

Oregon Early Childhood Care and Learning System Roundtable Charter

Collaboratively advancing statewide expansion of access to affordable, high-quality, equitable 0-3 care and preschool options, regardless of zip code, through scalable, sustainable strategies.

Call to Action by Governor: Map out an actionable statewide plan that can:

- Improving and strengthen existing programs
- Expand infant–toddler access
- Support “universal” preschool access statewide

Charge

The Early Childhood Care and Learning System (ECCLS) Roundtable, (“Roundtable”), is an advisory body dedicated to expanding statewide access to affordable, high quality and equitable early learning and care and preschool options for all Oregon children from birth to five-years-old. The Roundtable, made up of Oregonian and national experts from different regions and critical sectors, will advise the Governor on near-and-long-term strategies to strengthen and improve Oregon’s early learning system. These strategies will focus on aligning and strengthening existing programs, generating considerations on policy and needed resource allocation, while building a blueprint for expanding infant and toddler care and reaching universal access to preschool for three- and four-year-olds.

The Roundtable is planned over three phases:

Phase 1: Strengthen Current Child Care/Preschool Programs, System of Support, and DELC Infrastructure (March 2026 - August 2026). This phase will analyze Oregon’s current child care and preschool landscape and identify strategic improvements that strengthen the existing system. The focus is on making the most effective use of current resources, ensuring that investments are optimized and that programs collectively reach as many children and families as possible.

Phase 2: Improve and Expand Infant and Toddler Child Care (January 2027 - August 2027). This phase will address the critical shortage of infant and toddler care by examining cost pressures for families, capacity and infrastructure

challenges for providers, and constraints within the mixed-delivery system, and will present considerations for the future.

This will include identifying barriers to expanding care options and solutions, including workforce challenges, payment rates, and funding.

Phase 3: Improve and Expand Access to Preschool and Child Care Services for 3 and 4 year old children: (June 2027 - December 2027) In this phase, the focus is on strategies to reach universal preschool and care access for three- and four-year-olds across all 36 Oregon counties, including alignment with Oregon's current mixed delivery system and solutions to early care/preschool small business development challenges.

Deliverables

For each phase, the Roundtable will deliver a report on the current Oregon early childhood system and considerations for the future.

The Roundtable will begin meeting in March 2026 and deliver its first report in September 2026. The duration of the Roundtable is 18 months, concluding in December 2027.

Shared Expectations

Meetings:

- All official meetings of the Roundtable will have virtual and in-person participation opportunities.
- The Roundtable will meet monthly for 90 minutes.
- Delegates for these meetings will not be allowed. If a member is unable to attend, staff will ensure input is gathered and notes will be provided.
- If meeting participation is in person, costs associated with travel will not be eligible for reimbursement.
- If contacted by the media, members should refer inquiries to Johnna Timmes in the Governor's Office. Members should not speak to the media about Roundtable activities unless they have received explicit approval from the Governor's Office.
- There may be additional focus groups, led by the co-chairs, DELC or Children's Institute staff or other Governor's Office staff designed to hear input from key partners and other subject matter experts. Roundtable members are encouraged, but not required, to attend these. Key findings will be synthesized for the full Roundtable meetings.

Participation and Decision-making:

- All Roundtable meetings will be hybrid and in-person attendance where possible is encouraged.
- Roundtable members are expected to attend meetings and actively participate.
- Roundtable members are expected to represent their industry sector - not their individual company or organization - and consider the needs of all young children and their families across the State of Oregon.
- Roundtable members are committed to developing considerations and ideas through a collaborative process. Members will work in good faith to understand differing perspectives, identify shared interests, and craft solutions.
- While consensus is the preferred outcome, it must be recognized that unanimity may not always be achievable. These are recommendations and the Governor is the ultimate decision maker
- Members and staff alike are asked to **THINK** before speaking: Is it T-True, H-Helpful, I-Inspiring, N-Necessary, and K-Kind.

Membership

Members are appointed by Governor Kotek. Considerations for membership include industry, geographic diversity, and equity. Click [here](#) to see member bios.

