Guide to Partnering with

This Guide contains important information about being a host site with Early Learning Corps. Questions about Early Learning Corps should be directed to sites@ampact.us.

Early Learning Corps Fact Sheet

What are Early Learning Corps services?

- Early Learning Corps is an evidence-based, people-powered program that can meet the needs of all students. We train and support tutors to deliver the critical language, literacy and numeracy skills preschool children need to be ready for Kindergarten. Tutors work hand-in-hand with classroom teachers to deliver research-based interventions in the classroom, in small groups, or one-on-one with children.
- The Early Learning Corps model supports the implementation of a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework in early childhood. Simply put, this model includes implementing Tier I class wide literacy and numeracy strategies, as well as measuring students' literacy and numeracy skills using data to make instructional decisions for students.
- Early Learning Corps tutors provide support in both literacy and math, focusing on the skills listed below.

Early Language and Literacy Skills	Early Math Skills
Oral Language, Conversation, Comprehension	Subitizing
Vocabulary and Meaning	Object Counting
Book and Print Concepts	Counting Based Comparisons
Phonological Memory and Awareness	Number After Knowledge
Alphabetic Principle and Knowledge	Mental Comparisons
	Composing and Decomposing

Who are Early Learning Corps tutors?

- Early Learning Corps tutors are AmeriCorps members who focus on improving reading proficiency. AmeriCorps is often referred to as the "domestic Peace Corps."
- Early Learning tutors are individuals engaged in commitment of service, during the school year, in meeting the needs of their local communities through AmeriCorps and are commonly referred to as "members" or "tutors."
- Early Learning Corps tutors maintain a stable, regular schedule of hours at a site and are supported by an Internal Coach at the site.

Which students are eligible for Early Learning Corps services?

- The Early Learning Corps tutor is placed in one classroom and serves **all** the children in that room. A tutor can serve multiple sections of students, such as AM and PM, or M/W/F and T/TH.
- A tutor must be placed in a classroom that serves 3- to 5-year-old children, with priority on classrooms with 4- and 5-year-old children, as they are closer to entering Kindergarten.
- All students receive Tier I early literacy/numeracy support from the tutor. Children whose assessment data indicate a need for additional support will be eligible to receive Tier 2 (small group) or Tier 3 (individualized) instruction using evidence-based early literacy/numeracy strategies by the tutor.

Early Learning Corps Fact Sheet (continued)

What assessments are used by Early Learning Corps?

- The literacy assessment tool is the Preschool Early Literacy Indicator (PELI). The PELI assessment is designed for preschool and pre-kindergarten children (ages 3 to 5) and assesses alphabet knowledge, vocabulary and oral language, phonological awareness, and comprehension. The assessment is given in a storybook format that will be familiar to most preschoolers. The measure is untimed and takes about 15 minutes to administer per child.
- Benchmark assessments are administered by the tutor to all children in the classroom in the fall, winter, and spring.
- The Early Math Inventory (EMI) is used to assess numeracy skills in 3-5-year-old students. It is untimed, takes 5-10 minutes, and is administered in fall, winter, and spring to all students in the class.
- Children receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 instruction receive brief progress monitoring checks every two weeks, or 8-10 sessions. The purpose of more frequent assessment is to gauge student progress, the effectiveness of the intervention, and support the team with instructional, data-based decision making.

What Tier 1 interventions are used by Early Learning Corps?

- Early Learning Corps Tier 1 interventions are designed to support core instruction in the classroom. The Early Learning Corps model works well with any research-based curriculum (e.g., Creative Curriculum, OWL, etc.).
- Early Learning Corps tutors provide embedded and explicit language, literacy, and math support to all students throughout their daily routines, including but not limited to: Arrival, Sign-in, Daily Message, Choice Time, High Quality Read Alouds, Tier 2 or Tier 3 Intervention time, Journaling, Meal Time, Small Group, and Transitions.
- Early Learning Corps classrooms are expected to incorporate dialogic reading into the daily routine. The same theme-related book is read daily for one week. The teacher and tutor incorporate talking, reading, writing, and math into each reading to develop vocabulary and comprehension and early math skills.

What Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are used by Early Learning Corps?

