



# Oregon

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## Ready to Read Grant Program Evaluation: 1996-2002

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### Overview

During the 1993 Legislative Assembly, with the endorsement of the Oregon library community, legislation was passed to provide state aid to "establish, develop or improve public library services to children, ages 0-14, with an emphasis on preschool children." The *Ready to Read Grant* program began in July of 1993 with \$692,767 (50¢ per child per year) for the 1993-95 biennium. A consultant position was created in the State Library to administer the program and to assist libraries in planning their use of the *Ready to Read Grant* funds. The Oregon library community and the Oregon Legislative Assembly have been very supportive of the *Ready to Read Grant* program and in the 2001-2003 biennium, funding reached \$1.00 per child. The state budget crisis in the 2002-03 fiscal year reduced funding to 83¢ per child and that amount was recently approved for the 2003-05 biennium.

Every legally established public library in Oregon is eligible to apply for the annual *Ready to Read Grant*. To receive the funds, the project they propose must "establish, develop, or improve public library service to children from birth to 14 years of age with an emphasis on preschool children," and they must meet the Maintenance of Support requirements, which stipulate that the library's operating expenditures for the year just completed cannot be less than one of the previous two years. This provision was included so that local governments would not reduce a library's budget because they were receiving state funds. If libraries do not qualify, the funds are redistributed to the libraries that do qualify.

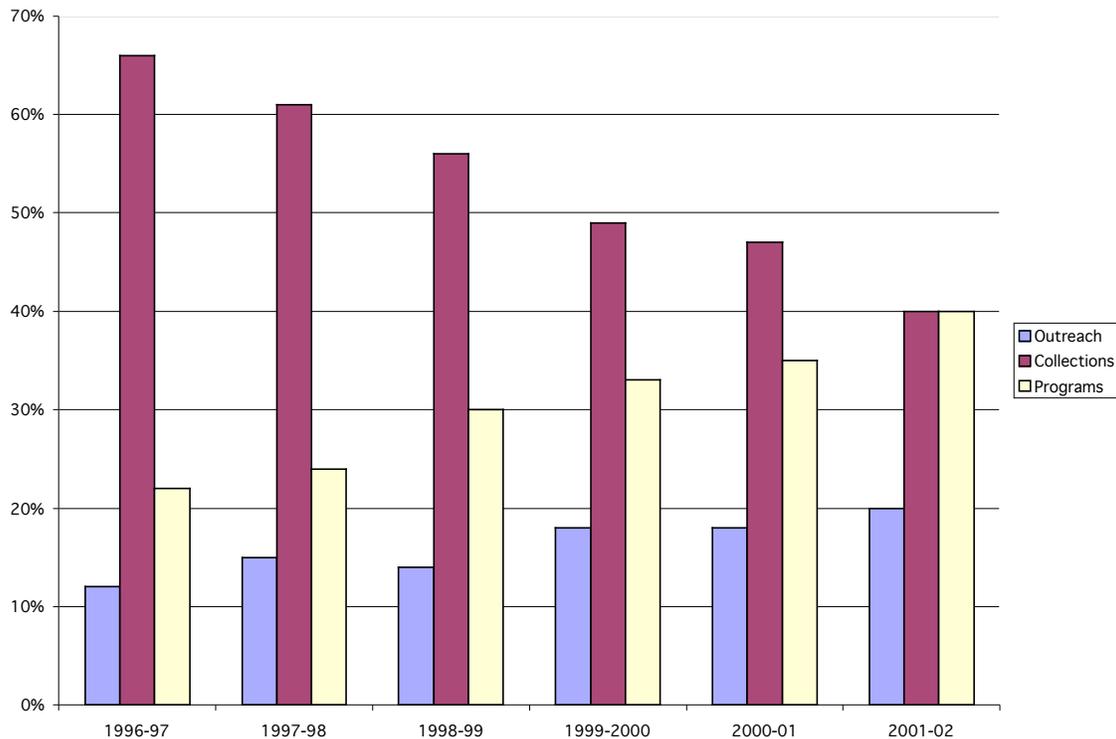
The funding formula was developed to take into consideration variations in population density. The grant amounts are calculated as follows: 80% on the number of children ages 0-14 in the library service area and 20% on the square mileage of the library service area. Our largest county, Harney, has 1,631 children ages 0-14 and occupies an area of 10,228 sq. miles. Our most populous county, Multnomah County, has 127,926 children ages 0-14 and occupies an area of 465 sq. miles. In 2003-2004 Harney County Library is projected to receive \$1,129 in population allocation and \$14,169 in square mileage allocation. Multnomah County Library is projected to receive \$89,541 in population allocation and \$644 in square mileage allocation. The applications are submitted by September 1st of each year and the grant checks are mailed before the end of December. Each library is required to annually report on how they spent their funds and this information is compiled into a "Final Report" by State Library staff, distributed to public libraries and the OSL Board and posted on the OSL website.

