

Pre-Application Toolkit
Early Reading First
Featuring *Scholastic ReadingLine*™

Scholastic Inc. has prepared this Grant Assistance Toolkit to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and/or public or private organizations or agencies in the development of an *Early Reading First* grant program. The Toolkit provides key information in these areas:

- ◆ Funding program information
- ◆ Alignment of **Scholastic ReadingLine** to *ERF* grant requirements
- ◆ Grant writing support

Scholastic ReadingLine is the research-based reading program featured in this Toolkit.

Scholastic ReadingLine fosters an early love of reading in Pre-Kindergarten students while they build foundational literacy skills. The program provides teachers with flexible, step-by-step lesson plans; engaging instructional materials; assessment tools; and research-based support. Two kits offer preschool students targeted skills instruction:

- ◆ *Sound and Letter Kit*, which focuses on building phonological awareness skills and alphabet recognition
- ◆ *Vocabulary Kit*, which focuses on building sight words and oral language skills

The Teaching Guide offers a complete, instructional plan for every book. Teachers choose one of two “tracks” depending on their schedule and the children’s needs:

- ◆ *Local Track*, a five-day plan, offers full skills instruction in the targeted learning areas.
- ◆ *Express Track*, using Days 2 and 3 within the five-day lesson plan, focuses on reading the book and doing a few follow-up activities. Teachers can supplement this track with activities from the other days as they see fit.

Using the Toolkit

This Toolkit is designed as a resource to provide information that can be used when completing the pre-application for *Early Reading First* grant funds. It only addresses application requirements that are pertinent to Scholastic products and services and does not cover all *Early Reading First* expectations.

The Toolkit also includes grant writing tips and examples of the types of information needed when applying for a grant. Contact the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) for the official application that has all the requirements and guidelines.

Please note these symbols throughout the Toolkit to help you write your application:

 **Highlights additional support and suggestions for writing your application.**

 **Refers to *Scholastic ReadingLine* features.**

Scholastic’s Commitment

Scholastic is committed to the sustainability of quality programs in order to improve teaching and learning. For more information about the products included in this Toolkit, please contact your Scholastic Regional Office.

California
800-342-5331

Northeast
800-878-8398

Southeast
800-221-5312


Southwest
800-221-5312

West/Midwest
800-225-4625



CONTENTS

Funding Program Overview: <i>Early Reading First</i>	3
Purpose of <i>Early Reading First</i>	3
Eligibility	4
What Projects Must Do	4
Invitational Priorities	7
Competitive Priority	8
The Pre-Application Process	9
After Submitting the Application Electronically	9
Tips for Electronic Submission	9
The Pre-Application	10
Pre-Application Deadline: <i>February 7, 2005</i>	10
Early Reading First Criteria	11
<i>Scholastic ReadingLine</i> Alignment to <i>Early Reading First</i> Required Activities	13
Customize Your <i>Early Reading First</i> Application	16
Part I of Pre-Application	16
Part II of Pre-Application	17
Part III of Pre-Application	23
Early Childhood Research Citations and Endnote Citations	24
RESEARCH CITATIONS	24
ENDNOTE CITATIONS	27
<i>Scholastic ReadingLine Kits</i> Research Base	30
About Scholastic Inc.	31

 *Because every grant program is unique, it is important to adapt the language provided in this Toolkit rather than copy it. Your proposal is more likely to be successful if you **customize** your application. Be sure to incorporate specific information about your program's needs, vision, programs, and design when you write your *Early Reading First* application.*

Funding Program Overview: *Early Reading First*

The information in this section of the Toolkit is based on the federal *Guidance for the Early Reading First Program* (March 2003) and the *Fiscal Year 2005 Application for New Grants for the Early Reading First Program* that is available at this website:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/applicant.html>

Purpose of *Early Reading First*

Title I, Part B, Subpart 2 of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* is known as *Early Reading First*. The ultimate goal of the *ERF* is to improve the school readiness of our nation's young children, especially those from low-income families, by providing support for Early Childhood Education programs serving preschool-age children.

Specifically, *Early Reading First* grants will provide funds to:

1. Support local efforts to enhance the early language, cognitive, and early reading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research.
2. Provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and print-rich environments so that they can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in Kindergarten and beyond.
3. Use language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research to support the age-appropriate development of:
 - ◆ *Oral language*—vocabulary development, expressive language, and listening comprehension
 - ◆ *Phonological awareness*—rhyming, blending, segmenting
 - ◆ *Print awareness*
 - ◆ *Alphabet knowledge*—letter recognition
4. Use screening assessments or other appropriate measures to identify preschool-age children who may be at risk for reading failure, and to determine whether those children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success
5. Integrate instructional materials and programs based on scientifically based reading research into existing preschool and programs



Scholastic ReadingLine supports early literacy by offering precise and comprehensive *Teaching Guides* with two methods for teaching each lesson, sequential lesson plans that focus on mastering the key skills and concepts necessary to create a successful foundation for literacy, and the materials needed to support all learning styles. ***Scholastic ReadingLine Kits*** provide activities for use in Circle Time, Small-Group Instruction, and Intervention with below level and English Language Learners.

Eligibility

The U.S. Department of Education will award *Early Reading First* grants on a competitive basis to eligible applicants, as described below:

1. **School Districts:** One or more local educational agencies (LEAs) identified as being eligible on the list of “Eligible LEAs” that is posted on the USDOE website for the FY 2004 *ERF* program grant competition at:
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/eligibility.html>
2. **Public or Private Organizations:** One or more public or private organizations or agencies—including faith-based organizations—located in a community served by an eligible LEA. Unless the public or private organization is a preschool program applying on its own behalf, it must apply on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool-age children, such as a Head Start program, a child care program, a family literacy program such as Even Start, or a lab school or university.
3. **A Collaborative:** One or more of the eligible LEAs, applying in collaboration with one or more of the eligible organizations or agencies.

