

Louisiana Educational Access Resource Network  
SOQ 23-023-Early Childcare Education Services  
(Birth to Five Program) for JeffCap

LEARN! (Louisiana Educational Access Resource Network) is a non-profit organization dedicated to emphasizing the relevant value and necessity of valuing the early learning teaching profession. Our core mission is to demonstrate quality teaching, quality learning, quality administration and its impact on building strong families in our communities. Our key areas of impact are

- Developing quality early learning educators while closing the early learning pay gap (quality work for quality pay)
- Providing the gold standard of early learning education and care
- Creating collaborative partnerships to provide unique and individualized programming
- Offering the Encouraging Parent Engagement Curriculum (EPEC)

**Professional training and experience –**

LEARN! is a collaboration between four early learning organizations determined to improve the early learning industry across the United States. Each member of the collaborative brings a unique talent and expertise to LEARN! with a distinctive design. We organized LEARN! in 2022; however, individuals on the LEARN! team has over 25 years of experience working in the early learning industry. The team has presented at more than 350 early learning conferences on the topics of early learning:

- Teacher Development/Recruitment and Retention
- Parent Engagement
- Wrap Around Services and Utilization
- Early Learning Expansion
- Early Learning Partnerships and Collaborations
- Policy Council/ Committees Training
- Performance Standards Surrounding Health and Mental Health
- Building Concepts for Medical/Dental Home
- Data-Driven Decision Making
- Early Learning Financial Regulations/In-Kind

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- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards
- Active Supervision
- CLASS Observations
- Grant Writing

The LEARN! team is comprised of all former Head Start consultants and employees. We are particularly accustomed to using the Performance Standards to lead an organization in the appropriate direction. We have managed early learning organizations with up to 3,100 children and budgets of up to \$30 million. The early learning research, training and development arm of LEARN has thrived with more than 210 clients a year. These clients across the United States have various early learning training bodies of work and requests. This division has also written and was awarded \$201 million of early learning expansion and implementation grants across the United States. LEARN has been engaged in several Head Start programs, early learning projects and expansion development opportunities in Louisiana. Our financial department at LEARN! has effectively overseen audits and ensured compliance with the federal Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards. This experience and diligent oversight ensure the financial integrity of our organization.

### **Scope of Services**

A large and consistent body of research shows that attending high-quality early learning programs can significantly impact the future success of children of all backgrounds—improving learning and development, boosting health outcomes, and increasing future employment and earnings. These benefits are applied across different racial and socioeconomic groups. With that knowledge, LEARN! is building an early learning incubator in Jefferson Parish. This incubator will be the gold standard of early learning for Southeastern Louisiana and beyond. Using the knowledge and experience of our LEARN! team,

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the LEARN! Incubator Preschool rooms will provide full day, full year education, parent involvement and nutrition services for children ages 36 months- 60 months for 10 hours per day, five (5) days per week, twelve (12) months per year. Our preschool classrooms will be financially braided with other financial resources to ensure all children's learning is supported by activities that drive performance and improve outcomes for all children. LEARN! is requesting 30 Head Start Slots for 3 classrooms. All preschool classrooms will have a maximum of 17 children in each classroom. All families in our preschool classrooms will receive *all the identical services* as Head Start children inside the classroom. The LEARN! team believes Head Start will address things that private preschool or even universal Pre-K programs may not be able to provide with the quality children need. It will give economically disadvantaged children a gold-standard preschool education and address all preschool classrooms' emotional, psychological, nutritional and social needs. It is not just preparing them academically but giving them the space to be more well-rounded children who will become more well-rounded adults. All families in the preschool classrooms will be invited to participate in parent orientation, parent engagement (EPEC), parent meetings and all programming for families. All families will partake in the transition and screening process within the 45 days of entry into the program, developmental screenings and ongoing assessments, and fully comply with the Head Start Performance Standards within 90 days of the contract date.

