

Oregon's partners in child care:

OregonASK (Afterschool for Kids)
Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children
Oregon Association of Child Care Directors
Oregon Center for Career Development in
Childhood Care and Education
Oregon Child Care Research Partnership
Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network
Oregon Child Development Coalition
Oregon Commission for Child Care
Oregon Commission on Children and Families
Oregon Council on Development Disabilities
Oregon Department of Community Colleges
and Workforce Development
Oregon Department of Education
Oregon Department of Employment, Child Care Division
Oregon Department of Human Services
Oregon Family Child Care Network
Oregon Head Start Association
Oregon State Library
Oregon University System

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Oregon's Child Care System

Achieving safe, affordable,
quality child care for Oregon
families



Oregon's Child Care System

Oregon's child care system has been established to serve the needs of working families throughout the state, supporting the employment of families with children and building and improving upon child care services. As no single agency has the expertise and capacity necessary to administer all parts of the child care system, it is instead a partnership of organizations working collaboratively to address the four essential areas, or "pillars," of child care: *quality, safety, accessibility, and affordability*.

While the system is complex, it is unified by the Childhood Care and Education Coordinating Council. This body includes representatives from all of the key agencies and organizations who carry out the work of addressing the four pillars. The council's primary role is to advise the Child Care Division of the Employment Department, the state's lead child care agency, on developing the federal Child Care and Development Fund plan, which provides over 90 percent of the financial support the state's child care system receives. The council also works with other member agencies and organizations to implement policy initiatives and recommendations.

The system is further guided by the Oregon Commission for Child Care, which prepares a biennial report to the governor and legislature on the status of child care in the state and meets to discuss policy and accountability, and the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, which works with public officials at state and local levels to identify obstacles to quality care and recommend policies for improvement.



The following four sections offer thumbnail sketches of the issues involved in each essential area of child care, along with brief summaries of the work that is being done to address them.

Quality

Studies have shown that children in high-quality child care settings demonstrate better cognitive function and social skills and fewer behavioral problems than those in lower-quality care. And they are more likely to be successful in school and in later life. Oregon's child care partners have defined successful outcomes in each of the four areas of care. For quality, a successful outcome is defined as "child care prepares children to succeed in school and life."

The system implements several strategies to improve the quality of care: Child care providers are offered technical assistance and training in diverse topics. Professional development standards have been created, and there is a system in place to document and recognize professional achievement. There are programs that offer stipends, scholarships, and grants to providers who attend early childhood education classes. And parents can get help in recognizing, finding, and maintaining quality care.

For information on professional development standards contact the Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education at 1-877-725-8535.

For information on trainings contact the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network at 1-800-342-6712.

Safety

Safety issues are wide-ranging, from making criminal background checks to ensuring that cribs meet current safety standards. A successful outcome in this area is defined as "children are safe and healthy in child care."

Safety is achieved through licensing, health and safety inspections, and investigating complaints.

For information contact the Child Care Division at 1-800-556-6616.

Accessibility

Access to child care can be difficult for families in certain circumstances. If there is an infant in the family or a child with special needs, if the family lives in a rural area, or if parents work odd hours, finding care can be difficult. A successful accessibility outcome is "parents can find the child care they need, when they need it."

Accessibility is addressed by working directly with parents to help them find appropriate care that meets their specific situations, and by offering subsidies to providers who may incur extra expenses when accommodating children with special needs.

For information contact the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network at 1-800-342-6712.

Affordability

Parents shopping for child care for the first time can suffer sticker shock. Cost varies with the type of care, the age of the child, and geographic area. Low-income families find it especially difficult to purchase adequate care. The definition for a successful outcome in the affordability category is "parents spend less than 10 percent of household income on child care."

Affordability is addressed through low-income child care subsidies, tax credits, and by encouraging employers to offer subsidized care.

For information contact the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network at 1-800-342-6712.

By offering advice and financial support for parents, training opportunities, technical assistance, and incentives for child care providers, and research and guidance for policy makers, Oregon's child care and education system keeps Oregon's families working!

quality, safety, accessibility, affordability