

# The Kid Spark STEM Equity Grants Initiative

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



**KIDSPARK**  
EDUCATION



# About Kid Spark



## WHY WE EXIST

Kid Spark's core mission is addressing persistent STEM education disparities, focusing on empowering girls, low-income youth, and children of color. Our aim is to close the STEM opportunity gap by fostering early and continuous STEM learning, countering the prevalent lack of STEM education, notably in underserved communities.

Early exposure to STEM is pivotal, influencing children's decisions regarding STEM paths by grade 3 or 4. This exposure disparity often deters underserved youth from pursuing STEM, resulting in a loss of talent and creativity across generations. Kid Spark strives to disrupt this pattern by consistently providing STEM education from pre-K to 8th grade, aiming for transformative change in formal and after-school education.

## WHAT WE DO

Kid Spark was founded on a transformative approach to STEM education, marrying progressive learning with hands-on experiences. Developed over fifteen years of research and classroom application, this method has proven highly effective in schools and after-school programs across the US.

Our programs are tailored to instill fundamental STEM fluencies in young learners, progressively building on their knowledge each year from elementary through middle school. By the time Kid Spark students reach high school, foundational STEM skills come as naturally as reading, and comfort with STEM is part of their identity.




Kid Spark prioritizes ease of adoption and affordability to overcome barriers that hinder STEM integration in elementary and middle school education. We ensure our program is user-friendly for educators regardless of their STEM background. As our network grows, we recognize persistent financial constraints in some schools. To address this, our STEM Equity Grants Initiative provides free or reduced-cost access to Kid Spark for U.S. Title 1 schools, promoting equal opportunities in STEM education.

## OUR IMPACT

Kid Spark's products and programs have a widespread reach, utilized in schools and informal learning centers across all 50 states and globally. Our STEM Equity Grants Initiative has already impacted over 10,000 children, with numbers steadily increasing each year.

Since 2009, Kid Spark has collaborated with educators and researchers at the University of California-San Diego, Pittsburg State University, and the University of San Diego to ensure that the Kid Spark program is effective in helping children increase their STEM skills, knowledge, confidence, and curiosity.

Over the past five years, our research has focused on the impact of the program. We know without question that Kid Spark works.

-  **Elementary school children who participate in Kid Spark's STEM program, especially girls, report a dramatic increase in how much they like or love engineering.**
-  **Teachers using Kid Spark's program report that their students substantially increase learning of STEM concepts and show increases in curiosity and creativity.**
-  **Educators report significant increases in their own comfort with teaching STEM.**

We continue to test our assumptions and push ourselves to do more.

## OUR GOAL

Meeting our audacious goal – to provide STEM learning to 300,000 children in underserved communities by 2027 – means not only increasing our current reach significantly, but also continuing to influence and strengthen elementary STEM culture in the United States and beyond.

As one of the nation's experts in early STEM education, we are uniquely positioned to help shape how the education and STEM communities think about STEM learning: to increase the emphasis on an early start and continued engagement, and to lead the way in design research and innovation.

We are one of the few organizations in the country focused on STEM education for the youngest learners in BIPOC, rural, and low-income communities, and we continue to break down barriers for educators in those communities and to work to earn the trust they offer us.

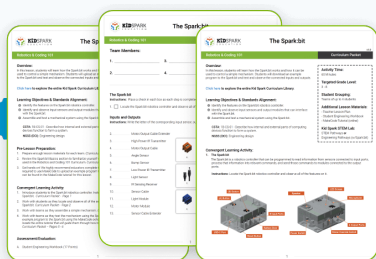
We are creating new gateways for children to learn and love STEM, ranging from expansion into informal education settings to forming strategic partnerships that help us connect with new communities in innovative ways. The opportunities are as diverse as the potential applications of STEM itself.

# The STEM Equity Grants Initiative

## ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

The STEM Equity Grants Initiative provides hands-on STEM education to elementary and middle schools students who are traditionally underrepresented in access to STEM, helping them develop skills and mindsets that improve their academic and social-emotional outcomes, and increase opportunities for success in the 21st century.

Select schools will receive a cost-free Kid Spark STEM program which includes:



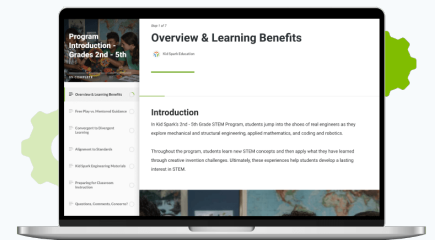
### CURRICULUM

A progressive, engineering and computer-science based curriculum including teacher lesson plans, student workbooks, design challenges, evaluation rubrics, interactive coding tutorials (2nd-8th Grade only), and unit assessments.



### STEM LABS

Kid Spark STEM Labs feature diverse, reusable engineering and robotics materials that effortlessly cater to various STEM concepts across multiple grade levels. These materials are sturdy, user-friendly, and perfect for collaborative learning and invention.



### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Kid Spark specializes in transforming educators into confident STEM mentors. Through targeted training and support, we ensure that educators not only gain expertise but also the confidence to implement impactful STEM learning in their classrooms or informal spaces. Kid Spark is committed to ensuring ongoing program success by providing continuous support each year.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Kid Spark's easy-to-use curriculum and engineering materials can be taught in any classroom or after-school space, by any teacher. Even the youngest students love engaging in Kid Spark engineering, and the program teaches the practices and crosscutting concepts used for all scientific learning.

**Within the program educators can expect:**

- Fun and engaging learning experiences for students and teachers
- Standards-aligned curriculum to develop STEM Identity & Technology Fluency
- Opportunities for Invention and Innovation in every lesson
- Project and inquiry-based science education
- Robust, reusable, and easily managed materials
- Online professional learning resources available to educators



# HOW IT WORKS

## Application Process



Our team will carefully review your application. If your application is considered, we will reach out to set up a meeting with your school administration to determine eligibility and fit.

