

Myth vs. Fact

Preschool and the Every Student Succeeds Act

Myth: The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) creates a new federally-funded preschool program.

Fact: The Every Student Succeeds Act provides funds to states to improve the collaboration, coordination, and quality of *existing* preschool programs in the state.

Section 9212 of ESSA allows the Secretary to provide grants to states that use the funds for *all* of the following activities, but not to create any additional preschool programs:

1. Conduct periodic needs assessments of the availability and quality of existing programs;
2. Develop a strategic plan that recommends collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities among existing programs in the state;
3. Maximizes parental choice and knowledge about the state's mixed delivery system of existing programs and providers
4. Sharing best practices among early childhood education program providers to increase collaboration and efficiency;
5. *After* #1 and #2 are completed - Improving the overall quality of early childhood education programs in the state.

The controlling definitions are:

EXISTING PROGRAM.—The term “existing program” means a Federal, State, local, or privately-funded early childhood education program that—

(A) was operating in the State on the day before the date of enactment of this Act; or

(B) began operating in the State at any time on or after the date of enactment of this Act through funds

that were not provided by a grant under this section.

(5) MIXED DELIVERY SYSTEM.—The term “mixed delivery system” means a system—

(A) of early childhood education services that are delivered through a combination of programs, providers, and

settings (such as Head Start, licensed family and center based child care programs, public schools, and community based organizations); and

(B) that is supported with a combination of public funds and private funds.

In addition, Section 9213 requires an interdepartmental review of all federally-funded preschool programs in order to develop a plan to eliminate overlapping programs, determine if the grants under Sec. 9212 have led to better use of resources, and make recommendations to Congress for streamlining all such programs.