



# Quick Guide to Investing in Early Learning

Using ESSER Funding

Updated  
**June  
2023**

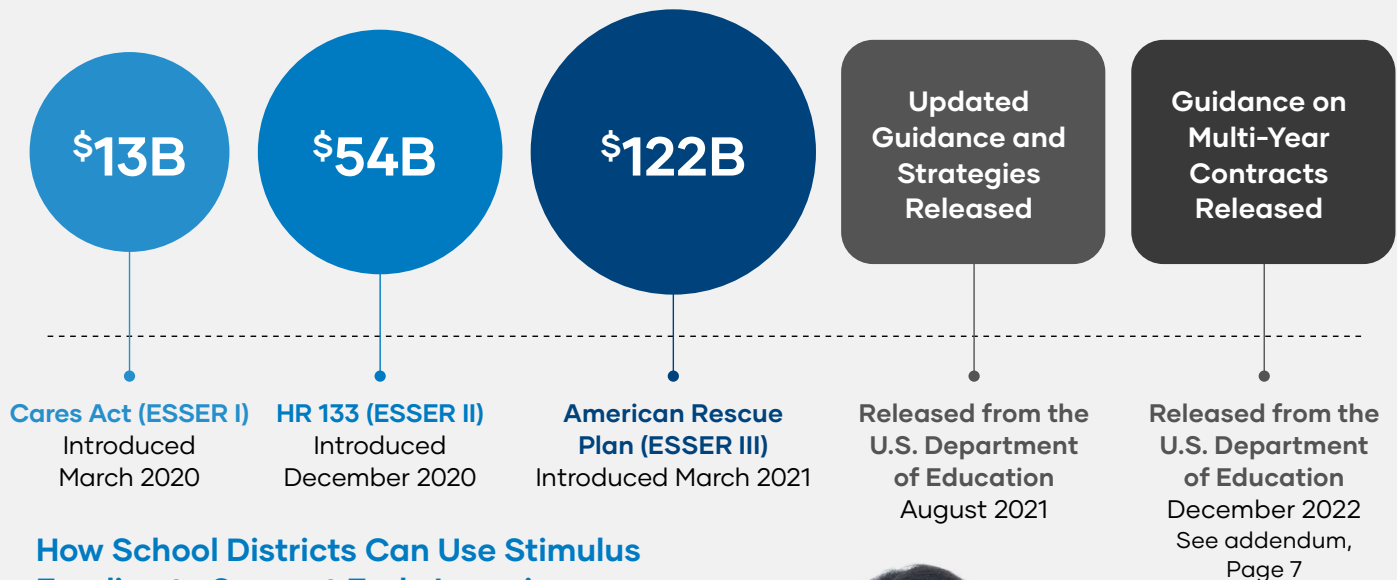


## Introduction

As the spending deadlines for the stimulus funds approach, it time to consider investments into high quality programs that will meet the needs of students today, and into the future. Several funding priorities make it possible to implement developmentally appropriate instructional programs that prepare our earliest learners for success in school, work, and life by

- **using valid and reliable formative assessment** to accurately identify each child's skills, knowledge, and abilities and provide individualized instruction;
- **implementing research-based, investigative, and joyful learning experiences** to meet the needs of the whole child, whether in the classroom or in a distance learning environment;
- **providing information and assistance to families** on how they can effectively support their children with rich, ongoing opportunities to connect learning in the classroom and learning at home; and
- **helping young children build resiliency** and the skills they need to prepare for life's challenges with an evidence-based social-emotional curriculum.

## Education Stimulus Funding and Guidance Timeline



## How School Districts Can Use Stimulus Funding to Support Early Learning and Address the Impacts of Lost Instructional Time

While schools and districts have flexibility in how stimulus funding may be utilized, the [Return to School Roadmap](#) includes three "landmark" priorities for schools, districts, and communities.

- **Landmark 1:** Prioritizing the Health and Safety of Students, School Personnel, and Families
- **Landmark 2:** Building School Communities and Supporting Students' Social, Emotional, and Mental Health
- **Landmark 3:** Accelerating Academic Achievement



Note: **The ESSER II obligation deadline is September 2023 and the ESSER III obligation deadline is September 2024.** Many states have set their own deadlines for district use of funds. We recommend checking with your state Department of Education to confirm deadlines for using ESSER funding.



