

ARPA COMMUNITY REQUEST: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE OAK PARK EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY



Collaboration for
Early Childhood
Strong Start, Bright Future

PROPOSAL

Name of Applying Organization: Collaboration for Early Childhood
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PROGRAM NARRATIVE

For the past twenty years, the Collaboration for Early Childhood has worked in partnership with more than sixty agencies to narrow the opportunity gap that begins in the first few years of a child's life. We leverage our relationships to integrate all of our community resources to better meet the needs of our youngest children, their families, and the complex network of people that mobilizes around their success.

Families and Children Need Support

COVID-19 has represented an unprecedented time of need in our community. Families have relied upon the Collaboration for Early Childhood more than ever before. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Collaboration has seen an increase in the number of families qualifying and enrolling in publicly funded preschools. We have also seen a nearly 300% jump in families who qualify for assistance. In response to these signs of need, we have increased our efforts to help families to find support. In 2021, we secured outside grants to increase our outreach to new and prenatal mothers and to support their access to health and wellness services, as well as mental health supports. These efforts have helped to bridge some of the existing gaps in support.

[This proposal seeks to further close gaps in support for some of Oak Park's most fragile families: those families enrolled in intensive home visiting services.](#)

Searching for Wellness

The Oak Park community relies heavily upon childcare. Because Oak Park is a place where people come to raise families, access to early childhood education is an integral and necessary part of our identity. For this reason, much of our support has gone towards ensuring that preschool programs are still able to function. Early in the pandemic, the Collaboration provided reopening support and guidance to programs, as well as PPE delivery and guidance around accessing Illinois State resources. As the pandemic's child care crisis deepened, we became a major support, a central source of information, and a lifeline to many of our program directors and family child care professionals. We also offered free, credited professional development opportunities focusing on trauma-informed practice, mental wellness and mindfulness. Although we offered as much support as we could, we were limited and many needs went unmet.

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Solid and consistent support around skills-building has mitigated some of the potential harm that teachers and directors could experience, as they navigate a health pandemic and a time of social unrest. Although much of the community survived this period, the effects of this stress and trauma are ongoing. In households and classrooms, both teachers and families have needed support in understanding and responding to their own emotional needs, as well as the needs of children in their care. Children have nuanced emotional lives and have been strongly impacted by the pandemic. Adults, in turn, have needed support in understanding children's social and emotional development, and the behaviors that are manifested as a result of the pandemic. The Collaboration has worked on a small scale to give some parents and teachers tools for understanding challenging behaviors. In doing so, we have provided what we believe is a vital tool in our community's efforts to keep children in school and decrease the incidence of preschool suspension and expulsion. The more adults understand children, the more successful children will be. There is a need to offer this kind of support more broadly in our community.

[This proposal seeks support to build mechanisms for offering mental health and wellness support to teachers as well as resources to enhance classroom practice.](#)

COMMUNITY BENEFIT: Supporting a Struggling System

Outside of the classroom, before the pandemic caused businesses and schools to close, our child care system was already fragile. From the perspective of early childhood professionals, it is a difficult and costly business to run, and one that often relies solely on the tuition that parents are able to pay. Working families with young children, on the other hand, have long relied on a patchwork of care, shuttling their children from family members to preschool programs to afterschool programs, just to get through each work day. Child care is expensive, often with limited hours. It was a tenuous network before 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic further strained this system of care. Programs struggled at first with State mandated lower enrollments, teacher fears, family concerns and the very complicated task of creating a safe environment for a population that it not eligible to be vaccinated. Our preschool programs continued working with an entirely unvaccinated student body. It is a difficult time for child care. Added to this stress are the ways in which our economy has relied heavily upon the ability of child care programs to open, so that adults could return to work. In order for our economy to work, child care has to work.

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Oak Park has approximately 3,800 children under the age of five. Prior to the pandemic, Oak Park had a network of 39 child care programs and 617 people working in early childhood. Seven of these programs were unable to weather the pandemic and have closed their doors. This is a nearly 20% drop in the number of programs available to families and a notable decrease in the number of Oak Park children who will find quality preschool in our community. The programs that survived remain universally understaffed and under-enrolled.

Women of color have been hit especially hard: the labor force participation rate for Black women has fallen by 3.2 percentage points during the pandemic as compared to 1.0 percentage points for Black men and 2.0 percentage points for White women. Add to this the fact that the child care workforce is 92% women¹ and that she, often a parent herself, typically earns less than \$12 dollars an hour².

During this crucial time for children, our early childhood system needs to be able to attract and recruit new families and staff. We need to create a network of early childhood programs that are resilient and which operated sustainably, have the skills to seek out and apply for funding to continue to run and enhance their programs.

This proposal includes a request for support to build a Village-wide system for recruiting and retaining talented educators and leaders to Oak Park and attracting families to our programs. In addition, this proposal includes a request for funding to build capacity in our community for grant-writing and grant-seeking, to enable Oak Park programs to build and grow in their capacity to sustain themselves.



