

awareness, alphabet knowledge, and numeracy skills. The grants are particularly important because there is a critical need for more high-quality, intensive, research-based professional development programs for early childhood educators to enable them to help young children better develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for school readiness.

These grants will fund projects that carry out activities to improve the knowledge and skills of early childhood educators working in early childhood programs that are located in high-need communities. Under the invitational priority identified in this notice, the Secretary is particularly interested in proposals that focus on providing professional development for early childhood educators to work with children who have limited English proficiency, children with disabilities as identified under Parts B or C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and children with other special needs. An application that meets this invitational priority, however, receives no competitive or absolute preference over applications that do not meet the priority.

The specific activities for which recipients may use grant funds are identified in the application package. The Secretary will expect funded projects to use rigorous methodologies to measure progress toward attaining project objectives and the final achievement indicators that are described in this notice under **Achievement Indicators**.

### Definitions

The following terms used in the application package for this grant competition have specific statutory meanings that are included in that package: "child with a disability," "early childhood educator," "high-need community," "low-income family," "poverty line," "professional development," and "scientifically based research." The Secretary strongly encourages applicants to review the statutory definitions of these terms before preparing their grant applications.

### Applications

Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program grants for FY 2003 will be awarded through a competitive process. The statute requires each applicant to submit an application that contains specific information and assurances that are described in the application package. Applicants must meet a statutory requirement to be eligible for

consideration for funding, and must address the selection criteria from section 75.210 of EDGAR that are identified in the application package. The application narrative addressing the statutory requirement, the selection criteria, and other information identified in the application package is limited to 30 double-spaced, typed pages. The Appendices, including the required Partnership Agreement, are not part of this page limit. The additional budget narrative is limited to 5 double-spaced, typed pages. Other application materials are limited to the specific materials indicated in the application package, and may not include any video or other non-print materials.

### Achievement Indicators

On January 6, 2003, the Secretary published in the **Federal Register** (68 FR 547–548) proposed achievement indicators for these grants. After receiving public comment, the Secretary now is publishing the following final achievement indicators in accordance with section 2151(e)(6) of the ESEA, elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**. That Notice of Final Achievement Indicators contains the Secretary's response to submitted public comments to the proposed achievement indicators. The Notice of Final Achievement Indicators also is posted on the Department's website at the following address: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SASA/ecprofdev.html>.

These final achievement indicators will govern these FY 2003 grants. Applicants must describe in their applications how their project objectives and measurement methods are aligned with these final achievement indicators, and report annually on their progress toward attaining these indicators.

### Final Achievement Indicators

In accordance with the timeline included in the approved application:

*Indicator 1:* Projects will offer an increasing number of hours of high-quality professional development to early childhood educators. High-quality professional development is ongoing, intensive, classroom-focused, and based on scientific research on early childhood cognitive and social development, including the age-appropriate development of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and numeracy skills, and on effective pedagogy for young children. High-quality professional development also includes instruction in the effective administration of age-appropriate assessments of young children and the use of assessment results.

*Indicator 2:* Early childhood educators who work in early childhood programs serving low-income children will participate in greater numbers, and in increasing numbers of hours, in high-quality professional development.

*Indicator 3:* Early childhood educators will demonstrate increased knowledge and understanding of effective strategies to support school readiness based on scientific research on cognitive and social development in early childhood and effective pedagogy for young children, and in the effective administration of age-appropriate assessments of young children and the use of assessment results.

*Indicator 4:* Early childhood educators will more frequently apply research-based approaches in early childhood pedagogy and child development and learning domains, including using a content-rich curriculum and activities that promote the age-appropriate development of oral language, age-appropriate social and emotional behavior, phonological awareness, print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and numeracy skills. Early childhood educators also will more frequently participate in the effective administration of age-appropriate assessments of young children and the use of assessment results.

*Indicator 5:* Children will demonstrate improved readiness for school, especially in the areas of appropriate social and emotional behavior and early language, literacy, and numeracy skills.

*Statutory Requirement—High-Need Communities:* Section 2151(e)(5)(A) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6651(e)(5)(A)) requires that grant funds be used to carry out activities that will improve the knowledge and skills of early childhood educators who are working in early childhood programs that are located in high-need communities. Thus, the statute requires that each early childhood program, in which the early childhood educators work who will receive professional development under the project, must be located in a "high-need community." To be considered for funding under this program, an eligible applicant must demonstrate in its application narrative how it meets this statutory requirement by including relevant demographic and socioeconomic information about those communities. "High-need community," as defined in section 2151(e)(9)(B) of the ESEA, means: (a) A political subdivision of a State, or a portion of a political subdivision of a State, in which at least 50 percent of the children are from low-income families; or (b) a political subdivision of a State that is among the