## Maximize Your Additional Funds

With pandemic-related loss of instructional time as a major focus, school leaders can maximize the use of these additional funds in ways that ensure their schools are ready for children such as by

- evaluating where children are pre- and post-pandemic in order to effectively scaffold their development for the next school year;
- supporting family members in the development of learning goals so they are appropriate and meaningful to their children;
- providing teachers with the tools and resources they need to support the immediate and long-term needs of the children, including strengthening teachers' capacity to differentiate instruction and use their data to facilitate whole-group, small-group, and individualized learning experiences; and
- investing in professional development for educators and staff that will elevate their knowledge of strategies to address the social, emotional, and mental health needs of children and strengthen their use of technology in the classroom and with families.

## Leverage Your ESSER Funding to Invest in Teaching Strategies Early Learning Solutions

The Teaching Strategies connected ecosystem of curriculum, assessment, professional development, family engagement, and social-emotional resources support many of the priorities of ESSER funding and can help you create powerful early learning experiences that are more effective, more efficient, and more accessible to everyone.

### Teaching Strategies Solutions Mapped to Legislative Priorities

			Lost Instructional Time	Differentiated Needs	Family Engagement	Social-Emotional Development	Hybrid, Remote & Distance Learning
Curriculum	The Creative Curriculum®	Research-Based, Whole-Child Curriculum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Al's Pals™	Evidence-Based Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Assessment	GOLD®	Formative and Summative Assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family Engagement	ReadyRosie	Research-Based Parenting Curriculum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Family Learning Packs	Summer Learning Experiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional Development	Virtual, In-Person, or Teacher Membership	Research-Based Professional Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	noni™	Coaching App to Support Teachers, Children Impacted by Trauma		✓		✓	
Classroom Materials	The Essentials Kit	High-Quality Classroom Materials	✓	✓		✓	
	The Kodo Kit	Unique, Open-Ended Classroom Materials		✓		✓	

## Lost Instructional Time Guidance

A major focus of the American Rescue Plan was the effect of lost instructional time on children, specifically children of color, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities. In ["Strategies for Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Address the Impact of Lost Instructional Time,"](#) the U.S. Department of Education outlines strategies for "effectively using American Rescue Plan ESSER funds to address the impact of lost instructional time on underserved and disproportionately impacted students." Each strategy outlined by the Department of Education requires the proper tools and training for educators and school leaders.

Below, Teaching Strategies has outlined how our solutions can help your team address the needs of children and families in your community.

### Teaching Strategies Solutions Aligned to the U.S. Department of Education's [Strategies for Addressing the Impact of Lost Instructional Time](#)

	CURRICULUM		ASSESSMENT	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT		FAMILY ENGAGEMENT		CLASSROOM MATERIALS	
	The Creative Curriculum®	AI's Pals™	GOLD®	Professional Development	Noni™	Ready Rosie™	Family Learning Pack	The Essentials Kit	The Kodo Kit
<b>Reengaging students by meeting their social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs</b>									
a. Building trust with families to support in-person learning	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		
b. Supporting students during key transitions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
d. Addressing student social, emotional, and mental health needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
e. Reengaging and supporting students in their learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
f. Supporting students with disabilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
h. The role of school leaders				✓					
<b>Supporting parents and caregivers in their child's success</b>									
a. Engaging and communicating with parents and caregivers	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
c. Sharing data and resources with families to support student learning	✓		✓			✓	✓		
<b>Using high-quality assessments to support student learning</b>									
a. The role of diagnostic and formative assessments	✓		✓	✓					
b. The role of summative assessments			✓	✓					
c. Performance-based assessments			✓	✓					
d. Using assessments as part of students' social and emotional needs			✓	✓					
e. Supporting educator assessment literacy and development			✓	✓					
f. Department resources			✓	✓					

To learn more about how Teaching Strategies can help you leverage ESSER funding to strengthen your early learning program, [contact an education consultant today.](#)



## Teaching Strategies Early Learning Solutions

### Curriculum



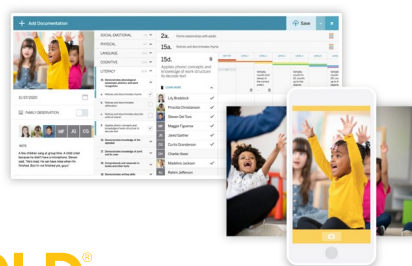
#### The Creative Curriculum®

Nationally known for its forward-thinking, rigorously researched whole-child approach and trusted for decades by early childhood educators, *The Creative Curriculum*® builds children's confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills through hands-on, project-based investigations.



