

Rhode Island State Personnel Development Grant

GOAL 2

To create a professional development system based on the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards.

There are three major components connected to this goal – (a) Rhode Island Early Learning Standards training; (b) development of a cadre of mentors and mentor classrooms; and (c) providing targeted technical assistance and support to four cohorts of participants.

Component 2.1 - Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Training

The RI Early Learning Standards Project began with the development of *The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards* describing what children should know and be able to do as they leave pre-school and enter kindergarten. Based on current education research and practice, *Rhode Island's Early Learning Standards* include a set of developmentally appropriate goals and expectations for all domains of learning and reflect the priorities of practitioners and families. The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards are divided into eight **domains**:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language Development and Communication
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science
- Creativity
- Physical Health and Development

These domains are organized in a **three-tier structure**:

- *Domains* are general areas of learning.
- *Learning Goals and Definitions* are categories of knowledge and skills within each domain.
- *Expectations* are examples of typical four-year-old behavior that demonstrate competence in relation to each Learning Goal.

Play appears as the first *Learning Goal* in each of the eight domains. The *Early Learning Standards* reflect evidence-based research on how children learn best and Rhode Island's strong belief in the important role of play in how children learn. Through play, children enhance the learning of skills, knowledge and dispositions that guarantees success in later schooling.

Since its inception, the Project has viewed professional development as a key strategy for ensuring that Standards are used in early childhood settings to improve quality and outcomes for young children. Through the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project, more than 700 early childhood administrators, teachers, and providers from school districts and community settings have earned certificates and college credit by completing core training to support implementation of a Standards-based program. The 30-45 hours of core training focuses on the following four components of a Standards-based program:

- Aligning Curriculum to the Standards
- Implementing Authentic Assessment Aligned to the Standards
- Supporting ALL Children through Differentiated Teaching and Learning
- Engaging Families

Through this core training, practitioners receive research-based information, reflect on current practice in all four component areas, and establish professional development goals for improving practice over time.

Component 2.2 - Developing a Cadre of Mentors and Mentor Classrooms

The RI Early Learning Standards Technical Assistance Initiative will build on a pilot project started in fall of 2006. Districts and community early care and education programs who have demonstrated commitment to implementing a Standards-based program and who are operating inclusive programs will be invited to participate in this Initiative. In order to participate, members of their team will have had to complete the RI Early Learning Standards Training at the administrator (Level III) and/or teacher level (Level II). Priority will be given to districts that have been selected as sample sites for the Outcome Measurement pilot related to the Annual Performance Plan.

Component 2.3 – Targeted Technical Assistance and Supports

Ongoing technical assistance will focus on:

- Building a cadre of expert technical assistance providers
- Designing mentor teacher/mentor classroom protocols
- Establishing policies, procedures, and documentation systems to ensure consistent, high-quality service delivery throughout the duration of the Project

Selected districts or community early care and education programs will receive:

- On-site technical assistance to assist the team in developing a program improvement plan that addresses next steps in implementing standards-based, inclusive practice
- Ongoing training and technical assistance for one year to support program improvement efforts
- Resources and materials to support their program improvement efforts

In exchange, districts and their partners must agree to:

- Provide information and feedback to ELS Project leaders regarding their T/TA experiences
- Share information with other programs by:
 - inviting programs to visit, tour, and talk with staff
 - participating in meetings sponsored by the RI ELS project
- Be available as mentor teachers in mentor classrooms for future cohorts for a period of at least one year

Sample technical assistance focus areas include:

- Aligning Curriculum (program-wide and/or classroom- based)
- Authentic Assessment aligned w/standards
- Differentiated Instruction
- Designing Learning Environments
- Building a mentor-coach system to support implementation of standards
- Developing IEPs aligned with the Standards

Logic Model – Goal 2		
Activities	(a) Rhode Island Early Learning Standards training; (b) development of a cadre of mentors and mentor classrooms; (c) providing targeted technical assistance and support to four cohorts	Activity Log Participant Interviews
Outputs	(a) 4 sessions of RIELS training offered during Year 1; (b) 2 sessions of RIELS core training offered each year during Years 2 – 5; (c) number of trainers; (d) number of mentor classrooms; (e) number of early childhood personnel who receive RIELS training or technical assistance	(a) Sherlock Center registration information (a) Sherlock Center registration information (c) RIELS data base (d) RIELS data base (e) Sherlock Center registration information
Outcomes	(a) a network of 20 mentor teachers will exist to provide professional development and technical assistance; (b) 40 quality early learning sites will exist; (c) children with disabilities (a) will spend increasing amounts of time with typical peers, and (b) will demonstrate increasingly positive outcomes in the APR.	(a) RIELS data base (b) Educational Programs for Young Children Approval Standards; interviews (c) Creative Curriculum Assessment System

