



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFP)

“Bright Beginnings” RFP#2026-02 0-to Age 6 Readiness Network “Building Brilliance from Birth: A Continuum of Growth, Learning, and Opportunity for Every Child in Escambia County”

Complete RFP available at www.escambiachildrenstrust.org

Important Dates

Release of ECT RFP	July 15, 2026
RFP Information Session *	July 20, 2026
Application Submission Deadline	September 4, 2026
Grants Committee Meeting	September 29, 2026
Program Committee Meeting	October 6, 2026
Funding Recommendations to ECT Board	October 13, 2026
Anticipated Contract Start Date	December 1, 2026

** Mandatory Meeting*

**Escambia Children's Trust (ECT)
1000 College Blvd., Bldg 26, 2nd Floor, Room 189
Pensacola, FL 32504
(850) 475-4980**

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SECTION 1: RFP TIMELINE

07/15/2026	RFP available on ECT website: www.escambiachildrenstrust.org
07/20/2026	<u>Mandatory In-Person RFP Information Session:</u> 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM CST 1000 College Blvd, Bldg 26, 2 nd Floor, Room 189 Pensacola, FL 32504
8/3/2026, 8/5/2026, 8/10/2026, 8/12/2026, 8/17/2026, 8/19/2026, 8/24/2026	<u>Mandatory In-Person Finance and Budget Training</u> 1000 College Blvd, Bldg 26, 2 nd Floor, Room 189 Pensacola, FL 32504 Time: 10:00am-11:30am (Only one date is required for eligibility)
8/5/2026-9/2/2026	<u>Staff Technical Assistance- ECT Training Room</u> 1000 College Blvd, Bldg 26, 2 nd Floor, Room 189 Pensacola, FL 32504 (Individual appointment required)
8/26/2026	Deadline for submission of questions regarding clarification of RFP
8/31/2026	Final posting of questions and answers and/or clarification or addenda to RFP (if any) on ECT website www.escambiachildrenstrust.org
9/2/2026	Deadline for technical assistance
<i>Please review Q&A and any addenda prior to application submission as it may affect outcome.</i>	
9/4/2026	RESPONSE DEADLINE All applications must be submitted electronically by 3:00 PM CDT <u>Late applications will not be accepted.</u>
9/8/2026 – 09/11/2026	Stage 1: ECT technical review of applications (pre-award risk assessment and vetting)
09/14/2026 - 09/27/2026	Grants Committee conducts due diligence and review of eligible Applications
09/29/2026	Grants Committee Meeting 1000 College Blvd, Bldg. 26, 2 nd Floor, Room 189 Pensacola, FL 32504 Time: 9:00 AM CST (Zoom link and location to be provided on ECT website)
9/30/2026	Notification by email to Applicants; scores and list of those recommended for funding posted on ECT website: www.escambiachildrenstrust.org
10/6/2026	Program Committee and final funding recommendation(s) to be submitted to the Board for approval
10/13/2026	ECT Board of Directors Meeting, Final Funding Decision 9:00 AM CST; 221 Palafox Place, Pensacola, FL
10/14/2026	Notice of Intent to award contract(s) posted on ECT website: www.escambiachildrenstrust.org
10/15/2026 - 11/30/2026	Contract discussion and finalization
12/01/2026	Contract Period Begins

ECT reserves the right to adjust the timeline. Any adjustments will be published on the ECT RFP Landing Page.

SECTION 2: OUR MISSION AND VISION

2.1 About Escambia Children's Trust

Escambia Children's Trust (ECT) is an independent special district established by Escambia County voters in 2020. ECT exists to provide leadership, funding, services, and research on behalf of Escambia County's children to ensure they grow up to be healthy, productive, stable community members. ECT invests in prevention and early intervention programs which reduce the need for more costly services later in life.

2.2 Impact Statement

Escambia Children's Trust (ECT) is committed to ensuring that all applicants for funding are treated fairly, equitably, and without discrimination. Our mission is to improve the lives of children and families in our community by funding programs and services that address critical needs. To achieve this, we are dedicated to creating an inclusive and transparent funding process that is free from bias based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that does not relate to the applicant's ability to deliver quality services.

