

**Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)
Preschool Promise
S411C230051
Preschool Promise EIR - Conscious Discipline Impact Study**

Applicant Name: Preschool Promise

Project Title: Preschool Promise EIR - Conscious Discipline Impact Study

Type of Grant Requested: Early-Phase Mid-Phase Expansion

Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Absolute Priority 1-- Demonstrate a Rationale (Early), Moderate (Mid), Strong (Expansion)

Absolute Priority 2-- Field-Initiated Innovations—General

Absolute Priority 3-- Promoting STEM Education

Absolute Priority 4-- Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Absolute Priority 5-- Educator Recruitment and Retention

Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Competitive Preference Priority 1— Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners

Competitive Preference Priority 2—Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning

Total number of students to be served by the project: 500 students in treatment classrooms, 500 in comparison classrooms each year of the 2-year implementation study

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: The population of focus for the EIR project is preschool children, between 3-5 years old, who reside in the highest and most under-resourced urban neighborhoods and outlying communities in Montgomery County.

Definition of high-need students: For the purpose of this EIR project, a high-need student is defined as a child who is performing below grade/age expectations, are involved in the foster care system, and/or considered part of an underserved population.

Brief description of project activities: Preschool Promise will work with an established network of licensed preschool and child care partner sites to identify preschool classrooms that will participate in a quasi-experimental design (QED), the purpose of which is to assess the effectiveness of Conscious Discipline® with a focus on cultural relevance. The impact of an emerging and innovative strategy called the Black Boy Ambassador program will be explored as an exploratory research question. The EIR will estimate the effectiveness of the program at increasing the social-emotional, self-regulation, executive function, academic skills, and kindergarten readiness for three- and four-year-old children attending Preschool Promise programs. The QED will compare outcomes for children attending Preschool Promise programs implementing CD compared to children attending Preschool Promise classrooms without CD and will also compare the instructional quality in the two sets of classrooms. Evaluation will also include an implementation evaluation that assesses fidelity of implementation in both years of the program and looks at the relationship of implementation to outcomes.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, and Performance Measures

Goal 1: Increase educator capacity and efficacy to amplify social and emotional skills within their academic curriculum.

Objective 1.1: By December 31, 2028, 90% of teachers will improve self-efficacy, pedagogical content knowledge, and attitudes towards teaching social emotional learning. Outcome: By May 2026 and May 2027, increase teacher use of personal self-regulation practices in the classroom. Tool: CD Fidelity Rubric and Pre- and Post- Surveys. Outcome: By May 2026 and May 2027, increase teacher use of self-regulation instructional practices. Tool: CD Fidelity Rubric. Outcome: By May 2026 and May 2027,

increase teachers' focus on children's social-emotional skills. Tool: CD Fidelity Rubric Outcome: By May 2026 and May 2027, increase teacher use of high-quality classroom instructional practices. Tool: CLASS Goal 2: Improve high-needs students' academic performance and engagement through relationship-focused, inclusive social and emotional skills and embedded instruction.

Objective 2.1: By December 31, 2028, 60% of children in CD classrooms will experience an increase in self-regulation and social-emotional skills. Outcome: By May 2026 and May 2027, increase student self-regulatory skills. Tool: eDECA P2 Behavioral Concerns scale and Self-Regulation and Initiative scale and the TPF overall. Outcome: By May 2026 and May 2027, increase student social-emotional skills by. Tool: eDECA P2 scales Attachment/ Relationships and TPF overall. Outcome: By May 2026 and May 2027, increase student executive function skills. Tool: Minnesota Executive Function Scale Standard Score. Outcome: By May 2026 and May 2027, increase student academic skills. Tool: WJ-IV ECAD Picture Vocabulary, Letter-Word Identification, and Number Sense Subtest Standard Scores.

Objective 2.2: By December 31, 2028, 36% of children in CD classrooms will "demonstrate" kindergarten readiness.

Outcome: By December 2026 and December 2027, increase student kindergarten readiness. Tool: KRA Outcome: By December 2026 and December 2027, increase student kindergarten readiness among African American children. Tool: KRA Key: CLASS - Classroom Assessment Scoring System; eDECA - Woodcock Johnson IV Tests of Early Cognitive and Academic Development; MEFS - Minnesota Executive Function Scale; WJ - Woodcock-Johnson IV (WJ IV); KRA - Kindergarten Readiness Assessment; and Total Protective Factors (TPF).

Summary of how the project is innovative: Conscious Discipline® (CD) is a popular and widely-utilized, trauma-informed, evidence-based practice, designed to improve the social-emotional skills that children need to succeed in school and later as adults. Although CD is implemented in educational settings throughout the U.S., and also applied in classrooms within the Preschool Promise system, there is minimal research to substantiate the impact of implementation. To date, there have been no studies of CD that meet the What Works Clearinghouse Standards With or Without Reservations. No comparative studies of CD combined with the emerging Black Boy Brilliance practice have been published or disseminated.

Other studies related to the proposed project: Prior research of the program includes a study of teachers' perceptions of the program and a study of children's behavioral improvement (after being identified by the teacher as exhibiting challenging behaviors) following participation in the Conscious Discipline® program. More recently, correlations between scores on the CD fidelity rubric and changes in children's executive function and academic skills were examined over time (Anderson et al, 2022; Anderson et al, 2020). Through this research, the team found that children who were in classrooms where teachers implemented the program with higher fidelity had greater executive function gains across the preschool year, and also reported that the association between program fidelity and children's kindergarten academic skills was fully mediated by children's growth in executive function skills.

Proposed implementation sites: The Preschool Promise Quasi Experimental Conscious Discipline Impact Study will over-recruit a total of 100 Preschool Promise partner classrooms with Montgomery County Ohio, in order to obtain an eventual target of at least 80 classrooms), half implementing Conscious Discipline® and half not using Conscious Discipline®. The EIR classrooms will be recruited in the 2025-26 school year to participate for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years. To be eligible for the study, the center must be a state-licensed child care center that is a Preschool Promise partner site. Teachers in those sites who teach in preschool classrooms serving 3- and 4-year-old children and who volunteer for the study will be part of the evaluation. The project will construct 4 blocks of classrooms defined by auspice (Head Start, Ohio Public Preschool, Licensed Center-Based Care, Other). Within each block, treatment and comparison classrooms will be matched on characteristics (staff demographics, years as a Preschool Promise partner, demographics of children/families served). The project will attempt to match

classrooms within the same center so that there will be both treatment and comparison classrooms within the same center, assuming there may be multiple teachers per classroom, and at least 1 - but not always all - teachers in the treatment classrooms will be implementing CD.

Organizations partnering with this project: The existing and proposed synergistic services involve the collaboration of multiple preschool partners, with 65 preschool sites offering their commitment going into the project, as noted in the signed MOU and letters of commitment. All partners share a similar mission of improving outcomes for children in the target area and have previously and successfully