LEARN! preschool classrooms will use Creative Curriculum to ensure individualization for each child and build robust lesson plans to guarantee classroom cohesiveness. We will also use Teaching Strategies Gold to ensure the curriculum is connected to assessment to individualize learning and data and reporting to inform instruction and drive program efficacy. Our Master Teacher is CLASS certified, a Pre-K CLASS Assessor and the Executive Director of LEARN! is CLASS Infant and Toddler certified. CLASS supports interactions that develop children's ability to relate, self-regulate, communicate, and think, the core skills critical to academic learning. LEARN will participate in all fiscal and non-federal share requirements to ensure that all expenditures and in-kind items related to reimbursement requests and Non-Federal Share are

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acceptable and allowable in accordance with 2 CFR, Part 200 and ensure that the Non-Federal Share obligation is met as required, which is 25% of the total Federal reimbursement received.

Our lead Financial Officer is well-versed in fiscal management and program design. He is certified every year by WIFLI and The Office of Head Start.

**Responsiveness to the SOQ**

Child development is a critical foundation for community development. When we invest wisely in our children's futures, they become the foundation for a generation that will, in return, pay back through prosperity and respectable citizenship. When we fail to provide children with a critical foundation, we place that future prosperity at risk. Louisiana ranks bottom for children who can access early care and education, young children not in school, and their overall economic well-being. In Jefferson Parish, families are struggling to make ends meet. More than 18% of all families are in poverty and 19% of residents have limited English proficiency. LEARN! cannot continue to build early learning programs across the United States and not support its home childcare industry. We believe that LEARN! initiatives will have a profound impact as they:

- Increase Outcomes for the State: By elevating the quality of early childhood education, we contribute to improved long-term outcomes, including enhanced educational attainment, reduced crime rates, and a stronger workforce.
- Close the Teacher Pay Gap: We are dedicated to addressing the disparity in early childhood educator compensation, ensuring these vital professionals are appropriately rewarded for their essential work.
- Disrupt the Preschool-to-Prison Mindset: Our efforts challenge the troubling trend of the preschool-to-prison pipeline, redirecting young lives towards brighter futures and away from a cycle of incarceration.
- Ignite the Passion in the Early Learning Profession: Through our programs and support, we inspire and invigorate early learning professionals, fostering a deep passion for nurturing the next generation and creating a lasting positive impact on children's lives.

**Innovative Concepts**

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LEARN! brings unique insight into the early education and care industry. We believe in these models:

- Blended classrooms
- Parent Engagement Strategies EPEC
- Multilingual classrooms
- Brain development

### Financial Profile

The LEARN! Executive team has managed millions of dollars in Head Start money and look forward to being good stewards of this opportunity as well. Our lead Financial Officer is well-versed in fiscal management and program design. He is certified every year by WIFLI and The Office of Head Start

#### *Learn Budget and Justification*

Revenue:

|             |    |      |        |
|-------------|----|------|--------|
| Partnership | 30 | 9600 | 288000 |
|-------------|----|------|--------|

Expense:

|                  |    |     |       |        |
|------------------|----|-----|-------|--------|
| Teachers         | FT | 2   | 30140 | 60280  |
| TA               | FT | 2   | 27851 | 55702  |
| Director         |    | 1   |       | 40000  |
| Cook             |    | 1   |       | 8000   |
| Floater          |    | 0.5 |       | 11440  |
| Fringe/Taxes     |    |     |       | 43856  |
| Rent/Utilities   |    |     |       | 40000  |
| Program Supplies |    |     |       | 3000   |
| Creative         |    |     |       |        |
| Curriculum       |    |     |       | 5000   |
| Office Supplies  |    |     |       | 1500   |
| Insurance        |    |     |       | 2500   |
| Finance          |    | 1   |       | 6000   |
| Trainer          |    | 1   |       | 5250   |
| Maintenance      |    |     |       |        |
| Contract         |    |     |       | 4000   |
| Other            |    |     |       | 1472.5 |
| Total            |    |     |       | 288000 |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Income over Expenses | 0 |
|----------------------|---|

|                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Federal Share       | 288000        |
| Non-Federal Share   | 72000         |
| <b>Total Budget</b> | <b>360000</b> |

