

Oregon's Early Learning System

Positive early experiences. A lifetime of learning. Results for Oregon.

The Oregon Early Learning Council was created in 2011 by the Legislature to build a coordinated, connected and outcomes focused statewide early learning system. The Council guides efforts to streamline state programs, provides policy direction to meet early learning goals statewide and provides oversight of services supporting children and families across Oregon.

The Council is committed to making measurable progress to ensure that all Oregon children enter kindergarten ready to succeed and are raised in stable families with caregivers to whom they are attached. The Council is also committed to ensuring services and systems are coordinated and aligned to support achieving these goals.

In doing its work, the Early Learning Council is committed to:

- Strategies that focus on children who are over-represented in the academic achievement gap and under-represented in accessing strong services and supports. Note that the ELC's priority population is: all children of color, all children experiencing poverty, all children experiencing developmental delays or disabilities, all children learning English as an additional language.
- Listening to stakeholders across the state and acting on what we hear and learn from them.
- Focusing on results and using data to drive decisions.
- Having the courage necessary to make change.
- Holding onto a sense of urgency.
- Focusing its message and broadening its communication.

This strategic plan acts as a high level guide for the important work of the Council. It is intended to be a living document to which additional activities and strategies may be added in response to changes in the early childhood landscape. Once adopted, the Council will review progress on key strategies at each business meeting and review/update the plan in its entirety annually. Action plans for each strategy are led by the standing committees of the Council: The Best Beginnings Committee, The Child Care and Education Committee, The Equity Implementation Committee and the Measuring Success Committee and the Executive Committee. Additionally, some strategies are led by a joint committee made up of members of the Council and the Oregon Health Policy Board.

As of January 2016, the members of the Oregon Early Learning Council are:

Pam Curtis (chair), Harriet Adair, Martha Brooks, Janet Dougherty-Smith, Tim Freeman, Kali Thorne-Ladd, Charles McGee, Salam Noor, Eva Rippeteau, Lynne Saxton, , Teri Thalhofer, Roberta Weber.

Updated and adopted: January 2016

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Goal 1: Ready children - All children enter kindergarten with the skills, experiences and supports to succeed

Success Metrics

- Standards are completed.
- 40% of providers licensed; 30% at C2Q; 15% at 3 star, 10% at 4 star, 5% at 5 star in the quality rating improvement system.
- Increase #/% of children in focus population on subsidy in 3,4, and 5 star programs.
- Increase # of license exempt early learning providers participating in training and professional supports by 25%.
- Increase “career ready” workforce by 25%, increase AA holding work force by 15% and increase BA holding workforce by 10%. (“Career ready” is defined here as obtaining at least a certificate in the state’s career lattice system.)
- Providers of color are proportionally represented in "career ready" workforce.
- Increase by 33% the number of children grades K-3 who are in schools that have
 - a. aligned curricula.
 - b. aligned professional development standards.
 - c. seamless, connected services and transition to kindergarten.

Strategy	Tactic(s)	Key Partners	Executive Sponsor	Timeline
Strategy 1.1 Develop a supply of high quality, community based early learning programs focused on the ELC’s priority population of low income children and children of color.	1A. Implement a Quality Rating Improvement System for licensed/regulated early learning and development programs in Oregon; continually evaluate implementation impact and adjust to overcome challenges/barriers based on learnings.	WOU, CCR&R, CBOs who work with child care providers, Head Start Association, AFSCME	Child care and education committee	Full implementation by June 2017; ongoing improvement
	1B. Develop quality community-based early learning development programs using support systems recognized by/responsive to the culture of our priority population.	CBOs who work with these providers; CCR&R	Child care and education committee	Full implementation by June 2017
	1C. Strengthen and support "family friends and neighbor" providers enhanced training and professional development, in line with feedback from communities, newly re-authorized federal rules and Oregon HB 2015.	DHS, SEIU, CBOs who work with these providers.	Child care and education committee	Jan. 2017
	1D. Develop and implement the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework as one unified set of Early Learning Standards for all early learning and development programs.	Oregon Center for Career Development, OAEYC, Head Start Association, ODE, WOU.	Child care and education committee	Jan. 2016

