

**Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) Grant**

**2020 Application**

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# Introduction

The grant supports child care centers in fostering positive and responsive relationships between teachers and infants and toddlers and developing critical early language and literacy skills in children.  Program staff will be required to participate in intensive professional development focused on improving teacher and child interactions, supporting responsive caregiving, and targeting language and literacy development in their infant and toddler classrooms. The grant will support the development of a Peer Coach to serve as on-site support for the teachers in the program and provide funds for purchasing appropriate language and literacy classroom materials, supplies, and equipment.

# Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for a Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) grant, a program must:

* Be a licensed child care center which serves infants and toddlers and is in good standing with DECAL (minimum of 2 classrooms)
* Have a 2 or 3-star rating in Quality Rated and an identified need for improving infant toddler care
  + Early Head Start programs are not eligible to apply for this grant
  + Programs currently participating in the SEEDS grant are not eligible to apply

**Grantee Requirements**

Eligible child care centers selected through the competitive program will receive a year-long grant to improve early language and literacy practices in up to four of their infant and toddler classrooms. Early learning programs receiving a LITTLE Grant will commit to:

* ensuring that their teachers and director participate in on-going professional development and coaching by a highly trained DECAL Infant Toddler Language and Literacy Specialist;
* identifying and hiring a Peer Coach with infant toddler teaching experience, who will receive intensive training and support in peer coaching to support infant and toddler teachers in their program
* hiring qualified infant and toddler teachers and supporting attainment of higher credentials;
* participating in all evaluation measures, including but not limited to, the use of LENA and CLASS instruments; and
* maintaining or increasing a Quality Rated star rating.

# Application Submission

* Application must meet the following guidelines to be reviewed:
  + Applications must be typed, not hand written.
  + Applications must be complete in FULL, with all supporting documentation.
  + Applications must be submitted by the due date
    - Applications submitted must be postmarked no later than 5:00 pm on April 3, 2020. Applications **will not** be accepted after the due date.
      * Applications should be submitted via email to [pssinfo@decal.ga.gov](mailto:pssinfo@decal.ga.gov) or via fax to 877-375-7034.
* The total sum of the application scoring rubric and applicable priority points will be used to identify programs to be awarded the grant.
* Applicants will be notified regarding grant awards through email by May 11, 2020.

**Scoring**

* Applications will be reviewed and scored using a rubric. Points will be awarded based on the quality and completeness of answers
* Applications will receive priority points based on sociodemographic data for the county in which the center provides service:
* Poverty Rate 2018 Age 0-17
* Milestones 3rd ELA % Beginning 2019
* Premature Birth Rate
* Turnaround Eligible Schools Serving Elementary Age Children
* Rural Counties

# Funding Awards

Applicants may apply for funding for a minimum of two infant or toddler classrooms to a maximum of four infant or toddler classrooms. Funding awards are based on the number of classrooms. Below are the funding amounts:

* Program with 2 classrooms: $45,000
* Program with 3 classrooms: $48,500
* Program with 4 classrooms: $52,000

Grant funds must only be utilized for specified uses outlined in the Grant Guidelines. The current grant guidelines are posted on the DECAL website at <http://decal.ga.gov/InstructionalSupports/EarlyLanguageandLiteracy.aspx>.

Funding guidance includes:

* **Peer Coach Salary**: Funding must be utilized to employ a full-time Peer Coach. A minimum salary of $15.00 per hour for a 40-hour work week must be met. Programs must spend a minimum of $28,800 (40 hours X $15 X 48 weeks) on the Peer Coach salary. DECAL approval must be obtained to use unspent personnel funds in any other category.
* The Peer Coach will also be eligible for stipends for participating in professional learning outside of the 40-hour work schedule and compensation for any travel expenses incurred due to training or job responsibilities. Funds are also provided to support appropriate benefit costs associated with the Peer Coach position.
* **Classroom materials, equipment, and supplies**: A minimum of $2,000 must be spent in each classroom for language and literacy materials, equipment, and supplies. An inventory of current classroom materials and suggestions for appropriate purchases will be provided to each classroom.
* **Professional Learning stipends and support:** Funds must be utilized for stipends to support participation by teachers, directors and coaches at trainings, professional learning community meetings and other activities outside the 40-hour work schedule.
* **Professional Development or Credential Attainment:** Grant funds may be utilized to support the professional development of staff working with the grant (directors, peer coach, and classroom teachers). Allowable expenses would include approved trainings; fees associated with credential attainment including tuition not covered by DECAL Scholars, certification fees or books; and other approved costs associated with professional learning. Requests must be submitted in writing and approved, prior to funds being spent.
* **Travel Costs:** Grant funds should be utilized to cover the costs of travel including mileage, meals, and overnight stays incurred due to professional learning.
* **Substitutes:** Grant funds may be utilized to pay for additional staff such as a substitute teacher or “floater” teacher to support a lead or assistant teacher’s participating in professional learning including workshops, coaching sessions, or other identified professional learning activities. Grant funds can only be utilized when teachers are participating in professional learning activities approved for the grant.

