

May 2023

JUMP START KINDERGARTEN TOOLKIT

Resources for Implementing a High-Quality Summer
Kindergarten Transition Program



REV 09/2023



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DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Oregon achieves . . . together!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Districts across the state have been hosting innovative kindergarten transitioning programs for many years and those programs inspired the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Jump Start Kindergarten initiative. This toolkit includes the best practices of districts and partners across the state including, but not limited to, the 28 Jump Start Kindergarten district grantees: Centennial, Central, David Douglas, Dayton, Forest Grove, Gervais, Gresham Barlow, Hermiston, Hillsboro, Hood River, Jefferson County, Klamath County, Klamath Falls City Schools, Lincoln County, Morrow County, North Wasco County, Ontario, Parkrose, Phoenix-Talent, Reynolds, Seaside, St. Paul, Stanfield, Tillamook, Umatilla, Vale, Warrenton-Hammond, and Woodburn. **Thank you for generously sharing your tools, tips, and stories.**

The Jump Start Kindergarten toolkit is a collaborative project of many teams at ODE, the Early Learning Division (soon to be the Department of Early Learning and Care, or "DELIC"), representatives from school districts, and community-based organizations. Jump Start Kindergarten is a key investment of ODE's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, a federal program administered by the Department of Education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, visit the [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund III \(ESSER III\) website](#).



WE ARE LEARNING TOGETHER!

Please share your feedback about the toolkit on this [form](#). If you have questions, please contact us at ODE.JumpStart@ode.oregon.gov.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit offers examples and resources that can be customized to meet the unique needs of your school community, and is organized into six sections:

- **Section 1: A Program Grounded in Equity** - highlights the Jump Start Kindergarten strengths-based vision of support and connection with children and families disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- **Section 2: Planning with Partners** - offers tools for planning with community-based partners, including early learning partners.
- **Section 3: Family-Centered Outreach** - includes “Register for Kindergarten Today!” materials and family-centered approaches to outreach.
- **Section 4: Planning the Jump Start Experience** - provides examples of hands-on, literacy-enriched curricula from across the state and beyond.
- **Section 5: Engaging All Families** - includes family engagement activities accompanied by dynamic tools.
- **Section 6: Making a Difference** - summarizes the toolkit and encourages continued systems work to align and connect learning.

A NOTE ON TERMS

- **Families:** Throughout this toolkit, the term “families” is defined broadly as anyone in a caregiving role for the child, as well as family members, relatives, and guardians supporting the child.
- **Jump Start Kindergarten:** Except when discussing specific ODE program requirements, “Jump Start Kindergarten” is used to refer to summer kindergarten transition programs in general.
- **Early Learning Programs:** This term includes federally and state funded programs like Head Start and Preschool Promise, as well as private preschools, child care settings, and home-based programs.



Look for the icon highlighting best practices from districts and partners across the state.



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INTRODUCTION

The first day of kindergarten is a significant milestone for families and children, marked by both excitement and at times, apprehension. While kindergarten opens the door to new experiences, knowledge, and friendships in a classroom community, elementary school is also a new setting for many children and families.

When Jump Start Kindergarten programs are culturally responsive and center the family as the child's first teacher, children and families are seen and valued and a strong first school experience provides a powerful waymarker for future school years.

Programs like Jump Start Kindergarten may help promote better and more immediate school adjustment, long-term social and emotional development, and greater academic success.¹ In short, the kindergarten transition can be challenging, but with the right support and resources, families and children can feel more prepared and confident as they embark on the K-12 journey.

In Oregon, with over 1,200 public K-12 schools spread across 197 districts, resources for supporting kindergarten transitions can vary significantly. Our goal with this toolkit is to provide a range of resources to support the development and implementation of engaging, culturally responsive programs for our youngest learners and their families.

At the heart of this toolkit is the idea that coordination between early learning providers and K-12 school systems is essential for success.² This toolkit emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts between districts, schools, and communities to create effective transition programs.



JUMP START KINDERGARTEN is an opportunity to center equity and focus less on how “ready” children are for kindergarten and more on how prepared Oregon’s educators, schools, districts, communities, and systems are to receive and support ALL young children and their families.



EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICTS (ESDs) AND EARLY LEARNING HUBS

For communities with limited resources, connecting with Educational Service Districts (ESDs) and Early Learning Hubs can be an excellent starting point. [Section 2: Planning with Partners, on page 11](#) of the toolkit provides further information on Early Learning Hubs and other resources that can aid in supporting successful kindergarten transitions.

A Strong Start

Jump Start Kindergarten is an evidence-based kindergarten transition program that occurs in the summer before kindergarten starts. Jump Start Kindergarten serves as an important bridge for young children and families, building on their strengths and lived experiences to secure belonging and promote early learning. By giving children and families a chance to ease into kindergarten routines, activities, and learning time with fewer children and more adult support, the conditions for belonging, success, and learning take root.



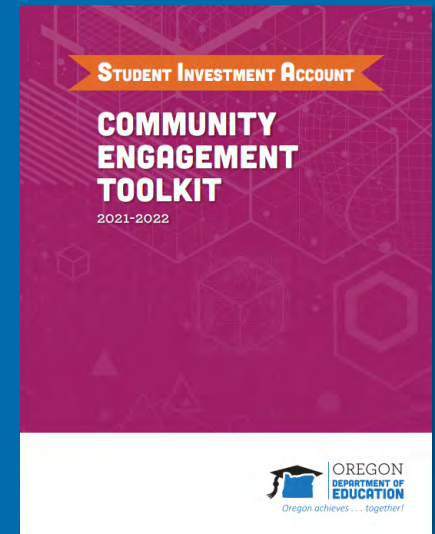
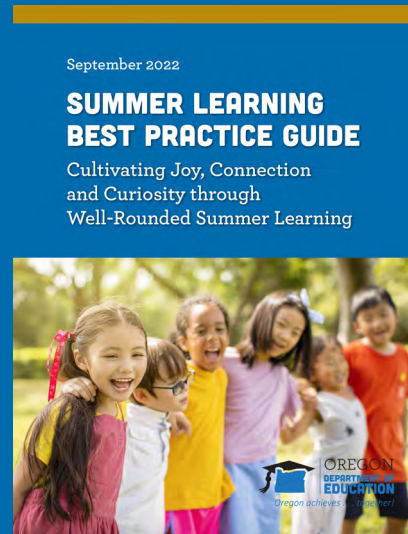
COMPANION RESOURCES

The following documents provide more information and resources on summer programming and community engagement. Please bookmark them to use alongside the tools for Jump Start Kindergarten.

- ▶ [Summer Learning Toolkit: Practical Tools and Resources for Planning Summer Learning Programs.](#)



- ▶ [Summer Learning Best Practice Guide: Cultivating Joy, Connection and Curiosity through Well-Rounded Summer Learning.](#)



- ▶ [ODE Student Investment Account: Community Engagement Toolkit, 2021-22.](#) This document offers district and school leaders the information and tools needed to engage the community, assess needs, plan well, and implement programs.



SECTION 1: A PROGRAM GROUNDED IN EQUITY

The Jump Start Kindergarten Vision

Jump Start provides a unique opportunity to build relationships, spark joy and deepen family engagement to support a seamless start to school.



Connection as the Foundation for Learning

Children flourish and learn best in the context of **strong and supportive relationships** and in joyful child-centered environments. Incorporating families' cultures into the classroom curriculum and family engagement activities gives children a sense of belonging.



Co-Creation and Innovation

Children succeed when families, schools, and communities **work together** during the pre-kindergarten (pre-k) year.



Purposeful Outreach and Engagement

Children and families feel connected to school when engagement is **culturally affirming** and **aligned** with early learning activities and providers. Outreach and enrollment is successful when schools prioritize families most underserved by our system and disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

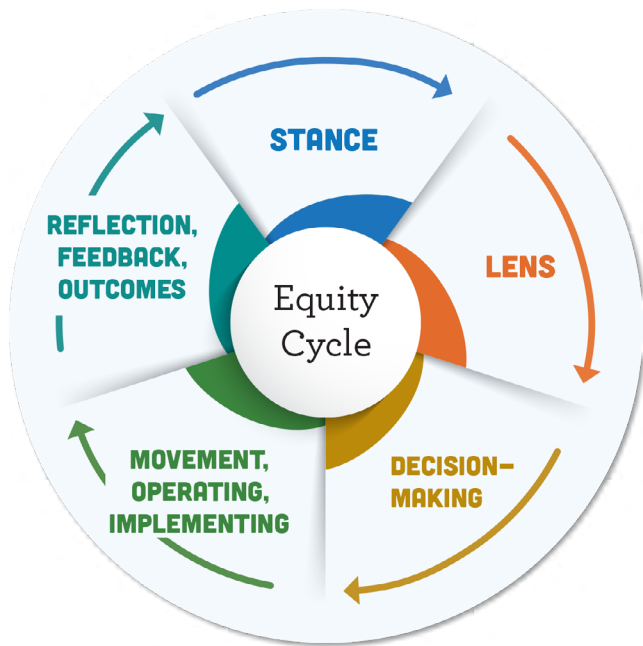


I GOT THIS!

Jump Start Kindergarten allows children to dip their toes in the water and see that school is a warm and welcoming place. I knew of one Jump Start student that had a hard time leaving his mother in the morning. He was assigned to my class this year, and came in on the first day with a beaming smile and a lot of confidence. It's a powerful thing to be able to arrive on your first day of kindergarten, the beginning of your elementary experience, and be able to think to yourself, 'I got this!'. That is what the Jump Start Kindergarten program gave him, and I couldn't be happier.