We believe that every child, regardless of background, should have equal access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. To this end, ECT ensures that all applicants for funding are evaluated based on their ability to meet the needs of children and families, as well as the effectiveness and sustainability of their proposed programs, rather than any personal or demographic characteristic.

SECTION 3: INTRODUCTION

3.1 Background

Bright Beginnings is a comprehensive, evidence-informed early childhood initiative designed to support children from prenatal through age six across Escambia County. The initiative establishes a strong developmental foundation by integrating health, early learning, family engagement, and coordinated support systems to ensure children enter kindergarten ready to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

To ensure fidelity, accountability, and cross-sector alignment, Bright Beginnings will operate through a centralized network structure coordinated by the Escambia Children's Trust (ECT). *ECT Staff will act as the coordinator of the collected data* and is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining a unified data collection and reporting system for all funded providers;
- Establishing standardized performance measures, reporting protocols, and quarterly data submission requirements;
- Monitoring program outcomes and ensuring consistency and integrity of data across all grant recipients;
- Facilitating cross-agency communication, data sharing agreements, and collaborative planning among providers;
- Producing quarterly and annual community impact reports that align early childhood indicators with the Bright Beginnings continuum and long-term educational outcomes;
- Convening network partners regularly to review performance data, identify service gaps, coordinate referrals, and implement continuous quality improvement strategies.

As the backbone entity, the *ECT Staff* will ensure that all funded organizations function as an integrated prenatal-to-age-six readiness network rather than as independent service providers. This coordinated approach promotes collective impact, strengthens accountability, reduces duplication of services, and creates a seamless system of care for children and families throughout Escambia County.

This initiative is intentionally aligned with the Escambia Children's Trust continuum:

- **Bright Beginnings (0–6):** Early brain development and school readiness
- **Bright Beginnings (K–12):** Academic enrichment and youth development
- **Bright Futures:** Postsecondary readiness and scholarship attainment (State of Florida Program)

By investing early, **Bright Beginnings** reduces the need for remediation, strengthens long-term academic outcomes, and positions children to fully benefit from supplementary programming/services and future educational opportunities.

By investing in early childhood, Bright Beginnings generates long-term benefits that extend into adolescence and adulthood. Children who enter school ready to learn are more likely to:

- Achieve grade-level proficiency
- Graduate from high school
- Pursue postsecondary education
- Qualify for programs such as Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship

This initiative represents a strategic, upstream investment that strengthens the entire educational pipeline and improves outcomes for children and families across Escambia County.

This RFP specifically aims to address the themes highlighted in **ECT's needs assessment**

<https://escambiachildrenstrust.org/partners/impact> ensuring that all students have access to the resources and support they need during the critical afterschool and summer hours.

3.2 Scope of Services/Scope of Work

A. Purpose of Funding

Escambia Children's Trust (ECT) invites high-performing, fiscally responsible local providers of high-quality prenatal and early childhood programs to apply for funding to operate Bright Beginnings programs over a three-year project period. Awards made through this Request for Applications (RFP) will enhance or expand direct services for children and youth in Escambia County.

The project period will be **up to 36 months**, beginning **on or after December 1, 2026**, and ending **no later than November 30, 2029**.

B. Target Population and Community Need

Bright Beginnings serves **prenatal families, infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children (0–6)**, prioritizing:

- Families in underserved and high-need communities
- Children at risk of developmental delays
- Children with disabilities
- Multilingual families
- English as a second language

- First-time and teen parents
- Families with multiple children with additional needs
- Households with limited access to early learning resources
- Single parent households
- Foster care families
- Grandparents raising grandchildren
- Incarcerated parent
- Military families

Community data consistently demonstrates that children who enter kindergarten without foundational literacy, social-emotional skills, or early learning exposure are significantly more likely to experience ongoing academic challenges. Bright Beginnings addresses these gaps through **early intervention, prevention, and family-centered supports**, ensuring equitable access to high-quality early childhood experiences.