- Kali Thorne Ladd, CEO Children's Institute – Co-Chair
- Sara Mickelson, National Expert in Child Care Systems – Co-Chair
- Jaime Arondondo, Executive Director Capaces
- Rod Belknap, Director, Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hub
- Heidi Hagel Braid, President & CEO First Children's Finance
- Miriam Calderon, Vice President W. K. Kellogg Foundation
- Liz Campbell Farrar, Chair Oregon Early Learning Council
- Harriet Dichter, Early Childhood Policy and Strategy Consultant
- Robin Hill Dunbar, Director Children, Youth & Families Ford Family Foundation
- Lisa Harnisch, Executive Director Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub
- Elaine Harrison, Early Head Start Director Albina Head Start
- Brittney Jackson, Director Pendleton Children's Center
- Sherri Killins Stewart, National Expert
- Amy Luhn, Director OSU Family Resource Center
- Carey McCann, Director Policy & Strategy Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care
- John Merriman, CEO Mt. Bachelor
- Stephanie Schmit, Director of Child Care and Early Education CLASP
- John Tapogna, CEO Oregon Business Council

- Albert Wat, Deputy Director for Advocacy and Impact Alliance for Early Success
- Candice Williams, Executive Director For All Families Oregon
- Certified Family Home Provider (TBD)

Additional Engagement

It will be important for the Roundtable's work to be informed by input from key partners, subject matter experts and the public at large. Tools for engagement can include:

- Focus groups
- Statewide survey: Questionnaire to solicit feedback and specific ideas.
- "Meeting in a Box": Engagement tools that can be used in various meetings across the state and sectors.

Underlying Values and Commitments

1. Our system embraces the richness of culture, language and geography of Oregon's families, and the early childhood care and early learning system and services are inclusive of the experiences and needs of families.
2. Family choice is an essential underpinning to our work. Families are the primary decision-makers in the enrollment of their children in the early learning and care options that best meet their needs.
3. Oregon's mixed-delivery early learning system is foundational for expanding access across all phases. Across our child care and preschool programs, all types of child care providers are important to meeting the needs of families and their children. This includes centers, home-based, and Family, Friend and Neighbors child care, Head Start, and Local Education Agencies (i.e. School Districts, ESDs).
4. Existing programs, investments, and infrastructure must be strengthened before scaling to universality.
5. A well supported workforce includes addressing workforce shortages, compensation, training and credentialing.
6. Affordability for families and financial sustainability for providers are equally essential and interdependent goals.
7. Community needs, demographics, and available resources vary significantly across Oregon's 36 counties, requiring flexible and locally responsive solutions.

Work Plan- Phase 1*

March- Welcome and Setting the Stage	12:15 pm Intros/building rapport (Kali and Sara) 12:30-12:50 GTK provides Roundtable Charge and Purpose (Governor) 12:50-1:00 Small Groups (People into breakout rooms of 6 rooms with 3 people each, to introduce each other. Groups should include both national and Oregon people.) 1:00 Charter Review including roles/expectations (Johnna) Phase 1 topic/deliverable and timelines and have open discussion 1:20 Grounding in Our Why (Sara Mickelson) Discussion Prompts: Governor's "why" is Let's hear reaction. How does your why relate to the governor's why? 1:40 Engagement and Next Meeting (Kali and Sara)
April- What is the "what" in the system?	● Defining elements of PSP/OPK/ERDC/PFA/EI-ECSE/Baby Promise ● Where do we stand on access now? ● Calibrating our meaning of - o access (goal/intention and eligibility pathways, overall coverage, other access issues, e.g. rural) - o mixed delivery - o universal

May- Who are the “who”? Family Access Points	• Inventory of access and eligibility pathways • ONE System • Coordinated Enrollment (heat map) • Other Community Systems
June- What is the “who”? Workforce	• Compensation • Skills/competencies • Access to PD/TA/HE
July- What is the “where”? Facilities and Infrastructure	• System capacity • Facilities development for mixed delivery • Facilities barriers • Expenses • Insurance • Licensure • Zoning, building codes, permitting processes
August- What is the “how”? Quality Assurances and Operations	• Monitoring and evaluation • Data • Granting • Technical assistance for excellence

*These may change as the work evolves.

- *If time allows:* You may want to give your personal definition of “universal”

Recommendation: A strong definition that aligns with Oregon values is, Research tells us that when we provide access to quality care and learning for at least 80% of age eligible children, we are meeting the threshold of “universal”. In Oregon, our priority is always to meet the needs of our most vulnerable families first. Universal in Oregon could mean that there is access for a minimum of 80% of children throughout a mixed delivery system (friends and family, certified family home, center based and school care) throughout