- 7 children per class are identified to receive targeted literacy and/or numeracy interventions.
- Tier 2 = small groups of 2-3 children; 10-15 minutes daily.
- Tier 3 = One-on-one; 5-10 minutes daily

Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions:
- High Quality Read Aloud/Dialogic Reading: To increase vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension.
- Sound Awareness: To increase skills in auditory discrimination, including environmental sounds, rhyming, and alliteration.
- Letter Identification: To increase skills in auditory and visual discrimination, including letter names and letter sounds.
- Early Math (7 levels): To increase skills in early numeracy, including subitizing, object counting, counting-based comparisons, number after knowledge, mental comparisons, composing and decomposing, and number after equals one more.

Is Early Learning Corps a Good Fit for Your Site?

Early Learning Corps thrives in a wide variety of contexts. There are a few initial minimum considerations:

- ❑ Does your PreK program serve students ages 3-5?
- ❑ Is your site a Head Start, school district early childhood programs, or nonprofit childcare programs (e.g., YWCA)?
    - o For-profit childcare centers may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- ❑ Is student contact time sufficient for a tutor schedule (18-35 hours per week)?
- ❑ Is there support for research-based literacy and math interventions to occur during the school day?
- ❑ Is there someone on your staff with the interest, capacity, and time to serve as the Internal Coach? **Please turn to the "Description of Internal Coach" in this document and review it.**
- ❑ How will the Internal Coach's schedule reflect time for Early Learning Corps duties (approx. 6-9 hours per classroom per month) plus training?
    - o How will you compensate the Internal Coach for the time completing required training?
    - o How will you compensate the Internal Coach for time spent on Early Learning Corps duties throughout the year?

Here are some other factors that are helpful to consider:

- ❑ What curriculum are you currently using, if applicable, and what assessments do you use and for what purpose?
- ❑ To which computer(s) or other device(s) would tutor(s) have regular, reliable access?
- ❑ What secure (locked) storage could the tutor utilize (for student files, for personal effects, etc.)?
- ❑ What is the lead classroom teacher's perspective on helping implement Early Learning Corps in the classroom?
- ❑ Which classrooms with which teachers will be identified for Early Learning Corps tutor(s)?
- ❑ Is the Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered Systems of Support model of service delivery utilized at your site? In what areas (e.g., academic, behavior)?
- ❑ What is your current enrollment of preschool students? Do you predict noteworthy changes for next year?
- ❑ What do we need to know about your district or agency in order to follow your own district or agency's policies for partnerships? For example, with whom should we work on the following if they come up?
    - o We run extensive background checks and cannot pay for or ask tutors to pay for any additional background checks
    - o Posting open tutor positions on a district or site employment page
    - o Posting a site sign with the AmeriCorps logo, Early Learning Corps logo, and potentially the logo of any funder who is sponsoring the program at your site

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Site Expectations in Implementing Early Learning Corps

1. **Identify a staff person to fill the role of Internal Coach** and allocate sufficient time for the person to complete training and fulfill the responsibilities of Early Learning Corps, including providing on-site supervision and support to the Early Learning Corps tutor.

2. Work in collaboration with Early Learning Corps staff to **find high-quality Early Learning Corps tutors** for your site. The majority of our tutor candidates are connected to the program by our site partners. Your participation in recruitment is essential.

3. Prioritize the placement of Early Learning Corps **tutors in classrooms that serve 4- and 5-year-olds** who are going to Kindergarten the next year.

4. **Educate lead teachers and teaching teams** about the Early Learning Corps model and expectations to capture buy-in and support for implementation.

5. **Welcome the tutor to the site**, introduce to staff, and provide an orientation to the site. Provide tutoring and workspace for the tutor to use, including a locked filing cabinet and computer access.

6. **Implementing high quality literacy and math activities throughout the day:** The classroom teaching staff and tutor commit to building and embedding high quality, evidence-based routines into the daily schedule as listed below:

   - **Arrival:** Children are greeted daily.
   - **Sign-in:** Children write their names daily, with the support of a tutor or teacher.
   - **Mealtime:** Mealtime conversations with children are encouraged with an emphasis on theme-related vocabulary and math talk.
   - **Large Group:** Children are provided an opportunity for large group learning.
   - **High Quality Read Aloud:** The teacher and/or tutor incorporate talking, reading, writing, and counting into each reading with the intention of developing vocabulary, comprehension, and early math skills.
   - **Tier 1 Small Group:** Tutors lead an additional Tier 1 small group high quality dialogic read aloud once a week.
   - **Journal:** Children are given the opportunity to write and draw something of interest in a journal each week.
   - **Choice Time/Active Learning:** Children have time to make choices and pursue their own interests in a literacy-rich classroom.
   - **Tier 2 & Tier 3 Interventions:** Tutors implement Tier 2 (small group, 10-15 minutes) or Tier 3 (one-on-one, 5-10 minutes) with selected students daily.
   - **Transitions:** The tutor and/or teacher use a song or rhyme focused on literacy or math to transition children from one activity to the next.
   - **Family Engagement:** The family literacy intervention*, Talk, Read, Write, and Count with Me!, is sent home weekly to partner with families in talking, reading, writing, and counting at home.
   Note: Early Learning Corps provides Talk, Read, Write, and Count with Me! materials annually, but asks that the site be responsible for inventorying and housing extra materials from one program year to the next.

7. **Student Assessments:** Support benchmarking by the tutor during the fall, winter and spring benchmark periods for children in Early Learning Corps classrooms. In addition, support bi-monthly progress monitoring by the tutor to guide instruction and interventions, along with collection of baseline data as applicable.

8. **Response To Intervention (RTI) Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Ensure successful implementation of Response to Intervention data-driven decision-making process. Coordinate decisions about teaching strategies and intervention selection with the Internal Coach and/or teachers based on the needs of each individual child and/or groups of children.

9. **Provide demographic data & state-assigned student ID** number for students receiving Early Learning Corps services. Support the Early Learning Corps program in following federal (i.e., FERPA) and state regulations for data security and sharing. A detailed description of data required from the site for participating students is provided in the Early Learning Corps Site Agreement.

10. Ensure that Early Learning Corps tutors consistently serve their minimum weekly hours and **a minimum caseload of students at any given time.**

11. Ensure **service site is accessible** to people with disabilities.

Description Of Early Learning Tutors

PreK Tutor

Who is this person?	Someone recruited from the community – a recent college graduate, a parent, a retiree, etc.
What does the tutor do at the site?	The tutor collaborates with the classroom teaching staff to incorporate specific Early Learning Corps strategies into the daily routine.
Are there other things the tutor is expected to do?	The tutor is required to complete ongoing Early Learning Corps training and participate in professional development with their Coach(es) and/or Program Staff. Tutors are required to complete data entry to track student progress. Tutors may also participate in supplemental activities at their site or in their community.
What is the time commitment?	• *Full-Time (FT) tutor serves 35 hours/week* • *Part-Time (PT) tutor serves 25 hours/week* • *Reduced Part-Time (RPT) tutor serves 18 hours/week (not available in all states)* Cohorts of tutors start at designated times and commit to serving through the end of the school year
What are the financial benefits?	• Bi-weekly living allowance • Education award up to $4,546.50 • Student loan forbearance on federal loans • Health insurance (FT)
What are the non-financial benefits?	• Receive free professional development • Help students improve literacy and math skills • Make an impact on their community • Gain valuable teaching experience • Learn literacy and math teaching strategies
How do they get involved?	Start the process by completing an Early Learning Corps application online at readingandmath.org

