

educators will engage children. For example, the commenter defined "content-rich," as referenced in Indicator 4, to mean "conceptually rich experiences that grow out of direct experience with concrete materials related to the disciplines of the physical and natural sciences and the social sciences."

*Discussion:* High-quality professional development for early childhood education programs must be based on scientific research on early childhood cognitive and social development. The Secretary agrees that the indicators would be strengthened by indicating the specific types of early childhood developmental skills that research shows are included in early language and cognitive development, namely, the age-appropriate development of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and numeracy skills.

As provided in Indicator 4, research-based approaches in early childhood pedagogy and child development and learning domains include using a content-rich curriculum. The Secretary believes that the specific content and context of the curriculum should remain broadly defined in the indicators, however, to give applicants the flexibility to align their high-quality, research-based professional development programs with their State's preschool standards or content guidelines, if any, and to address the foundational knowledge and skills that the children will need in order to meet that State's content standards when the children reach the lowest grade for which the State has elementary content standards.

*Change:* Changes are made to the first and fourth indicator to clarify that research-based approaches on early childhood cognitive and social development include the age-appropriate development of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and numeracy skills. A change is made to the fifth indicator by adding numeracy to the competencies that children need to demonstrate improved readiness for school.

*Achievement Indicators:* The Secretary announces the following final

achievement indicators for the ECEPD program, as required by section 2151(e)(6) of the ESEA.

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.

### Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive Order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive Order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document provides early notification of our specific plans and actions for this program.

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Dated: March 26, 2003.

**Eugene W. Hickok,**

*Under Secretary.*

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