- Eliana Belle, Kindergarten Teacher, Gervais Elementary School, Gervais School District





The Oregon Department of Education invested in Jump Start Kindergarten as part of the recovery effort from the COVID-19 pandemic. While all incoming children benefit from a transition experience, the Jump Start Kindergarten grant focuses on children and families disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. By using an equity-centered decision tool, administrators may employ Jump Start Kindergarten as a strengths-based, responsive expanded learning option to help accelerate social-emotional learning, language development, and early literacy and numeracy learning.



Equity Decision Tools for Leaders

Three tools have been developed by ODE to guide school and district leaders when making decisions.

The first tool is a “Decision Tree” and is the easiest tool to use in considering difficult decisions. It can help leaders spot patterns or gaps in their planning and guide them to the use of the other two decision tools. The Decision Tree is accompanied by a set of starting conditions to review and reflect on before beginning the decision process.

- ▶ To access the Decision Tree, as well as the other tools: Deepening Questions and Dialogue and Consultancy, refer to [Decision Tools for SY 2021-22](#).



- ▶ Another key document is the [ODE Student Investment Account: Community Engagement Toolkit, 2021-22](#), which is referenced in the Introduction, as a companion resource.



An Equity Lens

An equity lens is an active tool that supports core values, commitments, orientations, and questions to become operationalizable. An equity lens must support navigating choices in the here and now. It helps translate theory into practice, focuses on assets rather than deficits, and avoids making decisions that could marginalize or harm students, staff, families, and communities.

An Equity Stance

An equity stance includes core values, commitments, orientations, principles, strategies, and frameworks that your district, organization, school, or team has decided are foundational in decision-making.

ODE’s Integrated Guidance Appendix E lays out these processes of the equity cycle.

- ▶ [Integrated Guidance: Equity Lens and Tools](#)



Focal Children and Families

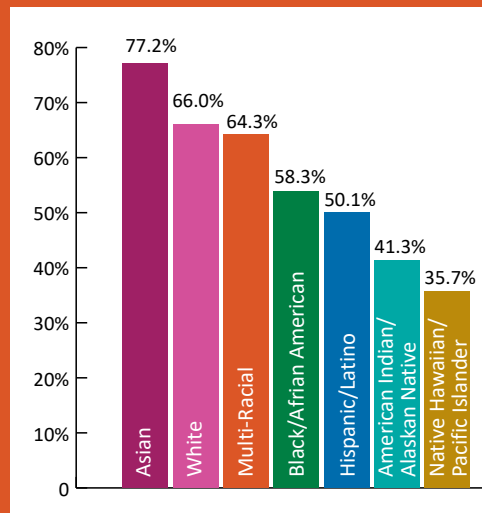
To align with the Oregon Department of Education’s Equity Stance, teams prioritize their outreach efforts to families and children who may benefit most from early connections with school staff, including:

- Children who are navigating poverty
- Children of color, including Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Latino/a/x, Pacific Islander, and communities who experienced a disproportionate impact of the pandemic
- Children who are emerging bilingual or multilingual
- Children whose families are in the migrant education program
- Children on an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP)
- Children who have not yet had a formalized education experience
- Children in the care of an adult other than the parent or guardian
- Children who are unhoused or are experiencing housing instability
- Families and children who are navigating the justice system

SUPPORTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE







Jump Start can help address some of the root causes of chronic absenteeism in kindergarten by helping to foster supportive relationships and resource sharing between school and family early on. School staff are instrumental in helping families understand how the school works - from opening and closing hours, to how to obtain before- and after-school care, to how drop-off and pickup or bus routes work. When resource sharing is done on a foundation of respect and care for student and family background and identities, and in the context of an overall welcoming school community, children and families can feel more comfortable and excited about the start of the school year.

Regular Attendance in Kindergarten Students by Race, 2021-2022



Oregon Department of Education.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [ODE’s Every Day Matters website and Toolkit](#)

- ▶ [Attendance Works Promotional Materials](#)

- ▶ [Attendance Works Preschool - Kindergarten Handout](#)

- ▶ [Why Attendance Matters](#)

- ▶ [Attendance in the Early Grades: Why it Matters for Reading, 2014](#)

- ▶ [Attendance Works Roadmap What to Do When?](#)


Attendance Tip: Lincoln County School District gives students magnets in English and in Spanish with the “no school days” listed for the school year, along with a suggestion that these are good days for scheduling appointments.

Jump Start Kindergarten Program Components

Jump Start Kindergarten may be implemented in many different ways based on the unique context of every school community, but there are some key elements that ensure quality. For recipients of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) Jump Start Kindergarten grant, the program components include:

For children, a minimum of two weeks or 30 hours of classroom time with a kindergarten teacher (or teacher with experience teaching kindergarten) from the child’s school. Classroom goals include:

- Increasing children’s social, emotional, and related skills.
- Building relationships and a sense of belonging.
- Cultivating each child’s joy, connection, inclusion, and curiosity in learning.



For adult family members and caregivers, a minimum of ten hours of family engagement activities providing:

- Opportunities for families to meet each other and the school community in a collaborative and authentic space.
- Support in navigating the school environment.
- Activities to help families and school staff build positive relationships in a culturally affirming environment.



For early learning and K-12 systems, a commitment to collaborative planning:

- District and school teams meet with regional early learning partners, such as Early Learning Hubs, Head Start, and Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, to plan for the unique needs of their school community.



Think about what planning, communication and coordination will need to take place in the spring to ensure children involved in Head Start or Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education are able to thrive in Jump Start Kindergarten in the summer.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [ESSER III](#). Information regarding the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.



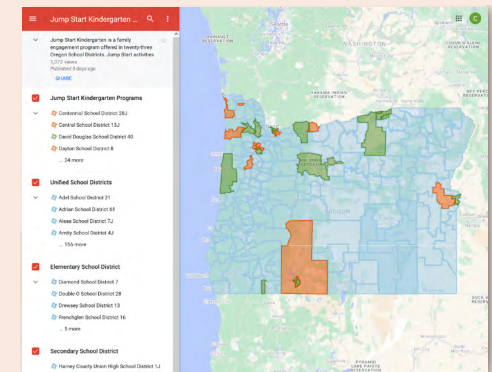
- ▶ [Jump Start Kindergarten](#)



- ▶ [Transitioning into Kindergarten](#). ODE’s website with resources for both families and educators.



- ▶ [Map of Participating Jump Start Kindergarten Districts](#)



SECTION 2: PLANNING WITH PARTNERS

A successful kindergarten transition program begins with collaborative planning, including making connections with the systems and programs that serve pre-kindergarten age students.

Building Diverse and Inclusive Teams

Jump Start Kindergarten and summer learning teams should center equity in every decision, including who is invited to the team, how outreach is coordinated, developing family engagement activities, and purchasing books and curriculum. The [Integrated Guidance, Family Engagement](#) (Appendix A: Community Engagement Toolkit) is a key resource for districts and offers these considerations when planning programs:

INTEGRATED GUIDANCE, FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



- **Assessing previous engagement activities:** Before planning new engagement opportunities, take time to reflect on previous engagement efforts. For example, review sign-in sheets from last year’s kindergarten orientation/engagement events signs. Who attended? Who did not attend? This may be an opportunity to team up with community-based partners to host events at locations like parks, Head Start centers, and libraries.
- **Feedback loops:** Create avenues for families to share their experiences, insights, and ideas for improvements. Viewing community engagement as an ongoing process, as opposed to an event (or a state requirement), is essential. The Center for Family Engagement’s “[Facilitating Community Listening Sessions: A Guide for PTA’s](#)” instructs teams to learn how families perceive engagement events to, in turn, continuously improve.
- **Establish or review and affirm engagement approaches:** Create clear expectations about the goals of engagement such as receiving input. Circle back to the question of who attended previous events and who did not.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [Jump Start Kindergarten Coordinator Position](#)

Many districts or ESDs (for rural districts) hire a Jump Start Kindergarten Coordinator. This document includes a list of possible job responsibilities.



- [Oregon’s Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines](#)



- [Oregon’s Transformative Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Framework & Standards](#)



- [Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework](#). This website is a guide to what children should know and do in five central developmental domains.

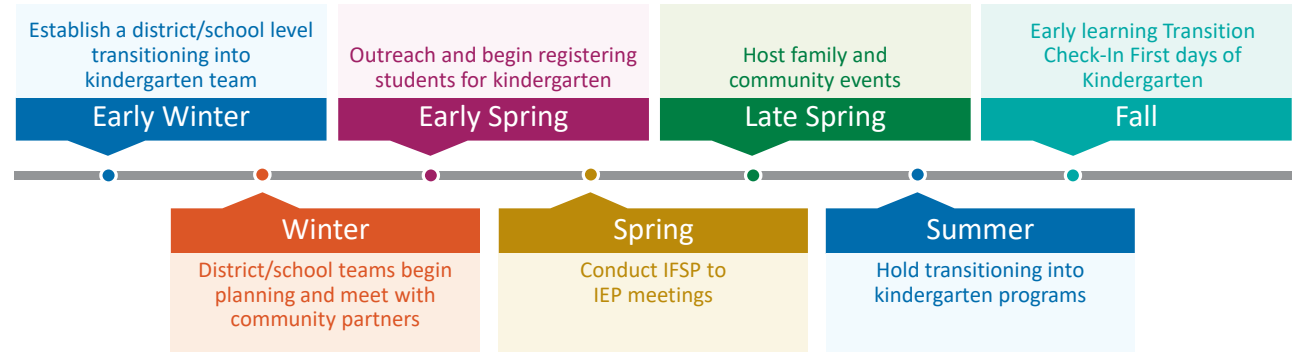


- [Raise Up Oregon: A Statewide Early Learning System Plan](#) serves as Oregon’s state system plan for early childhood prenatal to age five, bringing together government leaders from early care and education, public education, higher education, health, housing, and human services.



START EARLY!

