PROJECT "STRENGTHENING LEARNING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZILIAN PRESCHOOLS": RFP APPLICATION

Second Semester, 2024 Request for Proposals (RFP)

J-PAL´s project [Strengthening Learning and Child Development in Brazilian Preschools](#) calls for proposals from J-PAL affiliated researchers, invited researchers, post-docs, and PhD students who have a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher on their thesis committee to conduct a full randomized research project to evaluate the impact of programs focused on improving the quality of preschool education on learnings and development of children in Brazil. Additionally, applicants of this RFP can also request funds for implementation partners of "promising preschool programs" (see the "award types" section for more information).
Letters of interest are due by Monday, October 7th, 2024 at 7:00 PM UTC-3. Proposals are due by Monday, November, 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM UTC-3. Please submit your application via project's email preschool.rfp@povertyactionlab.org

The project "Strengthening Learning and Child Development in Brazilian Preschools" project is funded by donations in Brazilian Real (BRL) and the project will make all awards in BRL. Please be sure to submit your budget in BRL. If you expect to use your award, if successful, for expenses outside of Brazil, we will work to send grant funds to you in the currency needed, but you will be responsible for any currency risks.

The RFP Overview and Instructions can be found [here](#).

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APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To best fill out this application, please adhere to each question's character counts (if applicable) and answer each question under the provided instructions. Please include a short response (single-spaced) to each of the following sub-sections. Questions with asterisks (*) are required. If you have any questions, please email us, through preschool.rfp@povertyactionlab.org

Please submit the proposal application and all supplemental materials via email to preschool.rfp@povertyactionlab.org. Submit the proposal application file as a Word document.

NARRATIVE

Timeline *

Please, consider that this RFP will fund proposals feasible to be implemented in the period of January, 2025 until December, 2026. Please write out a timeline with key project activities (up to 250 words).

Policy Motivation*

Provide a summary of the policy problem that motivates this research and how it fits with the topics outlined in the RFP Research Agenda (up to 250 words).

Potential Policy Impact *

Please briefly describe the potential policy impact of this intervention (policies, programs, processes, or delivery mechanisms), including whether and how the project could inform policy or program design in this context or more broadly. Demonstrate meaningful ex ante uncertainty about the results of the study, i.e., that given existing evidence there are both reasons to believe the intervention(s) studied are promising and also reasons to doubt whether they will achieve their goals (up to 250 words).

Target Population and Context*

What population(s) does the intervention attempt to impact? What characteristics do they have? Do you have any comments on this population's alignment with the project's priorities? (up to 70 words).

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Unique Contribution to the Field*

What knowledge gap are you addressing, and how will your research advance the field? Explain the project's potential to provide a unique scientific contribution. Provide a brief literature review to demonstrate the uniqueness of your project. Note that a full reference list can be sent to the project's e-mail (up to 500 words).

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Intervention Details *

Please describe the intervention or program to be evaluated. Please provide information about the evidence or theoretical framework that supported the development of the intervention, and also results or main lessons learned at previous evaluations of the implementation process. State how the intervention is either innovative or uses a straightforward intervention to study a big question. Please describe how the intervention (mechanisms, materials) is delivered to the target population. Please attach any materials of the intervention (guidelines, online platform, booklets) and the Theory of Change of the program, if available, as an appendix (that does not count as part of the character/page limits for this proposal narrative) (up to 500 words).

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Evaluation Design*

Provide a brief description of the evaluation design, and how it fits with the topics outlined in the RFP materials. Does the research design appropriately answer the questions outlined in the proposal? Please include the randomization method, treatment groups, and describe any combinations of the interventions. Please include information about data collection and key outcomes: succinctly describe your data collection plan and key outcome measures of the study. Please include the data collection partner and your relationship with them. What are your intermediate and final outcomes? How will these be measured? When will you take measurements, and how frequently? If there are more than two treatment groups, please list them using numerals.