C. Budget Guidelines and Allowable Expenditures

Funding awarded through this RFP must adhere to the following:

- The maximum allowable program funding request is \$500,000 annually
- The maximum allowable request is \$5,000 per program participant
- The ECT Budget Narrative form must be utilized
- All applications must adhere to ECT fiscal policies and guidelines found here: [Fiscal Policies and Guidelines](#)
- Additional information will be provided at the mandatory grant financial planning course

D. Core Program Design and Curriculum Framework

Bright Beginnings aligns with the Bright Beginnings framework by adapting key categories to early childhood development:

- **Academic Enrichment:** Early literacy, language development, and pre-math skills
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** Attachment, self-regulation, and social development
- **Health, Wellness & Physical Development:** Prenatal care, nutrition, physical activity and screenings
- **Arts & Creative Expression:** Music, storytelling, and play-based learning
- **Family & Community Engagement:** Parent education, home learning routines, local support systems, ongoing medical/developmental services,
- **Program Quality & Safety:** Developmental monitoring and early intervention systems
- **Trauma Informed Practices**

The program utilizes a **stage-based milestone model**, ensuring that services are developmentally appropriate and aligned with measurable outcomes at each age level.

3.3 Project Goals

All funded programs will be required to submit prescribed data related to the targeted participant level's goals and objectives.

3.4 Eligible Applicants

ECT funds not-for-profit corporations, incorporated organizations, neighborhood organizations, and local government organizations. For-profit organizations may apply for ECT funds so long as the project does not generate a profit for the proposing organization.

Organizations or programs that operate under the exclusive jurisdiction of the public school system are prohibited from applying for funds directly from ECT. Programs requiring worship or religious instructional activities, as a condition of participation, shall not be funded.

ECT funding shall not supplant existing resources.

Programming funded by ECT shall be offered free-of-charge to eligible participants.

3.5 Stage-Based Curriculum and Service Delivery Models

Stage 1: Prenatal (Conception – Birth)

Bright Beginnings starts prior to birth, focusing on maternal health, early brain development, and parent education. Services include prenatal classes, mental health screenings, and coaching on bonding and early language exposure. These efforts ensure healthy birth outcomes and establish the foundation for lifelong learning.

Goal: Prepare brain development and strengthen the parent-child bond before birth; Provision of health services for mother (maternal hypertension)

- **Parent Focus:**
 - Prenatal visits and the importance of consistency
 - Attend prenatal classes on brain development and bonding
 - Read aloud or talk to the baby daily (language exposure begins in utero)
 - Reduce stress, prioritize nutrition, and avoid harmful substances
- **Intervention Steps:**
 - Screen for maternal mental health and provide supports
 - Offer community-based doulas or support coaches
- **Literacy/Learning Prep:**
 - Literacy assistance/supports for families
 - Encourage parents to start a “Read to Me” routine
 - Introduce “sound play” (music, rhymes, heartbeat sounds)

Stage 2: Infant (0–12 Months)

The program emphasizes secure attachment, responsive caregiving, and early language exposure. Families are supported in establishing daily reading routines and engaging in verbal interaction, while developmental milestones are monitored to ensure early identification of delays.

Goal: Build secure attachment and early language exposure.

- **Parent Focus:**
 - Responsive caregiving (talk, touch, eye contact)
 - Read books daily—even picture books with faces and contrast
 - Variety of books available for families – identify books that would be appropriate

- **Intervention Steps:**
 - Monitor developmental milestones at well-baby visits
 - Provide support for delays (hearing, motor, feeding)
- **Literacy/Learning Prep:**
 - Daily reading routines (even 5–10 minutes)
 - Narrate everyday tasks (“Now I’m changing your diaper...”)

Stage 3: Toddler (1–2 Years)

During this stage, children build vocabulary, mobility, and early problem-solving skills. The program provides resources for interactive play, language development, and early intervention services when needed, particularly in speech and developmental domains.

Goal: Expand vocabulary, mobility, and early problem-solving.

- **Parent Focus:**
 - Encourage open-ended play and conversation
 - Set routines that include music, books, and exploration
- **Intervention Steps:**
 - Screen for speech/language delays; offer early speech therapy if needed.
 - Provide resources for home language development (especially multilingual homes).
- **Literacy/Learning Prep:**
 - Sing songs and recite rhymes daily.
 - Provide books with textures, flaps, and interactive features.

