



EARLY LITERACY ALIGNMENT MINI GRANT GUIDELINES

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE GEORGIA FOUNDATION FOR EARLY CARE + LEARNING & GEORGIA FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

About the Early Literacy Alignment Mini Grant

The Early Literacy Alignment Mini Grant (ELA Mini Grant) provides up to \$5,000 funding to Georgia public elementary schools seeking to vertically align innovative literacy practices with local child care programs. Specifically, the grant funds strategic partnerships between child care providers and local public elementary schools as they engage in collaborative professional learning to align their literacy practices to facilitate a smooth transition for rising pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. The ELA Mini Grant is made possible through the generous donations to the [Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning](#) and to the Georgia Foundation for Public Education via the [PEACH Education Tax Credit](#).

About the Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning

Founded by Governor Nathan Deal and the Georgia Assembly in 2017, the Georgia Foundation for Early Care & Learning makes strategic investments to improve and expand high quality early education to help ensure all children in Georgia are prepared to success when they enter kindergarten regardless of family income or location. The Foundation will support education excellence by partnering with families, communities, the early care and education industry and stakeholders.

About the Georgia Foundation for Public Education

The Georgia Foundation for Public Education, the Georgia Department of Education's philanthropic arm, exists for the single purpose of supporting educational excellence for students in Georgia. The GFPE supports educational excellence in Georgia K-12 schools through donations and the [PEACH Education Tax Credit](#), Georgia's innovation-focused public education tax credit.

Award Timeline

See the table below for the ELA Mini Grant timeline.

GRANT APPLICATION OPENS	GRANT APPLICATION DUE	REVIEWED AND ANNOUNCED	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
September 22, 2025	October 31, 2025	Late November 2025	Early December 2025 to May 31, 2026

Eligibility Requirements

You are eligible to apply for an ELA Mini Grant if you meet all of the following criteria:

- You are the administrator (Principal or Assistant Principal) of a Georgia public elementary school.
- You are partnered with a local child care provider that has received a Quality Rating. As part of the application, you must submit a signed letter of support from the child care provider acknowledging their active participation in the program.

Priority Points Eligibility

You are eligible for one (1) priority point for meeting each of the following criteria for a possible total of two (2) extra points:

- Your school is located in a rural county defined as a county with a population of 35,000 or less; or your school is located in an under-resourced urban area.
- All partnering child care programs you have identified have received a Quality Rating of one (1) or two (2) stars.
- All partnering child care programs serve children who receive Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) scholarships.

Early Literacy Alignment Mini Grant Requirements & Allowances

Requirements

The Early Literacy Alignment Mini Grant Program must include the following features:

- **LEA Partnership:** Selected child care program partners must be located within the feeder LEA for your elementary school. As part of the application, you must submit a signed letter of support from the child care provider(s) acknowledging their active participation in the program.
- **Professional Development:** The program must include a collaborative professional development component centered on early literacy in which both staff from the child care program(s) and faculty from an elementary school located in the feeder LEA participate. The structure of the program and selected professional development program is determined by the Local School System (i.e., the applicant), and is **subject to approval from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning**.
- **Literacy Focus:** The selected professional development program must have an early literacy focus that will strengthen vertical alignment in literacy instruction at the child care center and the elementary school, ensuring rising pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students are entering elementary school with strong foundational literacy skills. This professional development must be based on the Science of Reading.

Allowances

The ELA Mini Grant will provide Local School Systems up to \$5,000 over a six month period to partner with (a) local child care program(s) as they engage in collaborative professional

learning to vertically align their literacy practices. You may use ELA Mini Grant Funds for the following purposes:

- Professional development;
- Meals for participation in professional development (must be reasonable);
- Mileage and travel to participate in the professional development;
- Supplies to support the implementation literacy practices in the classroom; and
- Other allowances not otherwise stated that are for the original purposes of the program.

How to Select Potential Trainings Using the DECAL Literacy Lab

- It is strongly recommended that applicants select a training from the DECAL Early Language & Literacy Lab for this grant opportunity. Selection of another training opportunity will not preclude an applicant from being considered for funding.
- To access resources from the DECAL Early Language & Literacy Lab that can inform training selection for your Early Literacy Alignment Mini Grant application, begin by visiting the DECAL Literacy Lab webpage [here](#). This online hub offers information about and links to high-quality, evidence-based training and resources focused on the Science of Reading, designed to support early learning professionals.
- To explore and register for trainings, select the Early Language and Literacy Lab under "Popular Searches" on the GaPDS [Scheduled Trainings Sessions page](#), where you can search for approved courses under the Early Language and Literacy Lab. For more information on how to create a GaPDS account, please review the following link: [GaPDS Help](#).
- It is intended that grantees use the Early Language and Literacy Lab or other similar resources to design collaborative professional development activities aligned with the Science of Reading.

Submission Instructions

To participate in the Early Literacy Alignment Mini Grant, please follow the steps below:

1. Watch the "[Grant Writing 101](#)" Webinar (recommended, but not required).
2. Carefully review this document, including the eligibility requirements, application components, and the scoring rubric.
3. Complete an application using the link provided by the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning, as directed on the grant application document.
4. Submit your application online by February 10, 2025.

If you have any questions during the application process, please contact:

Laura Wagner
Executive Director, Foundation for Early Care +
Learning
404-823-4062
Laura.Wagner@decal.ga.gov

How long will the Early Literacy Alignment Mini Grant last?

Early Literacy Alignment Mini Grant recipients have up to six months from the grant award date to use their funds.

If I receive an Early Literacy Mini Grant, what are the expectations?

Here are the expectations for ELA Mini Grant grantees:

- The ELA Mini Grant will be awarded up front.
- ELA Mini Grant winners are responsible for tracking the outcomes of the project or program. The evaluation report is the grantee's opportunity to share the project's progress, outcomes, lessons learned, and best practices. Grantees will submit one evaluation report at the completion of the program using the ELA Mini Grant Evaluation Template.
- ELA Mini Grant winners will distribute a survey to participants of the professional development to glean overall takeaways and impact from the program. The GFEC+L will provide a link to the survey to distribute to participants of the programming by August 2025.
- When appropriate, representatives from the GFEC+L and GFPE may request an in-person or virtual site visit to observe the program/project. Grantees may also request site visits to showcase the work or if course correction is needed.
- The GFEC+L and GFPE request that grantees recognize the Foundations as funders of the work at least two times throughout the grant year, or when applicable. Any media or social media posting should include the GFEC+L and GFPE's logo, social media handles, and be shared with the GFPE and GFEC+L.

Application Questions

The ELA Mini Grant application consists of the following sections and questions.

EARLY LITERACY ALIGNMENT MINI GRANT APPLICATION QUESTIONS	
Section	Questions
Project Information (10 Points)	In 200 words or less, provide a description of the professional development you have selected: 1. A description of the professional development in which you will engage; 2. A description of the need and why this PD will address early literacy best practices based on the Science of Reading; 3. Which child care program(s) you will collaborate with on the PD and how you selected these partners. We recommend identifying programs in your community that are Quality Rated child care programs: www.qualityrated.org
Program Activities (10 Points)	In 150 words or less, provide a description of the program structure. In your answer, please include: 1. How can you ensure that, if awarded, you can implement the project immediately? 2. Please describe the steps you will take during the grant period and how these steps will ensure your project is successfully implemented. 3. How you will ensure a smooth collaborative relationship between staff from the child care program(s) and faculty from the elementary school(s).

Program Impacts (10 points)	In 50 words or less, provide a description of the program outputs. 1. Specifically, provide information on the target staff and faculty for the professional development at the early child care center and the elementary school.
Project Evaluation (10 Points)	In 150 words or less: 1. Please tell us how this grant will produce measurable changes in the target population's lives. 2. Name at least one goal that will show measurable impacts to the target population (for example, 70% of early child care center staff participating in the program will demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of pre-kindergarten literacy skills). 3. Provide a description of how you will evaluate the goals for the project.
Project Budget (10 Points)	In 200 words or less: 1. Please list itemized expenses for your proposed project budget up to \$5,000.