Include preliminary, pilot, or other available descriptive data in support of your hypotheses, models, and/or theories of change. Indicate the reliability of this existing data from this research context. You may also attach more detailed pilot data and results as an appendix (that does not count as part of the character/page limits for this proposal narrative), but please highlight in this section of your narrative the key details to ensure reviewers take them into account.

Details of your evaluation design can include but are not limited to: What are the units of randomization and analysis (e.g., individual, household, village, etc.)? What is the method of randomization (e.g., lottery, phase-in, encouragement, etc.)? What is the sample size? How would it be divided into treatment and control? Are there threats that could compromise the validity of results? How do you plan to address those threats? (800 words max)

Outcomes and Measurement *

Please describe the outcome variables, how they relate to the project, and how you plan to measure the outcome variables (up to 250 words).

Mechanisms *

Through what mechanisms do you expect the pilot treatment to affect outcomes of interest? How will you test these mechanisms? What is the theorized causal relationship between the pilot intervention and the outcomes to be tested? (up to 250 words).

Power Calculations *

Please provide detailed, convincing, and well-justified power calculations, e.g., based on current or past pilot data, existing literature, admin data of ongoing operations, etc., for any impacts that the research team plans to measure. Include and describe effect size, take up/compliance, variance, clusters, observations per cluster, rho. Power calculations should quantitatively demonstrate that the study is well-powered enough to detect effects on the outcome(s) of interest that would be practically or conceptually meaningful. Proposals should articulate which null hypotheses are

relevant for this exercise and why (in particular, not assuming that the null of zero impact is necessarily the relevant one). (up to 250 words).

Be sure to answer these two questions:
1. What is the minimum detectable effect size? Why do you believe this is an appropriate size?
2. Clearly state what data and assumptions you use for these estimates. Always discuss take-up, and do not assume take-up will be 100% for the purposes of power calculations.

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Implications on Equity and Social Inclusion *

Please provide a comment on whether the research proposal addresses equity or social inclusion, in any way. Topics of social inclusion include, but are not limited to, gender, income level, location, ethnicity, race, language, citizenship status, disability, and at the intersection of those factors. Explain whether and how the project design allows us to learn about baseline differences between and differential impacts on groups mentioned above. Explain what reasons (if any) there are to expect that the intervention(s) studied may have disproportionate benefits for disadvantaged groups (up to 300 words).

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Local Researcher Involvement *

Please describe how the project involves researchers local to the project context (up to 250 words).

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Gender Implications, Analysis, and Reporting *

Does the proposal address gender issues and/or disaggregate data and outcomes by gender? Funded projects are required to report on gender-disaggregated data and outcomes. (up to 500 words)

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Scalability and Translatability *

Please comment on the ability of
and translate in different contexts (up to 250 words).

Scalability and Translatability *

Are there government decisions that might be informed by the results of the project? How can results be used to adapt and/or scale programs? Be as specific as possible, and refer to any discussions with your government partner on how they intend for this work to inform their decisions (up to 250 words).

Validation and Test Accuracy Data

Proposals that include Artificial Intelligence (AI) or any new specialized technology should include validation and test accuracy data in the proposal, showing that the technology successfully does what it intends. If applicable, please provide that validation and test accuracy data here, or attach it in the "additional attachments" section.

Potential Risks

Please answer the following questions below in detail (up to 500 words):