## *Assessment*

One of the objectives of the Oregon State Library for the 2001-2003 biennium was to have the staff evaluate the impact of the *Ready to Read Grant* program on children's services in public libraries. We began that process in January of 2002. To do this we decided to analyze how the funds had been spent during the grant years 1996-2002, if library service to children had increased, and how other local funds were leveraged by *Ready to Read* funds. We also wanted to assess outcomes, but since it is very difficult to evaluate a program that encompasses so many libraries with so many different projects, the decision was made to examine the professional literature dealing with early literacy and other aspects of library service to children, determine what were "best practices" in children's librarianship, and ascertain if library use of "best practices" had increased. If we could define "best practices" based on the research in the field and related fields, we could use that information to determine if libraries were using *Ready to Read* funds for best practices and if they were not. We could then use our report to encourage the use of these funds for best practices and encourage libraries to use local funds to support the basic services for children in their communities.

For the purpose of the annual "Final Reports," *Ready to Read* activities were divided into three categories: outreach, collections, and programs. Within each of those categories, the activities were broken into subcategories. For example, outreach was broken into preschool and school age; collections into preschool, school age, home school, languages other than English, and parenting; and programs (in-library programs) into preschool, school age, family, parents and other. A library could have spent money in any or all of the categories. Figure 1 consolidates information gathered from the 1996-2002 annual reports.

Figure 1. Spending by Program Category



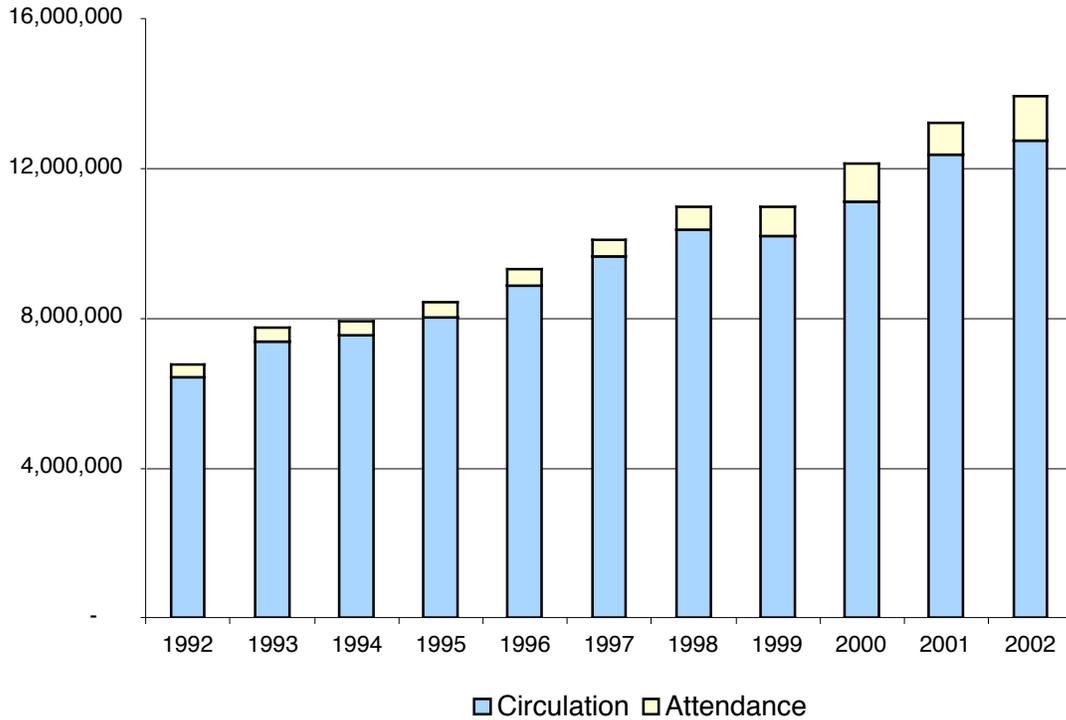
In 1996-97, 12% of the libraries reporting provided some kind of outreach activity with *Ready to Read* funds, and by 2001-02 that percentage had reached 20%. Interestingly, the number of libraries who used their *Ready to Read* funds for collections decreased while the number that used their funds for in-library programming increased. This is considered progress, as those libraries that did not have children's services and were using their *Ready to Read* funds to "establish" library service for children were then able to provide local funding for basic services and use their *Ready to Read* funds to "develop" and "improve" library services to children.

