



## U.S. Department of Education Proposes Dedicated Office for Early Learning

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The U.S. Department of Education announced today a proposal to create an Office of Early Learning, tasked with overseeing the [Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge \(/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html\)](/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html) Grants and coordinating early learning programs across the Department.

"Effective early learning programs are essential to prepare our children for success in school and beyond," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "A dedicated early learning office will institutionalize, elevate and coordinate federal support for high-quality early learning, while enhancing support for state efforts to build high-performing early education systems."

The proposal names Senior Advisor for Early Learning Jacqueline Jones as head of the new office, which will operate within the Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). The announcement was made public today during Jones's remarks to early learning educators and advocates nationwide at the [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(http://www.naeyc.org/\)](http://www.naeyc.org/) annual conference, held this year in Orlando, Fla.

"Establishing an early learning office reinforces this administration's unwavering effort and determination to address the essential needs of our youngest learners," said Jones.

As the Department's leading official on early learning, Jones oversees the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, a competitive grant program jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. Launched last May, the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge encourages States to create comprehensive plans to build coordinated statewide systems that will improve early learning and development programs so more children, especially those with high needs, will enter kindergarten ready to succeed. On October 20, the Department [announced that 35 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico submitted applications \(/news/press-releases/35-states-dc-and-puerto-rico-submit-applications-race-top-early-learning-challen\)](/news/press-releases/35-states-dc-and-puerto-rico-submit-applications-race-top-early-learning-challen) to the program. Winners will be named in December.

In addition to the Challenge, the Department administers several programs that provide support for early learning including Title I, IDEA, and recently established programs such as Promise Neighborhoods and the Investing in Innovation fund. As proposed, the Office of Early Learning will operate as a central resource to ensure that support for high-quality early learning and development programs is coordinated within the Department and across federal agencies, in addition to managing outreach to the early learning community.

Further details on staffing and office operations will be available in the coming months.

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