1. **Completion** - Are there any technical, logistical, ethical, or political obstacles and risks that might threaten the completion of the project (e.g., implementation capacity, government authorization, or other funding)? How do you plan to monitor and prevent/address these types of risks throughout the project?
2. **Implementing Partners** - Please discuss any information about the implementing partner(s) that could pose ethical, reputational, or legal risks (e.g., child safeguarding, corruption or misuse of funds, etc). If applicable, what proactive measures have you taken or will you take to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?
3. **Child Safeguarding -** Particularly for projects working with children, what child safeguarding risks exist?
4. **Participants, Staff, Community Members** - For each of the groups below, please describe any potential unintended consequences or risks of this project to them. What proactive measures have you taken or will you take to assess, monitor, and mitigate/prevent any such potential risks?
   a. Program and research participants
   b. Staff (e.g., implementing partners, research assistants, enumerators)

c. Community members (e.g., untreated members of a household, untreated neighbors, or broader communities if the treatment might have spillover or downstream effects beyond the study sample)
5. **Contractual Limitations** - Are there any contractual limitations on the ability of the researchers to report the results of the study? If so, what are those restrictions, and who are they from?

Relevant research aspects *

For the development of a research project, it is essential to consider several aspects, such as (1) a comprehension of the local context, (2) the complexity of the topic under investigation, and (3) the profile of the target population. In your project, what are the most relevant issues that you observe, and how do you intend to overcome any potential challenges/risks? How do you perceive that the academic and personal backgrounds of the research team (including yours) could contribute to the project's development in a way that is sensitive to the local context? (up to 500 words).

Implementing partner*

Please provide a brief description of the implementing partner (or partners), the history of the partnership, the partner's involvement in project activities. Please include any potential risks to the partnership (up to 250 words characters).

Role of Partner Organization *

List each Partner Organizations that you will be working with. This includes but is not limited to Implementing Partners and Co-funders. Please include the Organization's name, mailing address, and website, as well as a point of contact, an email address, and phone number. Add new columns to include more partners if necessary. If you are adding co-funders or potential ones, please provide information about them and the amount of received or committed funding (b) add the funded proposal or project title (c) add the name of the primary PI for the co-funded proposal or project.

	Partner #1	Partner #2 (if applicable)

Name of Partner Organization		
Partner Mailing Address		
Partner Website		
Role What role does this partner play in your proposal? (co-funder or implementing partner or others)		
If this is a co-funder, what is the amount they provided or are providing?		
If this is a co-funder, add the funded proposal or project title		
If this is a co-funder, add the name of the primary PI for the co-funded proposal or project		
Partner Contact First Name		
Partner Contact Last Name		
Partner Contact Title		
Partner Contact Email		

Local Legal Requirements Certification *

All PIs and Co-PIs certify that they understand they must adhere to all local legal requirements, including obtaining local IRB approval and government research permits, where applicable. Do you agree?

(   ) Yes
(   ) No

Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Record *

If the project has not received an IRB exemption and IRB review is required, please look up the current or expected IRB of record. IRB Requirements - If this proposal receives initiative funding, we will ask that you submit:

- All IRB approval(s) or exemption(s)
- All IRB-approved protocols
- Any IRB-approved consent forms [Instructions]

Do you agree?

(   ) Yes
(   ) No

IRB Organization (IORG) Information *

In compliance with Brazilian legislation, projects funded by J-PAL must obtain approval from a local IRB. J-PAL also requires that the reviewing IRB have IRB Organization (IORG) status with the US Office of Human Protections. You can look up the IORG status of an IRB here. Do you agree?

(   ) Yes
(   ) No

Data Publication *

Please confirm you plan to publish data collected in an open-access, online database at the end of the evaluation. Data publication is required for projects funded by a J-PAL initiative, unless researchers request an exemption (which J-PAL has the discretion to deny) for legal, ethical, or proprietary reasons. Do you agree?

(   ) Yes
(   ) No

Schedule and Description of Activities *

For J-PAL it is important to understand the sequence of steps in your project. Please submit to the e-mail preschool.rfp@povertyactionlab.org a concise and structured one-sheet Excel document with a timeline and a description of the activities corresponding to each defined time period. Since each type of project has a different time division, we are not providing a template from which to fill in your project information. However, we do ask that you highlight in the document when and what the funds from this RFP will be used for, should your research proposal be approved.