Grant funds cannot be used for:

* Supplies, equipment, and materials not related to supporting early language and literacy (examples of disallowed items include playground equipment such as climbers and ride-on toys, bye-bye buggies, portable sinks)
* Supplies, equipment and materials for classrooms not participating in the grant
* Food items
* Director or classroom teacher salaries and benefits

**Grant Overview**

**Professional Development:**

The professional development opportunities will support program staff in creating responsive relationships between teachers and children and focus on language and literacy strategies to increase children’s receptive and expressive vocabulary.

All **program staff** (infant and toddler teachers, directors, and Peer Coaches) will participate in 4-hour Language and Literacy Institutes quarterly. These Institutes will focus on early language and literacy. Topics will include the importance of promoting language development, interactions between children and adults, sharing books with children, and sharing literacy practices with parents. The Institutes will offer tracks for teachers and coaches and for directors. .

The model will develop a **Peer Coach** at each site. The Peer Coach may be selected from qualified applicants from within or outside the center. The role of the Peer Coach will be to provide on-site coaching and mentoring to infant and toddler teachers. The coaches will receive intensive on-site support from a DECAL Infant Toddler Specialist who will provide modeling and coaching support in all infant and toddler classes alongside the Peer Coach. In addition, the **Peer Coach** will participate in monthly professional learning sessions focused on improving interactions, peer coaching and early language and literacy strategies. The Peer Coach will also support the data collection at each site including LENA recordings and Responsive Caregiver checklists.

**Center Directors** will participate in monthly professional learning sessions designed to provide content and resources to assist them in refining their skills in reflective supervision and leadership and in supporting their teachers’ strong literacy practices.

The **infant and toddler teachers** will participate in regular Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions. These will be held onsite at each center and will be co-led by the Peer Coach and DECAL Infant Toddler Specialist. These sessions will focus on analyzing the classroom data collected including LENA reports, CLASS reports, class observation videos, and the Responsive Caregiver checklist. The sessions will invite participants to reflect on data, identify strengths and areas of improvement, and develop goals/ action plans.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Peer Coaches** | **Teachers** | **Directors** |
| Quarterly Saturday Language and Literacy Institutes   * Lead by DECAL staff and contracted staff * 4-hour trainings for credit * Stipends for attendees ($125 per participant) * Format: Conference style with breakouts * Tracks:   + Director   + Peer Coach and Teacher * Content:   + Language and Literacy Strategies (Read Right from the Start content) |  |  |  |
| PLC for Infant/ Toddler Teachers:   * Lead by Infant Toddler Specialist/ Peer Coach * 1.5 hours per PLC for credit * Stipends for attendees if held outside regular work day ($25 per participant) * Content: Focus on classroom data, LENA coaching sessions, developmental monitoring * A minimum of 5 must be conducted during the grant year |  |  |  |
| Monthly Literacy Leadership Forums:   * Lead by Infant Toddler Specialists and contracted staff * No stipend (within work day) * Tracks/ Content:   + Director- Leadership, reflective supervision, community building, practices to support language and literacy in center, supporting teacher credentials   + Peer Coach- mentoring and coaching, practices to support language and literacy |  |  |  |
| Weekly Coaching sessions   * Infant Toddler Specialist and Peer Coach * No stipend (within work day) * Content: supporting in-classroom coaching on language and literacy practices, holding individual coaching sessions with Peer Coach and teachers, supporting Peer Coach in coaching sessions with teachers |  |  |  |

**Data Collection and Evaluation:** Evaluation for the LITTLE grants will be rigorous and include meaningful, research-based measures and tools which measure adult-child and child-child interactions and the language richness of the early learning environments. Applicants agree to participate in all data collection and evaluation activities including:

* LENA Grow: LENA Grow is a system designed to measure talk with children birth to three in child care and preschool programs. A simple recorder worn by children in the classroom captures a full day of talk with is translated into data on factors such as the number of adult words spoken, number of conversational turns, number of child vocalizations and other information. Reports from LENA are used to provide objective feedback to teachers as part of coaching sessions designed to increasing verbal interactions. Each classroom receiving a grant will be required to have all children in the classroom participate in the LENA recording at least one day per week. Each child, with parent permission, will wear a LENA recorder.
* Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS): The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) Infant and Toddler tools are observation instruments that assess the quality of teacher-child interactions in center-based infant and toddler classrooms. The Infant CLASS® and Toddler CLASS instruments address three domains of teacher-child relationships and interactions: Responsive Caregiving, Engaged Support for Learning and Behavioral and Emotional Support. Within each domain are dimensions which capture more specific details about teachers' interactions with children.
* Responsive caregiver checklist: The Infant/Toddler Responsive Caregiver Checklist is designed to measure care giving practices for groups of children ages from birth to age 3 in center based early learning programs. The indicators in this checklist measure the interactions and responsive caregiving available to all children in the classroom.
* Classroom observation and coaching feedback: Individual teachers will be observed, in person and by video, and will be given feedback on interactions and language and literacy strategies. Coaching sessions will be strength-based and will focus on the individual development of goals.
* Teacher and director surveys: These surveys are designed to gauge the perceived changes in skills and attitudes of teachers and directors.



**LITTLE Grant Application Checklist**

New Applicants must include the following forms and documents in their application package.

**Program Information:**

2020 LITTLE Grant Cover Page

2020 LITTLE Grant Application

LITTLE Grant Applicant Questions

LITTLE Grant Program Assurances

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Program Name: |  |
| Person Completing Application |  |
| Title/Role |  |
| Telephone Number |  |
| Application Date |  |
| Total Pages |  |



**Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) Grant**

**2020 Application**

**Cover Page**

**LITTLE Grant Application**

THIS APPLICATION MUST BE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Program Legal Name: |  |
| Doing Business As Name: |  |
| CCLC #: |  |
| Quality Rated Star Level: | Date Rating Received: |

**Center Location:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Street Address: | | |
| City: | County: | Zip: |
| ***Mailing Address is same as Street Address*** | | |
| Mailing Address: | | |
| City: | County: | Zip: |

**Contract Signatory\*:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person authorized to sign contract: | | Title: | |
| Mailing address of contract signatory: | | | |
| City:       County: | State: | | Zip: |
| Phone Number: | | | |
| E-mail Address: | | | |

**Director Information:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Center Director:       Credential: | |
| Phone Number: | FAX: |
| E-Mail Address: | |

**Indicate in the chart below the classes that you are applying for grant funds (maximum of 4 classes):**

**The majority of children enrolled in eligible classrooms must be within a 0-36-month age range.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Class | Age Group  (Infant or Toddler) | Age Range of Children in the Class | Class Name | # of teachers (full and part time) | Credential of Lead Teacher | Number of children receiving subsidy (CAPS) |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Total number of children receiving subsidy in the center:       This includes preschool and pre-k classrooms as well as infant toddler.

\*The Contract Signatory must be an officer or representative vested with the powers to commit the organization to a binding agreement if the grant is awarded. The contract signatory (CEO, COO, CFO, President, Sole Proprietor, School Superintendent) who has apparent authority or legal authority for the program/company/school system/etc. applying for the grant must sign the grant agreement if the grant is awarded**.**

**Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE)**

**Grant Applicant Questions**

Applicants should provide a professionally composed and complete answer to each question. Failure to answer all questions fully will result in an incomplete application. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

**Center Overview**

The application should provide an overview description of the center’s ability to successfully implement this grant.

1. Please describe your center’s approach to providing high quality infant and toddler care.

2. How have the addition of quality-rated and previous grants benefitted your center and the development of your staff?

**Fiscal Oversight**

3. Describe the fiscal oversight in place to ensure that LITTLE funds are properly administered and only used for items and services allowed under the grant.

**Staffing**

4a. Describe how you recruit and retain credentialed staff (include required professional development activities).

4b. Describe how you handle teacher turnover and support the transition of new staff for both children and families?

5. Describe your center’s approach to supporting teachers in their daily work, as well as, their professional growth and development.

6. The grant includes the identification of a full time Peer Coach as an on-site support to teachers. How would you prepare the teachers in your center to be coached by a peer?

2020 LITTLE Grants Program Application Assurances

I agree:

All information provided in this application is true and accurate. I understand that falsifying information reported will result in automatic termination of the grant agreement.

I understand that all information contained within this application, as well as documentation required as a DECAL fiscal agent, is considered public information and will be included in the program’s permanent file and is subject to Open Records request(s).

I will conduct my business with financial integrity and fiscal responsibility including, but not limited to, appropriate use of LITTLE grant funds, compliance with state and federal tax requirements, compliance with rules and regulations of the Secretary of State’s office, the State Department of Audits, and other state agencies, as applicable, and appropriate settlement of employee and other financial obligations.

I have read the LITTLE grant guidelines and agree to support grant activities including supporting professional development, research and evaluation, and reporting.

I understand that it is my responsibility to communicate the expectations of the LITTLE grant, including the guidelines, to the center director and staff to ensure successful grant participation.

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Contract Signatory Signature Date

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Title