² <https://theconversation.com/the-typical-child-care-worker-in-the-us-earns-less-than-12-an-hour-160146>

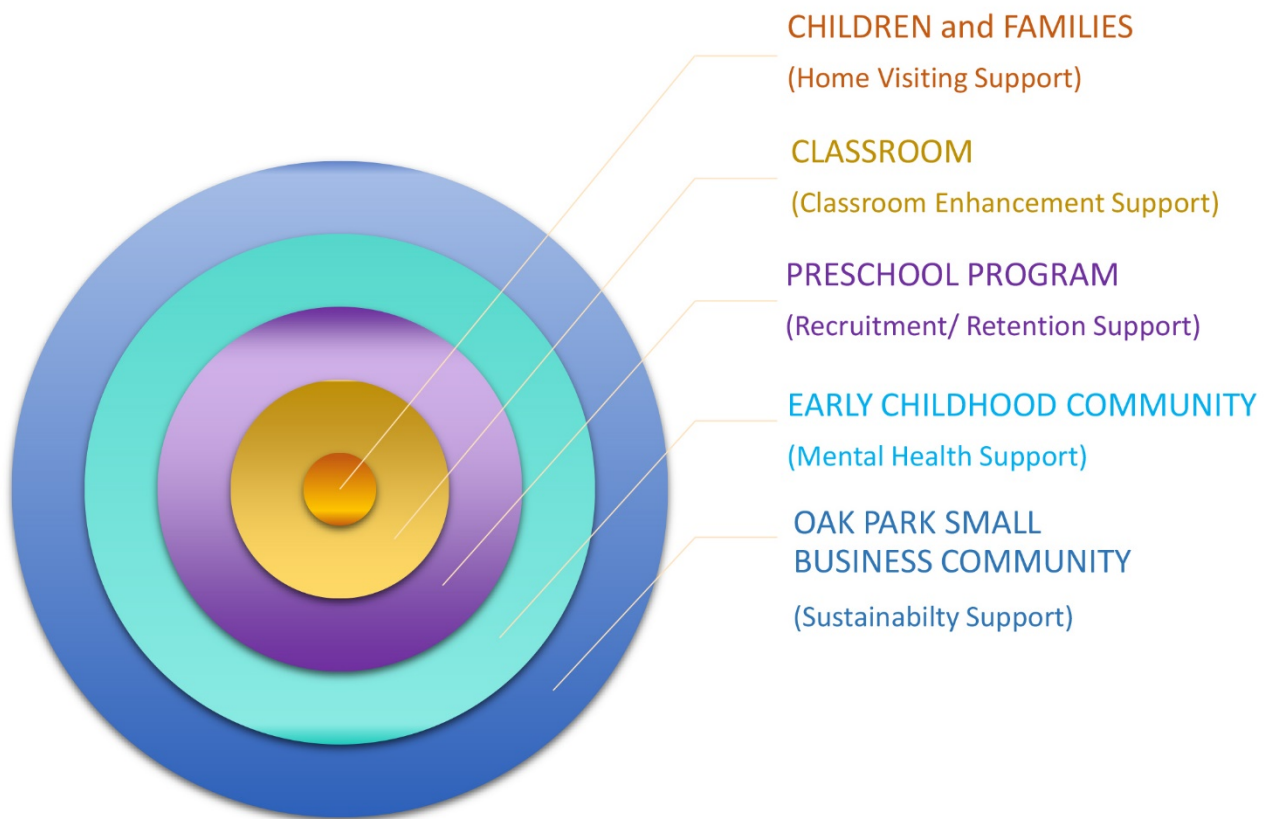
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Combating the Impact of COVID-19 in Oak Park, Illinois

The Needs of the Early Childhood Community



The Way Forward

The pandemic is not yet in the rearview mirror. ARPA funds have the potential to revitalize our child care workforce, empower families to re-enter the workforce, enhance the healthy development of our littlest citizens, and stabilize our future. Throughout the pandemic we have remained connected to the Oak Park community. Through group support sessions, focus groups and workshops, we have observed the struggles of our families and child care providers, heard their laments and listened to their worries. We ask the Village to join us in being a champion for the needs of our young children. It is in that spirit that we submit this proposal to the Village of Oak Park. We request funding to support the early childhood community in the areas outlined above.

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GOAL 1. SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: HOME VISITING

Combating the Impact of COVID-19 in Oak Park, Illinois

The Needs of the Early Childhood Community



APPROACH/IMPACT/GOALS

Home visiting is a prevention strategy used to support pregnant moms and new parents to promote infant and child health, foster educational development and school readiness, and help prevent child abuse and neglect. There are currently four home visiting providers that serve Oak Park: Easterseals, New Moms, Kids Above All, and Children's Home & Aid Society. These programs collect demographic and income information and track the developmental, health and mental health needs of the families in their care. Home visiting and the related

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services are specifically targeted in the ARPA funding guidelines. Additionally, there are approximately 25 home visiting families in Oak Park whose income levels make it difficult to purchase basic health and emergency supplies, such as personal protective equipment (PPE), groceries, sanitizing supplies, diapers and baby wipes.