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Strategy 1.2 Ensure equitable access for children and families to quality early learning and development programs for children in the ELC’s priority population	1E. Develop and implement a range of mixed delivery preschool models that includes but not limited to family and center-based care, OPK programs, community-based organizations and public/private schools.	Hubs, CCR&R, CBOs	HBB 3880 Ad-hoc advisory	Sept. 2016 (with ongoing improvement)
	1F. Connect Oregon's "Employment Related Day Care" child care subsidy program to quality early learning and develop a tiered reimbursement approach to ERDC and expand access to children/families within the ELC’s priority population.	DHS	Child care and education committee	March 2016
	1G. Make changes to contracted slots program, in line with program evaluation, to better support the ELC’s priority population.	DHS	Child care and education committee	Jan. 2017
Strategy 1.3 Provide parents with the information and support they need to meet the developmental and educational needs of their children and the child care needs of their families.	1H. Develop a statewide early learning services referral system to ensure that families can connect with the services they need when they need them.	DHS, CCR&R, Hubs, OHA, Parenting hubs	ELD staff, following recommendations of 2015 parent referral committee adopted by the ELC in March 2015.	July 2016
Strategy 1.4 Develop robust educational and certification pathways for early learning providers	1I. Create and sustain "portable" "stackable" and transferable degrees/pathways to degrees for early learning programs at community colleges and 4-year colleges/universities, accessible regardless of geography.	HECC, community colleges, private colleges & universities, Oregon Center for Career Development.	Child care and education committee	Dec. 2020
	1J. Ensure pathways are accessible, affordable and supportive of non-traditional students through strategies such as coaching, mentoring, etc.	HECC, community colleges, private colleges & universities, Oregon Center for Career Development.		
	1K. Establish a statewide apprenticeship program for early childhood professionals, early childhood teachers and program or center directors.	HECC, community colleges, Oregon Center for Career Development, AFSCME		

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Strategy 1.5 Build a consistent approach and aligned pathway between early childhood services (beginning at age 3) and K-3 education.	1L. For the 2017 legislative session, develop best practice strategies among early learning and development programs, Early Learning Hubs and elementary schools for strong kindergarten transition.	ODE	Executive Committee with Full Council	May 2016; ongoing
	1M. Adopt standards that connect and align standards and instructional practices from early learning and development programs through the early grades of elementary school.	ODE, Hubs, CBOs	Executive Committee with Full Council	May 2016

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Goal 2: Stable and Attached Families - Families have the information and support they need to nurture and prepare their children for school

Success Metrics

- Policy agenda adopted.
- Family Stability included as a lens in policy making.
- FRM is consistently operationalized across the state.
- 50% increase in high-risk families served.
- 35% decrease in substantiated child abuse and neglect in focus population.
- 50% of families and caregivers who receive information about family role in child development report behavior changes.
- 80% of children/families receiving developmental screening before age 3.

Strategy	Tactic(s)	Key partners	Executive Sponsor	Timeline
Strategy 2.1 Strengthen community supports for family health and well being	2A. Increase access to all home based services through child-driven home based services coordination so that children and families have access to the best program for their needs, by developing common outcomes and a common screening tool for all state funded home based programs	OHA, DHA	Best Beginnings Committee	July 2016
	2B. Identify state level policy changes that support family well-being and stability.	Family Forward Oregon, SEIU, AFSCME, Faith-based communities, Physical/mental health/therapists	Best Beginnings Committee	Dec. 2020
	2C. Develop and oversee a financial incentive set-aside for Hubs to collaborate with CCOs, DHS and community partners.	DHS, OHA	Measuring Success Committee	Dec. 2015
	2D. Finalize and implement statewide screening tool and assessment protocol.	DHS, OHA	Best Beginnings Committee	July 2016 – July 2017
	2E. Develop best practice referral pathways statewide.	DHS, Housing & Community Services, ODE, OHA	Best Beginnings Committee	July 2017
	2F. Develop a “family stability lens” to use as a filter for policy decisions and implementation of legislation.	DHS, Housing & Community Services, OHA, community partners	Best Beginnings Committee	July 2017
	2G. Solidify screening connection/referral process between EI/ECSE and early learning programs.	ODE, SICC	Best Beginnings Committee	July 2017

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Goal 3: Early Learning Services and Services are Coordinated and Aligned

Success Metrics

- Hubs making meaningful progress on accountability metrics.
- Contracts and state dollars aligned to both statewide and local goals.
- MOUs implemented and working.
- Statewide screening and referral protocols are established.
- Early Learning Passport exists and is operational.
- Comprehensive Children’s Budget exists and is driving policy and at state and local level.
- Data system exists and is operational.

