Lexington Social Services
RFP #4-2020 ESR Priority Area: Childhood & Youth Development
Clarification Request

ESR Grant Program Respondent
Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS)
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1. **Is your proposal still viable for implementation as originally submitted?** The proposal submitted by Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS) is still viable, but the implementation of services had to be altered a bit. A child does not stop growing and his/her development is not paused because of a pandemic. VIPS found a way to continue to work with children and families through this crisis.

2. **Please detail any modifications you will be making to the original submission in order to comply with the new service delivery requirements in the COVID-19 environment? (i.e. social distancing, capacity requirements, group event restrictions, etc.)**
   The Early Childhood Intervention Program: Changes to Service Delivery
   Prior to COVID-19, VIPS had begun to offer virtual home visits in addition to in-home visits to a select number of families. Many of VIPS children are medically fragile. To help reduce the risk of medical complications while still providing much needed early intervention VIPS piloted the virtual home visits. It was a new option for families that VIPS was rolling out slowly in order to tackle glitches that may come up during visits. When the pandemic hit, the virtual visit was offered to all VIPS families as the only option for continued programming. Visits were, and are, conducted securely using ZOOM or Google Meets. Following the lead by the Kentucky Early Intervention System's (KEIS) First Steps program, VIPS has resumed face-to-face visits to families who do not have access to the internet and unable to participate in virtual visits. As VIPS monitors the COVID-19 crisis and cautiously makes decisions regarding in-home visits, eventually, all families will be able to participate in virtual visits, face-to-face visits, or both.

   Families partaking in face-to-face visits are being contacted prior to the visit and asked if: A. they have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection; B. if they have been in contact with someone within the past 14 days who have had COVID-19 or a respiratory illness; or, C. if they have a weakened immune system, over the age of 65, or other COVID-19 risk factors. The visits are cancelled and rescheduled if they respond "Yes" to A. or B. On the day of the actual visit, VIPS teachers check their own temperatures and complete the VIPS COVID-19 screening sheet. The teacher checks the temperature of the child and adults present at the time of the visit, and conducts a brief COVID-19 symptom screen. Visits are conducted outside of the home in the yard, and social distancing is practiced. For each visit, teachers wear fresh, clean masks, and

provide them to the adults if they do not have one. Children under the age of 5 are not required to wear a mask. Only one adult in addition to the parent may attend the session. The VIPS teacher maximizes the opportunity for coaching and prompting, but does not use hands-on therapy. Items found in the natural environment are incorporated into the early intervention session. In addition to masks, VIPS teachers wear disposable gowns, and use disinfected sheets for covering the ground during the visit. VIPS teachers follow the CDC's guidance to disinfecting any equipment used during the visit. Teachers also use hand sanitizer prior to, as needed throughout the visit, and at the conclusion of the visit.

The Little Learners Enrichment Program: Changes to Service Delivery

The Little Learners Enrichment program continues to meet on a weekly basis, but virtually using ZOOM. The sessions are typically 30-45 minutes in length due to the limited attention span of the two to three-year-olds on a computer screen. Despite meeting virtually instead of in the classroom, the rate of participation has been 60-80% each week. The curriculum still includes learning about shapes, colors, numbers, concepts (i.e. in/out, up/down, near/far, etc.), pre-literacy skills, following directions, and other age-appropriate academics. VIPS teachers read books, sing songs with the children, and encourage them to socialize with each other (i.e. "how are you today?", etc). VIPS teachers send individualized learning packets to the families to assist their child in reaching his/her specific development goals. They also send art projects and other activities to the families to use along with the teacher during the sessions.

At this time, due to the uncertainty of COVID-19, the Little Learners Enrichment Program will continue in a virtual setting. It is hoped the children will be back in the classroom by January 2021 at the earliest.

3. **Will these new modifications increase or decrease your proposed budget? Please detail any increases or decreases to your proposed budget including additional costs and/or other secured funding.**

   At the time of submission, VIPS FY21 budget was being created, and had not yet been approved by the Board of Directors. It was approved in June with a reduction in overall operating expenses in travel and contract teachers. Expenses for PPEs, supplies for learning activities, postage, and business subscriptions for secured ZOOM and Google Meets access were added to the budget. The proposed budget has only slightly decreased due to these changes. Safety protocols and expenses have offset the travel and contractor expenses. VIPS humbly maintains the need for the total funding request of $68,700 for the Early Childhood Intervention and Little Learners Enrichment programs for the children of Fayette County.