Planning a program typically begins in the winter, alongside other summer learning programs. An early start helps districts form a comprehensive team, delegate responsibilities, connect with facilities and recruit staff successfully. It also gives district and school teams time to conduct culturally responsive outreach.



SPOTLIGHT ON HILLSBORO

[Hillsboro School District](#) (HSD) partners with [Adelante Mujeres](#) and [CAIRO](#) (Center for African Immigrants and Refugees Organization), two culturally specific non-profit organizations, to enhance preschool programming serving priority populations. Olga Acuña, Director of Federal Programs, believes that the key to successful early learning partnerships “is to include preschool staff in all aspects of the school community. Our principals are so excited to have a pre-kindergarten program in their building.”

Acuña shared that HSD has increased the number of preschool classrooms. They have also expanded the early learning team, including hiring teachers on special assignment (TOSAs), an education liaison who coordinates Jump Start Kindergarten, and a dual language specialist. Under Acuña’s leadership, all students in preschool have access to bilingual programming year-round. “With a blending approach, using Migrant and other federal funds, we can create a rich bilingual experience for our students,” says Acuña.

- ▶ [Hillsboro School District Early Learning Programs website](#)



FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBAL NATIONS

Become oriented to your community's tribal nation's website and their education programs. Each of the websites includes tribal history, culture, language, resources, and programs. Click to visit each website.










Tribal Partnership and Consultation

Tribal Consultation is required for any kind of program covered by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), not solely Title VI. It is the responsibility of the school district to initiate Tribal Consultation, which is a process to allow collaboration between the tribe and the district to enhance the educational opportunities of American Indian/Alaska Native students. Tribal Consultation works best when the time to build authentic trusting relationships has occurred. There is no conventional approach to Tribal Consultation; it must adapt to the needs of each tribal community, being aware of capacity and the need for on-going inclusion of tribal perspectives.

Consider the following when planning programs with tribal nations and communities.

- Most tribal nations offer early learning programs like Head Start, preschool, and before- and after-school that are immersive in Indigenous languages and cultures.
- Most tribal nations offer summer programming. Districts may wish to explore the possibility of combining or scheduling programs separately so they do not conflict.
- Most tribal nations have tribal-specific pre-K and kindergarten curricula. See an example in Section 4: Planning the Jump Start Experience.
- HB 2055 was passed in 2021, establishing the Oregon Tribal Early Learning Alliance (OTELA) to coordinate tribal early learning programs and services statewide. To learn more visit the [Tribal Advisory Website](#).
- Nine districts participate in Tribal Attendance Promising Practices (TAPP) aimed at reducing barriers to the attendance of Native students. Districts participating in TAPP have a coordinator that could help assist with outreach and enrollment for Jump Start Kindergarten.
- Reach out to your region's tribal leaders and education directors to learn how to respectfully integrate tribal language and culture into kindergarten classrooms and family engagement activities.

Resources

- ▶ [Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships](#)

- ▶ [Tribal Consultation Toolkit Guide 1.0](#)

- ▶ [Summer Learning Toolkit](#) (see page 17 - Indian Education in Oregon)

- ▶ [Tribal Attendance Promising Practices \(TAPP\)](#)

- ▶ [Indian Education Resources](#). ODE webpage listing a wide range of resources.

- ▶ [Tribal Nation Website](#). An overview of each of the nine federally recognized tribes.

- ▶ [Tribal History/Shared History \(TH/SH\)](#). Provides lesson plans and information regarding implementation of Tribal History/Shared History.


Planning with Early Learning Partners

Like all summer programs, collaborative planning is essential to enrolling focal families and providing children with the support they need to thrive in the Jump Start classroom. Families should experience a warm hand-off from the staff in their early learning program to the school team. When local systems (early learning and K-12) are working together, the start of school has the opportunity to be more positive and connected for everyone involved.



DID YOU KNOW?

Head Start and Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK) programs include family advocates who provide individualized support for registered children and families. Because these relationships often span many years, advocates may be highly regarded and trusted by the family. Often, this relationship ends when a child turns five and is no longer eligible for the federal or state program. As a result, a connected transition is critical during this sensitive window for families. Similarly, coordination with Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education partners can help ensure appropriate supports are in place for children experiencing a disability to participate in the JSK program and build a foundation of trust with families.

Early learning partners may:

- Connect districts and schools to additional partners who can enrich Jump Start Kindergarten programs with resources, expertise, experience, and additional funding.
- Help districts and schools connect early with incoming kindergarten families.
- Share school information flyers with their families during home visits or kindergarten transition meetings.
- Organize professional development opportunities for kindergarten teachers and partners in the elementary school.

Planning with early learning partners helps schools connect early with families. These websites will provide regional points of contact:

- ▶ [Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education \(EI/ECSE\)](#)
- ▶ [Early Learning Hub](#)
- ▶ [Extended Day Program Providers](#)
- ▶ [Head Start and Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten \(OPK\)](#)
- ▶ [Migrant Education Program Directory](#)

EARLY INTERVENTION/EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION (EI/ECSE)

Districts are encouraged to collaborate with EI/ECSE providers on the transition to kindergarten for children receiving special education services, as well as offer support to families who may not have strong connections to providers. Collaborative activities can include:

- Providing additional hours for teachers to meet with EI/ECSE staff to plan support for children enrolled in Jump Start Kindergarten.
- Sharing visual aids and equipment for staff to utilize.
- Hiring aides, teachers and coaches from local EI/ECSE preschool classrooms for Jump Start Kindergarten classrooms.



Learn more about [Inclusive Classroom Practices, on page 29](#) of this toolkit. Collaborative planning should begin the spring prior to the start of Jump Start Kindergarten when teams are writing Individual Education Program (IEP). Most EI/ECSE providers do not work in the summer, so consider asking about hiring staff to support classrooms.




SPOTLIGHT ON MECP AND PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Portland Public Schools (PPS) and their EI/ECSE provider, Multnomah Early Childhood Program (MECP), ensure that students receiving special education services thrive during the PPS Early Kindergarten Transition (EKT) program. MECP and PPS directors meet in the fall to coordinate program and training schedules for staff. MECP recruits coaches to support the classrooms, and PPS and MECP provide compensation for teachers to plan together. This sets the stage for all children and their families to feel confident on the first day of kindergarten.





"This partnership makes it possible for Early Kindergarten Transition families to enter kindergarten feeling confident, connected, and joyful!"

- Katrina Edwards, Academic Programs Administrator, Early Learners Department, Portland Public Schools

RESOURCES

- ▶ [Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Website](#)


Examples of IFSP to IEP Transition Documents:

- ▶ [Jackson County Guide to Early Childhood Special Education ENGLISH](#)

- ▶ [Jackson County Guide to Early Childhood Special Education SPANISH](#)

- ▶ [Lane County Special Education Transition into Kindergarten Letter ENGLISH](#)

- ▶ [Lane County Special Education Transition into Kindergarten Letter SPANISH](#)


EARLY LEARNING HUBS

Regional Early Learning Hubs collaborate and coordinate with local organizations that serve young children including preschool, child care providers, health, human services, and other organizations. Collaboration efforts can include:

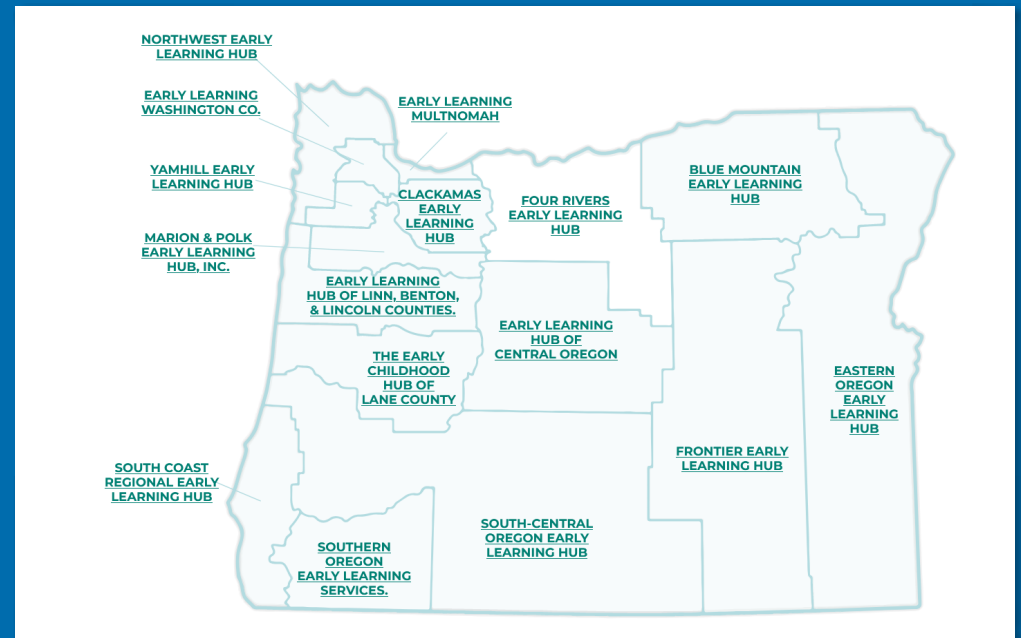
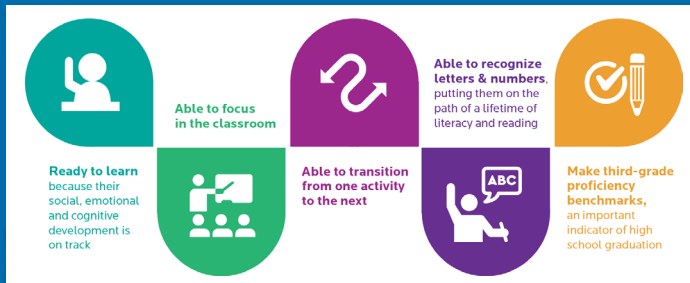
- Outreach support
- Family engagement activities
- Connections to organizations serving focal families
- Professional development opportunities for staff
- Thought partnership on Jump Start Kindergarten family enrollment prioritization
- Connection to other kindergarten transition programs in the region



DID YOU KNOW?