A yearly commitment of \$19,250 would provide assistance with monthly groceries, diapers, wipes and personal protective equipment for the 25 Oak Park families in need of community support. It would also provide assistance in purchasing school supplies for the children in these families. Of the \$19,250, \$5,000 would go towards the purchase of PPEs, \$6,000 would cover a year of grocery assistance for the 25 families, and \$7,500 would supply families with diapers and wipes for part of the year. The remaining \$750 would be divided across the 25 families for the purchase of school supplies.

MEASURES & REPORTING

	Priority & Timeline	Cost & Resources	Implementer	Indicators	ARPA Category
Home Visiting Support	High Priority Quick to implement	Basic necessities = \$14,250/year PPE = \$5,000/year	Collaboration for Early Childhood, Easterseals	Agencies will prepare and report data to the Collaboration around requests and distribution of funds using an existing needs assessment tool	<i>Programs to provide home visits ... to individuals with young children to provide education and assistance for economic support, health needs, or child development³</i>
Total Request		\$19,250/ year			

ARPA PRONG

Programs to provide home visits ... to individuals with young children to provide education and assistance for economic support, health needs, or child development.

³ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26822

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505-AC77 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

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POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

This initiative could engage the following community entities and leaders:

- Easterseals
- New Moms
- Children's Home and Aid Society
- Kids Above All



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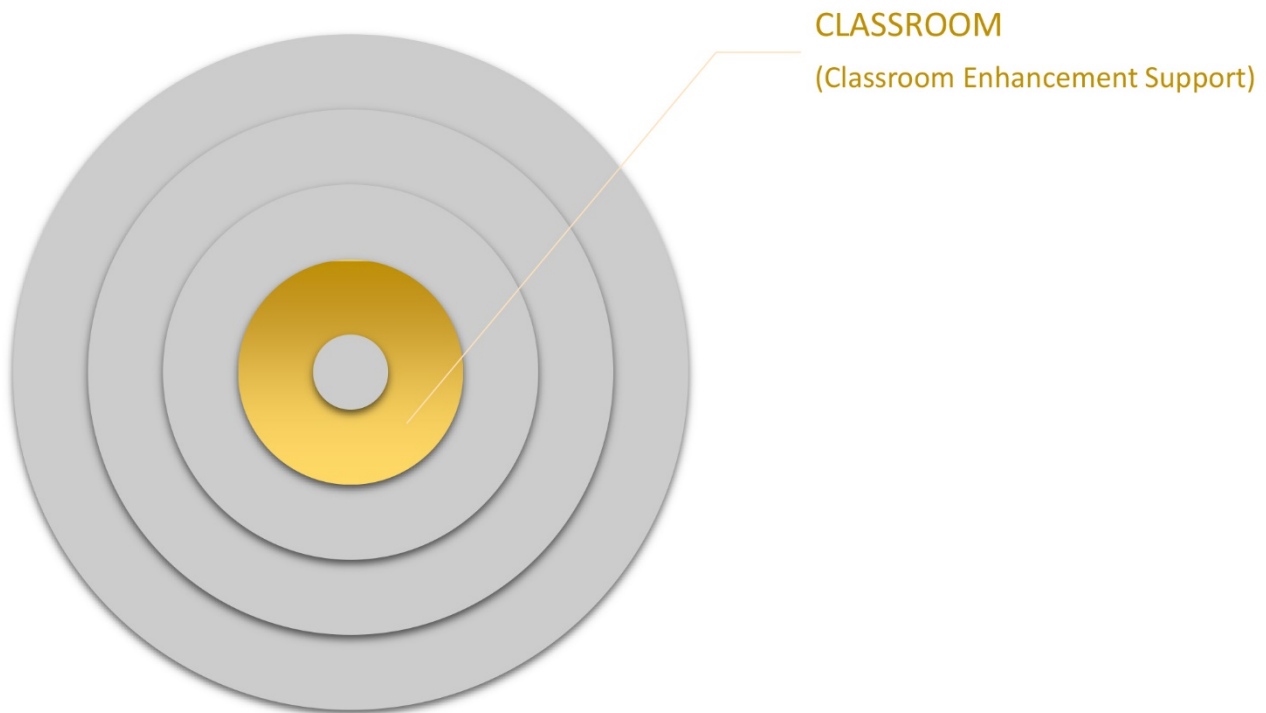


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GOAL 2. SUPPORTING CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Combating the Impact of COVID-19 in Oak Park, Illinois

The Needs of the Early Childhood Community



APPROACH/IMPACT/GOALS

A strong and responsive preschool classroom is a student-centered environment, utilizing a social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. It is comprised of a set of research- and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classroom and school communities for both students and teachers. Schools and teachers focus on creating optimal learning conditions for students to develop the academic, social, and emotional skills needed for success in and out of school, and building positive school and classroom communities where students learn, behave, hope, and set and achieve goals.

