten or the lowest elementary grade for which the State has those content standards. In evaluating the response to this third Pre-Application selection criterion, the Secretary will consider how well the Early Reading First strategies and activities would prepare children to meet the State's preschool cognitive standards (if any), and the State's

content standards in reading or language arts for the lowest grade for which the State has those standards.

(4) *Measuring Success* (up to 25 points): Applicants must describe how they will evaluate the success of their Early Reading First activities. Specifically, applicants must explain how they will determine whether the early language, literacy, and pre-reading development of the preschool-age children served by the Early Reading First Program has improved and been enhanced as a result of their Early Reading First strategies and changes. Applicants must describe the key outcomes that they would expect to see in the classroom environment, instructional practice, and children's development of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge, how they plan to measure those outcomes, and how they would use the results for continuous program improvement.

In evaluating the response to this fourth Pre-Application selection criterion, the Secretary will consider how well the expected outcomes are linked to the program's goals, and how well the proposed child measures will demonstrate those outcomes. The Secretary will also consider the validity and rigor of the proposed measures, their appropriateness for the target population, and the degree to which the program will use the results to inform future instruction and program improvement.

#### **Full Application Selection Criteria**

The Secretary will use the following selection criteria in accordance with 34 CFR 75.200(b)(2) and 75.209 to evaluate Full Applications under this grant competition. The maximum score for all of the Full Application selection criteria is 100 points. The *maximum* score for each criterion is indicated in parenthesis with the criterion.

When making funding decisions, the Secretary will consider the rank order of the applications based on the selection criteria and competitive priority. The Secretary will make award determinations under section 75.217 of EDGAR, 34 CFR 75.217, and may take into consideration other information that is relevant to obtaining a variety of types of funded projects and an equitable distribution of awards throughout the Nation, such as geographical representation, location in high-need urban and rural areas, project size, and type of program.

Each applicant must first use up to two (2) double-spaced pages of its Full Application to describe the context of