What Projects Must Do


Early Reading First provides funding and support to turn preschool programs into Centers of Excellence by improving instruction and classroom environment through scientific research-based practices in language, cognition, and early reading.

All *Early Reading First* projects must provide the following activities:

-  **For more information about these activities, as well as, research-based approaches and strategies, the *Early Reading First* Guidance is available at:**

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/legislation.html>

1. **Classroom Environment:** Provide preschool-age children with high-quality oral language and print-rich environments in which to acquire oral language skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.


 Each **Scholastic ReadingLine** Kit comes with a complete set of the materials needed for teaching and reinforcing skills. The following components are included:

- ◆ *Sound and Letter Kit: 26 alphabet book titles with a comprehensive teaching plan that will help young children develop phonological awareness and alphabet recognition skills*
- ◆ *Vocabulary Kit: 21 patterned book titles and a comprehensive teaching plan that build sight words and oral language skills*
- ◆ *Each book is connected to five days of activities and skill building exercises; within each book’s series of lessons, detailed instructions and tips offer suggestions for teaching specific skills to children.*
- ◆ *Additional resources include picture and word cards, Alphabet Posters, Letter Cards, Activity Books, Audio CDs, and Take-Home Books.*

2. **Professional Development:** Provide professional development for staff that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of language, cognitive, and early reading development that will assist in developing the preschool-age children's:


- ◆ *Oral language*—expressive and receptive language, including vocabulary development
- ◆ *Phonological awareness*—rhyming, blending, and segmenting
- ◆ *Print awareness*
- ◆ *Alphabet knowledge*—letter recognition

 *Each Teaching Guide includes a Scope & Sequence, Overview of the Lesson Plan Structure, ELL Support, and Daily "Focus Skills."*


 **Scholastic ReadingLine** offers research-based professional papers that support the Sound and Letter Kit and the Vocabulary Kit:

- ◆ *Why It Is Important to Teach Phonemic Awareness and Alphabet Recognition by Cathy Collins Block, Professor of Education, Texas Christian University*
- ◆ *10 Research-Tested Ways to Build Children's Vocabulary, based on work by Nell K. Duke, Associate Professor of Teacher Education, Learning, Technology, and Culture at Michigan State University, and Director of the Early Literacy Project; and Annie M. Moses, a doctoral student in Learning, Technology, and Culture at Michigan State University, and participant in the Early Literacy Project*

3. **Services and Instructional Materials:** Identify and provide activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing children's language, cognitive, and early reading skills.


 *The Scholastic ReadingLine Kits include focused, research-based skills instruction based on a systematic scope and sequence. This supplemental program can be used for full skills mastery. Two paths of instruction ensure that teachers can use it flexibly with a core-reading textbook, or become the cornerstone of a balanced literacy program.*

4. **Screening Assessments:** Acquire, provide training in the use of, and implement screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool-age children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success.


 *The Assessment Handbook contains diagnostic placement tests that record children's levels on a variety of skills and tasks, including concepts about print and book handling, oral language development, letter recognition, and phonological awareness. The assessments are aligned to common criteria from state standards and learning outcomes.*

 *Assessment categories are:*

- ◆ *Reading, which includes concepts about print/book handling, story retelling, environmental print, and oral language/picture comprehension*
- ◆ *Writing, which includes name writing and picture drawing*
- ◆ *Alphabet Knowledge, which includes alphabet recognition and letter names*
- ◆ *Phonological Awareness, which includes initial/final sounds, blending/segmenting, and splitting syllables/rhyming*

 Each **Scholastic ReadingLine** Kit provides on-going assessment to follow children's progress. Following each Little Book, a quick assessment focuses on the key skill areas. Each of the Kits has three End-of-Unit Assessments for a more comprehensive look at each child's learning.

5. **Integration:** Integrate the above instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures into the applicant's overall program.

 **Scholastic ReadingLine** Kits provide valuable instruction and activities to be used during Circle Time in a Pre-Kindergarten classroom. The Kits are supplemental resources that help Pre-K students develop foundational literacy skills.

6. **Coordinate with Reading First:** If applicants are located in a school district that receives a subgrant under the *Reading First* program, coordinate their *Early Reading First* activities with the school district's *Reading First* activities to ensure continuity for children between the Pre-Kindergarten program and Kindergarten through Grade 3 reading instruction.

7. **Report Annually:** Submit to the USDOE annual performance reports. Additionally, the annual performance report must report the project's performance against the GPRA indicators using the following two measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the *Early Reading First* program:


- ◆ The percentage of preschool-age children who demonstrate age-appropriate oral language skills as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III
- ◆ The average number of letters that preschool-age children are able to identify as measured by the K Upper Case Alphabet Knowledge subtask on the PALS Pre-K assessment

8. **Cooperate with Any Evaluation:** Participate fully in any evaluation of the *Early Reading First* program carried out by the USDOE.

Invitational Priorities


The Secretary has established two invitational priorities for the FY 2005 *Early Reading First* program.

1. The Secretary is especially interested in proposals that would use *ERF* funds to support preschool programs that operate full-time, full-year early childhood educational programs, at a minimum of 6.5 hours per day, 5 days per week, 46 weeks per year, and that serve children for the two consecutive years prior to their entry into kindergarten.
2. The Secretary is also especially interested in projects in which, in all preschool centers supported by *ERF* funds, at least 75% of the children enrolled in the preschool qualify for free or reduced-priced lunches; or at least 75% of the children enrolled in the elementary school in the school attendance area in which that center is located qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

 ***Applications that meet one or both of these Invitational Priorities do NOT receive any absolute or competitive preference.***

The Secretary encourages applicants to propose comprehensive approaches in designing their Early Reading First programs to ensure that preschool-age children will possess the reading readiness skills they will need in school. For example, research shows that the following are important ingredients in young children's acquisition and retention of language, cognitive, and early reading skills.

- ◆ **Intensity of Services**—Applicants are encouraged to think about how to increase the *intensity* of the existing preschool education services that focus on language and cognitive development, in addition to increasing the quality of the instruction, early learning environment, and professional development.
- ◆ **Building Children's Background Knowledge and Thinking Skills**—Applicants are encouraged to think about how to weave content; such as science, math, or geography; throughout the preschool program to enrich both children's language and early reading skills as well as their background knowledge.

 ***Each of the ReadingLine weekly lessons include a cross-curricular or arts activity that relates to the Little Book.***


Competitive Priority **NOVICE APPLICANT**

Early Reading First pre-applications that are submitted by a *novice applicant* or a *group of novice applicants* will receive 5 extra points. To receive points under this pre-application competitive priority an applicant must:

1. Qualify as a novice applicant as described below:
2. Check “Yes” in response to Question 6 on ED Form 424.

A “novice applicant” means any applicant for a grant from USDOE that:

- A. Has never received a grant or subgrant under the program for which it seeks funding
- B. Has never been a member of a group application, that received a grant under the program for which it seeks funding
- C. Has not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal Government in the five years before the deadline date for applications under the program

 **Questions regarding eligibility for this competitive priority may be submitted by e-mail to ERF@ed.gov or by phone to 202-260-4555.**

The Pre-Application Process

Pre-applications for grants under the *Early Reading First* program **must be submitted electronically using the Department's e-Grants system**, accessible at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>. The deadline for electronic submission of *ERF* pre-applications is 4:30 p.m. (Washington, DC time) February 7, 2005.

Applicants must submit all documents electronically, including the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424), Pre-Application Form A, and Pre-Application Survey for Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. Electronic pre-applications must comply with all page limit requirements. Applicants may NOT e-mail an electronic copy of a pre-application to USDOE.

 ***Please see Section D for specific instructions for electronic submission of pre-applications and hours of operation for the e-Grants web site.***

After Submitting the Application Electronically

After applicants submit the pre-application, they will receive an automatic acknowledgement that will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to their application).

Within three working days after submitting the application electronically, applicants are required to fax a signed copy of the ED 424 to the Application Control Center after following these steps:

1. Print ED 424 from e-Application.
2. The applicant's Authorizing Representative must sign this form.
3. Place the PR/Award number in the upper right-hand corner of the hard copy signature page of the ED 424.
4. Fax the signed ED 424 to the Application Control Center at (202) 245-6272.

Tips for Electronic Submission

- ◆ USDOE strongly recommends that applicants do not wait until the pre-application deadline date to begin the pre-application process.
- ◆ Prior to submitting the electronic pre-application, USDOE recommends that applicants print a copy of it for their records.
- ◆ For technical assistance with the e-Application system, contact the e-Grants Help Desk at 1-888-336-8930.

The Pre-Application

Part I of the pre-application


- ◆ Survey on Equal Opportunity for Applicants
- ◆ ED Form 424
- ◆ Pre-Application Form A
- ◆ Title Page (Optional for e-Applicants)
- ◆ Table of Contents (Optional for e-Applicants)
- ◆ Abstract—Applicants must submit a one-page, double-spaced Abstract, briefly describing their proposal project.

Part II of the pre-application

- ◆ Pre-application Narrative—The 10-page pre-application narrative should respond to the pre-application selection criteria in the order in which they are listed.

Part III of the pre-application

- ◆ List of names and addresses of existing preschool programs that the proposed *ERF* project would support, including a brief description indicated under Quality of Project Design, Note, Purpose 1
- ◆ Endnote citations

 ***For a complete list of all required forms and information, please consult the pre-application Final Checklist located in section D of the Early Reading First pre-application package, CFDA No. 84.359A.***

Following a review of the pre-applications, the USDOE will determine which applicants are invited to submit full applications. In this second phase of the *ERF* application process, peer reviewers evaluate full applications.


Pre-Application Deadline: *February 7, 2005*


Early Reading First Criteria

Early Reading First is a federal grant program that is part of the President’s early childhood initiative, “Good Start, Grow Smart.” These grants are designed to help existing Early Childhood Education programs become Centers of Educational Excellence for preschool-age children. Through improvements in the instruction and classroom environment, children will develop the critical language, literacy, and cognitive skills that will prepare them for success in Kindergarten.

