

Research and Innovation To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities [CFDA Number 84.324]

Purpose of Program

To produce, and advance the use of, knowledge to improve the results of education and early intervention for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities.

Eligible Applicants

State educational agencies (SEAs); local educational agencies (LEAs); institutions of higher education (IHEs); other public agencies; nonprofit private organizations; outlying areas; freely associated States; and Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99; and (b). The selection criteria, chosen from the EDGAR general selection criteria in 34 CFR 75.210. The specific selection criteria for these competitions will be provided in the application package for these competitions.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to IHEs only.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian tribes.

Priorities

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet one of the following priorities:

Absolute Priority 1—Research Validation and Implementation Project for Children Who Are Deaf-Blind (84.324D)

Background

New evidence-based research findings, including those related to hearing impairment, visual impairment, and other disabilities, have not been rapidly or systematically applied to children who are deaf-blind. These children are at high risk for exclusion from evidence-based research practices that promote high student achievement.

Priority

This priority supports a cooperative agreement to validate evidence-based research findings by translating those findings into procedures usable by personnel serving children who are deaf-blind, implementing new intervention procedures in home and community settings, and evaluating the effectiveness of the new procedures in

meeting the early intervention and educational needs of children who are deaf-blind.

Projects are expected to address one or more of the following areas of investigation: (a) Assessment of communication and cognitive development in infants, toddlers, and young children who are deaf-blind; (b) improving communication and language development for children who are deaf-blind including alternative forms for those children who do not use signs or speech; (c) learning strategies that encourage systematic instruction with a clear focus on targeting specific educational outcomes and producing knowledge on how these outcomes are achieved and replicated; (d) use of innovative technology to increase access to education and enhance learner performance; (e) transition from school to work; and (f) improved strategies and models for the use of paraprofessionals, including the intervenor. An intervenor is a term used in the deaf-blind community to describe an individual who provides direct support for all or part of the instructional day to a student who is deaf-blind.

The project must:

(a) Form a consortium with one or more research institutions at other locations to (1) Validate new approaches with multiple children and in multiple settings and (2) replicate initial evaluation findings.

(b) Identify specific research findings and the interventions or strategies based on those findings that will be implemented and evaluated;

(c) Carry out the project activities within a conceptual framework that provides a basis for the areas of investigation, the interventions or strategies to be implemented and evaluated, the evaluation design, and the target population;

(d) Produce a variety of descriptive and outcome data, including (1) Information regarding the settings, the service providers, the children, and if applicable, their families, targeted by the project (e.g., age, disabilities, skill and ability levels); and (2) multiple, performance outcome data regarding the children and families who are the focus of the interventions or strategies;

(e) Address causal questions by employing randomized experimental designs, to the extent appropriate; and

(f) Translate research findings into demonstrable practice that provides the informational bridge necessary to (1) Move research into practice, and (2) reduce lag time between research and implementing practice for children who are deaf-blind.

Fourth and Fifth Years of Project

In deciding whether to continue this project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), and in addition —

(a) The recommendation of a review team consisting of experts selected by the Secretary which review will be conducted during the last half of the project's second year in Washington, DC. The project must budget for the travel associated with this one-day intensive review;

(b) The timeliness and effectiveness with which all requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(c) The degree to which the project's design and methodology demonstrate the potential for advancing significant new knowledge.

Absolute Priority 2—Center on Outcomes for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers With Disabilities (84.324L)

Background

The NCLB Act and the IDEA Amendments of 1997 emphasize accountability in improving results for children with disabilities. With the Administration's "Good Start, Grow Smart" early childhood initiative, programs serving young children such as Head Start, Early Head Start, and State-funded Pre-Kindergarten programs are beginning to develop standards, outcome measures, and accountability systems to track the progress of the children they serve.

As part of this emphasis on accountability for results, reliable and valid outcome measures designed for young children with disabilities and their families must be developed and implemented.

Priority

The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to support a center to provide national leadership in the development and use of outcome information by early intervention and preschool special education programs and personnel. This Center must identify current and best practices in measuring outcomes for children with disabilities birth through five years of age and their families, served under parts C and B of IDEA, including performance indicators and assessment methodologies. The Center must accomplish this mission through a combination of research, technical assistance, dissemination, collaboration, and other leadership functions.

The Center's research activities must include, but are not limited to: