



# Arkansas Department of Education

*Division of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Jacob Oliva, Secretary

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## **Arkansas Department of Education Announces Arkansas Awarded Federal Preschool Development Grant to Advance Early Childhood Priorities**

**LITTLE ROCK** — The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) announced today that Arkansas has been awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. The award will provide \$14,751,000 over the next year to strengthen statewide coordination, expand access to high-quality early learning, and support families across the state.

PDG B-5 funding will help to continue the implementation of *LEARNS*, building on existing efforts towards a unified early childhood system. This includes sustaining and expanding local leads' work, supporting the Early Childhood Education workforce, and improving data systems.

"From day one, my administration has been committed to expanding access to quality education across Arkansas, and this grant reflects the Trump administration's confidence in not only what we are doing but also how we are doing it," said Governor Sanders. "Our mission is simple: invest in the next generation and ensure every kid gets the attention they deserve."

"This grant represents a pivotal step forward for Arkansas' youngest learners," said Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva. "By strengthening coordination across our early childhood system and expanding access to high-quality programs, we are investing in the long-term success of children, families, and communities. The PDG allows us to accelerate the work already underway, making sure every child, no matter their zip code, has the foundation they need to thrive."

"I'm thrilled for Arkansas, and everyone engaged in early childhood education, especially our youngest learners," said Ashley Abney, Arkansas Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood, Education Division Director. "The PDG grant provides an incredible opportunity to advance strategies that are central to our vision: ensuring access, enhancing quality, and promoting sustainability across the birth-to-five continuum."

As part of the grant, ADE will ensure the plan reflects local priorities and current context by collaborating with partners statewide, including families, early childhood educators, providers, Head Start, local lead organizations, school districts, and community organizations.

"As a Local Lead in Southeast Arkansas, I've had the privilege of witnessing firsthand how a unified early childhood system is laying a strong foundation for children's success in school and life," said Jessica Griffin, Local Lead, Southeast Educational Service Cooperative. "When children have access to quality programs from the start, they thrive both academically and emotionally. Working with providers and families, I have seen how our entire community benefits from quality programs."

#### **About the Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)**

The PDG B-5 program provides federal funding to states to improve early childhood systems serving children from birth to age five by strengthening coordination, expanding access, enhancing quality, and supporting families. To learn more, visit <https://acf.gov/ecd/early-learning/preschool-development-grants>.

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