

Early Learning Matters Committee

Co-Chairs: Dell Ford and Kitty Lake

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Purpose Statement: To support, enhance and implement strategies and actions identified by the Early Learning Matters (ELM) Committee as outlined in the Early Childhood Matters framework. Activities will provide “value added” to existing efforts by coordinating with, promoting and not duplicating these efforts.

ELM selected two strategies and actions for primary work to be coordinated with existing efforts.

Promote Quality -- defined as facility and system level

Strategy: Increase investments to expand quality care and education services for all children (ages 0-5) and families. Promote and support high quality in all care and education settings.

Action: Develop a state plan for implementing continuity of quality standards, monitoring and degree requirements -- include a funding plan for implementation and media campaign.

Existing Efforts: ELM will coordinate with existing efforts of the Child Care Coordinating Council/Training Quality Committee and Child Care/Head Start Work Group for this action.

The Child Care/Head Start Work Group is made up of Head Start, Child Care Resource and Referral and DHS Child Care Team members. The purpose statement reads: *To support local efforts to integrate and implement best practice for comprehensive child development services to address the needs of working parents.* The Work Group has met over many years and has many accomplishments that support this purpose. This year, the Work Group identified *Quality Improvement* as their highest priority and has begun their work by looking at requirements for standards across the system. The goal of this work is to create more continuity of quality across all early childhood settings ensuring that all children receive a base level of quality no matter what type of environment they are in. Continuity of quality across early childhood environments will also make it easier to implement more partnerships among early childhood programs.

Progress to Date:

The Child Care/Head Start Work Group developed a draft cross walk of standards. The cross walk includes Head Start/Essential Elements/NAEYC Accreditation and Oregon Child Care Center Licensing. The following areas are addressed: Teacher Qualifications, Learning Environments, Curriculum, Indoor Space, Outdoor Space, Transportation, Meal Service, Ratios, Exclusion, and Special Needs. Maps identifying

the locations of NAEYC Accredited Centers, Registered Family Child Care, Certified Family Child Care, Certified Centers and Head Start programs were developed to assist in understanding the status of programs related to standards, accreditation, certification and registration. Another cross walk in process of being developed includes NAFCC Accreditation and Oregon Certified FCC Licensing.

Next Steps

The Child Care/Head Start Work Group will merge with the Child Care Coordinating Council/Training Quality Committee to use information from the cross-walk to investigate ways in which child care can become “Head Start Partnership-Ready.” Three primary areas will be addressed: degree requirements, early childhood education standards and facility requirements. In order to support a systemic approach to quality, linkages to the Oregon Registry, Child Care Quality Indicators and Early Childhood Foundations will be included as part of this overall effort. Other emerging activities related to quality will also be addressed.

Promote Quality -- defined as training and compensation of individuals

Strategy: Support professional development and adequately compensate early childhood workforce. Ensure early education is accessible and affordable.

Action: Enhance Oregon professional development system by providing more accessible training with multiple entry points and financial incentives.

Existing Efforts

ELM will coordinate with existing efforts of the Child Care Coordinating Council/Training Quality Committee, Head Start Training System, Community College Early Learning Consortium, and ODE Inclusion Collaborative. ELM is also tracking the Higher Education Act that has a section on development of a State Early Childhood Professional Development Task Force. This may provide an opportunity for federal funding to support Oregon’s efforts in early childhood professional development.