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Social-emotional learning is the process by which children and adults understand and manage emotions; set and achieve positive goals; learn, observe and model empathy; establish and maintain positive relationships; and make responsible decisions. Learning to manage feelings, respond positively to stressful situations, and get along with others is a vital part of childhood development. There can be no doubt that what teachers believe, know, and can do powerfully influences student learning. Teachers working in the early learning environment, and navigating the effects of a global health pandemic must be able to pivot and remain flexible in their beliefs about children and learning.

An early childhood community that supports their work will equip them with new knowledge and skills, and encourages them to transform their teaching by putting their new beliefs and knowledge into action. We must help preschool educators to access social-emotional learning resources that will enable them to bring highly interactive, hands-on tools to the classroom. Social emotional learning materials are a part of a healthy classroom setting, and are needed today more than ever before. Preparation for this elevated level of practice involves learning materials and children's literature around social and emotional development; adaptive materials for children with developmental needs; and professional development for adults around the proper development and use of a social emotional curriculum.

A. SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND SENSORY MATERIALS FOR CLASSROOMS

Developmentally appropriate materials for early childhood providers to use with children with IEPs and/or children who need emotional or developmental support.

EXAMPLES

- *Provide sensory "calming boxes" for programs to use in their classrooms and potentially lend to families.*
- *Increase early childhood educators' knowledge and skills to support children with disabilities and social emotional support needs in their classrooms.*

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B. BOOKS AND CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Literacy materials that focus on topics of social-emotional development, trauma, etc.

EXAMPLES

- *Provide social-emotional learning books to every provider.*

C. MONTHLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS

Regular responsive group training events to support early childhood provider needs.

EXAMPLES

- *Compile the social-emotional learning resources available in the community to share with early education staff.*
- *Provide teacher education on how to support the social-emotional needs of students.*
- *Subsidize pay for teachers for time spent in consultation and training to reduce/avoid cost to programs (i.e. substitutes or after hour work time expectations).*



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MEASURES & REPORTING

	Priority & Timeline	Cost & Resources	Implementer	Indicators	ARPA Category
Sensory and Social Emotional Materials	High priority. Implementation is quick since this is already in place on a smaller scale. It involves identifying, purchasing, and distributing materials. Staff training is minimal.	Sensory materials = \$31,500 one-time cost to equip Oak Park programs with sensory materials.	Collaboration for Early Childhood, Oak-Leyden Developmental Services	Agencies will prepare data reports for the Collaboration around use of materials distributed.	<i>(xviii) ... other behavioral health services⁴</i>
Social Emotional Curriculum Books and Children's Literature	High priority. Implementation is quick. It involves identifying, purchasing, and distributing materials. Staff training is minimal.	Books = \$10,000/yearly expense	Collaboration for Early Childhood, Oak Park Public Library, Wonder Works	Agencies will prepare data reports for the Collaboration around materials distributed.	<i>Evidence-based practices to address the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students⁵</i>
Professional Development	High priority. Implementation is quick. Workshops can be added onto an existing system of professional development.	Workshops = \$12,000/yearly expense	Collaboration for Early Childhood, Wonder Works	Agencies will prepare data reports for the Collaboration around services offered.	<i>New or expanded high-quality childcare to provide safe and supportive care for children⁶</i>
Total Request	\$22,000 per year. <i>(\$53,500 for year one, for one-time purchase of sensory and social emotional materials for classrooms.)</i>				

⁴ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26822
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505-AC77 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

⁵ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26796
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ARPA PRONG

Addressing Educational Disparities as well as Promoting Healthy Childhood Environments

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

This initiative could engage the following community entities and leaders:

- Oak-Leyden Developmental Services
- Oak Park Public Library
- Wonder Works Children's Museum



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GOAL 3. EARLY CHILDHOOD RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Combating the Impact of COVID-19 in Oak Park, Illinois

The Needs of the Early Childhood Community



PRESCHOOL PROGRAM
(Recruitment/ Retention Support)

APPROACH/IMPACT/GOALS

Recruitment and retention focuses on attracting new early childhood practitioners and keeping experienced, veteran early childhood practitioners, ensuring efforts are being made to fill position vacancies with qualified personnel and maintain existing personnel. Recruiting and retaining highly-qualified professionals has been a long-standing challenge in early childhood education. Working in a historically low-paying field with limited to no benefits, early childhood professionals are often unable to support themselves and/or a family and need to find a different job. Sometimes that means that a highly-qualified educator, upon completing a degree or certification program, moves to a K-12 setting where benefits and salary are much greater.

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Other times, it means that the professional leaves the education field altogether in search of greater compensation. With an ever-changing workforce, providing professional development is a vital—yet costly—endeavor, with no guarantee that the investment of time and money will result in retention of the newly prepared workforce.

The ability to keep the same staff for years is important because young children require consistency of caregivers, settings, and experiences to have a strong foundation from which to grow and develop. Staff turnover or children moving from one program to another because of quality issues and/or staffing shortages means that young children do not have the benefit of that necessary consistency. Children’s development and growth can be negatively affected when young children repeatedly start over with building new relationships or learning new environments and routines.

In the Oak Park community, COVID-19 has negatively impacted the small businesses that provide early learning and care before kindergarten. Child care providers are reporting reduced enrollment even now that space restrictions have been lifted. Families are hesitant to rely upon child care, because centers may close occasionally to quarantine, parents may be un- or under-employed, they may be caring for children while working from home, or they may be concerned about safety since children under 5 are not yet vaccinated. We know about this dip in enrollment from local child care administrators and research⁷.

To complicate this issue, low staff wages have made it difficult for early learning programs to retain staff when competing with other employers for less demanding, higher paying positions. A preschool teacher makes between \$11 and \$15 per hour, but a delivery driver for Amazon begins at \$17 per hour in Chicago. In addition, early childhood staff are at higher risk of COVID-19 exposure due to the nature of their work and the fact that young children cannot yet be vaccinated. We propose a two-pronged approach: Enroll more children into early learning programs and recruit and retain qualified teachers.

⁷ <https://chicago.chalkbeat.org/2021/10/29/22751615/illinois-student-enrollment-pandemic-decline-prekindergarten-early-education>

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A. ENROLLMENT SUPPORT

Assistance and maintenance of community initiatives to promote child enrollment in local early childhood programs.

EXAMPLES

- *Implement an extensive campaign to promote the importance of early learning prior to Kindergarten.*
- *Ensure families are aware of financial assistance for early childhood education.*
- *Implement a tuition loss mitigation subsidy to programs and families who qualify based on income.*

B. EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF RECRUITMENT & RETENTION SUPPORT

Directed support to recruit and retain talented early childhood staff to short-term and long-term early childhood program staff vacancies.

EXAMPLES

- *Provide access to online platforms that address staffing challenges for substitutes and full-time staff.*
- *Create a local early childhood job opening platform that programs and providers could access and to help alleviate staff shortages.*
- *Identify and support volunteer opportunities to support early childhood programs.*
- *Host an annual job fair for programs to showcase their schools and talk with interested parties. Coordinate with local education institutions to encourage their early childhood graduates and students to participate.*
- *Work with local colleges who offer early childhood coursework to increase internship opportunities.*
- *Ensure professional development trainings are meeting the needs of the workforce or programs.*

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MEASURES & REPORTING

	Priority & Timeline	Cost & Resources	Implementer	Indicator	ARPA Category
Enrollment Support	High priority. Enrollment for Fall 2022 begins in February 2022.	Campaign = \$5,000 Tuition stipends = \$10,000/year	Collaboration for Early Childhood	The Collaboration will track campaign outreach initiatives.	<i>Promoting Healthy Childhood Environments⁸ and/or Small Businesses and Non-profits⁹</i>
Staff Recruitment Support	High priority. Full implementation requires additional staff support in a p/t staff role. Partial implementation can be done with existing resources.	Sub service = \$6,000/year .5 FTE = \$24,000/year	Collaboration for Early Childhood	The Collaboration will track recruiting efforts, survey job fair attendees and programs with openings.	<i>Promoting Healthy Childhood Environments¹⁰ and/or Small Businesses and Non-profits¹¹</i>
Total Request		\$45,000 yearly			

ARPA PRONG

Promoting high-quality child care, especially for families experiencing financial hardship.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

This initiative could engage the following community entities and leaders:

- Local Preschool programs
- Higher Education Institutions in Greater Chicagoland

⁸ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26796
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505–AC77 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
⁹ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26794
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505–AC77 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
¹⁰ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26796
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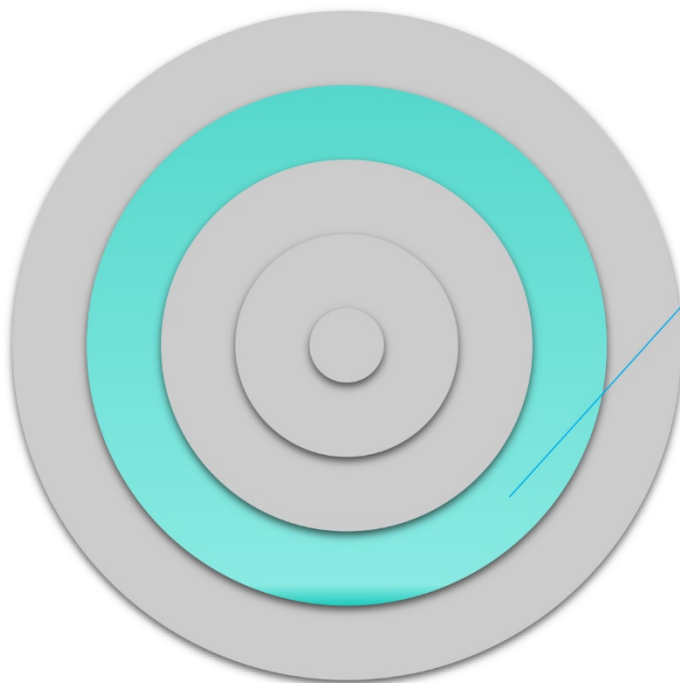