To connect with Regional Hub directors, click on the Early Learning Division's [Hub Website](#), scroll down to the map, and click the county navigator. Once on the website, look for the Hub director contact information, as well as information about kindergarten transition activities supported by the Hub.

Hubs are a one-stop shop for districts to collaborate with early learning agencies.



EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM PROVIDERS

Extended day programming can make summer learning more robust and inclusive and ensure that children of working families can participate in the program. This could include:

- On-site before and after school child care
- Transportation to a licensed home-based or agency provider
- Partnering with a community-based organization

To ensure program alignment and to support a smooth transition from Jump Start to extended day programming, administrators and coordinators should schedule planning time to review the curriculum, the daily schedule, food service, use of building space, and transportation.

Child Care Providers

Many Jump Start programs operate for a half-day. For working families, this may create a barrier to enrolling in the summer Jump Start program. School leadership may want to partner with a licensed child care provider for on-site child care services before and after Jump Start and other summer programming.



Tips for Schools and Districts from Child Care Providers

Camp Fire Columbia, a licensed child care provider in the Willamette Valley area, shared these tips when planning for summer programs like Jump Start:

- ✓ Connect with child care providers as early as January.
- ✓ Discuss the scope of the program, including the number of students that will likely need child care services.
- ✓ Ask providers to share licensing requirements or have them consult with the Office of Child Care if they are uncertain of the requirements. Often there are strict guidelines around space use, staffing, number of restrooms available, and ages of students.
- ✓ Invite providers to planning meetings to address questions, challenges, and ideas.
- ✓ Clarify funding up front, including the state's Employee Related Day Care subsidy for qualifying families.
- ✓ Consider sharing staff to optimize the services and support.
- ✓ Create a document that district/school teams and providers can share. Include expectations, dates, times, points of contact, community building, language services, meals, and general coordination.
- ✓ Celebrate your work together and build a community of practice that will live and grow for future summers.
- ✓ Debrief to evaluate and reflect on the services provided for better support in the future.

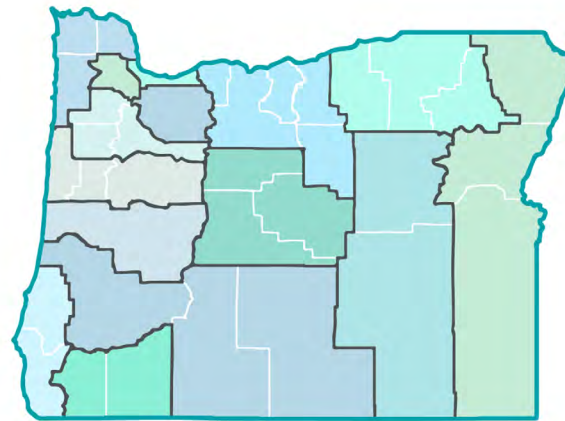


CENTRAL COORDINATION OF Child Care Resource & Referral

To learn about potential child care partners, contact the regional [Child Care Resource and Referral agency](#) for support.

Find Your
Regional CCR&R

Click on the map to see
regional contact
information.



Resources

- ▶ [OregonAsk](#) is a statewide expanded learning network that identifies extended day learning partners across the state. The [OregonAsk GIS](#) maps locate extended day program providers in a given region. OregonAsk also provides training for educators serving school-age children.



- ▶ [211info](#) is a clearinghouse for access to family resources, including child care as well as housing and shelter, utility assistance, health care, and basic needs.



- ▶ [Employee Related Day Care](#) (ERDC) is a state subsidy program where eligible families receive financial assistance to pay for child care costs.



- ▶ The Transition to Kindergarten and Out-of-School Time Programs ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#)).



SPOTLIGHT ON HERMISTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Hermiston School District partners with [Champions](#), a licensed child care business to provide on-site after-school child care services (at no cost to families) for children in Jump Start and other summer learning programs. Since many family members are farm workers with late summer hours, Hermiston extends child care until 7 PM. After Jump Start Kindergarten concludes for the day, staff transition children to the child care area in the school for play-based learning activities, snacks, and meals, and communicate regularly with families and school staff to ensure children's needs are being met.

"Our child care partnership resulted in higher enrollment of our summer programs and gave parents and caregivers peace of mind during the workday until they were able to pick up their children. And best of all, children had a lot of fun, enjoying time with children of different ages and enriching activities."

- Jerad Farley, Director of Elementary Instruction, Hermiston School District

MIGRANT EDUCATION COORDINATORS

Jump Start School Teams can connect early with Migrant Education Teams to plan summer programming and strengthen partnership and outreach efforts.

Important Tips:

- [Contact](#) regional Migrant Program Coordinators to align summer program dates and outreach efforts.
- [Contact](#) the Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC), the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantee for Oregon and other programs.
- Through the Binational Teachers Program, migrant regions can collaborate with districts to bring teachers from Mexico to support summer programming. [The Migrant Education team](#) can provide more information.



DID YOU KNOW?

Every Migrant region has a School Readiness Specialist? The Oregon Migrant Education Service Center has a [school readiness page](#) and a [directory](#) of Migrant Education Program staff by region. Connect with the Migrant School Readiness Specialist, who may facilitate referrals of Migrant Pre-K students, connect with migrant families, and inform families about the Jump Start Kindergarten program.



SPOTLIGHT ON ONTARIO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Every December, the Multilingual and Migrant Education Team (MME) asks districts about their need for binational teachers for summer programming. MME invites teachers to Oregon from Mexico as part of a cultural exchange. During Ontario's Jump Start program, the binational teacher not only taught kindergarten but also engaged with families.

"Families and children appreciate native Spanish-speaking teachers and the cultural connections they make."

- Anabel Ortiz-Chavolla, Director of Federal Programs

▶ [Ontario School District](#)



Resources



Supporting Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Children and Their Families

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs provide comprehensive services to children and families. As a part of this work, they collaborate and coordinate with others to support effective transitions that migrant and seasonal Head Start Association (2018). While all children and families in Head Start programs experience transitions such as enrolling in the program, daily arrivals and departures from group care settings, classroom to classroom, and exiting the program, MSHS children and families experience some unique transitions. For example, families may move one or more times a year, either within a state or between states in search of agricultural work. This means families change residences and their children may attend more than one early childhood program during the year. Head Start Program Performance Standard 45 CFR § 1307.22(c) requires MSHS programs to "support effective transitions to other migrant or seasonal Head Start or, if appropriate, Early Head Start or Head Start programs for families and children moving out of the community in which they are currently served."

▶ [Supporting Migrant Students and Seasonal Head Start Students](#). This document highlights tools in order to support migrant students and seasonal head start students.



▶ [Directory of Migrant Education Program Staff by Region](#)



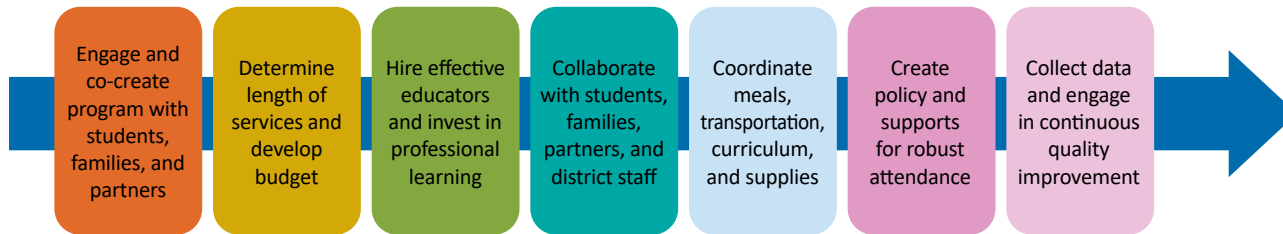
▶ [Oregon Migrant Education Service Center](#). Willamette Education Service District has a school readiness page where it serves to prompt, aid, and share resources to statewide Migrant Readiness Specialists.



Creating a Work Plan

Once district teams have connected with community-based partners, it's time to create a work plan. The You for Youth (Y4Y) Summer Planner is a tool designed to set goals, clarify roles, and track progress. It also includes separate planning tabs for implementation, scheduling, and staff recruitment.

Additional planning tools include a budget workbook to support and track funding and plan for sustainability, a program plan, and end-of-program report templates in the Resources section. Below are components of planning effective summer programs:



GET CLEAR ABOUT WHERE YOU'RE HEADED

Intentional program planning helps summer leaders use time and resources wisely along with supporting student success and intended outcomes. The Y4Y Summer Planning tool includes the following elements:

- Developing your program team
- Assessing needs of the school community
- Creating goals of program
- Intentional design and logistics
- Student recruitment and outreach
- Continuous quality improvement



Y4Y COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM PLANNER



Program Implementation Planner Page: Project Planning Matters!
The Path to Success Is Paved With Solid Planning

FOCUS	STRATEGY	LESS STRESS	RESULTS
The planning process helps your program team focus on the right steps at the right time, with a clear destination in mind. It can prevent missteps such as setting goals before assessing student needs, or designing activities that are "cool" but don't	Like good chess players, good program planners are always thinking several moves ahead. What can we do this spring to recruit the students who need our summer program the most? If we schedule a field trip in January, could bad weather wreck	Having a plan won't guarantee that your team will never say "Oh no!" or "I didn't think of that!" But you won't say those words nearly as often.	Planning enables you to use time and resources wisely, to hire and develop the staff you need, and to design activities intentionally. These steps are essential to reaching your goals and helping your students succeed.

Implementation Planner



Blank Summer Planner



Sample of Completed Planner



User Guide for the Planner



Recruiting Staff

Hiring teachers and other critical staff for summer programming can be challenging. One of the most effective strategies is to start recruiting early. If a teacher can only commit to one week, consider hiring a different teacher for the second week. Be sure to plan ahead for additional staffing to support students experiencing disabilities and emerging multilingual students. Staff that have specialized skills and knowledge are often in high demand for summer programs.



Planning Team Checklist

For small and rural districts, Education Service Districts (ESD) and [Regional Early Learning Hubs](#) may be the best first point of contact for planning.






School and District Staff:

- ✓ Principal
- ✓ Summer/Jump Start Coordinator
- ✓ Office Support
- ✓ Kindergarten, English Language Learner, and Special Education teachers
- ✓ School Counselor
- ✓ Social Worker/CARE team
- ✓ [Migrant Education Program Coordinator](#)
- ✓ Operations: Facilities, Nutrition Services, Transportation
- ✓ McKinney-Vento Point of Contact/Foster Liaison
- ✓ School Nurse/School Health Assistant

Community Partners:

- [Regional Early Learning Hub Director](#) (scroll down to the map and click your county)
- [Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator](#)
- [Local Head Start Director or Education Manager](#) (scroll down)
- [Tribal Nations Representative](#)
- [Regional Child care Resource and Referral](#)
- Community-Based Organizations
- Local high school(s) with Early Learning Programs of Study. See [Approved CTE Programs](#) in the Resource section.

Resources

- ▶ [Equity Lens and Tools](#). This is part of the Oregon Department of Education's Aligning for Student Success that provides equity lens and tools.

- ▶ [Tips for Recruiting Teachers](#)

- ▶ [Transitioning into Kindergarten Timeline](#)

- ▶ [Approved CTE Programs](#). When exploring summer staffing options for Jump Start, consider reaching out to your local high school to determine if the school has an Early Learning Program of Study. To see if your local high school offers this Program of Study, visit the website above.

- ▶ [You for Youth Summer Planner](#). This website includes planning tools to help implement both summer and school year programs.


SECTION 3: FAMILY-CENTERED OUTREACH

When families and caregivers register for kindergarten in the spring, they have more opportunities to connect with their school community, build relationships with staff, and start the year off right. Registering early also gives families time to learn about summer programs like Jump Start Kindergarten and access school and district resources, such as free meals, after-school programs, bus transportation, and health resources.



WHEN FAMILIES REGISTER IN THE SPRING:

- ✓ Families have access to summer programs
- ✓ Families have time to build trust with school staff
- ✓ Schools have time to plan supports
- ✓ Schools have time to prepare the right number of kindergarten teachers

Early Registration

Schools need many hearts and hands to spread the word about early kindergarten registration. Many districts begin outreach and planning for kindergarten orientation events in the early spring. **These events can be jointly planned with early learning and community partners.** While early learning partners can share school information with their enrolled pre-kindergarten families, it can be challenging to connect with families whose children are not enrolled in publicly funded early learning programs. That's when eye-catching materials like banners, yard signs, flyers, fact sheets, and social media posts can be especially effective.



STRATEGIC OUTREACH TO FOCAL FAMILIES

Invite community partners to post and distribute flyers to their families and networks. These community partners are located in every community:

- [Migrant Education Program Coordinator](#)
- [Regional Early Learning Hub Director](#) (scroll down to the map and click your county)
- [Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator](#)
- [Local Head Start Director or Education Manager](#) (scroll down)
- [Tribal Nations Representative](#)
- [Child Care Resource and Referral](#)



The school community can share information with incoming kindergarten families. Here are some examples of where families can distribute flyers:

- Faith-based organizations
- Bus stops
- Community centers
- Head Start, preschools and child care centers
- Health clinics
- Apartment complexes
- Grocery stores
- Parks
- Libraries

Using Social Media to Promote Early Registration

Social media can be an excellent way to reach a broader audience of community members with eligible kindergarten students. The feeds are often translated using the preferred language the viewer has on their devices. Consider changing the school social media account “cover image” or profile image to one of the stickers or banners during the Spring registration time.

▶ [Social Media Kit](#)



Jump Start Registration/Application Checklist

Once families have registered for school, school staff have the contact information to invite families to summer programs like Jump Start Kindergarten. To facilitate that process, applications should be:

- ✓ In a language families can understand
- ✓ Brief
- ✓ Online and in paper form
- ✓ Informative to families: include start and end dates, orientation dates, daily schedules, and options like extended-day child care, and transportation
- ✓ Informative to schools by asking families about their child’s participation in early childhood services, health concerns, and other special needs
- ✓ Clear to families that the program is free

As a team, decide in the spring how to manage prioritizing Jump Start Kindergarten enrollment if there is a waitlist. A “first come, first serve” approach should not be used, since more resourced families are often able to register early.

- ▶ Sample from Hermiston School District: [Kindergarten Camp Registration form](#)

RESOURCES

- ▶ Register for Kindergarten Flyers [Arabic](#), [English](#), Chinese ([Traditional/Simplified](#)), [Chuukese](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#)
- ▶ Register for Kindergarten Yard Signs [Arabic-English](#), Chinese ([Traditional/Simplified](#)), [Chuukese-English](#), [English](#), [Russian-English](#), [Somali-English](#), [Spanish-English](#), [Vietnamese-English](#)
- ▶ Register for Kindergarten Banners [Arabic](#), [English](#), Chinese ([Traditional/Simplified](#)), [Chuukese](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish-English](#), [Vietnamese](#)
- ▶ Register for Kindergarten Stickers [Arabic](#), [English](#), Chinese ([Traditional/Simplified](#)), [Chuukese](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish-English](#), [Vietnamese](#)



Families Experiencing Houselessness

Partnership and consistent collaboration between Jump Start Kindergarten teams and designated McKinney-Vento Liaisons will strengthen outreach and help ensure more students are identified and prioritized for additional services and support. Check with the district liaison to determine if families have incoming kindergarten students. If so, the coordinator may share the program application and school registration materials with the liaison and ensure there are no barriers to the family’s transition to kindergarten. **It is essential that children experiencing houselessness receive priority when enrolling in Jump Start.**

Every school district in Oregon has at least one designated McKinney-Vento Liaison to provide direct assistance to families navigating housing insecurity and unaccompanied youths to access and achieve in school. To reach a district liaison, contact the district’s administrative office or the state McKinney-Vento Program office.

RESOURCES

- ▶ Head Start programs also serve families experiencing homelessness. For more information contact the [Head Start Family Services Manager](#) (scroll down).



- ▶ [McKinney-Vento Act: Homeless Education Program](#) (scroll down to District Liaison Contacts to identify the liaison for your school district).



SPOTLIGHT ON LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

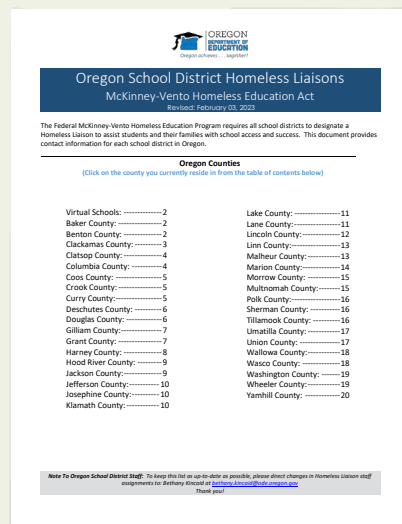


LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Lincoln County School District created a weighted point enrollment model that was based on the priority populations developed by their regional Early Learning Hub and used by Preschool Promise providers. Lincoln County only used the point system if they received more applications than the space available. The Early Learning Coordinator at Lincoln County School District, Lauren Sigman said, “It’s been so helpful collaborating with our early learning partners like Preschool Promise and Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties. As a result of these partnerships, we are aligned when it comes to enrolling focal families in our programs. It also helps ensure that we were targeting enrollment to children and families who are furthest from opportunity as determined by the Early Learning Hub’s sector plan.”

For more information about family engagement activities, see [Section 5: Engaging All Families, on page 32](#).

- ▶ [Lincoln County School District](#)



SECTION 4: PLANNING THE JUMP START EXPERIENCE

A key step in the planning process for Jump Start Kindergarten is building an inclusive curriculum that all children can access. If Jump Start Kindergarten activities help children continue to experience themselves as curious critical thinkers and doers, with their identities as cultural and social beings, AND if these activities continue into kindergarten, then schools will build a strong foundation of connection, care, and trust between children, families, and school. This section offers some suggestions for planning the program.

Building the Bridge From Home

The Jump Start experience is meant to give children a sense of belonging, confidence, and joy as they step into kindergarten. To do that, all of the activities and curriculum that comprise Jump Start must serve as the scaffolding or bridge from early childhood to the kindergarten classroom, gently introducing features of kindergarten that feel the most different from a home- or center-based experience.

Bridging from home to classroom means honoring families as a child's first and lasting teacher. This includes time to connect with families and caregivers to learn more about the wealth of information they have to offer. These connections are essential for meeting the diverse needs of each child in the classroom and creating culturally relevant and enriching learning experiences and identity development.



Figure 7-1. Elements of a Healthy Classroom Community, *Leading for Literacy*

RESOURCES

- ▶ [Social and Emotional Learning: A Transformative Approach](#)



- ▶ [Mental Health: Guidance for Schools and School Districts](#)



Mental Health Guidance and Resources



- ▶ [Create a Healthy Classroom Community: The Home-School Connection](#)



- ▶ [Honoring Family in the Classroom](#) from the Colorín Colorado website, for educators and multilingual families. This article highlights literacy-based home to school strategies.



