



## **Program Overview**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the School Readiness Initiative is to improve the ability of families, schools, and communities to prepare children to enter school ready to succeed.

### **Eligible Schools/Communities:**

Communities served by schools who scored in the lowest 3 deciles of the Academic Performance Index, API (1999/2000) are eligible. In San Luis Obispo County, Georgia Brown Elementary in Paso Robles, is the only eligible school. Counties with a limited number of schools in API deciles 1-3 may use the funds to create a broader, countywide system as long as the targeted children and families in the eligible schools and communities receive focused interventions that provide demonstrable results. The eligible school/community must receive 80% of the CCFC funds, with 20% available for use in communities with API scores higher than deciles 1-3. San Luis Obispo will receive \$119,303/year from the State Commission, to be matched by the County Children & Families Commission plus \$50,000/year for implementation (\$677, 212 in state funding plus \$477,212 County funding for a total of \$1,154,424).

### **School Readiness Program Design:**

School Readiness Program matching funds are offered to coordinate, develop, implement, and sustain a system of collaborative school-based or linked services, programs, and informal supports based on research or promising practices to improve "school readiness" for children, families, communities, and schools. Local programs will provide a unified, integrated system by restructuring and coordinating the delivery of quality early care and education, health and social services, parental education/involvement and support, plus improve schools' readiness for children through family-friendly environments. The goal is to link ALL early care and education providers (parents, licensed, licensed exempt, family child care, etc.) to the neighborhood school sites as well as provide services at or near schools or through outreach or mobile delivery strategies. Such a system starts early to coordinate all elements needed during pregnancy and throughout the early childhood years to position children for success.

### **Definition of School Readiness (CCFC-adapted from National Education Goals Panel, NEGP):**

#### **1. Children's readiness for school:**

- a. Physical well-being and motor development
- b. Social and emotional development
- c. Approaches to learning
- d. Language development
- e. Cognition and general knowledge

#### **2. Schools' readiness for children:**

- a. A smooth transition between home and school
- b. Continuity between early care and education programs and elementary grades
- c. A student-centered environment focused on helping children learn
- d. A commitment to the success of every child
- e. Approaches that have been shown to raise achievement for each student
- f. A willingness to alter practices and programs if they do not benefit children
- g. Assuring that their students have access to services and supports in the community

**3. Family and community supports and services that contribute to children’s readiness for school success:**

- a. Access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate early care and education experiences
- b. Access by parents to training and support that allows parents to be their child’s first teacher and promotes healthy functioning families
- c. Prenatal care, nutrition, physical activity and health care that children need to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies and to maintain mental alertness.

**5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements” of the School Readiness Program:**

The three parts of the NEGP definition are the framework for the 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements” of the program. The following chart outlines the principles and processes that surround the services/supports provided through the 5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements”. All of the components need to be present in some form, but each community will approach them somewhat differently to meet the local community’s assessed needs through building on, improving, and expanding existing services, local resources, and community expertise and infrastructure to improve outcomes for young children and their families.

Principles	5 “Essential and Coordinated Elements”	Processes
Voluntary family participation Family focus and decision-making Community investment and design Inclusive, culturally/linguistically competent Collaboration Builds on family and community assets Coordinates existing services and infrastructure	<p><b>Early Care and Education</b> services with kindergarten transition programs</p> <p><b>Parenting/Family Support</b> services</p> <p><b>Health and Social Services</b></p> <p><b>Schools’ Capacity</b> to prepare children and families for school success</p> <p><b>Program Infrastructure, Administration, and Evaluation</b></p> <p>(plus other services determined by local communities)</p>	School based or linked Plan with connected assessment, prioritized goals, strategies, partners, and evaluation Comprehensive training for staff and volunteers Results based accountability and strong evaluation component Systems integration and redesign Standards and research based, plus “promising practices”. Program, District, and County level coordination and technical assistance.

The mix of services and supports within each element needs to be coordinated and/or developed by County commissions and their partners, including families, schools, and communities. All services and supports must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and sensitive to the needs of diverse populations including children with disability and other special needs. Bold, collaborative action steps must be implemented to achieve significant and measurable improvements in school readiness.

**Local Partners:**

Strategies, systems, and policies should be developed to enhance collaborative governance, planning, and decision-making and ensure inclusively of diverse stakeholders including:

- o Families
- o County Commission and Advisory Committees
- o Child care providers, teachers and educational administrators, colleges/training institutes
- o Health, mental health, social services, family court, child abuse prevention programs, etc.

- Community based organizations (CBO's), businesses, the faith community, cities, etc.

Adapted from the California Children and Families Commission  
School Readiness Program materials by Susan McGraw, 8/15/2002

Susan McGraw, 8/15/2002



## ***Key Review Criteria***

1. Do the proposed new/expanded strategies address the assessed community needs, including prioritized needs and service strategies identified by families? Are the services appropriate for the population being served?
2. What are the expected outcomes for the program? How will the new/expanded program services better prepare children for school? How will you track those improvements?
3. Does the School Readiness Program provide for services in all 5 "Essential and Coordinated Elements"?
4. Do the new/expanded services and programs serve only children 0-5? If not, please specify additional funding streams and partners that provide services to children older than 5.
5. Does the School Readiness Program provide new and/or expanded services to children 0-5 (i.e., what is the added value)? Are the existing services/resources clearly identified and described?
6. Does the School Readiness Program demonstrate cost-effective and cost-appropriate use of Prop. 10 funds? Does the budget narrative explain the connection between the SR Program and the costs? Are assurances provided that supplantation would not occur?
7. Has the program considered other potential funding streams to pay for direct services? Is the explanation clearly presented?
8. What percentage of the funds being spent are in the administrative area? How is the expenditure of funds for administrative purposes related to providing new or expanded services to children 0-5? Please justify the need for all administrative expenses.