






Unlocking Long-Term Sustainability: How to Make the Most of ESSER Funds to Support Improved Early Childhood Outcomes

The obligation date for the final round of ESSER funding allocated by the American Rescue Plan is September 30, 2024. As with the earlier ESSER funds provided under CARES and CRRSA, ESSER III funding can be used by early childhood providers, agencies, and leaders to:

-  Ensure the health and safety of children, educators, and staff
-  Address learning loss
-  Support the social-emotional well-being of children
-  Remove barriers to educational equity
-  Make a lasting impact on the educational system

Use this checklist to maximize the use of ESSER funds to improve program quality and ensure equitable access to high-quality education for our youngest learners.

1. Understand ESSER III Funds

- Get familiar with the guidelines and requirements for ESSER III funding in your state or local educational agencies (LEAs).
- Stay updated on any changes or updates to funding allocation and usage guidelines.

2. Assess Your Program Needs

- Conduct a thorough assessment of your early childhood education program to identify areas for improvement, challenges, and opportunities.
- Determine specific needs that can be addressed through ESSER III funds, such as learning loss, resource access, professional development, or program enhancements.

3. Develop or Update Your Strategic Plan

- Create a comprehensive plan detailing how ESSER III funds will be used to maximize impact on early childhood education.
- Set clear goals and objectives that align with program needs and desired long-term outcomes.

4. Foster Collaboration and Engagement

- Involve key stakeholders, including providers, agencies, leaders, educators, and families, in decision making about fund obligations.
- Collaborate and gather input to ensure ESSER III funds reflect the needs and priorities of your community.

5. Invest in High-Quality Materials and Resources

- Allocate funds to improve the availability of high-quality materials, resources, and curricula based on evidence-based practices in early childhood education.
- Prioritize resources that support holistic child development and effectively address learning loss.

6. Research and Utilize Technology Solutions

- Explore solutions to enhance practice fidelity across your early childhood education programs.
- Ensure that technology solutions align with all of your programs' specific needs and goals and are HIPAA and FERPA-compliant.

7. Provide Professional Development Opportunities

- Allocate funds for professional learning and coaching opportunities for practitioners and educators.
- Offer training programs, workshops, and coaching to enhance skills, knowledge, and implementation of evidence-based practices.

8. Ensure Equity and Access

- Develop strategies to promote equity and access to high-quality early childhood education for all children, especially those from underserved communities.
- Allocate funds to reduce barriers, improve infrastructure, and enhance resources in areas with limited access to quality programs.

9. Establish Data Collection and Evaluation Systems

- Implement data collection systems to monitor program progress and outcomes.
- Establish evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and impact of investments made through ESSER funds.

10. Foster Sustainability

- Create plans to ensure the long-term sustainability of the early childhood education program beyond the availability of ESSER funds.
- Explore partnerships, collaborations, and funding opportunities to support sustainability.

11. Communicate and Celebrate Success

- Regularly communicate program progress, achievements, and impact to stakeholders and the wider community.
- Celebrate successes, share positive outcomes, and advocate for continued investment in early childhood education.

The TORSH Talent Coaching and Professional Learning Management System can help advance the priorities of ESSER and your early childhood programs' long-term strategic goals. Visit torsh.co/esser to learn more and to schedule a time to chat with an early childhood professional learning expert.