Description of Internal Coach

Role	The Internal Coach is designated by an administrator and will be trained by Early Learning Corps to provide literacy and math support and oversight to the Early Learning Corps tutors. Internal Coaches will uphold the Early Learning Corps model and act as a liaison between school staff, the tutors, and the program.
Person	An Internal Coach is an employee of the service site. An Internal Coach should have interest in and time available to dedicate to the program, including supporting members, completing required training, and participating in coaching sessions. Challenges occur when this responsibility is assigned to staff without concretely opening dedicated time in that position for Early Learning Corps coaching. We recommend that administrators be thoughtful about incorporating this responsibility into a staff person's position.
Time Commitment	• Average of 6-9 hours of coaching and tutor support per Early Learning Corps classroom per month • Approximately 5 hours of required training Required training + coaching for **1 classroom** = approx 0.1 FTE Required training + coaching for **2 classrooms** = approx 0.15 FTE Required training + coaching for **3 classrooms** = approx 0.2 FTE
Training	Internal Coaches are required to complete less than 5 hours of training but have access to additional information and professional development through our learning management system if needed. Training will be sent to Internal Coaches before the start of the program year or when they register with the program and should be completed within two weeks of a tutor starting.
Responsibilities	Provide an **on-site orientation** for the tutor to introduce them to your site **Develop a consistent weekly schedule** with the tutor that accounts for the daily and weekly hours commitment of their position: Full-Time (FT) tutor serves 35 hours/week; a Part-Time (PT) tutor serves 25 hours/week, and a Reduced Part-Time (RPT) tutor serves 18 hours/week at the site. Tutors should work with a full caseload of students at any given time Provide support to allow the tutor to develop professionally throughout the year, including inviting the tutor to participate in **professional development opportunities** at the service site and in the community Consult with the Early Learning Corps Coaching Specialist to ensure the following takes places: • Help Early Learning Corps tutor and teaching team **implement the Response to Intervention data-driven decision-making model** to review data & set goals • Assist in the **tutor's implementation of student literacy and math assessments** • **Conduct integrity observations** of the assessments (three times/year) and interventions (twice-monthly) used by the tutor to ensure fidelity to the model • Support the tutor in implementing the family engagement intervention, **Talk, Read, Write, and Count With Me!** • Ensure the tutor is **accurately reporting student data**, including assessment scores and demographic information, by the deadlines Work closely with Early Learning Corps program staff and site administration to **proactively** manage tutor performance and address issues as they arise. Tutors are expected to adhere to site policies and procedures regarding confidentiality, safety, dress code, attendance, etc. Complete a **semi-annual online program survey** and participate in **semi-annual site visits** with Early Learning Corps program staff **Approve tutor timesheets** once every two weeks and complete a **tutor performance evaluation** two times per year Participate in **special site visits** to highlight and demonstrate the effectiveness of the Early Learning Corps program, as applicable. These site visits may include media, legislators, corporations, and other parties involved in funding Fulfill additional or modified responsibilities for Early Learning Corps pilot projects, as applicable Complete an **FBI background check** and a **full state background check** in accordance with federal grant requirements.

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The Cost of Early Learning Corps

The chart below breaks down the cost associated with Early Learning Corps.

Description of cost	Early Learning Corps pays	Site pays
Tutor recruitment efforts	✓	✓
Background checks on tutors	✓	*
Tutor living allowance & benefits	✓	
Worker's Compensation / AD&D policy for tutors	✓	
Tutor transportation costs to attend Early Learning Corps-required training	✓	
Cost of including tutors in site-sponsored training		✓
Misc. supplies used by tutor (e.g. markers, photocopies, paper, stickers)		✓
Computer and Internet access for tutor		✓
Work space for the tutor, including locked file cabinet		✓
Salary of Internal Coach to fulfill Early Learning Corps responsibilities (including completing training)		✓
Salary of Early Learning Corps Coaching Specialist and Program Staff to fulfill Early Learning Corps responsibilities	✓	
Early Learning Corps manual, along with assessment & intervention materials	✓	
Site fee		✓ **

* If site or district/agency policy requires a background check above and beyond what is conducted by Early Learning Corps, that fee is not paid by the program, nor may it be passed on to the tutor.

** While federal AmeriCorps funding covers 2/3 of the costs associated with each member, our programs must raise additional dollars to serve as a cash match to the federal dollars. Depending on the success of these efforts in specific states or regions, it may be necessary to charge a fee to a school. This fee varies based on state or region. Please contact sites@ampact.us with any questions.

Next Steps to Partnering with Early Learning Corps

Prepare to Submit Your Application

- ❑ Identify a staff member to serve as an Internal Coach

- ❑ Identify a staff member to serve as a Recruitment Contact

- ❑ Determine the number of Early Learning Corps members and type for which to apply

- ❑ Complete and submit your site application. Site applications are reviewed on a rolling basis.

After You Apply

- ❑ Receive communication with site award decisions and details

- ❑ Communicate with Early Learning Corps program staff to further discuss the partnership

- ❑ Complete the site onboarding training course. Share this with the identified Site Supervisor and other relevant staff.

- ❑ Begin recruiting using the recruitment toolkit

Before the Program Year Begins

- ❑ Sign the Site Agreement

- ❑ Ensure the Internal Coach is ready to complete program-required tasks and training and has the capacity to dedicate 6-9 hours per member, per month

- ❑ Educate staff about Early Learning Corps

- ❑ Prepare to welcome Early Learning Corps member(s) to your site by determining a designated workspace and communicating with the Early Learning Corps member(s) once they are hired