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GOAL 4. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Combating the Impact of COVID-19 in Oak Park, Illinois

The Needs of the Early Childhood Community



EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY
(Mental Health Support)

APPROACH/IMPACT/GOALS

Early childhood mental health refers to the healthy social, emotional and behavioral well-being of young children. Early childhood mental health can look differently depending on the individual child, their family and their community or culture. Young children are learning how to experience, express and regulate their own emotions and understanding, so there is some trial and error. They need to be able to experiment and learn while in a safe relationship with caring adults, who can give them guidance.

Current public and political attention to early childhood education and universal pre-K reflects a growing interest in making sure that children have strong early childhood education that prepares them for future success.

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Research emphasizes that children need consistent, sensitive, caring, and stable relationships with adults in order to thrive. Adults who are well, physically and mentally, are likely to have better relationships with children and other adults than educators who are dealing with the effects of stress and trauma, or struggling with depression or chronic illness. It is critical that we pay attention to, invest in, and be compassionate about the well-being of the adults who provide early care and education.

Our focus on mental health support is on relieving some of the emotional load of early childhood teaching and care by offering general wellness, mindfulness, and support to mitigate significant mental health events and emergencies. *While intensive mental health services and counseling are certainly needed for families and people working in child care, we are relying on the mental health providers in our community to provide ongoing counseling and crisis management.*

We are proposing a referral system for mental health support (similar to the coordinated intake referrals we already provide for home visiting or public preschool guidance), where we build capacity in the community to offer this support, and subsidize these services for the early childhood community. **This area has been identified as a high priority by 100% of those we surveyed in the community.**

A. COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS SUPPORT

Ongoing wellness and mindfulness support for early childhood providers and families.

EXAMPLES

- *Provide discounts to child care providers to use the full array of wellness services at the West Cook YMCA.*
- *Assign a physician or other medical provider to advise each early childhood program on COVID-19 concerns that arise. This would have a model similar to the Child Care Health Consultants in Head Start, except that our focus would be exclusively on COVID-19 issues at programs.*
- *Build proactive integration of infant & early childhood mental health consultation services into provider programming.*

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B. VIRTUAL WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Self-initiated phone or virtual support for early childhood providers.

EXAMPLES

- *Fund memberships for young children or child care staff for online therapy services. Virtual therapy may be more accessible due to shortages or diminished access to mental health providers.*
- *Provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for early childhood providers as a benefit for staff to call when they need short-term assistance navigating personal issues that arise. EAPs allow staff to handle life issues with minimal disruption to their work.*
- *Facilitate group sessions for providers to process their emotions and challenges of working in the shared field of early childhood during a pandemic.*
- *Expand infant & early childhood mental health supports for programs, including purchasing virtual observation equipment to create a lending library to support the early childhood mental health consultation process.*



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MEASURES & REPORTING

	Priority & Timeline	Cost & Resources	Implementer	Indicator	ARPA Category
Community Wellness and Health Support	High priority. Implementation could move fairly quickly. Planning needs to occur with the partner agencies to work out how compensation happens, as well as other details.	YMCA (Free use of facilities for 70 early childhood teachers at a time) = \$42,000/year Health consultants = \$14,400/year	YMCA, others to be determined, Collaboration	Providers will offer an array of wellness supports and track participation (quarterly and yearly reports) Reports on usage	<i>Mental health treatment¹²</i>
Virtual Wellness and Mental Health Support	High priority. Planning and implementation could move fairly quickly.	Online therapy = \$27,000 EAP = \$24,000/year Facilitated group = \$1,800/year	Telehealth, EAP, Collaboration	Providers will offer an array of wellness supports and produce reports on usage.	<i>Mental health treatment¹³</i>
Total Request		\$109,200 yearly			

ARPA PRONG

Behavioral health care.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

This initiative could engage the following community entities and leaders:

- West Cook YMCA
- Employee Assistance Provider/Network (EAP/EAN)
- Telehealth provider(s)

¹² Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26822
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505–AC77 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

¹³ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26822
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GOAL 5. SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Combating the Impact of COVID-19 in Oak Park, Illinois