- ▶ [SEL with Families & Caregivers](#) from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).



Building the Bridge to the Classroom

Developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), tap into each child's innate joy in learning and creating opportunities for each child to reach their potential. The Jump Start Kindergarten experience should include carefully planned activities and meaningful play that provides ample opportunities to explore and discover, while also explicitly giving children and families instruction about routines, and social and emotional skills.

By building on a child's lived experience, home language and culture, learning experiences can be both culturally responsive, a protective factor, and academically enriching. While the focus of Jump Start is not solely on learning standards, it is an opportunity to help children build from their strengths to lay essential ground for literacy and numeracy learning. Read-alouds, math games, role playing, singing, and free play are activities to help children acclimate to a new environment.

GET OUTSIDE!

Summer learning programs like Jump Start offer an ideal opportunity to spend learning time outside. Whether that includes exploring the community garden, a walking field trip to a park, or a read-aloud under a shady tree, learning can and should take place in various community locations and settings.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten Practice Resources](#)



- ▶ [Kindergarten: Where Play and Learning Can Meet](#). This documentary explores the advantages associated with a play-based approach in kindergarten and features stories of how two Illinois school districts made the transition to play-based learning.



- ▶ [Engaging Pre-K Learners by Following Their Interests](#). From Edutopia, teachers build upon children's excitement to reach learning objectives



KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUILDING THE JUMP START CURRICULUM

- ✓ Is the curriculum developmentally appropriate, and play-based?
- ✓ Does the curriculum include a whole-child focus that supports growth across all areas of development and learning, including social-emotional, cognitive, physical, language, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts?
- ✓ Does the curriculum prioritize individualized instruction daily to meet the unique needs of every child along their unique progression of growth and development?
- ✓ Does the curriculum include a culturally and linguistically sustaining approach?
- ✓ Does the curriculum seamlessly increase and provide meaningful partnerships with families?

(From [Teaching Strategies](#), 2022)

Early Literacy

In the pre-kindergarten and primary years, children develop oral language skills, phonological awareness, print concepts, phonics knowledge, and decoding skills, all of which contribute to developing a strong foundation for skilled reading and writing. Jump Start Kindergarten helps children build an important literacy foundation by honoring children’s home language, lived experience, culture and family. When songs, books, read alouds, chants and stories are reflective of what is familiar to children, they feel seen and affirmed. Building from oral language is the best way to bridge into literacy, and helping to reinforce phonemic awareness and early concepts of print ensures children will be primed for learning to read. Families, as a child’s first teacher, also have an essential role to play in enriching their child’s literacy skills at home by singing, reading, playing and talking together.

Literacy Considerations

Literacy Leaders’ Role: How do we intentionally connect literacy leaders to the kindergarten transition process? What are some roles that literacy leaders could play in the kindergarten transition process?

Jump Start Program Planning: What literacy learning activities will be included? What literacy routines will be the focus? How can there be consistency across instructors? How can the Jump Start program be leveraged to learn about the newest students as literacy learners?

Partnering with Families: How are families empowered to support their child’s literacy success? How is the school/district plan for students’ literacy learning shared? How are the voices and experiences of families and their role in a child’s literacy development honored?

Tools to support literacy in the Jump Start Classroom:

- [Effective Enhancements for Foundational Skills Instruction](#); By enhancing foundational skills instruction with engaging activities, it is important to create learning opportunities that feel like fun and games to learners!
- [Reading Rockets Classroom Strategies](#); This library provides effective, research-based classroom strategies to help strengthen students’ skills in phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing.
- [Planning for an Interactive Read Aloud](#); Interactive read-alouds — which involves not just listening to the words of the book but asking children to answer questions along the way — can support children’s literacy development, extend their understanding of language, and build their comprehension skill.

Resources

- ▶ [ODE’s Early Literacy Framework](#). ODE is investing in the development of Oregon’s Early Literacy Framework as part of its commitment to addressing unfinished learning and supporting literacy education infrastructure for the long term.



- ▶ [Oregon Kindergarten English Language Arts and Literacy Standards](#)



- ▶ [Book Knowledge and Print Concepts - National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning](#)



- ▶ [National Center on Improving Literacy: Families and School Partnering for Children’s Literacy Success](#)



- ▶ [Planned Language Approach \(PLA\): Big 5 for ALL](#). This website is from the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center that includes resources organized by the five key skills that lead to later school success for all children.



SOBRATO EARLY ACADEMIC LANGUAGE MODEL (SEAL)

At the heart of quality early education is the understanding that children learn and develop best where they feel safe, where they feel a sense of belonging, and that they are part of a caring community that embraces who they are and believes in them. This video demonstrates preschool environments where children's languages, cultures, and identities are welcomed, present, and affirmed.



RESOURCES

- ▶ [Grand Ronde Kindergarten Tribal History](#). The curriculum includes social studies, math, science, and language arts; and each lesson aligns with the Common Core State Standards.



- ▶ [Diverse Books For Children](#) from Reading Rockets.



- ▶ [iColorin Colorado!](#) A bilingual site for families and educators of multilingual learners.



- ▶ [Multilingual Learning Toolkit](#)



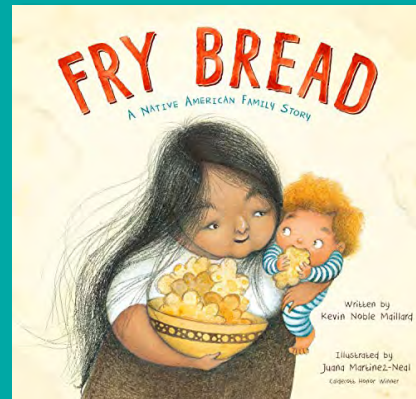
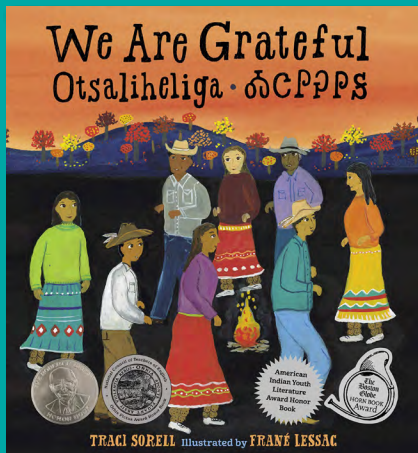
- ▶ [Multnomah County Library, Indigenous Authors & Illustrators: Board Books from Multcolib Early Childhood](#)



- ▶ [Affirming, Language, Culture, & Identity](#). This brief video showcases preschool environments where children's languages, cultures, and identities are welcomed.



AFFIRMING LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY



Materials that are culturally and linguistically affirming offer a valuable opportunity to bring our students' languages, cultures, histories, and voices into educational spaces.

- ▶ [First Book Marketplace](#): discounted books with bilingual and culturally diverse selection.

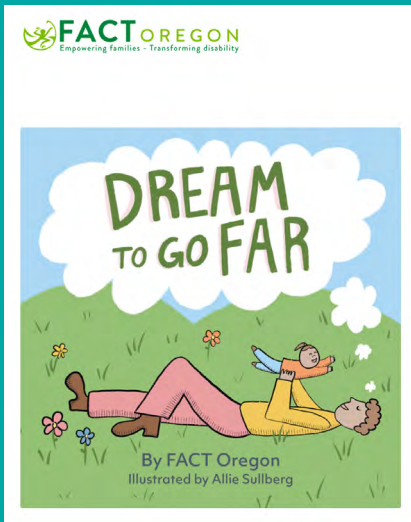


OREGON'S EARLY LEARNING AND KINDERGARTEN GUIDELINES

[Oregon's Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines](#) is a resource for early educators of children ages 3–6. This document offers a shared view of and common vocabulary for child development and learning from age 3 through the end of kindergarten.



INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICES



In Oregon, when children transition from Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) to school-age special education services, they shift from an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to an Individual Education Program (IEP). While evidence suggests that involvement in pre-kindergarten prepares both children who experience disabilities and those who do not experience disabilities for school, a pre-kindergarten experience is not universally offered to every young child.

Even for those who can access pre-kindergarten, the contextual differences between early learning and care environments and kindergarten are vast. Collaborative planning, clear communication, and a variety of transition activities, such as the Jump Start Kindergarten program, support child and family preparation for and adjustment to the new setting.

► [Fact OR](#)



Resources

- [Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Website](#). Includes resources for families, providers, and partners regarding high-quality inclusion.
- [EI/ECSE Contractor Contact Information](#). Provides Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) contractor contact information for Oregon.
- [Transition to Kindergarten - IFSP to IEP Guidance](#)
- [Transitioning from Early Childhood Special Education \(IFSP\) to Kindergarten](#). Includes tips for parents/caregivers of children with challenging behaviors.
- [Transition from Preschool Special Education to Kindergarten](#). Contains a learning guide regarding communication and coordination in transition planning from preschool to kindergarten.

Sample Program Curriculum and Schedules

The Jump Start Kindergarten curriculum is not one size fits all. Districts individualize curricula to align with their goals, kindergarten program, and most importantly, their school community. However, all Jump Start curricula prioritize Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), practicing classroom routines and transitions, and engaging in activities that embrace hands-on joyful learning.

- ▶ [Early Kindergarten Transition \(EKT\)](#). Portland Public School’s 3-week curriculum.



- ▶ [Kids in Transition to School \(KITS\)](#). A six week program developed by the [Oregon Social Learning Center](#) in Lane County, Oregon.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PPS CURRICULUM

Focus on SEL:

- Children learn a different social skill such as how to share or ask for help. The teacher models the daily skill with puppets.
- Teachers illustrate social skills while reading a book such as *The Color Monster* by Anna Llenas when discussing sharing.
- Teachers guide students from discussing the characters in the books to “I statements” such as, “I feel angry when I can’t play with legos.”