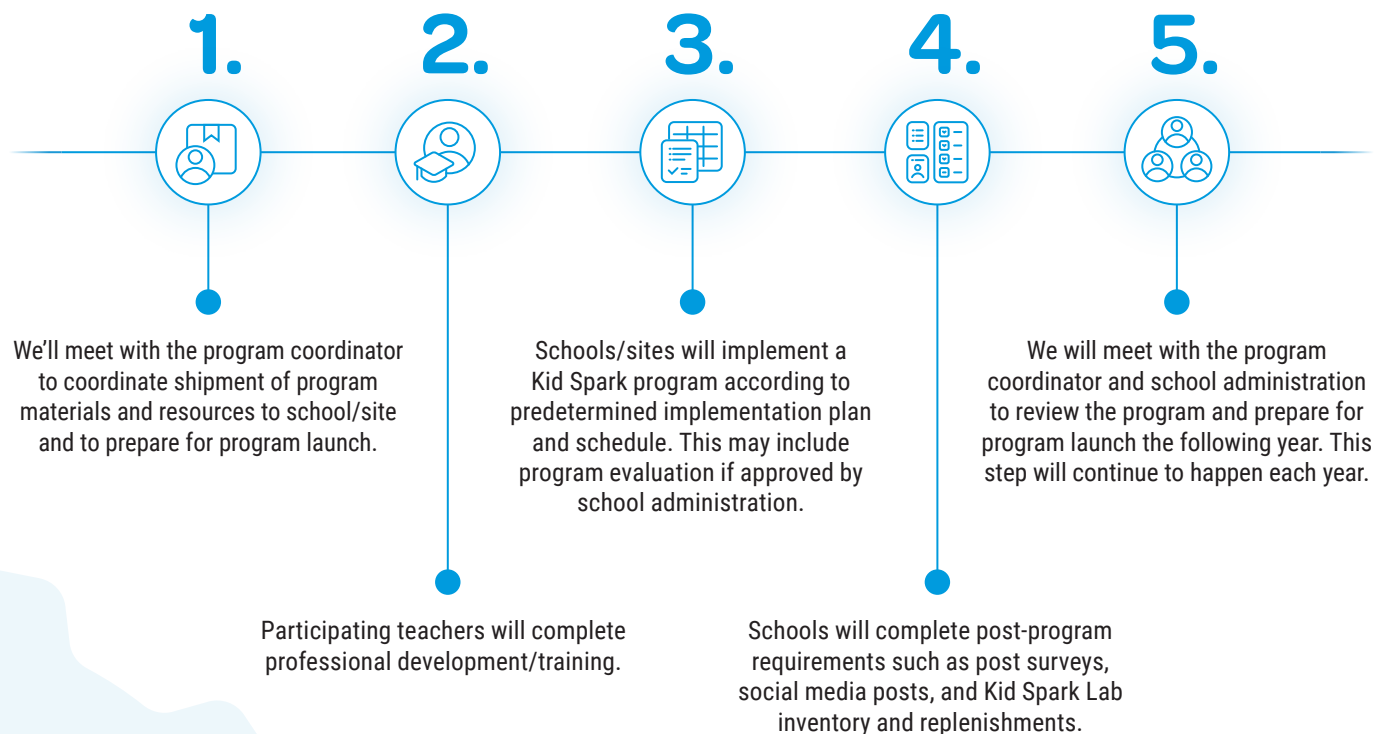


During the meeting, we will discuss program requirements and implementation plan/schedule for the program. Schools will need to select a program coordinator who will be the main liaison between Kid Spark and the school, and be responsible for managing the program.



If the application is approved, school administration will need to sign off on the terms and conditions of the grant.

## Program & Support Process



## Eligibility Requirements

- U.S. publicly funded elementary schools, pre-schools, and Head Start programs (priority will be given to schools serving a high percentage of Title 1 students).
- Located in the United States.
- Applications are to be submitted online. No email or mail applications will be considered.
- All notifications will be made within 90 days of completed applications. Grant notifications will be emailed to the main contact on the grant application.
- Eligible schools who do not receive a grant are eligible to apply the following year.
- Kid Spark Grant applications must be completed in one session. Partially completed applications are not saved.





## Program Requirements

- Participating schools will work with the Kid Spark team to determine a program implementation plan and schedule. The program can be implemented as an in-school or after-school/summer school program.
- Participating schools are required to make the Kid Spark Program open and inclusive to all students who wish to participate.
- Schools must appoint a program coordinator from their school to help manage the Kid Spark program. This person will act as the main liaison between Kid Spark and the participating school.

### The Program Coordinator will be responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring all Kid Spark materials and resources have been received at the school.
2. Ensuring all participating teachers have completed the required professional development and training.
3. Ensuring the program is successfully launched and is on schedule.
4. Making at least one social media post about the program including pictures and a short testimonial of program impact.
5. Coordinating student evaluation surveys (if applicable).
6. Ensuring all participating teachers complete the required post-program surveys.
7. Ensuring all Kid Spark Labs are inventoried and missing/broken pieces are replenished.
8. Assisting Kid Spark team with scheduling yearly program review meetings with school administration.

- Participating school administrators agree to meeting with the Kid Spark team twice yearly. The first meeting will be prior to program launch (to determine implementation plan and schedule each year), and the second meeting will take place after completion of the program (to review the program and provide feedback).

## HOW TO APPLY

1. **Confirm your eligibility (see page 5).**
2. **Visit: <https://go.kidsparkeducation.org/grants/application> to submit your application.**



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