Advocating for Equity Across All Levels of Government

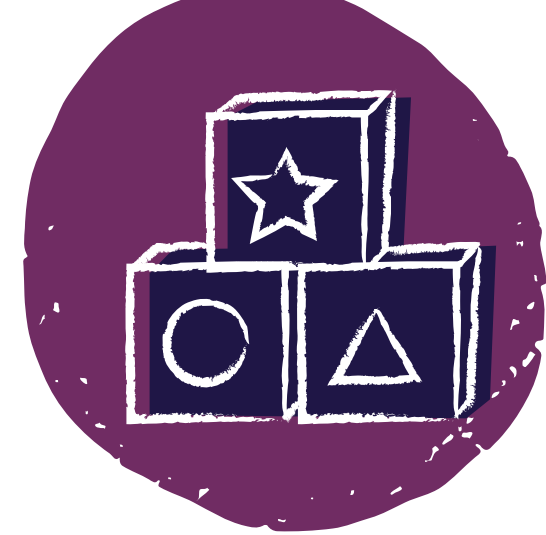**DIMENSION 8:**

HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

ALLIANCE FOR RESOURCE EQUITY

Uniting advocates and education leaders
to unlock excellence for every student

DIMENSION 8:

HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

THE VISION: Each student — including students of color and students with higher needs — has access to high-quality preschool programs that meet their needs, so all students can reach high standards and thrive.

KEY QUESTION
8.1

Does each student have access to high-quality preschool programs?

Federal

- **Congress** can:
  - Set rules for implementing state early learning programs, including mandatory child care funding plans and related consultation
  - Require states to establish state advisory councils to include representation across state and local education and health agencies
  - Fund programs across federal agencies to support three- and four-year-old children in early learning settings
    - The Administration for Children and Families administers:
      - Preschool Development Grants Birth through Five
      - The [Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy](#) Program
      - Head Start, which provides federal funding directly to localities

- The US Department of Agriculture administers reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children enrolled in participating child care centers through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

- The US Department of Education administers:
  - Funding for preschool through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
  - Competitive grants to colleges and universities for campus-based child-care services for student parents with low incomes through the Child Care Access Means Parents in School grant program
  - Competitive grants for "distressed communities" to provide early learning through the Promise Neighborhoods program

- The US Department of the Interior administers the Family and Child Education program, which supports federally recognized tribal members

- States, territories, and tribes administer the Child Care and Development Fund with support from the Administration for Children and Families

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Section 619, administered by state education agencies

State

- **States** typically take one of three approaches to oversight of early learning:
  - Creating a new entity to oversee several Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs
  - Consolidating existing offices and programs into an existing entity
  - Coordinating multiple agencies

- **State legislatures and governors** can:
  - Fund early learning programs
  - Establish a standing source of revenue for early learning programs
  - Establish state early learning advisory councils to help coordinate and implement early learning programs
  - Establish a dedicated department of early learning
  - Create children's cabinets or other oversight bodies that facilitate collaborative action or advise on policy across various governmental and nongovernmental agencies that deal with children's welfare, education, and well-being

- **State early learning advisory councils** provide policy recommendations and statewide coordination for early learning programs

School District

- **Local education agencies:**
  - Distribute funding for early learning education
  - Collect local property tax revenues, sales tax revenues, soda tax or other local revenues for early learning programs

- **Local early learning advisory councils** can contribute to the state early learning advisory council's activities and coordinate efforts at the local level

School

- **School leaders and educators** can:
  - Choose professional development topics and family engagement strategies
  - Partner with community organizations to provide early learning
  - Provide culturally- and linguistically competent professional development for all teaching professionals on:
    - Evidence-based strategies for supporting positive behaviors
    - Developmentally appropriate practice
    - Child development (including social-emotional development)
    - Screening and progress monitoring for students with learning and attention challenges
    - Supporting language-rich environments
    - Dual language learners
    - Collaborating with families