Declaration of Awareness and Agreement with the General Terms and Conditions of the Financial Aid Contract *

J-PAL can accommodate two financial management models, based on applicable legislation and the internal rules of each host institution. The hyperlink to this Declaration is available in the [RFP website](#), under Application documents. Please read the descriptions of the two models carefully and select your preferred one. This document must be dated, signed and sent via e-mail to [preschool.rfp@povertyactionlab.org](#).

Statement of Adherence to Policies and Standards *

There are policies and standards that must be followed within the scope of a J-PAL research. The hyperlink to the Statement of Adherence to Policies and Standards is available in the [RFP website](#), under Application documents. We ask that you read them carefully and, at the end of the document, express your agreement. Please submit via e-mail to preschool.rfp@povertyactionlab.org the signed version.

Term of Approval and Consent *

The Term of Approval and Consent must be issued by one of the PIs' Host Institution representatives with their signature, so that J-PAL has an institutional endorsement that the Host Institution of affiliation/place of employment of the PI knows, approves and supports the project as submitted. We call a representative a person who is in a position that has standing to grant consent on behalf of the institution. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make sure to speak with the Host Institution and define with them who best represents this role.

    a. **Example language for Model Executed by J-PAL LAC| Insper:**

        i. (On corresponding letterhead) *<Name of the Host Institution of the PI>* is pleased to support and will authorize the participation of the *<Name of PI>*'s proposal on the Strengthening Learning and Child Development in Brazilian Preschools RFP 2024 Second Semester considering their contract affiliation in *<Name of the Host Institution of the PI>*. Likewise, this institution agrees in relation to the administrative and financial management model indicated in the proposal, among the models indicated in the Request for Proposals (RFP). Please contact me *<this will be the person representative of the institution, identified by you, who has the legitimacy to grant consent on behalf of the institution by signing this letter>* with any concerns which may arise related to project implementation.

    b. **Example language for Model Executed by Another Host Institution:**

        i. (On corresponding letterhead) *<Name of Host Institution of the PI>* is aware, approves, and is pleased to support *<Name of PI>*'s proposal and will plan on carrying out the work in accordance with the submitted budget and the administrative and financial management model indicated in the proposal, among the models indicated in the Request for Proposals (RFP). *<Name of Host Institution of the PI>* is aware of and has full responsibility for making

available the infrastructure required by the scope of work described within the submitted project. <*Name of PI at Host Institution*> will serve as <*Name of Host Institution*>'s Principal Investigator for this work. In this role, he/she is responsible for the implementation of this project in accordance with this proposal and with appropriate research and data protection practices. Please contact me <*this will be the person representative of the institution, identified by you, who has the legitimacy to grant consent on behalf of the institution by signing this letter*> with any concerns which may arise related to this project's operation at <*Name of Host Institution of the PI*>.

Additional Information

A discussion of the other evaluation criteria if not already addressed in the fields above.

Share any additional materials you would like considered with your proposal

If there are any documents we have not requested elsewhere in this application, that you feel strengthen your proposal, please submit them.

RFP PROPOSAL BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit to the e-mail preschool.rfp@povertyactionlab.org a detailed project budget using the spreadsheet templates available on the RFP webpage. To reduce processing time, please keep the following in mind:

1. For **Research grants**, you can choose to manage your project through J-PAL LAC (at Insper) and add 15% of direct costs for project support, or choose another institution, adding the corresponding overhead (Universities in high-income countries, generally defined as OECD member countries, can charge up to 10% of direct costs. Independent non-profits from any location and universities from mid- or low-income countries (LMIC) may charge up to 15% of direct costs).
2. Every **Research grant** that follow the ***Model Executed by J-PAL LAC| Insper*** must have a Senior Research Associate or Manager overseeing the project. In case the funds for hiring a Senior Research Associate or Manager for your research project have already been dedicated from a co-funder's budget, then you do not need to include this specific line in the current RFP budget.
3. Please note that PIs with affiliation to non-Brazilian universities must adhere to the ***Model Executed by J-PAL LAC | Insper.***
4. We understand that the cap on overhead or indirect costs under J-PAL is low and that grantees may have reasonable project support costs included in budgets as direct costs. Such costs should be reasonable and explained in the budget notes.
5. For implementation grants, please estimate the costs of components necessary to implement the preschool program or intervention. Consider the expected duration of the implementation of the program/intervention, sample size and logistics to estimate the costs.