Some of the projects that have been underwritten with *Ready to Read* funds have demonstrated a creative use of small amounts of money. In Athena, a town in eastern Oregon with a very small library and a child population of 298, the librarian used her \$300 to purchase picture books, then created a birthday club so that for each child's birthday they got to pick one of those books, have a book plate put in it with their name on it and have it placed in the collection. The Seaside Public Library, on the Oregon coast, uses their funding to provide give-away books and information packets to the family of every child born in Seaside, as well as to Head Start students. The Cedar Mill Community Library, in the Portland metro area, has expanded on an extensive child care outreach project with their funds. The Jackson County Library, in southern Oregon, has used their funds in past years to provide book talks to 3rd-5th graders in 12 elementary schools. The Spanish speaking population of Oregon has increased dramatically in the last ten years and a variety of libraries have used their funds to create a Spanish language collection. Others have gone a step further to hire Latino and Spanish speaking staff to interact directly with the Latino community.

Each year the State Library staff also selects a small number of outstanding *Ready to Read* projects. The selection is based on adherence to the original intent of the program, partnering with other community organizations, and creating an opportunity for children to become lifelong learners and readers. Several years of outstanding *Ready to Read* projects are presented on the OSL website. When a library is honored for an outstanding *Ready to Read* project, OSL development staff offers to make a presentation to public officials of their choice (City Council, County Commission, Library Board) to share the information about the *Ready to Read Grant* and the excellent work their local library is doing.

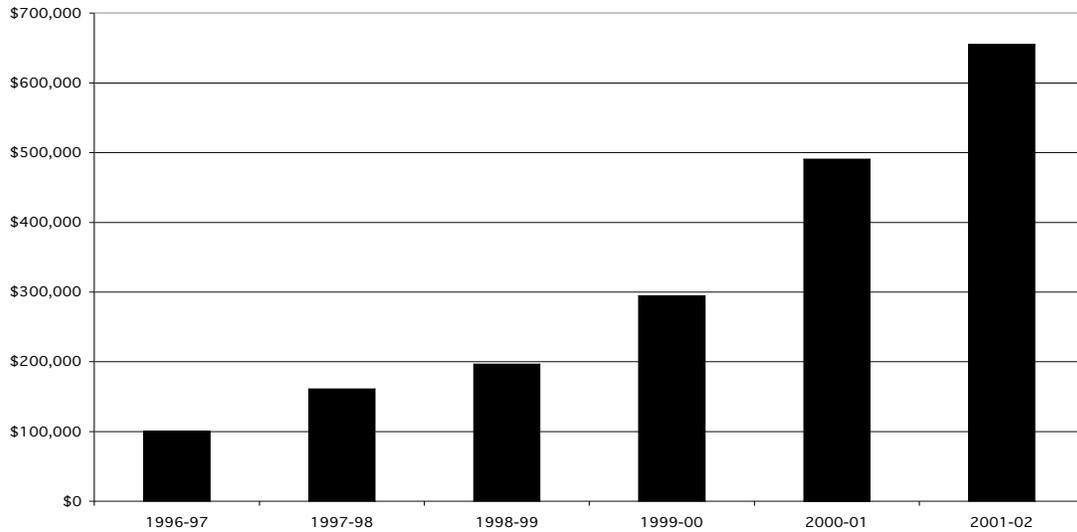
To measure the impact of the *Ready to Read* program, the juvenile circulation figures from each public library in the state and the attendance at children's programs in each public library are added together as an operational definition of "library services to children." The State Library began using this measure during the 1993-95 biennium, the first biennium of the *Ready to Read Grant* program. The results have been impressive. Statewide library services to children (circulation + program attendance) increased 19% from 1993-95 to 1995-97. The most recent figures show that, since the *Ready to Read* program began in 1993, library service to children has increased 80%. (Figure 2) Although the *Ready to Read* program is not the only factor in that increase, we believe it has been a significant contributor. As with any program that does not have a rigorous evaluation component attached to it, we cannot say that the *Ready to Read* funds caused these changes. There are a variety of other factors that will have contributed to the increase in children's library services. In 1993, when *Ready to Read Grants* were begun, the State Library created a staff position to develop and carry out a youth services consulting program. That program included a biennial Focus on Children and Young Adults Institute for library staff that do not have an MLS degree, which is the case with many who work with children. The three-day Institute provides training on both the philosophical and practical aspects of youth services. The Oregon Library Association Children's Services Division has improved upon an already strong statewide summer reading program (SRP) by obtaining corporate sponsorship to underwrite free distribution of SRP materials to every library in the state. Programming grants were also offered two years ago. A one-day training has been added in 2003. Over the last ten years libraries in Oregon have seen significant improvements to library facilities, staffing and collections which have had an important impact on the increase in library service to children.