Stage 4: Early Preschool (2–3 Years)

Children are introduced to structured, play-based learning environments that promote communication, comprehension, and social interaction. Parents receive coaching on creating language-rich environments and extending learning through everyday interactions.

Goal: Strengthen communication, early comprehension, and social skills.

- **Parent Focus:**
 - Create consistent reading times.
 - Ask open-ended questions and extend conversations.
- **Intervention Steps:**
 - Regular developmental screening and parent coaching.
 - Early childhood education referrals (if delays identified).
- **Literacy/Learning Prep:**
 - “Print-rich” environments (labels, letter games).
 - Begin name recognition and story prediction (“What do you think happens next?”).

Stage 5: Preschool (3–4 Years)

The focus shifts to pre-literacy, number sense, and peer engagement. Children participate in activities that promote letter recognition, storytelling, and collaborative play, while families are encouraged to enroll in quality early learning programs.

Goal: Build pre-literacy, number sense, and peer interaction.

- **Parent Focus:**
 - Practice storytelling, drawing, name writing.
 - Participate in preschool or community-based early learning.
- **Intervention Steps:**
 - Provide referrals to free preschool programs.
 - Offer behavioral coaching and parenting groups.
- **Literacy/Learning Prep:**
 - Rhyming, sound matching, and letter identification.
 - Daily story time with discussion (“Who was your favorite character?”).

Stage 6: Pre-K (4–5 Years)

This stage prepares children for formal education through structured learning experiences, phonics development, and school readiness assessments. Families are actively engaged in the transition to kindergarten, strengthening home-school connections.

Goal: Prepare for classroom routines, independent learning, and reading readiness.

- **Parent Focus:**
 - Build independence (getting dressed, following directions).
 - Increase parent-teacher communication in preschool.
- **Intervention Steps:**
 - School readiness assessments.
 - Early IEP (if needed) and intervention services.
- **Literacy/Learning Prep:**
 - Sound-letter mapping, basic phonics.
 - Exposure to books with longer narratives and complex vocabulary.

Stage 7: Kindergarten Entry (5–6 Years)

Bright Beginnings ensures that children demonstrate readiness across academic, social, and emotional domains. Final screenings and supports are provided, and families are connected to school-based resources and Bright Pathways OST opportunities.

Goal: Ensure readiness across academic, social, and emotional domains.

- **Parent Focus:**
 - Reinforce routines (sleep, meals, homework habits).
 - Practice fine motor (cutting, writing) and early math.
- **Intervention Steps:**

- Final readiness screening (vision, hearing, developmental).
- Connection to school support teams as needed.
- **Literacy/Learning Prep:**
 - Begin simple reading and writing.
 - Encourage daily “read aloud, read together” routines.

3.6 Service Delivery and Key Partnerships

Bright Beginnings leverages a **collaborative network of community-based organizations and service providers** to deliver comprehensive supports:

- **Healthcare Providers:** Deliver prenatal education, developmental screenings, and early literacy integration through pediatric visits, referral for early intervention programs/services
- **Home Visiting Programs:** Provide individualized family support, parenting education, and early intervention referrals
- **Early Childhood Systems:** Coordinate developmental screenings, care navigation, and connections to specialized services
- **Early Learning Providers:** Deliver high-quality preschool and Pre-K programming aligned with school readiness standards*
- **Formal Systems:** Health Department, Department of Children and Families for WIC, support benefits and wellness (ex: smoking cessation)
- **Community-Based Organizations:** Offer parent workshops, literacy resources, generational support systems and enrichment opportunities. Each partner contributes to a **coordinated system of care**, ensuring that families receive seamless, wraparound support from prenatal stages through school entry.

*** Early Learning Providers and Childcare Institutions:** Deliver high-quality preschool and Pre-K programming aligned with Florida's School Readiness Standards and the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards while implementing enhanced services that extend beyond core childcare and instructional requirements.

ECT funding shall be used to support supplemental and enrichment activities that strengthen school readiness outcomes and improve equitable access to comprehensive services, including but not limited to:

- Evidence-based early literacy and language development initiatives, including home literacy kits, family reading programs, and language-rich classroom enhancements;
- Supplemental social-emotional learning curricula, behavioral supports, and trauma-informed practices;
- Developmental, behavioral, vision, hearing, and speech screenings beyond those otherwise required by licensing or state-funded programs;
- Parent engagement activities, parent education workshops, and family resource navigation services;
- Professional development, coaching, and credentialing opportunities that improve instructional quality and teacher effectiveness;
- Enhanced inclusion supports for children with developmental delays, disabilities, or behavioral needs;

- Expanded family engagement personnel, parent navigators, or community liaisons to improve service coordination;
- Transition-to-kindergarten initiatives, including readiness assessments, family orientation activities, and kindergarten bridge programming;
- Classroom materials, educational resources, and technology that support evidence-based learning experiences and are not otherwise funded through state or federal sources;
- Coordination with healthcare providers and community-based organizations to establish a comprehensive system of care that addresses the educational, developmental, and wellness needs of children and families.

Funds awarded through the Bright Beginnings initiative are intended to **supplement, enhance, and expand existing early childhood services and should not supplant federal, state, local, or private funding sources used to provide basic childcare operations, staffing requirements, or mandated educational services.**

Providers must demonstrate that grant-funded activities represent new, expanded, or enhanced services that increase program quality, improve child outcomes, or address unmet community needs.

Allowable Use of Funds Matrix (Examples):

Allowable (Supplement)	Not Allowable (Supplant)
Literacy coaches	Regular classroom teachers already funded
Family engagement coordinators	Existing administrative salaries
Developmental screenings	Required licensing activities
Evidence-based curricula enhancements	Basic childcare operations
Parent workshops	Routine parent conferences
Kindergarten transition programs	Standard VPK instruction
Mental health consultation	Existing contracted services already funded

3.7 Governance, Data Collection, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Collective Impact Structure with the following framework:

ECT Board



ECT Staff (Data and Network Coordinators)



Early Childhood Collaborative Network

- Healthcare Providers
- Home Visiting Programs
- Early Learning Providers
- Community-Based Organizations
- Family Support Agencies

Bright Beginnings incorporates a robust system for **tracking developmental progress and program effectiveness**, including:

- Developmental screenings and milestone tracking
- Parent engagement metrics (e.g., reading frequency, participation)
- Enrollment and access to early learning programs

- Referral and follow-up data for intervention services

Data is used to inform continuous improvement, ensure accountability, and align early childhood outcomes with later academic success indicators within Bright Pathways.

Bright Beginnings employs a **comprehensive data system** to monitor performance and ensure accountability:

- **Baseline Assessments:** Conducted at program entry
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Quarterly progress tracking across all domains
- **Outcome Evaluation:** Annual assessment of kindergarten readiness and family outcomes
- **Continuous Improvement:** Data used to refine program delivery, target interventions, and inform funding decisions

Data Integration Strategy:

- Align early childhood data with **K–12 outcomes in Bright Pathways**
- Utilize shared platforms and partner data systems
- Ensure compliance with ECT reporting requirements and Quality Program Assurances

3.8 Alignment with Bright Pathways and Long-Term Outcomes

Bright Beginnings serves as the **entry point into the Bright Pathways continuum**, ensuring that children transition into available supplemental programming with the foundational skills needed to succeed.

Program outcomes include:

- Increased kindergarten readiness
- Improved early literacy and language development
- Enhanced social-emotional competencies
- Decreased Infant Mortality Rate
- Decreased Low Birth Weight Rate Babies
- Decreased Substance Exposed Newborns
- Increased Pre-Natal Care and Pediatric Care
- Decreased bacterial STD rates among children
- Increased VPK participation and Quality Child Care
- Reduced verified child maltreatment
- Reduced childhood hunger
- Higher family engagement in education
- Reduced incarceration rates

These outcomes directly support success in Bright Pathways programming, including academic enrichment, SEL development, and long-term educational attainment.

3.9 Program Design, Measurable Outcomes & KPIs

Bright Beginnings: Prenatal – Age 6 Readiness Continuum

1. Outcomes Framework Overview

Bright Beginnings utilizes a **results-based accountability framework** that aligns early childhood indicators with downstream success in Bright Pathways and long-term eligibility for postsecondary opportunities. Outcomes are measured across five domains:

1. *Health & Development*
2. *Early Literacy & Cognitive Development*
3. *Social-Emotional Development*
4. *Family Engagement*
5. *Access & Participation*

Each domain includes **clear, quantifiable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** tied to developmental milestones and program participation.

