



## Relief Nurseries

**R**elief Nurseries work to stop the cycle of child abuse and neglect through interventions that strengthen parents, build successful and resilient children and preserve families. The Relief Nursery model is based on nationally recognized standards for best practices in early childhood education and family support. Core services include therapeutic early childhood classrooms and home visits. Additional services include:

- Alcohol and drug recovery support
- Counseling for children and parents and families
- Crisis response for families in urgent need
- Mental-health screening and assessment
- Outreach for isolated families
- Parent respite, education and support
- Transportation and basic needs assistance

Relief Nurseries serve children under age 6 in families experiencing multiple stresses related to abuse and neglect. The Nurseries work closely with programs such as Healthy Start, Early Intervention for special needs children, and Head Start, to ensure children are getting health and education services they need to grow up healthy and prepared for school.

The Oregon Commission on Children & Families, through local commissions on children and families, provides state oversight and support of Oregon's Relief Nurseries. Programs are located in Albany, Bend, Eugene, Cottage Grove, Medford, Salem, West Salem/Polk Co., Pendleton, Roseburg, and two locations in Portland. (Pendleton and West Salem have the newest programs, added by the Legislature in this biennium.)

### Who Are Relief Nursery Families?

At program entry, families are screened using a detailed, 65-item risk assessment tool that includes such issues as child welfare and foster care involvement, mental and physical health, poverty and criminality. This evaluation found that Relief Nursery families are at very high risk at program entry:

- 100 percent of the families served by Relief Nurseries had at least eight risk factors.
- 75 percent of the families had 19 or more risk factors.

The average number of risk factors per family at program entry was 17. This indicates a very high level of risk. However, when assessed again at program exit, families showed a significant reduction in their number of risk factors, lowering risk by an average of two mutable risk factors per family.

Further, results found that the greater the level of risk reduction for families, the less likely it was that children would be involved in child welfare or placed in foster care homes after Relief Nursery participation. Specifically, for every two risk factors reduced over time, the risk of maltreatment was cut in half. Both of these findings imply potential benefits for families as well as potential cost savings for taxpayers.



## Relief Nurseries Get Results\*

Results found that after only 6 months of involvement in Relief Nursery services, participants significantly improved both their overall family functioning and the quality of their parent-child interactions.

Overall, after 6 months in the program:

- The number of families demonstrating positive family functioning increased from 36 percent to 78 percent
- The number of families demonstrating positive parent-child interactions increased from 46 percent to 78 percent
- Private funding comprises 50.4 percent of the Relief Nursery budgets.

\*Evaluation of Oregon's Relief Nursery Program: 2005-06

### Contact:

Pat Pitman • 503-378-4658 • [pat.pitman@state.or.us](mailto:pat.pitman@state.or.us)  
Oregon Commission on Children & Families • 530 Center Street NE, Suite 405 • Salem, OR 97301  
FAX: 503-378-8395 • Web: [www.oregon.gov/occf](http://www.oregon.gov/occf)