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| FY25 FC 0350 Playful Learning Institute, Preschool through 3rd Grade Application Planning Template**This document is for planning purposes only! Please be sure to enter all of this information directly into GEM$ when applying for this grant.** |

Thank you for your interest in applying for the FY25 FC 0350 Playful Learning Institute, Preschool through 3rd Grade. Please see the FC 0350 Funding Opportunity-Request for Proposals (RFP – ADD LINK) for additional information including eligibility requirements, funding request amounts, and priorities for the use of grant funds. A [Q & A](https://mass.egrantsmanagement.com/DocumentLibrary/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentGuid=ebc0d6c0-c35c-4190-b6ef-b29db52f3708&inline=true) is posted in GEM$ DESE Resources.

**District Team**

The participating team must include two (2) inclusive classroom educators from each grade level, Preschool through 3rd grade along (PK-3) with a district administrator (preferably one who has responsibility and oversight for curriculum decisions) and the school administrator of the building where the educators teach. If possible, the preference is for the educators to be from the same school but in cases where grade level configurations for schools don’t include all grades, two schools may be paired together to make up the team; in these cases, the building principal from both schools must be active participants. Small and rural districts with only 1 classroom per grade or 1 multi-age classroom covering more than one grade are eligible to apply.

Districts are encouraged to include classroom PK-3 instructional assistants, an English language/Multi lingual support specialist (working with educators PK-3), a special education/inclusion specialist (working with educators PK-3) as well as community-based preschool and out-of-school time staff on the team. While these additional team members are encouraged to participate in the professional development, please note that the coaching allocated for each team is for 10 public school educators, PK-3, and the district and school leader.

**Name of School(s)/Program applying to be part of the Playful Learning Institute**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of School/Program** | **Address** | **Principal** | **Principal’s Email** |
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**Team Members**

***Please place an asterisk beside the name of the person who has been designated as the team lead/coordinator.***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role** | **School Name, if applicable** | **Number of Years Working in the Education Field** | **Email Address** |
|  | PS Preschool Educator |  |  |  |
|  | PS Preschool Educator |  |  |  |
|  | PS Kindergarten Educator |  |  |  |
|  | PS Kindergarten Educator |  |  |  |
|  | PS 1st Grade Educator |  |  |  |
|  | PS 1st Grade Educator |  |  |  |
|  | PS 2nd Grade Educator |  |  |  |
|  | PS 2nd Grade Educator |  |  |  |
|  | PS 3rd Grade Educator |  |  |  |
|  | PS 3rd Grade Educator |  |  |  |
|  | EL/ML support specialist |  |  |  |
|  | Special education support specialist  |  |  |  |
|  | School Principal |  |  |  |
|  | School Principal, if applicable |  |  |  |
|  | District AdministratorTitle: |  |  |  |
|  | Instructional Assistant |  |  |  |
|  | Instructional Assistant |  |  |  |
|  | 21st CCLC Coordinator, if applicable |  |  |  |
|  | Community-Based Preschool Program |  |  |  |
|  | Other: |  |  |  |
|  | Other: |  |  |  |

Please respond to the following questions. Responses should provide sufficient detail for the reader and be at least 2-3 sentences each in length. Please make sure to pay close attention to the questions as there are multiple parts. When addressing questions please do not add charts, lists or bullet responses.

**Interest in the Playful Learning Institute**

1. Why is your district/school interested in applying to be part of the Playful Learning Institute (Institute)? How does the concept of playful learning align with your district and school’s priorities?
2. What do you hope to accomplish by participating? What might successful implementation look like at each grade level?
3. What do you anticipate will be most challenging in your work to implement playful learning? What structures, policies and practices exist that may act as barriers to the integration of playful learning?
4. How can the Institute be supportive in developing additional strategies to address the challenges?

**Current School/District Context for Playful Learning in the Early Grades, PK-3**

There are many types of play that exist along a continuum from free play to guided play to direct instruction (For definitions of these different types of play, see description for Figure 1 in this article: [Zosh, Hirsh-Pasek, Hopkins, Hanne-Jensen, Liu, Neale, Solis, & Whitebread, 2018](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6084083/)):



The Institute focuses on the benefits of playful instruction, co-opted play, guided play and games as instructional strategies to enhance both academic and social-emotional outcomes for students, PK-3.