Figure 2. Circulation and Attendance, 1992-2002



In addition to providing enhanced library services for children in local communities, the *Ready to Read Grant* has leveraged local dollars. While we don't track where the leveraged funds originate, anecdotal evidence tells us that they come from local governments, private non-profits and community organizations. Due either to better reporting or increased fund raising savvy on the part of local librarians, the amount of local funds leveraged has increased significantly since 1996. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Local Funds Leveraged by Ready to Read Grant Funds



In 1996-97, for every \$1.00 spent in state money \$0.29 was provided locally. By 2001-02 that ratio was \$1.00: \$0.93.

### ***Research and Best Practices***

To develop a list of basic services and best practices to assist in the analysis of the *Ready to Read Grant* program, the youth services consultant used several authoritative bibliographies. The primary sources were the bibliography of the “Oregon Study” done by Keith Curry Lance and his associates about the importance of school librarians in student achievement (Lance et al, 2001), and the bibliography of a report commissioned by the Pennsylvania Library Association to evaluate the role of public libraries in Pennsylvania on children's literacy development (Celano and Neuman, 2001). As is often the case, the list was expanded as other resources were discovered. The research literature of children's librarianship is not as rich as some other disciplines. Therefore, literature on early brain development and early cognitive development research, research relating directly to library service for children and families, and research on how children learn to read were included, followed by a look at the focused area of research that examines the importance of access to reading materials and free reading time. Finally, the relationship between libraries and educational reform was reviewed. As a result of that literature review the following were determined to be basic services and best practices (Figure 4, 5):

Figure 4. Basic Services in Public Library Service to Children

<i>Basic Service</i>	<i>Promotes</i>
1. Materials collections	Access to reading materials, enjoyment of reading, reading motivation, independent reading, recreational reading, lifelong library use, frequent and intensive opportunities to read, reading fluency.
2. Staff interaction with children in the library	Socialization, language play, independent reading, joy of reading, access to materials, recreational reading.
3. Child friendly, literacy rich environment	Early/emergent literacy, motivation, joy of reading, access to materials.
4. Trained staff	Knowledge of early childhood and books.
5. Storytime for preschoolers	Hearing language, being read aloud to, socialization, cognitive development for building later learning, modeling reading aloud and interaction for parents and care givers, reading motivation, playing with language.
6. Summer Reading Program	Access to reading materials, independent reading, recreational reading, reading motivation, enjoyment of reading, interaction during reading, playing with language, reading practice, building vocabulary, reading fluency.

Figure 5. Best Practices in Public Library Service to Children

<i>Best Practice</i>	<i>Promotes</i>
1. Storytime for babies, toddlers and their parents and caregivers	Hearing language, being read aloud to, socialization, cognitive development for building later reading, modeling reading aloud and interaction for parents and care givers, reading motivation, playing with language.
2. Give-away books	Access to reading materials, opportunity for parent/child interaction.
3. Parent training and mentoring	Socialization, language skill building, book selection, motivation, joy of reading.
4. Programming for families (e.g. parent/child workshops, cultural programs, discussion groups)	Lifelong use of library, motivation, parent/child interaction, independent reading, access to materials, early/emergent literacy.
5. Outreach to child care facilities	Reaching the unserved/underserved, access to low SES children, model for providers, access to materials.
6. Child care provider training and mentoring	Early/emergent literacy, book selection, motivation, joy of reading, playing with language.
7. Partnerships with community agencies	Parental involvement, access to low SES families, access to non-library users, early/emergent literacy, reading motivation.
8. Partnerships with schools	Reading motivation, access to materials, independent reading, joy of reading, reading practice, fluency, recreational reading.
9. Materials in languages other than English	Opportunity to build literacy in first language, than learn English.

Finally, the annual reports submitted to the Oregon State Library by the grant recipients each year from 1996-2002 were analyzed to determine if the library had used *Ready to Read* funds to provide basic services, best practices, or both.

