

# Executive Summary

During the 2021–2023 biennium, the Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK) Program advanced a coordinated, outcomes-driven strategy to improve child and family well-being during the most critical developmental period—from pregnancy through age five. Grounded in longitudinal research demonstrating that early, aligned investments produce improved educational attainment, health outcomes, and economic stability, OPK continued to focus on measurable impacts, system integration, and equity-centered implementation.

OPK investments during this period supported evidence-based interventions across prenatal to five health, early childhood mental and behavioral health, parenting and home visiting, early learning, and family stability. Implementation was guided by shared outcomes related to healthy families, school readiness, family stability, and long-term child well-being. Agencies and partners increasingly aligned funding, performance measures, and service delivery to improve service continuity for families.

Data from state agencies and local partners indicated that expanded service reach among priority populations, including families experiencing low income and houselessness, rural communities, and families disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Cross-agency data sharing and evaluation efforts were strengthened to improve tracking of participation, service quality, and intermediate outcomes across the prenatal to five continuum. These efforts supported more targeted resource allocation and continuous quality improvement.

The 2021–2023 biennium also focused on strengthening system infrastructure, including governance, workforce capacity, and local coordination. Investments addressed early childhood workforce stabilization, improved access to culturally responsive and trauma-informed infant toddler services, and enhanced service duration for preschool. While workforce shortages and rising operational costs continued to pose challenges, state investment strategies helped mitigate service disruptions and supported system resilience by increasing wages for the OPK workforce, not just at the classroom level, but at the agency and system level.

Early outcome trends continue to align with national and state research demonstrating that comprehensive service approaches are associated with improved prenatal and post-natal health indicators, increased stability and well-being for the family, and improved readiness for kindergarten entry. Importantly, OPK investments are designed to generate multigenerational outcomes by reducing the need for remedial education, child welfare involvement, and later health and justice system expenditures while stabilizing families and investing in children's educational journeys.

Overall, during the 2021–2023 biennium, OPK demonstrated that a coordinated systemic prenatal to 5-year-old, family focused and social services approach, supported by shared data, aligned funding, and system accountability, is an effective strategy for improving outcomes and reducing inequities for Oregon's most vulnerable families. Sustained legislative investment and continued emphasis on data-driven decision-making that directly supports family well-being and self-sufficiency, rather than just looking at child care access will be essential to fully realize the long-term benefits of the Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten program and ensure that all Oregon children enter kindergarten healthy, supported, and ready to succeed.