Self-Regulation Skills:

- Children practice yoga poses and breathing or [Freeze Dance](#) if the class is feeling especially energetic.
- The teacher ends the day with a community meeting, passing an object to indicate turns which helps children learn to wait and actively listen to their classmates.

Math Focus:

- Counting games such as children counting each other in a circle by 1’s and 5’s, with every 5th child sitting down.
- Magical spoon counting activity using color paper squares and cut out spoons - color combinations, adding and subtracting colors.

Literacy Extensions:

- Read aloud and retelling stories from the week’s anchor book.
- Turn and talk discussion of the book.
- Table group discussion with sorting activity to explore sequence.

Movement

- Freeze dance
- [Go Noodle](#)
- Walking field trip
- Parade with hand-made instruments

PEEP SCIENCE CURRICULUM

Celebrate curiosity and the joys of discovery! The PEEP Science Curriculum invites students to actively investigate their world by exploring water, sound, plants, color, shadows, and ramps (movement) in units lasting three weeks.

- ▶ Learn more about [PEEP Science Curriculum](#)



Color



Plants



Ramps



Shadows



Sound



Water

EXAMPLES OF JUMP START PROGRAM SCHEDULES

- [Gervais](#)
- [Hermiston](#)
- [Lincoln County](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON GERVAIS SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Very early into the program, the incoming kindergarten students began feeling very comfortable at school, which helped facilitate several weeks of successful instruction in learning new rules and routines, building friendships, and meeting staff members. During our program, incoming students and their parents received school tours and met the principal, office manager, teachers, and instructional assistants.

Now that the school year is underway, we can already see higher numbers of kindergarten students feeling more comfortable at school and ready to learn. Jump Start

Kindergarten at Gervais Elementary this past summer was, by all measures, a success!”

-Dr. Creighton Helms, Director of Student Services and Federal Programs, Gervais School District



SECTION 5: ENGAGING ALL FAMILIES

When schools welcome and partner with families, families experience an increase in confidence to help support their children’s learning. Additionally, teachers experience greater job satisfaction and increased confidence, and students have better attendance and more positive attitudes toward school, as well as increased test scores. ([National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement](#)). Culturally and linguistically affirming family engagement activities are key to a successful Jump Start Kindergarten program.

Goals for family engagement include:

- Honoring families as their child’s first and most important teacher.
- Developing positive and transparent relationships among families, school staff, and community partners.
- Promoting consistent attendance and understanding of school routines.
- Orienting and guiding families and children to the school and building confidence in navigating school systems.
- Connecting with existing family programs such as the Head Start policy council to bridge and align engagement activities.



SPOTLIGHT ON PHOENIX-TALENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Phoenix-Talent Schools

Excellence for Everyone

Some schools and districts offer family engagement events for specific groups of families. For example, Phoenix-Talent School District hosts “Charla entre padres” for Spanish-speaking families with children experiencing disabilities, led by a community organization, Bridging Communities. The group meets regularly to support each other and share information. Additionally, elementary principals have transformed traditional school events, such as Back-to-School and Open House, into opportunities for families to meet with not only classroom teachers and staff but with each other. During Jump Start Kindergarten, families with older children invite families with incoming kindergartners to their meetings and welcome them into the community.

Assistant Superintendent, Tiffanie Lambert, said the family engagement efforts, “help ‘build the village’ to support the children and families in our community. The camaraderie and collaboration between families increase friendships, support, and advocacy.”



STRATEGIES FOR WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES

- Create a culturally enriching and reflected family room (such as a lounge or classroom) during Jump Start with multilingual information and magazine subscriptions, a bulletin board, a lending library, and a computer.
- Post signs in multiple languages.
- Display student work on the walls.
- Enlist a multilingual morning greeter to welcome students and families.
- Ensure that your multilingual staff and volunteers are visible throughout the building and during all family engagement events.
- Include multilingual books in the [school library](#) and classrooms.
- Consider playing music in the front entryway or lobby at drop-off and pick-up time.
- Encourage teachers to create a [welcoming environment](#) within the classroom.



¡Colorín colorado!



THE 4 I'S OF TRANSFORMATIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parents and caregivers know that they play an important role in their child's success. But traditional family engagement practices don't always meet the needs of every family, nor treat them as equal partners in ensuring their child's success. The [Center for Family Engagement](#) developed the "4 I's to transform family engagement events.



Inclusive: Invite diverse perspectives, question assumptions, and intentionally build relationships.

Individualized: Be responsive, personalize outreach efforts and offer tailored experiences to meet the unique needs of every family.

Integrated: Go beyond one-time events, link engagement activities to learning and collaborate with educators.

Impactful: Help families develop their knowledge and skills, offer opportunities to practice and interact, and gather feedback to measure success.

(From [Facilitating Community Listening Sessions: A Guide for PTAs](#), The Center for Family Engagement)

INCLUSIVE

Embracing and valuing diverse perspectives.



INDIVIDUALIZED

Meeting the unique needs of every family and child.



INTEGRATED

Connecting and aligning with the educational system.



IMPACTFUL

Empowering families to support their child's success.



BEST PRACTICES IN FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Co-creation of Family Engagement Activities

It is best practice for school planning teams to co-create family engagement events with community partners and a diverse group of families and caregivers. For example, schools can host listening sessions with current kindergarten families. The following questions may be helpful when meeting with families:

- What do families wish they had known before the first day?
- What challenges and successes did they experience during the first month of kindergarten?
- Are there lingering questions about school?



"I feel that my responsibility as a teacher is to be a bridge that connects our parents with the school system. When families are involved in their children's learning, children show improvement in academics, self-esteem, behavior, and attendance."

- Rosa Floyd, Kindergarten Teacher at Nellie Muir Elementary IB School in the Woodburn School District and 2022-23 Teacher of the Year.






Affirming the Home Language

Engaging families whose home language is not English is essential to the success of Jump Start Kindergarten. It is important to encourage families to continue to use their home language consistently with their children through conversations and literacy where possible.

"Using your home language connects your children to your family. Using your home language allows you to teach your children, and to learn new things together. You can talk about new experiences and words; you can practice letters and numbers. All of these things are an important part of your children's early learning— and it will be easier and more fun for you if you do it in your most comfortable language."

- From the Gift of Language

Resources

- ▶ [The Gift of Language](#): For Families is a helpful document to share with families during Jump Start Kindergarten. 
- ▶ [Facilitating Community Listening Sessions: A Guide for PTA's](#) is an excellent kick-off to planning family engagement events and activities. 
- ▶ [Encouraging Strong Parent-Child Relationships](#) From the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement. 
- ▶ [Ensuring Focal Student Group Safety and Privacy Resource](#) "Before You Engage with Focal Groups," [Section 5: Engaging All Families](#), provides critical guidance to ensure staff is not unintentionally harming families. 
- ▶ [Foster Point of Contact](#) Connect with your foster point of contact to establish community connections with programs that serve students and families involved with foster care. 

Family Engagement Events

Family engagement events should feel welcoming to all families, offer time for families and children to meet one another and school staff, and provide essential school information. For more information, check out the Resource section on this page.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PLANNING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS






- Are some events designed for specific language groups? For example, an event in Spanish with interpreters to support English-speaking families.
- Are events designed for families to engage with and learn from each other?
- Are events family-centered? For example, do events include child care and access to interpreters?
- Are events co-created with early learning partners, community-based organizations, and families?
- Are events scheduled at varying times to meet the needs of family schedules?



TIPS FOR INCLUSIVE EVENTS FROM SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- ✓ Help families register for school and sign-up for your summer programs at every event.
- ✓ Invite principals and kindergarten teachers as well as front office staff, counselors, social workers, the school nurse or school health assistant, and after-school providers.
- ✓ Extend a special invitation to Head Start, Preschool Promise, and other early learning educators in the community.
- ✓ Hire interpreters to attend if the event is not bilingual.
- ✓ Encourage staff to wear school t-shirts and badges to encourage families to feel more comfortable approaching staff with questions.
- ✓ Include a table with refreshments and handouts such as the school calendar, sign-up sheets for school tour times, and information about upcoming school events.
- ✓ Invite families with older grade students to answer incoming kindergarten family questions.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [ODE Mental Health Toolkit](#)
This toolkit is designed to help district and school leaders promote health and well-being of school communities.

- ▶ [6 Strategies for Effective School Family Engagement Events](#)

- ▶ [Examples of Family Engagement Events](#)

- ▶ [iColorin Colorado!](#) This guide offers twenty big ideas to help school leaders get started on the path toward a strong home-school partnership.

- ▶ [Family Engagement Planner](#). This spreadsheet helps schools track family engagement events to ensure a minimum of 10 hours at each school. It also helps teams assess which events were most successful for various groups of families.


ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES FOR FAMILY EVENTS

This section offers tools, handouts, and activity ideas for Jump Start Kindergarten family events.



Family Engagement Curricula

- ▶ [Portland Public Schools' Early Kindergarten Transition \(EKT\) Family Engagement Curriculum](#): Activities are designed for adults to learn from each other and build relationships in a supportive environment. Families receive books that are part of the kindergarten curriculum for a home-school connection. Includes six family meetings.



- ▶ [SEL Discussion Series for Parents & Caregivers](#): A step by step guide for educators to facilitate inclusive parent and caregiver Social and Emotional Learning discussions. Includes ten 60-minute sessions. From the [Oregon Department of Education's Social and Emotional Learning website](#).



Icebreakers

Icebreaker activities create an engaging and warm welcome. Whether reflective or silly, icebreakers are respectful, culturally inclusive, and easy to do.

Breathing exercises can be a restorative icebreaker for busy families. Hot cocoa breathing: breathe in the aroma of the cocoa and then breathe out to cool it down.

