



## DEKALB COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

475 DeKalb Avenue, Sycamore, IL 60178

815-748-5383 [www.dekalbccf.org](http://www.dekalbccf.org)

# KINDERGARTEN READINESS TOOLKIT GRANT GUIDELINES

### Grant Program Purpose

The DeKalb County Community Foundation recognizes the importance of supporting young children and their families across one of the most important transitions in life; from early childhood to kindergarten. Early childhood experiences play a significant role in a child's development and the degree to which a child is ready for kindergarten.

Early learning and kindergarten educators in DeKalb County have identified kindergarten readiness toolkits as a positive way to engage young children and their families. By using the resources provided in the toolkits, parents and other family members can create fun learning experiences for their children and help prepare them for school. The toolkits include items and tools that families and children can share together.

Our teachers and families have learned that kindergarten readiness toolkits provide a wide variety of benefits including:

- an easy way to explain what kindergarten is all about
- bridging pre-K and kindergarten programs
- explaining the differences between pre-K and kindergarten
- providing a curriculum guide that informs families on what they can do to better prepare children for kindergarten
- simple and easy to use resources for parent and family engagement

### Background and Overview

In 2016, Community Foundation board members and professionals working in early care and education (including early childhood and home care programs, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten educators) formed the Crib to Career- Kindergarten Readiness Working Group (now the Kindergarten Readiness Collaborative). With guidance from this group, the Community Foundation commissioned the DeKalb County Kindergarten Readiness Study and engaged early childhood educators and other professionals associated with early childhood education to assess the state of kindergarten readiness in DeKalb County. Results from this study helped to create a Kindergarten Readiness Work Plan as part of a collective impact process. The evolving Work Plan identifies key issues and concerns and captures the goals and strategies stakeholders have identified to address some of these concerns.

**If you are interested in being part of this initiative, or know of others who would like to participate, contact [t.spartz@dekalbccf.org](mailto:t.spartz@dekalbccf.org).**

## Application Process

Deadline to apply for a Kindergarten Readiness Toolkit Grant is December 1 or as published through the Community Foundation and the Regional Office of Education. Grant applications are reviewed by members of the Kindergarten Readiness Collaborative with final approval from the Community Foundation Board of Directors. All requests must be submitted using the [Kindergarten Readiness Toolkit online application](#)

## Eligibility

Kindergarten Readiness Toolkit grants are intended to support kindergarten programs, both public and private, located in DeKalb County, Illinois. The grant is intended to benefit the **entire** kindergarten program of a public school district or of a private school. The grant applicant can be a kindergarten teacher or pre-K teacher or other significant professional on behalf of the entire kindergarten program.

## General Requirements

- Limit one grant application per school district or private school. Collaboration amongst all kindergarten teachers within a district is required in order to ensure equity and that all incoming kindergarten students of a public school district or private school program are served.
- Grants are to be utilized within 12 months of their receipt and a grant report will be expected before the end of the school year.
- Grant recipients are expected to collaborate closely with pre-K teachers and kindergarten teachers in distributing the kindergarten readiness toolkits and in engaging families in their use.
- Recipients of Kindergarten Readiness Toolkit Grants are expected to share successes and challenges learned from the toolkit program and may be contacted by the Community Foundation during or after the completion of the distribution process.

## Grant Guidelines

Applicants are strongly encouraged to plan for and compile grant requests for kindergarten readiness toolkits and the strategy for distribution.

Applicants are encouraged to secure appropriate engagement and approval from key administration personnel and colleagues before initiating a kindergarten readiness toolkit program in their school district.

Toolkits consist of 'core elements' which are common elements requested by previous toolkit grantees. Examples of commonly requested core elements are: a white board and marker, crayons, scissors, playdoh, notebook, dice or counters, sidewalk chalk, book, flash cards, alpha and number magnets (or foam). \* *Core elements may vary due to pricing.*

The Community Foundation is excited to partner with the DeKalb County Farm Bureau to provide a farm matching game in each toolkit. The matching game consists of 60 cards (30 matches) that promote farm literacy in our students and their families. Thank you to our friends at the Farm Bureau for being a part of this program!

**For questions or additional information, please contact Teri Spartz, Community Engagement Director, [t.spartz@dekalbccf.org](mailto:t.spartz@dekalbccf.org) or 815-748-5383.**

*Guidelines last updated: 10/9/19*