Applicants for *ERF* funds must ensure that their program aligns with the following key emergent literacy skills:

- Oral Language
- Phonological Awareness
- Print Awareness
- Alphabet Knowledge

Early Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic ReadingLine Kits
<p>Oral Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of expressive and receptive language including vocabulary, the contextual use of speech and syntax, and oral comprehension abilities 	<p>The Scholastic ReadingLine Vocabulary Kit contains 175 Oral Language Cards that feature colorful photographs of real-life objects, places, people, and animals. They are used to develop vocabulary, real-world background knowledge, and other oral language skills.</p> <p>In addition to picture cards, children develop their vocabulary and contexts through word webs, games, hands-on activities, and discussions.</p> <p>Lessons for each book present story-related vocabulary prior to reading the Little Books. During the program, children also learn the top 25 sight words. Children have repeated exposure to the targeted vocabulary, and they independently complete exercises in the 64-page Vocabulary Activity Book.</p>
<p>Phonological Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying and making oral rhymes ▪ Identifying and working with syllables in spoken words through segmentation and blending ▪ Identifying and working with “onsets and rimes” <p>Identifying and working with individual sounds in words</p>	<p>Scholastic ReadingLine phonological awareness instruction includes sound awareness, oral segmentation, oral blending, oddity tasks (phoneme identity and categorization), and phonemic manipulation (phoneme deletion, addition, substitution). Teachers model skills and provide exemplars.</p> <p>Each lesson begins with a rhyme or song. In the <i>Sound and Letter Kit</i>, teachers use Phonological Awareness Picture Cards to help children focus on the targeted sound. Children learn phonological awareness skills in small groups.</p> <p>Sound-letter relationships are taught together. Teachers use Letter Cards, which contain upper and lower case letters, in pocket charts and other activities.</p>


Early Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic ReadingLine Kits
<p>Print Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print 	<p>With the Scholastic ReadingLine program, children are exposed to a variety of print everyday. Each weekly lesson in the <i>Kits' Teaching Guides</i> revolves around a book, showing children that books convey important, fun information and carry a message. In addition, activities in each workbook have teachers and children use print in a variety of forms and for many different purposes.</p> <p>Children work with letters, words, punctuation, directionality, and other print conventions. Instructional materials include books, posters, letter cards, and activity books.</p> <p>Through multiple encounters with the provided materials, and the recommended teacher modeling strategies, children develop critical concepts of print that aid the reading and writing process.</p>
<p>Alphabet Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letter recognition 	<p>In the <i>Sound and Letter Kit</i>, there are 26 books—one for each letter of the alphabet. Repetitive text and clever illustrations highlight critical sound-letter relationships and letter recognition. The <i>Kit</i> also provides letter cards, posters, and activities.</p> <p>Teaching letters is not done in isolation; children learn letter and alphabetic principles using many visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile experiences. Examples of this in the Scholastic ReadingLine Kits are the ABC posters, listening centers (CD-ROMs); literacy manipulatives (ABC cards) that allow for hands-on learning; and an activity book which is appropriate for teacher-led or child-initiated exploration.</p> <p>In the Scholastic ReadingLine Sound and Letter Kit's activity book, there are three pages of activities where children practice saying and writing letters while learning the connection between the two, as well as looking at pictures that begin with the same letter.</p>


Scholastic ReadingLine Alignment to Early Reading First Required Activities



In addition, *ERF* programs must include the following components:

- Classroom Environment
- Professional Development
- Services and Instructional Materials
- Screening Assessments
- Integration

The following chart details how the **Scholastic ReadingLine Kits** fulfill the above *ERF* required activities.

Early Reading First Requirement	 Scholastic ReadingLine Kits
<p>Classroom Environment</p> <p>A high-quality oral language and print-rich environment</p>	<p>Both of the Scholastic ReadingLine Kits contribute to creating print-rich and high-quality oral language environment.</p> <p><u>Sound and Letter Kit:</u> Builds phonemic awareness skills and alphabet recognition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching Guides include tips on encouraging discussion and conversation in the classroom. ▪ 104 Little Books (26 titles, 4 copies each) ▪ Audio CD (covering each title in kit) ▪ 4 Activity Books (1 book, 4 copies) ▪ Phonological Awareness Picture Cards ▪ Letter Cards ▪ ABC Posters (2) – Posted at child’s eye level <p><u>Vocabulary Kit:</u> Builds sight words and oral language skills. Contains 21 patterned books using the top 25 sight words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching Guides include tips on encouraging discussion and conversation in the classroom. ▪ 84 Little Books (21 titles, 4 copies each) ▪ Audio CD (covering each title in kit) ▪ 4 Activity Books (1 book, 4 copies) ▪ Oral Language Picture Cards ▪ Sight Word Cards ▪ Classroom Posters (2) posted at child’s eye level
<p>Professional Development</p> <p>Professional development that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of language, cognitive, and early reading development</p>	<p>The Scholastic Early Childhood Seminar Series consists of four one-day seminars, offered individually, that can be customized to meet district needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Essentials of Early Literacy and Language Development ▪ Integrating Content Area Themes ▪ Learning Literacy through Interactive Activities ▪ Supporting the English Language Learner <p>An in-service day, conducted by a Scholastic Reading Specialist, is offered free of charge for grantees using the Scholastic ReadingLine Kits as part of their curriculum.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p>