- ▶ [Icebreaker Activities](#)



5. **Hot Cocoa Breathing.** Imagine you are holding a cup of hot chocolate, feel the warmth of the mug in your hands, take a deep breath in to smell the cocoa, and then slowly blow out your exhale as if you are cooling it down.



Resources

Below are topics and resources to share with families or include on a resource table during school events:

- ▶ [Everyone has what it takes to be a brain builder](#). An inspiring video for families to watch during an orientation and share reflections.



- ▶ 30 Things You Can Do With Your Child ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#))



- ▶ This is How I Feel ([English/Spanish](#)) ([English/Vietnamese](#))([English/Chinese](#)) ([English/Russian](#))([English/Somali](#))



- ▶ (PDF) Tips For the Parents/Caregivers of Kindergartners ([Chinese](#)) ([English](#)) ([Russian](#)) ([Spanish](#)) ([Vietnamese](#))



- ▶ [211info](#) is an essential resource for families, providing individualized support for families seeking child care services, housing assistance, access to health care, and more. Call or text 2-1-1 or visit www.211info.org.



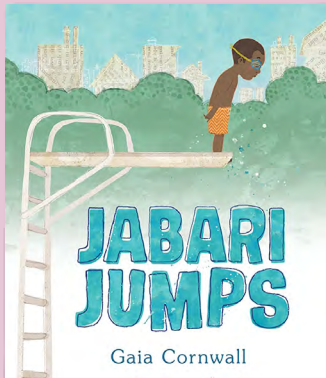
INTEGRATING LITERACY IN FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

During family engagement events, convey to parents and caregivers that they are the child's first and primary teacher and everyday activities they do together help build strong readers and relationships. Singing, storytelling, silly rhyming, and daily reading increase vocabulary and improve listening skills to help children become strong readers. Children and families can create their own stories together in their home language, write letters to family members, draw and label pictures, and read and re-read favorite books. Make connections between the Jump Start Kindergarten classroom and home by giving a book highlighted in the classroom to parents, guardians, and caregivers.



ENGAGING READ-ALoud BOOKS

Jabari faces his fears about jumping off the diving board with the help of his encouraging father.



Ring! Ring! Ring! Can you hear his call? Paletas for one! Paletas for all!



After Lola reads a book of garden poems, she makes a garden!



RESOURCES



iColorin
colorado!

TIPS for parents of Kindergartners

Play with letters, words, and sounds! Having fun with language helps your child learn to crack the code of reading. The tips below offer some fun ways you can help your child become a happy and confident reader. Try a new tip each week. See what works best for your child.

- **Talk to your child.**
Ask your child to talk about his day at school. Encourage him to explain something they did, or a game he played during recess.
- **Trace and say letters.**
Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Do this on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar.
- **Say silly tongue twisters.**
Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help kids become sensitive to the sounds in words.
- **Write it down.**
Have paper and pencils available for your child to use for writing. Working together, write a sentence or two about something special. Encourage her to use the letters and sounds she's learning about in school.
- **Read it and experience it.**
Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last trip to the zoo.
- **Play sound games.**
Practice blending sounds into words. Ask, "Can you guess what this word is? m...e...p..." Hold each sound longer than normal.
- **Use your child's name.**
Point out the link between letters and sounds. Say, "John, the word *jump* begins with the same sound as your name. *John, jump.* And they both begin with the same letter!"
- **Read it again and again.**
Go ahead and read your child's favorite book for the 100th time! As you read, pause and ask your child about what is going on in the book.
- **Play with puppets.**
Play language games with puppets. Have the puppet say, "My name is Mark. I like words that rhyme with my name. Does *pot* rhyme with *Mark*? Does *hid* rhyme with *Mark*?"
- **Talk about letters and sounds.**
Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound *mmmmmm*."

- ▶ [iColorin Colorado!](#) Bilingual website of culturally and linguistically affirming materials and resources for family events.



- ▶ Your local library: If possible take a field trip to your local library or if that's too difficult logistically, invite the librarian to a family engagement event for a read aloud.

- ▶ [Reading Rockets](#): This website has a section just for families to support language development and reading skills at home.



School - Home Communication



At family engagement events, explain how schools and families communicate throughout the school year. Help families sign up for text messages from the school during the event and access school-based social media.



Share the school calendar and explain key dates such as the first day of kindergarten, in-service days, family-teacher conferences, and holidays.

▶ [Hillsboro School District](#) outlines communication information clearly on its website.



SPOTLIGHT ON WARRENTON-HAMMOND SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Every year, Warrenton Grade School hosts a “Kindergarten Konnect” event in the spring. This is a pirate-themed event in which teachers lead small groups of students on a treasure hunt. The treasure hunt introduces students to staff as well as our buses, cafeteria, gymnasium, library, front office, and health room spaces. Parents and caregivers register their kindergartners at the event, and every student goes home with a Warrenton High School Class of _____ t-shirt. Youth-based community agencies are on-site to form connections with families. Local businesses provide funding to offset the costs of t-shirts and prizes. Nearly 80% of incoming kindergarten families participate each year!”

- Tom Rogonzinski, Superintendent,
Warrenton-Hammond
School District



WARRENTON-HAMMOND
SCHOOL DISTRICT





Home Visits

Educators and counselors have shared how transformative home visits (or visits in a neutral location like a park or community center) are to their teaching practice and relationships with parents and caregivers. [Research](#) shows that home visits reduce chronic absenteeism. Nine months after the first home visit, students in grades PreK-5 experienced approximately an eight-percentage point increase in attendance. Pairing home visits with a robust Jump Start program offers multiple touchpoints for families, more opportunities to build trust, and stronger connections between families and educators.

Jump Start Kindergarten Orientations and Reunions

Touchpoints with families before and during the kindergarten year help families continue to connect with staff, access resources, and address concerns. A brief orientation before Jump Start begins ensures families understand program logistics.

A Jump Start Reunion may be scheduled after the first day of kindergarten. A reunion is a celebration and a time to congratulate children and families on starting school. It's also an opportunity to ask families how schools can improve the program for next year. Finally, it is a time to remind families that they are partners in their child's education and to encourage them to continue to connect with school staff with questions and concerns at any time.



RESOURCES



- ▶ [The Sacramento Parent-Teacher Home Visiting \(PTHV\) model](#) (website) is an evidence-based approach that includes training and support for districts interested in conducting family home visits. The visit starts with this question to the parent or caregiver: “What are your hopes and dreams for your child?” This question centers the conversation around the student and grounds the relationship between educators and families. It also creates a mutual goal for teachers and families to work together.



- ▶ [Jump Start Kindergarten Family Reunion](#)



- ▶ [Jump Start Kindergarten Orientation Tips](#)



SECTION 6: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Measuring Impact

Tracking Jump Start Kindergarten data helps districts analyze the impact of the program over time as well as identify areas to improve. Below are examples of data points to measure impact.



STUDENT PARTICIPATION RATES

Students who attend Jump Start Kindergarten program 50% or more of the time will likely benefit most from the experience because they will have more time to practice routines and classroom norms, make friends, and gain literacy and social and emotional learning skills. When participation rates are less than 50%, consider potential barriers such as transportation, language, lack of trust, and food and housing insecurities.

▶ Tool: [Student Roster](#)



FAMILY PARTICIPATION RATES

Sign-in sheets from family engagement events are good data points to track, as mentioned in Section 5, Family Engagement. If attendance is low overall or among particular groups of families, school teams could check in with early learning partners to discuss changing the location of the event from the school to a community center or a park. Another strategy to consider if family engagement participation is low is home visits, outlined in Section 5. Tracking this data over time will guide your team to adapt family engagement events to meet the needs of focal families.

STUDENT AND FAMILY VOICE

To continuously improve Jump Start Kindergarten, seek feedback from families about their experience. Kindergarten family reunions in the fall, after the start of school, provide an opportunity to hear first hand from families about their experience.

Questions to ask families include:

- What was the most valuable aspect of Jump Start?
- What was least helpful?
- What questions do families still have about school?
- What information do you wish you had known before your child started school?

For a sample Reunion agenda and activity, see [Section 5: Engaging All Families](#).

DATA TRACKING OVER TIME

Kindergarten data points to consider tracking over time include attendance rates for students participating in Jump Start Kindergarten and families registering in the spring versus the late summer.



Beyond Jump Start Kindergarten

A smooth transition for families from early learning to kindergarten requires strategic cross-sector work at all levels: state, district, school, early learning, and community. From outreach about registering for school in the spring, to building relationships with school staff and accessing school resources, Jump Start Kindergarten provides families with the **foundation for a successful school experience in kindergarten and beyond**. As an education system, our goal is to welcome every family to school and to convey that parents and caregivers are **essential partners in their child's education**. The Oregon Early Learning Division and Oregon Department of Education are creating alignment through collaborative special education partnerships, Oregon Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines, Migrant Education programs, Jump Start Kindergarten, and other kindergarten transition programs. But there is more to be done as we continue to develop and sustainably fund programs that build sturdy bridges from early learning into kindergarten and up through the grades.



ENDNOTES

- 1 Ehrlich, S.B., Kyle DeMeo Cook, Dana Thomson, Kristie Kauerz, Mitchell R. Barrows, Tamara Halle, Molly F. Gordon, Margaret Soli, Andrew Schaper, Sarah Her, Gabriella Guerra (2021). Understanding cross-systems transitions from Head Start to kindergarten: A Review of the knowledge base and a theory of change, OPRE Report # 2021-128, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 2 Thomson, D., Tamara Halle, Stacy Ehrich, Kyle DeMeo Cook, Kristie Kauerz, Mitchell Barrows, August 18, 2022, "Children's Transitions to Kindergarten May Benefit from Effective Coordination Across Early Childhood and K-12 Systems." [Child Trends Blog](#).



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