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- The organization partnership will have two classrooms of 17 children. 30 children will come from the partnership and 4 from private pay. The partnership will follow All state and federal rules regarding pay and treatment of all employees.
- The partnership classrooms will consist of one teacher and one teaching assistant per classroom and one part-time floater for breaks and lunches.
- There will be one director who will be responsible for the overall operation of the program and will be responsible for the two classrooms.
- It will be a part-time cook to cover breakfast and lunch.
- All paid staff will be employed year-round and be paid a prevailing wage. Friends includes all employment tax and benefits that the partnership offers.
- The remaining positions will be contracted finance, training, and maintenance.
- The partnership is renting a building that will meet childcare regulations.
- The partnership will use creative curriculum, CLASS and ASQ assessments.
- The partnership will follow the Head Start model and the rules and regulations according to the Head Start act.
- The partnership will have an additional 72,000 in in-kind, non-federal share, donations from parent and community volunteer hours, cash and services donations.

**The nature, quantity, and value of parish work previously performed and presently being performed by the person and/or firm submitting:**

Yvette M. Dobbs, MS, Executive Director of LEARN!, has worked in Early Care and Education in Southeastern Louisiana for ten years. She has consulted with Agenda for Children for the last two years to introduce outdoor learning environments curriculum to more than 320 childcare centers in Jefferson, Orleans, and Washington Parishes. She has consulted with Baptist Community Ministries and the New Orleans Baptist Association to open childcare centers in Orleans and Jefferson parishes. Ms. Dobbs has also provided training and technical assistance to all Grantee agencies in Orleans parish. Topics included but are limited to:

- Governance Training
- Program Expansion
- Executive Coaching/leadership training
- Data-driven decision making
- Parent Engagement Strategies = EPEC Curriculum
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The LEARN Team has also trained at early learning conferences in the region, including 4ProvidersXByProviders, Region VI Head Start Conference, Region IV Conference, and NAEYC.

Topics include:

- Self-Care for Teachers
- Program expansion for Directors
- CLASS Observations in a new light
- Fiscal management of programs
- Creating a new mindset for early learning providers
- Data-driven decision making

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**Past and current professional accomplishments, for which references from clients or former clients and information gathered by inspection of current or recent projects may be considered.**

The LEARN! executive team is a unique group that provides comprehensive experiences in early childhood learning and design. Our professional accomplishments include:

**Yvette Dobbs, MS** Yvette is the owner/master trainer of Dobbs and Associates. Dobbs and Associates is a national consulting firm that provides training and technical assistance to the early learning industry. She is a Federal Reviewer for Early/Head Start programs and a Federal Reviewer for Early/Head Start grants. Yvette is a former Head Start Director and a UCLA Head Start Fellow alum.

**Geoffrey Lowry, MBA** Geoffrey owns Boulden Rogen Early Learning Academy (BRECA). Geoffrey has opened seven (7) NAEYC accredited early learning academies in the last three years. BRECA serves more than 550 children with a staff of 120. Geoffrey is also a former Head Start Director and Executive Director and was part of a federal monitoring team with the specialty in fiscal and administration. He is certified every year by WIFLI and The Office of Head Start.

**Jon Walker** Jon Walker is the owner of RHEA Services. RHEA is dedicated to helping organizations identify, adopt and implement leading industry practices. Jon has trained professionals in Head Start and Early Head Start programs, Community Action Agencies, Head Start Associations, county governments, social service agencies, and small and large businesses. Jon believes, "To build a better product, invest in building better people."

At LEARN! our team boasts an impressive track record in early childhood education, with a combined experience spanning four decades and totaling nearly 140 years. Here are highlights of our achievements:

- Written and awarded \$201 million in early learning grants across the United States
- Written and awarded \$7 million in Department of Agriculture grants
- Expanded more than 27 early learning programs, including four in the state of Louisiana
- Partnered with the University of Connecticut to provide The Family Development Credential for early learning organizations to the state of Louisiana
- Developed the Encouraging Parent Engagement Curriculum (EPEC), used in 57 Head/Early Start programs in the United States.
- Coached more than 500 teachers on CLASS strategies and how to improve their classroom interactions

As a collective, we have provided invaluable support to public and private Early Childhood Education organizations across the nation, helping them streamline, execute, and assess their

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programs to attain peak performance. This rich expertise positions us as trusted partners in advancing JCAP's Head Start goals.

Our commitment to excellence in early childhood education is unwavering.