Early Reading First Requirement	 Scholastic ReadingLine Kits
<p>Professional Development— <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Scholastic ReadingLine offers research-based professional papers that support the <i>Sound and Letter Kit</i> and the <i>Vocabulary Kit</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Why It Is Important to Teach Phonemic Awareness and Alphabet Recognition” by Cathy Collins Block, Professor of Education, Texas Christian University ▪ “10 Research-Tested Ways to Build Children’s Vocabulary,” based on work by Nell K. Duke, Associate Professor of Teacher Education, Learning, Technology, and Culture at Michigan State University, and Director of the Early Literacy Project; and Annie M. Moses, a doctoral student in Learning, Technology, and Culture at Michigan State University, and participant in the Early Literacy Project <p>In addition, each <i>Teaching Guide</i> includes a Scope & Sequence, Overview of the Lesson Plan Structure, ELL Support, and “Focus Skills” for each book.</p>
<p>Services and Instructional Materials</p> <p>Activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing language, cognitive, and early reading skills</p>	<p>Scholastic ReadingLine phonological awareness lessons include: sound awareness, oral segmentation, oral blending, oddity task (phoneme identity and categorization), and phonemic manipulation (phoneme deletion, addition, substitution). Teachers say and model each skill, using scripted text in the <i>Teaching Guide</i>’s lesson plan.</p> <p>Sound-letter relationships are taught together in Scholastic ReadingLine. After sounds are introduced, children learn about the spelling that represents the sound. In the <i>Sound and Letter Kit</i>, teachers use Phonological Awareness Picture Cards to help children focus on the targeted sound.</p> <p>Lessons for each Little Book present story-related vocabulary prior to reading. During the program, children also learn the top 25 sight words. Children have repeated exposure to the targeted vocabulary, and they independently complete exercises in the 64-page Vocabulary Activity Book.</p> <p>Fluency instruction and practice are built into every Scholastic ReadingLine lesson. The practice activities include choral reading, echo reading, reader’s theater, and partner reading. The fluency lessons begin with teacher modeling and are accompanied by instruction focusing on how punctuation, character, and other text features inform expression. Students listen to the weekly story on the audio CD as they read along.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p>

Early Reading First Requirement	 Scholastic ReadingLine Kits
<p>Services and Instructional Materials—<i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Scholastic ReadingLine comprehension focuses on understanding the text and concepts in the book. Prior to reading the book children build background, as well as preview and predict. As the group reads together, the teacher asks targeted questions to organize and expand students’ knowledge base. Children discuss the book and use comprehension-building strategies such as graphic organizers, categorization, and listening/thinking games.</p> <p>Children participate in hands-on activities related to the weekly book or letter that was taught. They also create word lists, their own pages to add to the book, and draw pictures related to the book.</p> <p> For information on the research base for Scholastic ReadingLine, please see page 30.</p>
<p>Screening Assessments</p> <p>Screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool-age children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success.</p>	<p>The diagnostic assessments in the Assessment Handbook are designed to drive instruction by determining each child’s instructional needs, diagnosing each child’s strengths and weaknesses, and providing a starting point from which to measure a child’s literacy growth. The assessments are aligned to common criteria from state standards and learning outcomes.</p> <p>The main assessment categories are Reading, which includes a) concepts about print/book handling b) story retelling c) environmental print d) oral language/picture comprehension; Writing, which includes name writing/picture drawing; Alphabet Knowledge which includes a) alphabet recognition b) letter names; and, Phonological Awareness which includes a) initial/final sounds b) blending/segmenting c) splitting syllables/rhyming.</p> <p>Each Scholastic ReadingLine Kit provides ongoing assessment to follow children’s progress. Following each Little Book, a quick assessment focuses on the key skill areas. Also each of the programs has three End-of-Unit Assessments for a more comprehensive look at each child’s learning.</p>
<p>Integration</p> <p>The preschool program integrates the instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures described above into the overall early childhood education program offered.</p>	<p>Scholastic ReadingLine is flexible enough for teachers to weave into their existing Pre-Kindergarten program. There are two options for using the lessons: “Express Track” for those who want to focus on reading the book, and “Local Track” for those who want complete skills instruction.</p> <p>The instructional program is arranged so that teachers can choose which skills to focus on in each lesson to balance Scholastic ReadingLine with other programs. In addition, each week’s lesson includes a cross-curricular or arts activity that is related to the Little Book.</p>

Customize Your *Early Reading First* Application

This section of the Toolkit provides basic information for those preparing to write an *ERF* grant. It is *not* intended to fully explain every part of the grant application, but should help you understand how to organize information within the *ERF* pre-application.

The *Early Reading First* Pre-Application

-  **Be sure to obtain the pre-application for *Early Reading First* from the U.S. Department of Education as it contains the official instructions, schedules, and requirements.**

All USDOE forms for the *ERF* pre-application are available at the following web site:


<http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/applicant.html>

Part I of Pre-Application

- I. Survey on Equal Opportunity for Applicants
- II. ED Form 424
- III. Pre-Application Form A
- IV. Title Page
- V. Table of Contents—List the contents in this order:
 - I. Abstract
 - II. Pre-application Narrative
 - A. Quality of the Project Design
 - III. Appendices
 - A. Names, addresses, and brief description of preschool programs
 - B. Endnote citations
- VI. Abstract (one-page, double-spaced)

The *summary* or *abstract* encapsulates all the components of the proposal and gives an overview of the proposed program; it is basically, the program “in a nutshell.” The summary/abstract includes the following information:

- ◆ The audience—Who will the program directly impact?
- ◆ The need/problem—What need will the program address?
- ◆ The educational goals—What does the program strive to ultimately accomplish?
- ◆ The objectives and effectiveness indicators—Who do what by when?
- ◆ The evaluation plan—What are the guiding questions in the evaluation plan?

-  **Because the abstract is essentially a summary of the program, you should write it after the grant proposal is completed. It can be summarized from other parts of the proposal.**

Part II of Pre-Application

I. Pre-Application Narrative (10 pages, double-spaced)

The 10-page application narrative should respond to the Pre-Application Selection Criteria in the order in which they are listed. Information that applicants provide in one section of the pre-application may be cross-referenced in another section.

QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN—0-100 points

Selection Criterion 1, Factor 1: The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2: The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting statutory purposes and requirements.