Furthermore, please take the following items into account when preparing your budget:

1. Budgets **MUST** be stated in **Brazilian Real (BRL)**. If you expect to use your award for expenses outside of Brazil, we will work to send grant funds to you in the currency needed, but you will be responsible for any currency risks.
2. Please include detailed budget notes in the column provided in the templates.
3. For travel airfares, indicate the city of origin and destination.
4. For Field expenses, detail the main expenses (pollsters, licenses, transport, etc) and if you have a quote from a survey company (ideal), **link it to the budget.**
5. Grantees should notify the organization they wish to work with prior to submitting a grant application, as these organizations may require applicants to budget for overhead or other expenses incurred.
6. Unallowable costs include those labeled as "incidental" "miscellaneous," or "contingency". If you think some amount may change in the short term, be aware that rebalances of up to 10% between major lines are possible, as long as the total amount remains unchanged. Try your best to comment on each label in the budget notes.
7. Please note that J-PAL does not cover the salaries of PIs based in high-income countries. For PIs based in low- and middle-income countries, the following apply:
   a. Full Research Project: Up to BRL 110,000 per year for LMIC researcher PI/co-PI time, with a limit of BRL 45,000 per PI per year.
8. Travel insurance: All traveling grantees are required to provide proof of emergency medical insurance coverage before travel. If you already have one, covered by your university, please add that information to the notes. If not, add the cost to the airfare line, as it is compulsory to travel with it.
9. For Full Research grants, if there is co-funding for the project, you must complete both the "Total Project Budget" and the "Research BudgetTemplate" sheets in the budget template.
10. Any computer/equipment purchases should include a breakdown of what is being purchased, (e.g. how many laptops), as well as the project staff that will be assigned to the equipment.
11. Be aware that when developing a project outside J-PAL at Insper, **we can request the documentation** behind the expenses reported.
12. Applicants should review J-PAL best practices on questionnaire design and data collection/management in the J-PAL Research Protocol Checklist, to ensure they have budgeted for expenses associated with piloting and surveyor training, survey translation, field spot checks, and back checking.

Application Budget Templates*

Use and complete the spreadsheet templates (Budget for Research and Budget for Implementation costs) available on the RFP webpage and attach it via email when submitting your application.

Allocation of External Funding

If you have other pending awards for this project, please tell how you plan to allocate the funds received in case you are successful and receive all of these requested awards? Is J-PAL funding sufficient to run the project, or is the project contingent on whether or not additional funding is secured? (up to 350 words).

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letter of Support from Implementing Partner

RCTs are required to provide a letter of support from their implementing partner. This letter should indicate a willingness to work with the research team and agreement to share program cost data with J-PAL (through the PI) for the purpose of conducting cost effectiveness analysis. Please submit this letter to preschool.rfp@povertyactionlab.org

J-PAL Affiliate or Invited Researcher Letter of Support

PhD student applicants are required to submit a letter of support from a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher who serves as an adviser or applicant's dissertation committee at their host university. This letter should indicate the adviser's willingness to advise the student throughout the project's lifetime. Please note that in some cases, the adviser may be asked to add his or her name to the financial award and IRB documents. If applicable, please submit this letter to preschool.rfp@povertyactionlab.org.

REVISE AND RESUBMIT

R&R Additional Information

Once your proposal has been submitted via email, the initiative team may follow up with additional questions before sending it for review. If you received an email requesting additional information on your proposal, please clearly provide your responses to each request below.