

**Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)  
Research Collaboratory at ASU, dba Enterprise Collaboratory  
S411C230180**

**Development and Testing of EYEPlay Inclusion: An Innovative Approach to Providing Professional Development in Drama-Based Instruction to Teachers and Caregivers of High Communication Needs Children.**

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**Applicant Name:** Research Collaboratory at ASU, dba Enterprise Collaboratory at ASU (RCASU)

**Project Title:** Development and Testing of EYEPlay Inclusion: An Innovative Approach to Providing Professional Development in Drama-Based Instruction to Teachers and Caregivers of High Communication Needs Children.

**Type of Grant Requested:** (select one)  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:** 114 to 174

**Grade level(s) to be served by the project:** Preschool. Three to five-year-old children

**Definition of high-need students:** High communication needs (HCN) preschool children. HCN children are learners experiencing cross-categorical communication challenges requiring Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), including those who are emergent English Language Learners

**Brief description of project activities:** With guidance from the five-phase ADDIE model, Arizona State University and Childsplay, with the support of Phoenix Elementary School District #1, will: conduct a needs assessment; develop integrated drama-based instructional activities for teachers and caregivers to apply during storytime with high-needs preschool children; refine the developed instructional materials through pilot testing; and conclude with a randomized controlled trial of 30 classrooms to establish initial efficacy support.

**Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes:** Our primary objectives are to: (1) ascertain the needs of preschool teachers and caregivers in supporting early literacy for their high communication need children, (2) develop drama-based instructional materials to support those needs, (3) formatively assess the appropriateness and success of the developed materials, (4) refine the materials as needed, and (5) test the effectiveness of the complete intervention package at supporting literacy, engagement and achievement outcomes of high-needs preschool children.

**Summary of how the project is innovative:** The program is innovative in that it seeks to tailor dramabased literacy instruction strategies to teachers and caregivers of the often-underserved population of children experiencing communication challenges requiring Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

**Other studies related to the proposed project:** 2023 - 2025. EYEPlay ADAPT: Expanding A University-Theater School District Partnership to Support Early Literacy for Preschoolers with Diverse Abilities through Drama. Spencer Foundation. \$399,000. 2018 - 2022 Supporting Early Language Development of Preschool Children with Drama Integration. US Department of Education. Marley PI, Bernstein, K., Kelley,

M., Restepo, L. \$2,291,598. 2015 – 2019. Early Years Educators at Play (EYEPlay) Dual Language Learning Program. Helios Education Foundation. \$721,000.

**Proposed implementation sites:** Phoenix Elementary School District preschools and soon to be identified partner schools with comparable student characteristics.

**Organizations partnering with this project:** Childsplay Theatre Company, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers