



Early Learning Council

December 10, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Department of Early Learning and Care
3rd Floor, Grand Ronde Room
700 Summer St NE, Suite 350
Salem, OR 97301

COUNCIL ACTION REQUEST

Date: December 10, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: Birth to Five Literacy Program Ruleset Amendments

ACTION: Adopt the proposed rule amendments to the Birth to Five Literacy program ruleset to establish a single, comprehensive ruleset to clarify the purpose of the literacy plan and outline how funding will be administered across grants, streamlining guidance across programs.

ISSUE: There is currently no Birth Through Five Literacy Ruleset. Establishing a ruleset will clarify the purpose of Birth Through Five grant funds and outline how funding will be administered through grants streamlining guidance for programs

BACKGROUND: Through the Birth Through Five Literacy Initiative, DELC will implement strategies recommended in the Birth Through Five Literacy Plan by administering grants and contracts to:

- Equip culturally specific programs to support early literacy;
- Engage families in early literacy through parent education, book distribution and home visiting programs; and
- Expand language revitalization and preservation efforts by Tribal Nations in Oregon.

Implementation of these strategies will prioritize supporting, enhancing, and expanding current DELC programs in order to minimize burdens on grantees and partners.

The goal of the Birth Through Five Literacy ruleset is to establish a single, comprehensive ruleset to clarify the purpose of the literacy plan and outline how funding will be administered across grants, streamlining guidance for programs. The rules include sections that:

- Define the purpose of the funds;
- Provide definitions;
- Clarify eligibility criteria; and
- Specify evaluation goals.

PROCESS: DELC convened a Rules Advisory Committee (RAC) that met on October 9th from 6:00 to 7:30pm with families, child care providers, subject matter experts, early learning system partners, community-based organizations, and other community members. A public hearing was held on October 27th at 5:00 PM and the public comment period was open until October 30th.



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EQUITY ANALYSIS: Rule language was evaluated by the RAC for equity impacts to providers, early educators, and families. These will be reported on in the December 2025 meeting. This ruleset is anticipated to have a positive impact on programs. Having a comprehensive ruleset clarifies the purpose of the literacy plan and outlines how funding will be administered across grants, which streamlines guidance. DELC's Social Equity office was consulted and gave detailed feedback on the draft rules, which has been incorporated. In addition, DELC also engaged in formal Tribal consultation because the proposed BT5 Literacy Ruleset was identified as a significant agency action potentially impacting Tribes and their members. DELC invited formal consultation under a new policy and process established by the Office of Tribal Affairs. Both the Burns Paiute Tribe and The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians participated in consultation, offering impactful input and collaboration. Key takeaways included the importance of codifying eligibility for Tribal Members residing out of state to be served by BT5 funds, and an identified need for resources and support in developing funding plans, creating culturally relevant curriculum, providing training, and supporting early literacy family engagement activities. The applicable feedback was incorporated in the ruleset.

PROPOSED DRAFT MOTION: I move to adopt the proposed rule language amendments dated, 2025 December 10, 2025 that adopt amendments to Oregon Administrative Rules 414-576-0000, 414-576-0010, 414-576-0020, 414-576-0030, 414-576-0040.

CONTACT: Carey McCann, Interim Early Learning Systems Director, Department of Early Learning and Care



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Appendix:

414-576-0000

Purpose

The purpose of this division is to establish a process for administering grant funds from the Birth Through Five Literacy Fund for the following purposes:

- (1) Expanding culturally specific early literacy programs for children from birth through five years of age by:
 - (a) Encouraging family and caregiver engagement in their child's early literacy development; and
 - (b) Providing research-aligned, developmentally appropriate professional training and coaching for direct service staff in early literacy.
- (2) Strengthening the capacity of programs that engage parents and children from birth through five years of age in early literacy and that are available equitably and statewide.
- (3) Expand and develop language revitalization and language preservation efforts by federally recognized Indian tribes in this state.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 327.839 -327.841

414-576-0010

Definitions for Birth Through Five Literacy Fund

As used in this section, unless the context requires otherwise.

- (1) "Early literacy" means the skills and knowledge that children develop in the years before they learn to read and write formally. This includes foundational skills such as speaking and listening, recognizing sounds in words, knowing letters and how they work, and narrative skills. Early literacy **starts at birth and** provides the building blocks for later reading and writing proficiency.
- (2) "Native American Language revitalization" means the intentional efforts, policies, and community-led movements aimed at preserving, revitalizing, and promoting the daily use, teaching, and intergenerational transmission of Indigenous languages spoken by Native peoples in the United States. This work is focused on halting or reversing language decline; restoring, reviving and maintaining Indigenous languages endangered or lost due to historical suppression,



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colonization, and cultural assimilation; supporting intergenerational education programs and language fluency among younger generations; strengthening cultural identity; and promoting community cohesion.

(3) "Research-aligned, developmentally appropriate professional training and coaching" means learning aligned with current research and practices that are culturally responsive and relevant to diverse learners and adult learning needs, which builds on each learner's individual strengths and considers social cultural contexts.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 327.839 -327.841

Statutes/Other Implemented: ORS 327.839 -327.841

414-576-0020

Eligibility Criteria

(1) To be eligible for a grant, the organization must:

(a) Serve children ages birth through five and / or their families in support of early literacy development; **and**

(b) Serve communities in Oregon or Tribal members affiliated with the federally recognized Tribes in Oregon; and

(c) Be a current grantee of the Department of Early Learning and Care.

~~(2) The following types of organizations may be considered for funding:~~

~~(a) Community-based organizations;~~

~~(b) Culturally specific organizations as defined in OAR 414-575-0005;~~

~~(c) Education service districts as defined in ORS 334.003;~~

~~(d) Early Learning Hubs as defined in ORS 417.827;~~

~~(e) Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Oregon;~~

~~(f) Healthy Families Oregon programs as described in ORS 417.795;~~

~~(g) Non-profit organizations;~~

~~(h) Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative Hubs;~~

~~(i) Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten programs as defined in ORS 329.175;~~

~~(j) Public libraries;~~

~~(k) Public schools or school districts;~~

~~(l) Relief Nurseries as defined in ORS 417.786.~~



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(23) Grantees found to be out of compliance with the terms of an existing Department of Early Learning and Care program grant agreement, as determined by the Department, will no longer be ~~are~~ not eligible to receive funds under the Birth Through Five Literacy Plan.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 327.839 -327.841

414-576-0030

Administration

(1) The Department will administer grant agreements with the grant recipients and provide program guidelines.

(2) Grant recipients must comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement including, but not limited to, cooperating with the Department's program monitoring, technical assistance, program evaluations, and reporting requirements.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 327.839 -327.841

414-576-0040

Evaluation

The Department will submit a progress report on the Birth Through Five Literacy Plan to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to early childhood no later than December 31 of each year.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 327.839 -327.841