Figure 6a. Comparison of Ready to Read Funds Spent on Basic Services and Best Practices

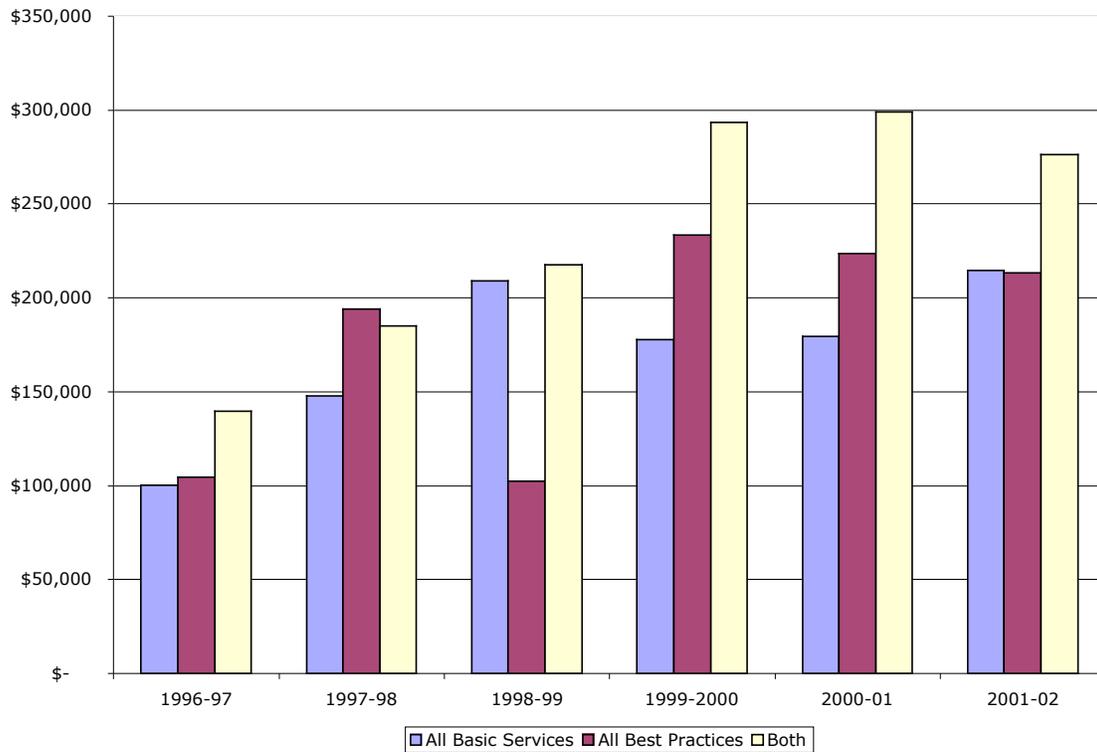


Figure 6a. shows the amount of *Ready to Read* funds used each year exclusively for basic services, exclusively for best practices, or for a combination of basic services and best practices. Over the years most funding has been used for a variety of activities, and therefore is counted in the “both” category. The trend here appears to be that most of the funding is being used for a combination of basic services and best practices.

Figure 6b. Comparison of number of libraries who used Ready to Read Funds for Basic Services and Best Practices