Selection Criterion 1, Factor 3: The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 1*:

- ◆ *Full endnote citations, in the appendices, supporting the research basis for the Quality of Project Design narrative.*
- ◆ *An explanation of the extent to which the body of research on which the project is based meets the definition of Scientifically Based Reading Research.*


For *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2*, the ERF statute lists the following five purposes for the *Early Reading First Program*; applicants should address these five purposes in the order indicated.

Purpose 1: To integrate such scientific reading research-based instructional materials and literacy activities with existing programs of preschools, child care agencies and programs, Head Start Centers, and family literacy services.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 1*:

- ◆ Specify the existing preschool program(s) that the project proposes to support and improve with *Early Reading First* funds.
- ✍ ***The Secretary recommends that, in the case of center-based programs, applicants generally include no more than a total of five centers in order to ensure that funds are sufficiently concentrated to achieve the program goals.***

(continued)


- ◆ Explain how each existing center selected for the proposal has the capacity and potential to become an *ERF* preschool Center of Educational Excellence. The Secretary believes that such centers are likely to be preschool programs that currently:
 - Have existing, appropriately equipped, preschool classrooms in which the Early Reading First program will be implemented
 - Have high rates of daily attendance for enrolled children
 - Are staffed by teachers, with the qualifications necessary to implement a language and literacy focused project, such as a bachelor's degree
 - Demonstrate a history of low staff turnover
 - Effectively attend to the developmental domains traditionally supported by preschool programs, including social, emotional, and physical; and are ready to implement an added component focused on developing young children's oral language, cognition, early reading skills
 - ◆ Include in the appendices the name(s) and address(es) of the preschool program(s) that the project will support.
-  ***For specific information to include in each of the above criteria, please refer to section D of the ERF pre-application package.***


Purpose 2: To demonstrate language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research that supports the age-appropriate development of:

- a. Recognition, leading to automatic recognition, of letters of the alphabet
- b. Knowledge of letter sounds, the blending of sounds, and the use of increasingly complex vocabulary
- c. An understanding that written language is composed of phonemes and letters each representing one or more speech sounds that in combination make up syllables, words, and sentences
- d. Spoken language, including vocabulary and oral comprehension abilities
- e. Knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 2*:

- ◆ Outline the proposed project's goals for improving young children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Outline the curriculum's defined scope and sequence and describe how it is structured, systematic, and aligned to support the development of children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Describe how the curriculum, combined with project procedures and other supports, will ensure that each day teachers know what they are supposed to do in order to support the development of children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge, and the extent to which the curriculum and other project supports will provide teachers with the materials to do it.
- ◆ Describe how instruction in new knowledge and skills is explicit and intentional and starts as teacher directed and moves towards more independent activity with the context of whole-group instruction and practice, small-group instruction and practice, and independent practice.
- ◆ Outline the content, or subject matter, that will be provided as the context for improving children's oral language and background knowledge.
- ◆ Detail the amount of time the proposed program will spend developing each child's language, cognition, and early reading skills.

 *The Sound and Letter Kit's goal is to build preschool-age children's phonological awareness and alphabet recognition skills, and the goal of the Vocabulary Kit is to help children build oral language skills and sight word recognition. Both research-based programs teach children within a print-rich environment with a variety of activities.*


 *The Sound and Letter and the Vocabulary Teaching Guides provide complete instruction in two "tracks":*


- ◆ *Local Track, a five-day plan, offers full skills instruction in the targeted learning areas.*
- ◆ *Express Track, using Days 2 and 3 within the five-day lesson plan, focuses on reading the book and doing a few follow-up activities. Teachers supplement this track with activities from the other days as they see fit.*


Purpose 3: To provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and literature-rich environments, so that children can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.


Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 3:*


- ◆ Outline the proposed project's goals for improving the language and print richness of the environment.
- ◆ Describe the strategies and materials that the project proposes to enhance the literature and print richness of the environment.
- ◆ Describe the strategies and materials that the project proposes to implement so that the physical environment will provide support for the development of children's oral language.
- ◆ Describe the strategies and materials that the project proposes to implement so that the physical environment will provide support for the development of children's background knowledge.

 *The Teaching Guides provide skills instruction, strategies for English Language Learners, suggestions for activities, and scripts for teachers to use during whole-group and small-group instruction. The Kits come with Little Books, activity books for independent practice, decorative posters, picture and letter cards, audio CDs for independent reading, and Take-Home Books.*

 *Each **Scholastic ReadingLine** Kit includes "the best little books on earth" according to Phyllis Hunter, a renowned reading expert and program author. Playful text, stunning photographs, and beautiful illustrations foster an early love of reading while targeting specific literacy skills.*


 *With the **Scholastic ReadingLine** program, children are exposed to a variety of print everyday, including trade books, posters, letter and word cards, activity books, and Take-Home Books.*


 *Children have many opportunities to develop oral language through rhymes, songs, discussions, hands-on activities, listening experiences, interactive reading, and writing. In addition, the Teaching Guides include strategies for English Language Learners.*

 *Every lesson in the **Scholastic ReadingLine** program contains a section that helps children build their background knowledge prior to reading the book.*


Purpose 4: To support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy, and prereading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 4:*