The Needs of the Early Childhood Community



APPROACH/IMPACT/GOALS

In Oak Park, child care providers are small business owners. They operate either a center-based or home-based business where they employ a full staff of providers, utilize vendors for materials and food, and contribute to the local economy. Still, these small businesses struggle because they rely almost exclusively on tuition to fund all of their costs. There are funding opportunities available to child care providers. Finding these grants, applying for them, and keeping up with the reporting requirements is a significant task. Many times, the costs of applying for grants (such as hiring a consultant to seek and write grants) outweighs the benefits for a small business. A standard small grant application can cost thousands of dollars of consultant time and require significant internal

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capacity for paperwork and reporting. The capacity needs to be built in the community to support local programs from a central location. A dedicated staff person could be hired and become well-versed in the funding opportunities for which the child care industry is eligible. Under the Collaboration for Early Childhood, this person could help relieve the burden on program administrators who are already stretched thin and assist them in finding funding for special projects, site enhancements, and a variety of other fundable pursuits.

Additionally, while we are not able to pay teachers more than what they are paid (even \$1,000 increase for each of the community's 450 providers would amount to a monumental \$450,000 yearly expense), we could allocate resources to help educator and parents stretch their dollars further. The Collaboration for Early Childhood would like to design a community-based discount program which would group early childhood professionals into a unified body and then broker relationships with local businesses on their behalf. The Collaboration would work with local businesses to offer discounts for people purchasing items for use with young children. In addition to extending upon the buying power of the 450 teachers and over 4,000 parents of children under 5 in Oak Park, this keeps dollars in our community and supports local businesses.

A. TECHNICAL/FINANCIAL GRANT ASSISTANCE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROVIDERS

Dedicated staff support to early childhood programs to secure and report on grants and other funding opportunities for program operations and enhancements.

EXAMPLES

- *Provide technical grant writing assistance for programs to secure grant and foundation funding.*
- *Identify and communicate about funding and other supports that are available to programs.*
- *Provide ongoing support on grant reporting and ensure funding requirements are met.*

B. SMALL BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP BROKERING/DISCOUNTING

Creation and maintenance of a community-based discounting program for early childhood providers.

EXAMPLES

- *Broker discounting relationships with local businesses on behalf of early childhood providers.*

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MEASURES & REPORTING

	Priority & Timeline	Cost & Resources	Implementer	Indicator	ARPA Category
Financial Grant Writer	Medium priority. Planning and implementation could move fairly quickly.	1.0 FTE = \$50,000/year	Collaboration for Early Childhood, OP-RF Community Foundation	The Collaboration will hire grant writer and track financial assistance to programs.	<i>Technical assistance, counseling, or other services to assist with business planning needs¹⁴ and/or Small Businesses and Non-profits¹⁵</i>
Discounting Program	Medium priority. Planning and implementation could move fairly quickly.	.5 FTE = \$24,000/year	Collaboration for Early Childhood, Village of Oak Park, Chamber of Commerce	Implement a discount program	<i>Small Businesses and Non-profits¹⁶</i>
Total Request		\$74,000 yearly			

ARPA PRONG

Technical assistance, counseling, or other services to assist with business planning needs.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

This initiative could engage the following community entities and leaders:

- Oak Park - River Forest Community Foundation
- Village of Oak Park
- Oak Park - River Forest Chamber of Commerce

¹⁴ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26795
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505–AC77 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

¹⁵ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26794
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505–AC77 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

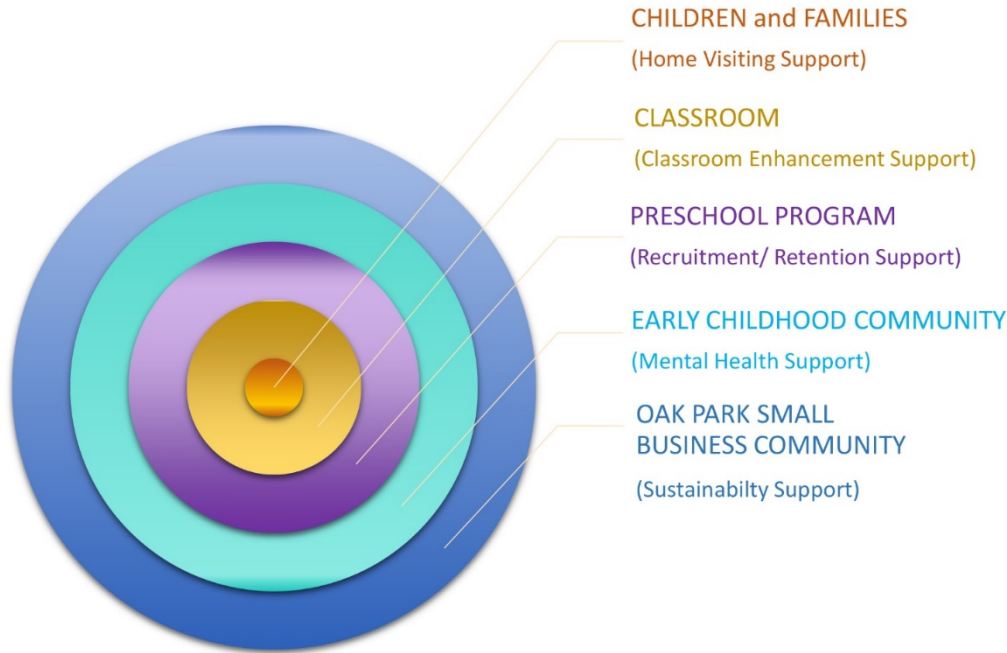
¹⁶ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26794
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Combating the Impact of COVID-19 in Oak Park, Illinois
The Needs of the Early Childhood Community