*Al's Pals*™ is an evidence-based, comprehensive social-emotional learning curriculum and professional development program designed for the specific needs of preschool children. The program promotes resiliency through social-emotional learning and the development of self-control and problem-solving skills.

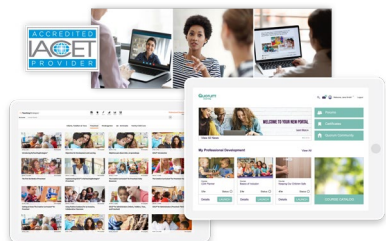
### Assessment



#### GOLD®

*GOLD*® is a valid, reliable, and scalable formative and summative assessment solution that drives better learning outcomes for the whole child. Embed ongoing, authentic, observation-based assessment into everyday interactions with children.

### Professional Development



#### Professional Development

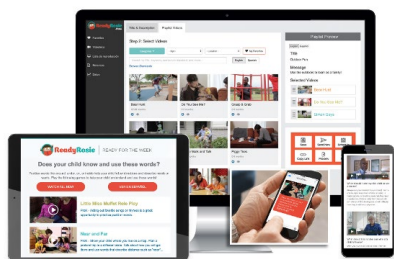
Our wide variety of professional development options include comprehensive in-person sessions; flexible, live, and virtual sessions; and a Teacher Membership that provides a variety of learning formats. Our offerings build and strengthen educators' capacity and foster professional growth.



*Noni*™ provides real-time support to help teachers build trauma-sensitive classrooms and understand, manage, and predict dysregulated child behaviors that stem from exposure to trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

# Teaching Strategies Early Learning Solutions

## Family Engagement



This research-based family engagement tool is based on seven essential principles for transformative family partnerships. ReadyRosie® supports families with mobile-friendly videos and tools (in English and Spanish) that show real families modeling fun activities that support learning.



## Family Learning Packs

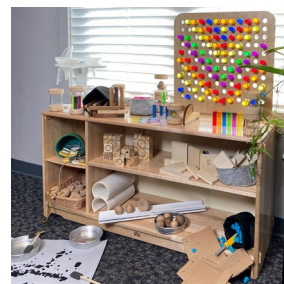
Family Learning Packs are designed to empower families and elevate their role in school readiness. Each pack includes a family subscription to ReadyRosie®, children's books, and a backpack filled with learning materials. MarcoPolo for Educators sold separately.

## Classroom Materials



## The Essentials Kit

The Essentials Kit provides the high-quality materials teachers need to guide daily learning experiences, as well as materials children will gravitate towards for investigation and play. It makes it easy to ensure classrooms have all the right materials, all in one kit.



## The Kodo Kit

The Kodo Kit energizes children's classroom explorations with unique collections of high-quality materials that support open-ended, hands-on, and investigative learning and play.

## ESSER Multi-Year Contract Overview

The US Department of Education released guidance saying a district *can* commit to multi-term contracts using ESSER funds. Federal guidance recognizes that there are circumstances where contracted activities may continue for a reasonable time after the ESSER fund liquidation date. Accordingly, a district can sign a multi-year licensing contract, pay for the contract before the final liquidation date, and receive services under the contract for some time after the liquidation date.

There are restrictions to committing to multi-term contracts using ESSER funds. Under no circumstances may services extend beyond four years after the obligation date of a grant. School officials must conclude that the extension is necessary, reasonable, and does not threaten good grant management.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE: [W/A Q&A on ESSER Multi Year Contracting December 2022](#)

SOURCE: Frequently Asked Questions: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Programs Governor's Emergency Education Relief Programs (ED: December 2022). [LINK](#).