

Rhode Island's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

Goal and Key Reform Strategies

The goal of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge competition is for states to show how they will build a comprehensive and coherent early learning and development system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High needs, including low income children, children with disabilities, English Learners, and children in the child welfare system so that they enter Kindergarten ready to succeed. The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs.

High-Quality, Accountable Programs

- Aligned quality measurement and improvement standards (licensing, BrightStars, RIDE approval)
- Participation in BrightStars QRIS required for all licensed centers, family child care homes, and public schools serving preschoolers
- Increased frequency of routine licensing inspections for family child care homes
- Program improvement grants to support advancement in BrightStars
- Focused technical assistance to support advancement in BrightStars for centers serving infants/toddlers, centers and public schools serving preschoolers, and family child care providers
- Tiered quality incentive payments tied to quality levels in BrightStars for programs serving low-income children receiving a child care subsidy

Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

- Strengthened Early Learning Standards for preschoolers
- New Early Learning Standards for infants and toddlers
- Expanded professional development opportunities on the RI Early Learning Standards
- Expanded developmental screening for children
- Expanded use of statewide formative child assessment system (Teaching Strategies GOLD)
- Expanded professional development on child assessment and using Teaching Strategies GOLD

A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

- New Workforce Knowledge and Competencies frameworks for early childhood educators
- New, aligned, high-quality professional development opportunities
- Expanded access to aligned, high-quality professional development
- Aligned higher education coursework and credentials
- Expanded access to higher education

Measuring Outcomes and Progress

- New, statewide, comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Assessment
- New, cross-departmental, shared Early Learning Data System