SUMMARY OF COSTS

Item	Overall Cost			
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four
Home Visiting Support	\$19,250	\$19,250	\$19,250	\$19,250
Classroom Enhancement Support	\$53,500	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000
Recruitment & Retention Support	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
Mental Health Support	\$109,200	\$109,200	\$109,200	\$109,200
Sustainability Support	\$74,000	\$74,000	\$74,000	\$74,000
Total	\$300,950	\$269,450	\$269,450	\$269,450

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ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The early childhood community continues to be at the forefront of the pandemic. As such, there are additional opportunities available for providers and families to receive support outside of the requests above. There are also many existing functions that the Collaboration for Early Childhood is serving that are built into our regular activities. Since the pandemic began, we have pivoted our typical offerings to include a focus on COVID-19.

Here are some other areas where COVID-19 is affecting the early childhood community. **These areas do not have costs tied to this proposal** but the Collaboration for Early Childhood is supportive of their implementation:

VACCINATIONS

The State of Illinois required child care providers to be vaccinated as of December 2, 2021. The Collaboration promotes local vaccine clinics and other opportunities to encourage providers to become fully vaccinated via the Village of Oak Park, the West Cook YMCA, etc.

COVID-19 vaccines are not yet available for children younger than age 5. When they do become available, the Collaboration for Early Childhood is available to help coordinate vaccinations via the Village of Oak Park's mobile vaccine van and/or clinics at central locations.

FEDERAL FUNDS FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS

The State of Illinois has been providing COVID-19 relief in the form of financial support to child care centers. The Child Care Restoration and Child Care Workforce Bonus grants are federal funds administered by the state. They are about to begin additional funding through the Strengthen and Grow Child Care program. As of December 2021, they are on round 5 of workforce bonuses that vary in amount. These funds can be used as one-time bonuses or to increase salaries, as decided by the center

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administrators. The various stabilization funds are meant to assist with operating costs, workforce development, increasing quality, and adequately compensating staff to ensure that child care programs stay open. They also cover the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other emergency operating costs. Illinois considers itself a leader in the national administration of federal ARPA and CARES Act funds for early childhood.

These financial supports are very beneficial; however, they do come with reporting requirements and administrators need to keep on top of their announcements. We have outlined ways that local ARPA funds can help by providing a dedicated technical financial assistance staffer in the Small Business section above.

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CCAP)

In July 2021, the State of Illinois implemented changes to the existing CCAP program, which is subsidized child care for families who qualify based on income¹⁷. The co-pay that families are still required to pay child care providers was reduced, the amount of reimbursement that providers receive was increased, and families who earn more money than before may still be eligible for the program.

FAMILY SUPPORT

An ongoing challenge of the pandemic happens when people lose their income because they have to quarantine from work, or they have to stay home with a young child who has to quarantine from day care. Employers may close due to positive cases and hourly staff are out of work. There are many scenarios where people, especially parents with children in child care, lose income related to COVID-19. During the pandemic, many families have been faced with economic choices that put them on the edge of a crisis. ARPA funds may be used to avert these crises.

¹⁷ <https://www.illinois.gov/news/press-release.23500.html>

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ARPA funds may be used to provide "support for isolation or quarantine"¹⁸ in the form of cash assistance or other supports to people "facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19"¹⁹. While the Collaboration for Early Childhood is not in a position to administer a cash assistance or similar program, we are supportive of assistance being provided to families who are experiencing these challenges. We are open to partnering with the Village of Oak Park or other agencies to implement such a program. Of note: The City of Evanston is considering a proposal for \$100,000 in emergency support for families and scholarship dollars²⁰. That would cover financial aid during times of hardship (loss of job, inability to pay preschool tuition, etc.) due to COVID-19. (Evanston's population is 74,587 and Oak Park's is 52,233.)



¹⁸ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26790
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505–AC77 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
¹⁹ Federal Register / Vol. 86, No. 93 / Monday, May 17, 2021 / Rules and Regulations, page 26794
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505–AC77 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
²⁰ https://evanstonforever.org/files/5516/3586/3676/ARPA_Impact_Report_ECF_ARPA_English.pdf



“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

Nelson Mandela



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