- ◆ Outline the goals for the project's proposed professional development program.
 - ◆ Describe the content and scope and sequence of the professional development to be provided.
 - ◆ Explain the strategies and materials that will be implemented in the professional development that will ensure that it will be classroom focused and will enhance the implementation of the curricula, materials, and instructional strategies outlined in *Purpose 2*.
 - ◆ Delineate the number of hours, the frequency, and the method of delivery of the professional development for each teacher and the extent to which the professional development will be high-quality, sustained, and intensive. If teacher mentoring is provided as part of the professional development plan, specify the qualifications of the teacher mentor and explain the link between the teacher mentoring and the professional development delivered in a classroom or workshop setting.
-  ***Applicants may cross-reference demographic, information from Purpose 1, regarding the income level of children whose early language, literacy, and prereading development will be enhanced through professional development provided to the teachers.***

 ***Scholastic ReadingLine offers research-based professional papers that support the Sound and Letter Kit and the Vocabulary Kit:***


- ◆ *Why It Is Important to Teach Phonemic Awareness and Alphabet Recognition by Cathy Collins Block, Professor of Education, Texas Christian University*
- ◆ *10 Research-Tested Ways to Build Children's Vocabulary, based on work by Nell K. Duke, Associate Professor of Teacher Education, Learning, Technology, and Culture at Michigan State University, and Director of the Early Literacy Project; and Annie M. Moses, a doctoral student in Learning, Technology, and Culture at Michigan State University, and participant in the Early Literacy Project*


 ***In addition, each Teaching Guide includes a Scope & Sequence, Overview of the Lesson Plan Structure, ELL Support, and "Focus Skills" for each book.***


Purpose 5: To use screening reading assessments to effectively identify preschool-age children who may be at risk for reading failure.

Applicants are encouraged to include the following information when addressing *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 2, Purpose 5:*

- ◆ Specify screening instruments for young children’s oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Specify progress-monitoring instruments for young children’s oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge.
- ◆ Provide validity and reliability date for specified measures, when it exists.
- ◆ Describe strategies, systems, and professional development activities that will ensure teachers gather high-quality data and will assist teachers with using information gained from screening reading and progress monitoring assessments to improve instruction for individual children.

 **Applicants may cross reference information from Purpose 4 regarding the content of professional development.**

 *The diagnostic assessments in the Assessment Handbook are designed to drive instruction by determining each child’s instructional needs, diagnosing each child’s strengths and weaknesses, and providing a starting point from which to measure a child’s literacy growth.*

 *Each **Scholastic ReadingLine Kit** provides ongoing assessment to follow children’s progress. Following each Little Book, a quick assessment focuses on the key skill areas. Also each of the programs has three End-of-Unit Assessments for a more comprehensive look at each child’s learning.*

For *Selection Criterion 1, Factor 3*, applicants are encouraged to include the following information:

- ◆ Demonstrate how the proposed project will coordinate with the LEA to prepare students with the foundational language, cognitive, and early reading skills to ensure a successful transition into the LEAs Reading First program, if it has one, or a district’s elementary reading program based on scientific research.

Part III of Pre-Application


I. List of names and addresses of existing preschool programs that the proposed *ERF* project would support. Include the following information in your description:

- ◆ The ages and number of the children being served
- ◆ Demographic and socioeconomic information on those children
- ◆ Information on the types of special needs that any of the children may have
- ◆ The average hours the children attend the program in hours/day, days/week, and months/year
- ◆ Primary funding source(s)
- ◆ The basic instructional program
- ◆ The number of staff and their qualifications

 ***This information may be organized into chart form.***

II. Endnote citations

- Each reference should include at a minimum the author(s), the title of the book or journal and article, and the date of the publication.

 ***Do NOT include a general reference bibliography; include ONLY endnote citations for those quotations included in the 10-page narrative.***

NOTE: Do not include any enclosures or appendices other than those listed on the “Pre-Application Final Checklist” in section D of the ERF pre-application package.

Early Childhood Research Citations and Endnote Citations


The ultimate goal of *Early Reading First* is to prevent later reading difficulties. The program is designed to prepare children to enter Kindergarten with the necessary cognitive, early language, and literacy skills for success in school.

Applicants must use *ERF* funds to:

- ◆ Provide preschool-age children with high-quality oral language and print-rich environments in which to acquire oral language skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge
- ◆ Provide professional development for staff that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of language, cognitive, and early reading development that will assist in developing the preschool-age children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge
- ◆ Identify and provide activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing children's language, cognitive, and early reading skills
- ◆ Acquire, provide training in the use of, and implement screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool-age children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success
- ◆ Integrate these instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures into the applicant's overall programs

RESEARCH CITATIONS

Because *Early Reading First* requires an emphasis on instructional materials and professional development grounded in scientific research, applicants are encouraged to include research citations within the narrative sections of their pre-applications. The following quotes can be used when drafting the indicated sections of the pre-application.

 ***Make sure you ONLY include endnote citations for each of the quotations used in your narrative.***

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The number of months that children spend in preschool has been found to be related to achievement test scores in second grade, behavior problems in third grade, and school retention in kindergarten through third grade. Children with more preschool experience had higher achievement scores and fewer behavior problems and were less likely to be required to repeat a grade (*Pianta & McCoy, 1997*).

In order to develop their language capabilities, children need a language and conversation-rich environment. Research demonstrates that the number of words and variety of conversations children hear affect the speed of their language growth (*Snow et al., 1995*).

Studies have firmly established the importance of reading aloud as one of the most important activities for reading success (*Bredekamp, Copple, & Neuman, 2000*). However, simply reading aloud to children does not by itself impact children's reading abilities; dialogue about and beyond the immediate context of the book is critical (*Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001*).

Importantly, studies show that book discussions that focus beyond the immediate context of the book have a greater impact on children's literacy (*Dickinson & Tabors 2001; Snow et al., 1995*).