2. Domain-Level Outcomes and KPIs

A. Health & Development Outcomes

Outcome Goal: Children are born healthy and meet age-appropriate developmental milestones.

Key Performance Indicators:

- **≥ 85% of enrolled pregnant participants** receive prenatal care in the first trimester
- **≥ 90% of infants (0–12 months)** receive all recommended well-child visits
- **≥ 95% of children (0–5)** receive developmental screenings annually
- **≥ 80% of identified developmental delays** receive referral and follow-up services within 60 days
- **≥ 90% of children entering kindergarten** complete vision, hearing, and developmental screenings

B. Early Literacy & Cognitive Development Outcomes

Outcome Goal: Children demonstrate age-appropriate language, pre-literacy, and early math skills.

Key Performance Indicators:

- **≥ 80% of children ages 3–5** demonstrate age-appropriate vocabulary and language benchmarks
- **≥ 75% of preschool children (3–4)** demonstrate pre-literacy skills (letter recognition, phonological awareness)
- **≥ 70% of Pre-K children (4–5)** demonstrate kindergarten readiness in literacy assessments
- **≥ 85% of families** report reading to their child at least **3 times per week**
- **≥ 75% of children entering kindergarten** meet or exceed readiness benchmarks

Data Sources:

Kindergarten readiness assessments, literacy screeners, parent surveys, program observation tools

C. Social-Emotional Development Outcomes

Outcome Goal: Children demonstrate self-regulation, positive relationships, and emotional readiness.

Key Performance Indicators:

- **≥ 80% of children (ages 2–5)** demonstrate age-appropriate self-regulation skills
- **≥ 85% of children in preschool settings** show positive peer interaction and engagement
- **≥ 75% reduction in behavioral concerns** among children receiving early intervention supports
- **≥ 90% of parents** report increased confidence in supporting their child's emotional development

Data Sources:

SEL screening tools (e.g., DECA), provider assessments, parent surveys, observation data

D. Family Engagement Outcomes

Outcome Goal: Families are actively engaged in their child’s development and learning.

Key Performance Indicators:

- **≥ 85% of families** participate in at least one parent workshop or coaching session quarterly
- **≥ 80% of families** implement home learning routines (reading, talking, structured play)
- **≥ 75% of families** demonstrate increased knowledge of child development (pre/post survey)
- **≥ 90% of families referred to services** successfully connect to at least one community resource

Data Sources:

Attendance logs, parent surveys, case management systems, referral tracking

E. Access & Participation Outcomes

Outcome Goal: Children and families access high-quality early learning and support services.

Key Performance Indicators:

- **≥ 85% enrollment rate** among eligible target populations
- **≥ 80% average participation rate** in program services (home visits, workshops, screenings)
- **≥ 75% of eligible children (3–5)** enrolled in a high-quality preschool or Pre-K program
- **≥ 90% retention rate** of enrolled families across program stages
- **≥ Increased participation** from priority zip codes and high-need communities (tracked annually)

Data Sources:

Enrollment data, attendance records, ELC/Pre-K enrollment verification, geographic tracking

3. Milestone-Based Outcome Alignment

Bright Beginnings integrates **KPIs** at each developmental stage to ensure continuous progress:

Stage	Key Milestone Outcomes
Prenatal	Healthy birth weight; early prenatal care initiation
Infant	Secure attachment; early language exposure
Toddler	Vocabulary growth; developmental screening completion
Early Preschool	Communication skills; early social interaction
Preschool	Pre-literacy and number sense development
Pre-K	Kindergarten readiness benchmarks met
Kindergarten Entry	Academic, social, and behavioral readiness

The Bright Beginnings KPI framework provides **clear, measurable indicators of success** that align with Escambia Children’s Trust priorities, Bright Beginnings performance expectations, and long-term educational outcomes.

By integrating data-driven strategies, milestone tracking, and cross-sector collaboration, the program ensures that every child is not only ready for kindergarten—but prepared to succeed throughout their educational journey and beyond.