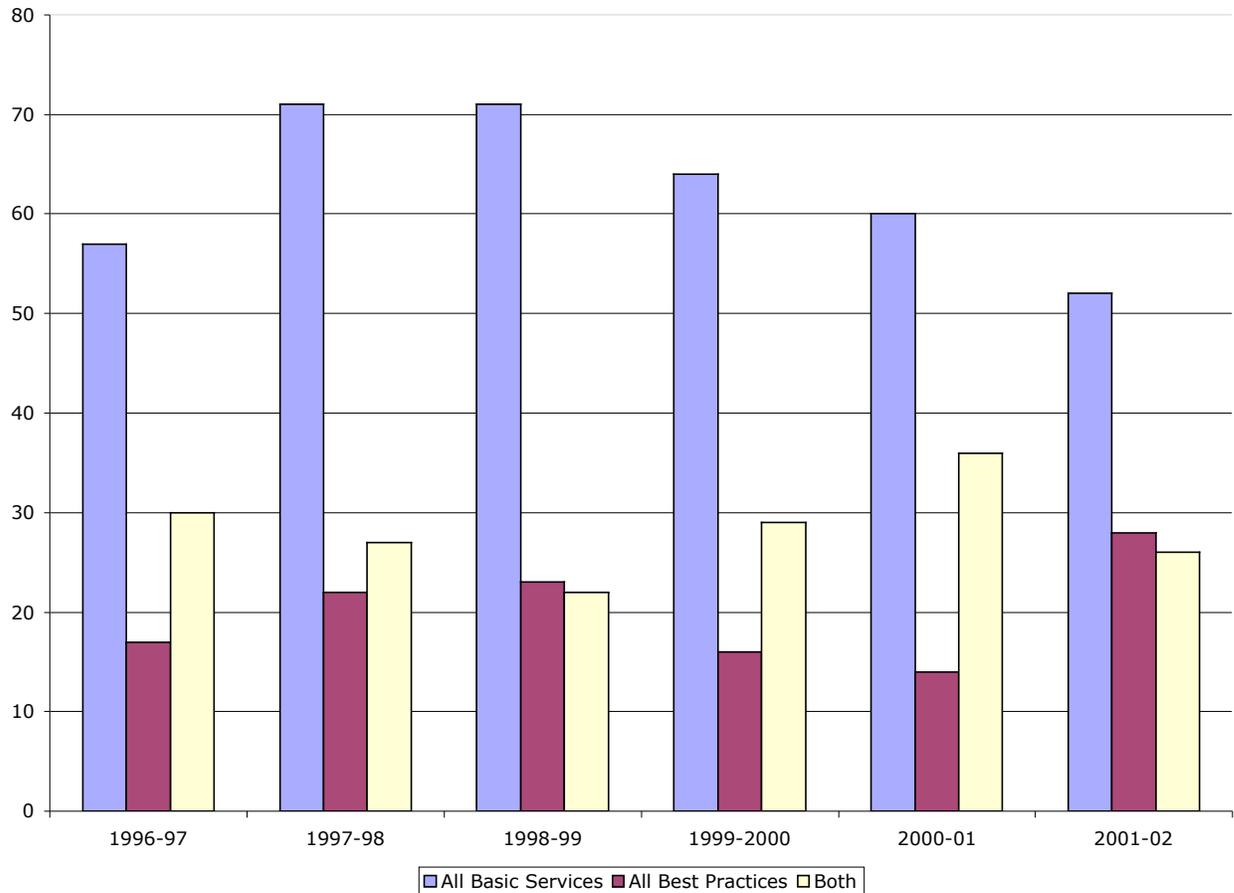


Figure 6b. shows the number of libraries who used *Ready to Read* funds each year exclusively for basic services, exclusively for best practices, or for a combination of basic services and best practices. This data confirms that while there has been some increase in use of *Ready to Read* funds for best practices, most libraries still use their funds for basic services. (See Appendix A for 2001-2002 figures.)

### ***Next Steps***

The current research on brain development, emergent literacy, and reading acquisition, as well as a deeper understanding of the importance of the first years of life in laying a foundation for learning, have influenced the way community leaders and policy makers view the need for support for programs that serve children. The *Ready to Read Grant* program has had an impact on services to youth in the public libraries in Oregon. We need to determine if and how we can create more impact and if any changes in statutes or administrative rules could facilitate that. Some possibilities include:

- Provide minimum grants.
- Grant funds to larger units of service.
- Require maintenance of effort on youth services expenditures in library budget rather than total library expenditures in local government budget.
- Change target audience from 0-14 years to 0-8 years to provide focused effort on early childhood as defined by the early childhood community.
- Educate directors and policy makers about program value and need for local funds to provide basic services while *Ready to Read* provides funding for best practices.
- Change wording and intent of ORS from “establish, develop, or improve” to “develop or improve” to reflect that all libraries have established children’s services.
- Require some or all funds be spent on “best practices.”

We recommend that this report be distributed to public libraries in Oregon and their governing bodies in a variety of formats and via a variety of venues. Discussion should take place with the staff who use the funds, administrators, and policy makers to determine how we can make an effective and efficient program more effective in providing excellent library service to the children of Oregon.

### ***Success Stories***

**Harney County**, in southeastern Oregon, is the largest county in area at 10,228 sq. miles. The total population is 7,600 and the population of children ages 0-14 is 1,622. Two-tenths of one percent of Oregon's population live in Harney County (Loy 2001, 26) and 20.9% of the children under age 18 live in poverty (Loy 2001, 45). There are only a few towns and the economy is based on agriculture (cattle ranching) and natural resources. It is the only county in the state that has a state-supported boarding school. There is a small reservation for the Paiute near the county seat of Burns. In the last several years, as the summer reading program has grown in popularity, the librarian has allowed children to report their reading each week by phone since the distance to and from the Burns is so great that families don't make weekly trips. The longtime library director retired in 1999. The new library director had experience in school libraries and an enthusiasm for children and libraries. The following progress, using *Ready to Read* funds and other resources of the State Library, has been made in Harney County:  
 From 1996-2000 *Ready to Read* funds were spent on basic services.  
 In 2000-01 5% of *Ready to Read* funds were spent on best practices.  
 In 2001-02 22% of *Ready to Read* funds were spent on best practices.  
 In 2000 and 2002 staff from Harney County attended the Focus on Children Institute.