Overall children learn by talking with adults: during daily routines, storytelling, reading, by relating personal experience, and having complex conversations in which they offer opinions (*Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999*).

Intentional, focused instruction should be based on clearly defined goals and embedded in daily routines (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE 2002). To achieve these goals, teachers need to provide both planned experiences and ones that emerge as an outgrowth of children's interests, offering a balance between teacher-centered and child-initiated activities (*Hohmann & Weikart, 1995*).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

"The knowledge and skills of the teacher account for the largest difference in academic achievement than any other single factor. (*Darling-Hammond et al., 1999*). The professional development of teachers has been shown to be integrally related to the overall quality of early childhood programs and thus, the overall effect of those programs in having a positive outcome for children" (*Kontos et al., 1997*).

Well-designed and effective professional development programs are job-embedded, continuous, collaborative, and research-based" (*Epstein, 1993*).

SERVICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Approximately 20% of children have difficulty acquiring reading skills, particularly awareness of sound-symbol relationships. These children decode text at a slower rate than average (*Lyon, 1995 and Lyon & Motats, 1997*).

The building blocks of literacy for young children, in addition to oral language development, have been identified as print awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and phonological awareness (*Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999*).

In learning to read, children must unlock the relationships between the sounds they use to say words and the letters of the alphabet (*Juel, 1996; Chall & Popp, 1996; Torgeson, 1998*). Children's ability to discern the sounds in words and link them to alphabetic symbols is a strong predictor of reading success (*Stanovich & Seigel, 1994; Stanovich, 1993; Vellutino, Scanlon, & Sipay et al., 1996*).

SCREENING ASSESSMENTS

The primary role of assessment in early childhood education is to provide insight into the educational experiences that will be the most valuable for individual children (*Burns, 1996, Bodrova & Leong, 1996*).

Teaching and assessment need to be inseparably fused in an ongoing cycle of refinement (*Meisels & Attkins-Burnett, 2000*).

Appropriate assessment and monitoring of children's learning contributes to decision-making about practice, designing programs and planning curricula (*Wiggins, 1998*). To achieve these aims, teachers should use multiple methods of assessment over time, including observation, investigation, and interviews, as well as more formal assessments (*Shepard et al., 1998*).

The primary role of assessment in early childhood education is to provide insight into the educational experiences that will be the most valuable for individual children (*Burns, 1996; Bodrova & Leong, 1996*). Assessment should support and inform instruction (*Shepard, Kagan & Wurtz, 1998*).

Curriculum-embedded forms of assessment allow children to demonstrate their knowledge or skills through active engagement in classroom activities (*Meisels, 1996*).

For all children, it is individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate measures of their strengths, development, progress, and needs that will provide vital information to professionals involved in promoting children's learning (*Stiggins, 2001; McAfee & Leong, 2002*).

INTEGRATION

"A recent comprehensive review of early childhood programs for children from low-income families concludes that preschool programs can produce large effects on IQ during the early childhood years and sizable persistent effects on achievement, grade retention, special education, high school graduation, and socialization" (*Barnett, 1995*).

"Research is beginning to delineate the key experiences and circumstances that will enable children to realize their potential. These include nurturing relationships with caregivers, experiences that encourage social interchange, varied opportunities for expression, appropriate physical activity, cognitive stimulation and challenge, opportunities to explore the environment, and involvement with language, print, and other forms of communication" (*Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000 ; Denton & West, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001*).

"Children use language for complex and varied purposes. Language and literacy development is not only vital to specific reading skills and overall cognitive development, but recent research reveals that it plays an important role in children's social competencies. For instance, one study has correlated children's literacy with their ability to empathize with others" (*M.Regalado et.al., 2001*).

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Scholastic ReadingLine Kits Research Base

ReadingLine Kits are based directly on the scientific research of these Early Childhood experts:

- ◆ Wiley Blevins—Scholastic ReadingLine Author and Academic Advisor; Author of Scholastic ReadingLine Professional Paper, “Phonics and the Beginning Reader”
Director of Primary Publishing, Scholastic Education
- ◆ Cathy Collins Block—Scholastic ReadingLine Author and Academic Advisor; Author of Scholastic ReadingLine Professional Paper, “Why It Is Important to Teach Phonemic Awareness and Alphabet Recognition”
Professor, Texas Christian University
- ◆ Nell Duke—Scholastic ReadingLine Author and Academic Advisor; Co-author of “Reading & Writing Informational Text in the Primary Grades: Research Based Practices”
Assistant Professor, Michigan State University
- ◆ Phyllis Hunter—Scholastic ReadingLine Author and Academic Advisor; Member, 2003 National Family Literacy Advisory Board NIFL and former Educator of the Year, National Alliance of Black School Educators
- ◆ John Shefelbine—Scholastic ReadingLine Author and Academic Advisor; Professor at California State University, Sacramento specializing in early reading, phonics, and comprehension strategies for struggling readers
- ◆ Francie Alexander—Scholastic ReadingLine Author and Academic Advisor; Vice President and Chief Academic Officer, Scholastic Education

About Scholastic Inc.

Scholastic is committed to providing teachers with effective materials for every stage of reading instruction to ensure that students develop the skills and strategies needed to succeed in school. Our reputation is built on an 84-year history of helping foster and support effective learning for all students. For years, we have worked with leading researchers to develop scientifically based products that produce significant results in student achievement, as well as meaningful changes in teacher effectiveness.

We look forward to partnering with you to improve reading achievement, and would like the opportunity to talk with you about how we can best support your efforts to implement **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)** over the next several years.