Strategy	Tactic(s)	Key Partners	Executive Sponsor	Timeline
Strategy 3.1 Strengthen birth through 3rd grade policy, planning and service coordination.	3A. Support and continually improve local system building work through the Early Learning Hubs.	Hubs, DHS, OHA	Executive Committee	Ongoing
	3B. Develop and approve an approach to contracting and contract administration for programs assigned to ELD that advances equity and system coordination goals.	ELD, contractors in network	Equity Committee	March 2016
	3C. Create a developmental passport that shows the progressive path of positive child & family development tasks/outcomes beginning pre-birth through 3rd grade with 3rd grade culminating in on-track 3 rd grade reading score.	ODE (data team), OEIB, OHA, DHS, DOHAD	Executive Committee	July 2020
Strategy 3.2 Strengthen systems that support cost-effective results driven services.	3D. Biennial development of comprehensive children's budget.	ODE fiscal, OHA, DHS, DAS	Executive Committee	Next due date – July 2017 for 17-19 biennium
	3E. Develop early learning data system.	ODE data team; OEIB , DHS, DAS	Measuring Success Committee	July 2017

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Goal 4: The Early Learning Council is accountable/accessible to its constituents

Success Metrics

- 25% increase in stakeholder opportunities to give feedback and inform early learning policy through Early Learning Council.
- Increase Hub and Provider understanding of focus populations, as measured by:
 - Implementation of recommendations resulting from evaluation of equity strategies in programs and Hubs; and
 - Self reported use of equity toolkit by 100% of Hubs.

Strategy	Tactic(s)	Key Partners	Executive Sponsor	Timeline
Strategy 4.1 Ensure implementation of the equity lens across the ELC's work.	4A. Identify and analyze service disparities for focus populations by hub region.	ODE, DHS, OHA, Hubs	Measuring Success; partnering with Equity Implementation	May 2016
	4B. Create positive, anti-racism, anti-bias and anti-privilege environments within the Early Learning Council, Early Learning Hubs and provider organizations. Provide training and support for individuals throughout the early learning system to promote knowledge, acceptance, inclusion, respect and strong community based partnerships.		Equity Implementation Committee	Ongoing
	4C. Validate and provide accountability to the ELD Equity Plan, measuring progress using the metrics established in the Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations.		Equity Implementation Committee and Measuring Success	Ongoing
	4D. Develop disaggregated data collection standards for a) Early Learning Hub Grantees b) Early Learning Hub Leadership c) The Early Learning Hub Provider Workforce d) The Early Learning Division Workforce e) The Early Learning Council.		Measuring Success	Dec. 2016
	4E. Use data to establish metrics toward becoming a more culturally responsive organization, per the domains found within the Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations (1) Organizational Commitment, Leadership & Governance 2) Racial Equity Policies & Implementation Practices 3) Organizational Climate, Culture & Communications 4) Service-Based Equity 5) Service-User Voice & Influence 6) Workforce Composition & Quality 7) Community Collaboration 8) Resource Allocation & Contracting Practice 9) Data, Metrics & Continuous Improvement)		Equity Implementation Committee; partnered with Measuring Success	July 2017
	4F. Develop and approve a data driven model for allocating resources that takes into consideration race, poverty and service access/service outcomes disparities in each service delivery area and use as the standard for making funding allocation decisions.		Measuring Success	July 2016
	4G. Sharpen the ELC's message and deepen the ELC's commitment to and presence in communities across the state. Develop consistent approach for listening to communities/incorporating feedback/vetting resulting action, and ensure perspectives from underserved communities are regularly heard at ELC meetings.		Hubs, CBOs	Full Council