	Children's Circulation	Children's Programs	Children's Program Attendance
1996-97	5,444	28	1,400
2001-02	8,205	92	4,681

Located along the Oregon Trail, on the border of Oregon and Idaho, **Baker County** has a total population of 16,741, .5% of the Oregon's population (Loy 2001, 26). At 3,089 sq. miles, 3,226 children ages 0-14 live in Baker County, and 24% of children under age 18 live in poverty (Loy 2001, 45). The economy of Baker County is also based on agriculture and natural resources. In addition to the library in the county seat, Baker City, there are several branches in small communities and a bookmobile. Baker County Library is a special library district serving the entire county and independent of county government, with a very energetic and forward thinking library director. Staff from the Baker County Library attended the Focus on Children Institute in 1993 when it was first offered and again in 2002. Their *Ready to Read* funds have been spent on outreach to childcare, a best practice, since they began receiving funds. The following progress has been made in Baker County.

	Children's Circulation	Children's Programs	Children's Program Attendance
1996-97	26,894	230	2,490
2001-02	30,549	648	5,941

**Deschutes County**, in central Oregon, has one of the fastest growing populations in the nation. The county is a recreation destination in both summer and winter and is home to both service workers and retirees. The total population is 126,500 and the population of children ages 0-14 is 25,371. The Deschutes Public Library District was formed in November of 1998, prior to that the library had been a department of county government. The library board and director very astutely promised excellent library services if the district formation vote passed and they have delivered on that promise. In addition to local funding, *Ready to Read Grant* funds are spent primarily on a district-wide Summer Reading Program and other special programming. The following progress, with a dynamic director and youth services staff, a healthy budget, and *Ready to Read Grant* funds, has been made at the Deschutes Public Library:

	Children's Circulation	Children's Programs	Children's Program Attendance
1996-97	261,527	446	9,307
2001-02	464,686	1,004	24,604

Another district success story is the **Jefferson County Library District**. In May 2000 the Library Board of this private non-profit association made an enormous, and successful, effort to create a library district. Jefferson County is sparsely populated and quite poor. In 2000 17% of the population were Hispanic and 22% of children under age 18 lived in poverty (PSU 2003). The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation and a small portion of Wasco County are both part of the Jefferson County Library District. The library district has a population of 16,629 and the population of children ages 0-14 is 4,963. In 1996 and 2002 library staff attended the Focus on Children and

Young Adults Institute. Jefferson County Library has used their *Ready to Read Grant* funds since 1996 to build a youth services program, beginning with children’s services staff, adding Spanish language storytimes, and currently, providing an extensive outreach program for early childhood care and education facilities, including several remote areas of the the District. This library is another example of the progress that can be made with a dynamic director and youth services staff, as well as a stable funding base and the *Ready to Read Grant* funds:

	Children’s Circulation	Children's Programs	Children's Program Attendance
1996-97	Not reported	117	2,320
2001-02	Not reported	565	12,198

The **Woodburn Public Library** is located in the Willamette Valley between Portland and Salem. 50% of the population in 2000 was Latino (PSU 2003). The total population is 20,860 and the population of children ages 0-14 is 4,772. 23% of the children under age 18 live in poverty (PSU 2003). The Woodburn Public Library has used their *Ready to Read Grant* for outreach to child care and family programming, both best practices, since 1996. They provide an extensive outreach program to preschool age children in Head Start and other early care and education facilities, as well as providing a variety of programs and services for Spanish-speaking and other families. In 1996 three staff members attended the Focus on Children and Young Adults Institute.

	Children’s Circulation	Children's Programs	Children's Program Attendance
1996-97	37,198	64	1,797
2001-02	35,109	153	6,030

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*Appendix A*

	<i>Basic Services</i>	<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Both</i>
BAKER COUNTY			
Baker CL		\$8,011	
BENTON COUNTY			
Corvallis/Benton CL		\$12,705	
CLACKAMAS COUNTY			
Clackamas CL	\$16,460		
Canby PL			\$3,881
Estacada PL	\$3,266		
Gladstone PL	\$3,694		
Lake Oswego PL	\$7,441		
Ledding L. (Milwaukie)			\$5,634
Molalla PL		\$3,334	
Oregon City PL	\$9,403		
Sandy PL	\$3,914		
West Linn PL	\$5,374		
Wilsonville PL		\$3,716	
CLATSOP COUNTY			
Astoria PL		\$1,601	
Seaside PL		\$962	
Warrenton Community L			
COLUMBIA COUNTY			
Clatskanie LD	\$1,390		
St. Helens PL	\$1,989		
Scappoose LD	\$1,976		
Vernonia PL	\$441		
COOS COUNTY			
Coos CLSD			
Bandon PL	\$432		

