

Executive Summary



Purpose

ORS 327.839 requires the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) to submit annually to the legislature a progress report on the Birth Through Five Literacy Plan established under the Governor's Early Literacy Success Initiative, House Bill 3198 (2023). This report satisfies that requirement.

In 2025, DELIC made significant progress in implementing the [Birth Through Five Literacy Plan](#) DELIC submitted to the legislature on December 31, 2024. The plan has three goals informed by community input:

Goal 1: Expand Culturally Specific Early Literacy Programs

Goal 2: Promote the Capacity of Programs that Engage Families in Early Literacy

Goal 3: Support Language Revitalization Efforts for Tribal Nations

DELIC's legislatively approved budget includes roughly \$10 million for the implementation of the Birth Through Five Literacy Plan in the 2025-27 biennium. Funds have been allocated to initiatives and strategies under each of these three goals.

2025 Implementation Milestones

Goal 1: Expand Culturally Specific Early Literacy Programs

Update the Early Learning Kindergarten Guidelines (ELKG): In 2025, DELIC and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) entered into an Interagency Agreement to update the ELKG. DELIC released a Request for Proposals on November 20, 2025, for a consultant to lead the revision process. The selection and notice of intent to award will be completed in January 2026.

Strengthen culturally specific organizations: DELIC is enhancing culturally specific early literacy programming through non-competitive funding to Early Childhood Equity Fund (ECEP) grantees. Grant agreements have been distributed to 20 organizations currently funded by ECEP.

Goal 2: Promote the Capacity of Programs that Engage Families in Early Literacy

Strengthen connections between DELIC and the library system: DELIC is preparing to allocate funds to the Oregon State Library in the 2025-27 biennium to increase funding for the Ready to Read program.

Strengthen book distribution: In 2025, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL) celebrated statewide coverage in Oregon with enrollment available in all 36 counties. DELIC funding for DPIL increased to \$3.7 million for the 2025-27 biennium to support the program in reaching their goal of 65% enrollment of eligible children.

DELIC is working with ODE to support the administration of the Reach Out and Read program and will increase the investment to \$100,000 for 2025-27, to support work with pediatric clinics leveraging well-child visits to support early literacy.

Increase access to culturally responsive family education and support opportunities: DELIC administered funds to Oregon's 16 Early Learning Hubs in the 2025-27 biennium to support early literacy.

Enhance home visiting: DELIC distributed non-competitive grants for the 2025-27 biennium to Healthy Families Oregon, Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten, Relief Nurseries grantees to strengthen the early literacy support they provide through home visiting.

Goal 3: Support Language Revitalization Efforts for Tribal Nations

Fund and consult with Tribal Nations: To allocate funding in a way that respects the sovereignty of Tribal Nations and honors their government-to government relationship with the state, Tribes were offered non-competitive, direct funding for the 2025-27 biennium, with participation by all nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon.

2024-25 One-Time Funds

In 2023, the legislature approved a \$9.4 million General Fund limitation increase for Birth Through Five Literacy. DELC allocated \$4.7 million to Early Learning Hubs and issued a simplified application for the remaining \$4.7 million through the Early Childhood Equity Fund.

As a result, in 2024–25, over 243,000 early literacy resources were distributed to families, and more than 400 literacy trainings reached over 4,000 educators. While this funding preceded the Birth Through Five Literacy Plan, grantees reported meaningful progress toward plan outcomes benefiting children, families, and staff.

Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

DELC made great progress towards plan goals in 2025, and some key strengths include a focus on culturally specific investments, impactful Tribal Consultation, new and deepening partnerships, and improved coordination to support grantees. DELC has identified key lessons learned and is exploring strategies to address barriers such as funding gaps and the complexity of measuring impact and outcomes.

To track progress towards outcomes, DELC is developing an evaluation proposal for the 2025-27 biennium. DELC plans to hire an external contractor to conduct surveys and interviews focused on family early literacy engagement.

Conclusion

In 2025, DELC made significant progress towards ensuring that every Oregon child has access to early literacy support, starting at birth. While challenges remain, the ground gained this year reflects a shared commitment to improving early literacy outcomes for Oregon's youngest children.