1. In what content domains (domains listed in Question 6) is playful learning most likely or currently in use at each grade level, PK-3, in your school(s)? Use the grid below to share examples of ways it takes place during the school day and what playful learning currently looks like in your classrooms/school(s).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Examples: |
| Preschool: |  |
| Kindergarten: |  |
| 1st Grade: |  |
| 2nd Grade: |  |
| 3rd Grade: |  |

1. Please check the content areas by grade level where you see opportunities to embed/strengthen playful learning.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Language arts/literacy | Math | Science | Social Sciences | Art, Music and Dance | Health and Physical Education |
| Preschool |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Kindergarten |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grade 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grade 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grade 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. Please attach in this GEM$ application’s **Related Documents** a schedule of the day along with a description of what curricular programs are used for the different parts of the day at each grade level.

Using the space below, explain whether and how these curricular programs provide opportunities for playful learning already. If they don’t include opportunities for playful learning, what do you anticipate the barriers in doing so?

1. Does the district/school have flexibility in its curriculum and scheduling policies to possibly use the day differently (e.g. give more time for children to explore content through playful learning)?
2. Please provide some examples of how supports for Multi-lingual Learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities are provided in PK-3.
3. Do educators, PK-3, have instructional assistants supporting instruction in their classrooms? Please explain the role of instructional assistants, if any.
4. Is there flexibility in policies around staffing to include instructional assistants and specialists (e.g., Multi-Lingual learners, special education, art, music, physical education, etc.) to be part of this Institute?
5. Describe the current classroom/learning environments by grade. Include information about set up of the classroom, materials/manipulatives, visuals, classroom libraries, student access to materials, etc. Examples can include but are not limited to: types of seating options, play and/or games equipment (e.g., dramatic play props and costumes, blocks, sensory tables, garden space, dice, board games, clay/play-dough, climbing structures, sound systems for music, etc.).

Knowing that classroom configurations can vary, please use the classroom/learning

environments of the educators included on the team to respond to this question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Classroom/learning environments description |
| Preschool |  |
| Kindergarten |  |
| 1st Grade |  |
| 2nd Grade |  |
| 3rd Grade |  |

1. Is there anything you would like to change or strengthen about the classroom/learning environments? If yes, please describe.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Areas of Desired Change/Growth** |
| Preschool |  |
| Kindergarten |  |
| 1st Grade |  |
| 2nd Grade |  |
| 3rd Grade |  |

1. What is the school’s/district’s policy around common planning time for educators, PK-3 grade?
2. Other than common planning time, what collaborative structures will exist for educators to be able to engage in the work of the Institute at the district/school level? This includes time for all PLI participants to come together and collaborate, time for participants to prep materials for PLI related lessons, and time to participate in quarterly virtual networking meetings as well as evaluation activities. If other opportunities for educators to collaborate on PLI related activities don’t currently exist, what strategies can the district implement to ensure that educators are supported to collaborate and plan together around playful learning instructional practices?

**Student Population Information**

1. Please tell us about your student population, PK-3, in the participating school(s). Please use the last row to share any additional information that is not captured in the chart.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Total # Enrolled in the Participating School(s) | Racial Demographics of Students | # of Bi-lingual or Multi-lingual Learners | # of Students with IEPs | # of Students experiencing homelessness, in foster care or migratory |
| Preschool |  |  |  |  |  |
| Kinder-garten |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grade 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grade 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grade 3 |  |  |  |  |  |

1. Is there a particular equity gap/problem in PK-3 that your school(s) has identified and that the Institute may help to address? Please explain.
2. The Department has created this grant to support the use of playful learning as an anti-racist practice. How does your team think about/envision playful learning as a practice that addresses engagement of students, PK-3, who have been historically marginalized? How will you ensure that all children have access to playful learning?

**Playful Learning Institute Professional Development Schedule**

As noted in the Request for Proposal (RFP) document, awarded school teams are required to participate in asynchronous and in-person professional development, both of which are expected to begin in the spring of 2025.

1. Please prioritize which 2-day professional development session the district team would prefer to attend, if awarded the grant. Please note:
* All members of the team are required to attend the same two-day session (grant funds can be used to cover substitutes and travel costs); and
* The school team should be available to attend either date (the Department will do its best to ensure that teams can attend their preferred date. If the team can only attend one of the session dates, please use the space below to explain why.)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Our school team is available to participate in either session and does not have a priority.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Thursday, April 3, 2025 and Friday, April 4, 2025

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Thursday, June 5, 2025 and Friday, June 6, 2025

1. If the team can only attend one of the session dates, please use the space below to explain why. It is noted that locations for the professional development sessions will be determined based on the geographic location of the awarded grantees.