	<i>Basic Services</i>	<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Both</i>
Coos Bay PL		\$2,339	
Coquille PL		\$631	
Laird Mem. L. (Myrtle Point)		\$370	
Lakeside PL	\$209		
Hazel M. Lewis L. (Powers)		\$112	
North Bend PL	\$1,437		
CROOK COUNTY			
Crook CL			\$8,630
CURRY COUNTY			
Agness LD	\$536		
Chetco LD			\$2,415
Curry LD		\$1,175	
Langlois LD	\$330		
Port Orford	\$760		
DESCHUTES COUNTY			
Deschutes Public LD			\$25,604
DOUGLAS COUNTY			
Douglas CL			\$25,305
GILLIAM COUNTY			
Gilliam CL	\$2,291		
GRANT COUNTY			
Grant CL	\$9,073		
HARNEY COUNTY			
Harney CL			\$18,765
HOOD RIVER COUNTY			
Hood River CL			\$4,979
JACKSON COUNTY			
Jackson CL	\$35,945		
JEFFERSON COUNTY			

	<i>Basic Services</i>	<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Both</i>
Jefferson CLD		\$8,425	
JOSEPHINE COUNTY			
Josephine CL	\$15,065		
KLAMATH COUNTY			
Klamath CL			\$22,115
LAKE COUNTY			
Lake CL	\$15,446		
LANE COUNTY			
Cottage Grove PL			\$1,362
Eugene PL		\$21,942	
Fern Ridge Com. LD			\$1,968
Junction City PL		\$764	
Oakridge PL	\$506		
Siuslaw LD			\$2,819
Springfield PL		\$8,546	
LINCOLN COUNTY			
Lincoln CSLD	\$4,783		
Driftwood L (Lincoln City)		\$1,138	
Newport PL	\$1,414		
Toledo PL	\$513		
Waldport PL		\$306	
LINN COUNTY			
Albany PL			\$7,583
Brownsville PL		\$269	
Harrisburg PL	\$520		
Lebanon PL			\$2,400
Lyons PL	\$187		
Scio PL	\$129		
Sweet Home PL	\$1,458		

	<i>Basic Services</i>	<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Both</i>
MALHEUR COUNTY			
Malheur CL			\$22,059
Nyssa PL		\$626	
Vale PL			
MARION COUNTY			
CCRLS	\$35,011		
Jefferson PL	\$490		
Mt. Angel PL	\$612		
Salem PL			\$26,929
Silver Falls LD	\$3,780		
Woodburn PL		\$3,968	
Stayton		\$1,343	
MORROW COUNTY			
Oregon Trail LD	\$2,941		
MULTNOMAH COUNTY			
Multnomah CL		\$106,896	
POLK COUNTY			
Dallas PL	\$2,242		
Independence PL		\$1,086	
Monmouth PL	\$1,389		
SHERMAN COUNTY			
Sherman Co. P/SL			\$1,766
TILLAMOOK COUNTY			
Tillamook CL			\$5,591
UMATILLA COUNTY			
Umatilla CSLD		\$9,059	
Athena PL	\$242		
Echo PL			
Hermiston PL		\$2,611	

	<i>Basic Services</i>	<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Both</i>
Milton-Freewater PL	\$1,279		
Pendleton PL	\$3,233		
Pilot Rock PL			
Stanfield PL	\$392		
Ukiah School/Public L	\$912		
Umatilla PL	\$996		
Weston PL	\$143		
UNION COUNTY			
Elgin PL			\$866
La Grande PL	\$5,388		
Union	\$1,370		
WALLOWA COUNTY			
Wallowa CL		\$5,909	
Enterprise PL	\$314		
Joseph PL	\$175		
WASCO COUNTY			
The Dalles-Wasco CL			
Dufur School/Community L			
WASHINGTON COUNTY			
Washington CCLS			\$38,966
Banks PL	\$257		
Beaverton PL			\$15,027
Cornelius PL		\$1,906	
Forest Grove PL			\$3,481
Hillsboro PL			\$13,955
Sherwood PL	\$2,389		
Tigard PL			\$8,250
Tualatin PL	\$4,504		
WHEELER COUNTY			

	<i>Basic Services</i>	<i>Best Practices</i>	<i>Both</i>
Fossil PL	\$69		
YAMHILL COUNTY			
McMinnville PL			\$5,097
Newberg PL		\$3,571	
Sheridan PL			\$1,000
Willamina PL			
TOTALS	\$214,510	\$213,321	\$276,447