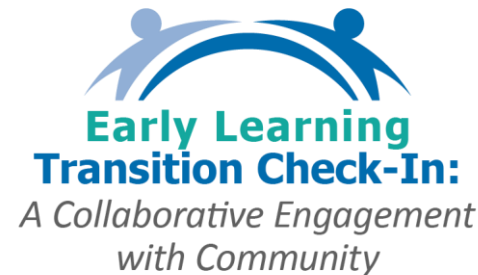


Family Conversation

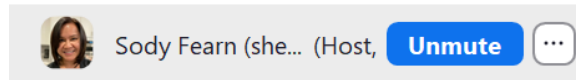
Early Learning Transition Check-In: A Collaborative Engagement with Community

Informational District Session
October 2025

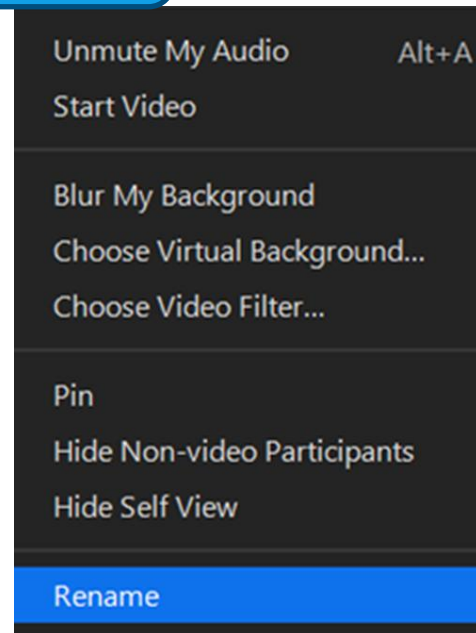


Renaming Steps

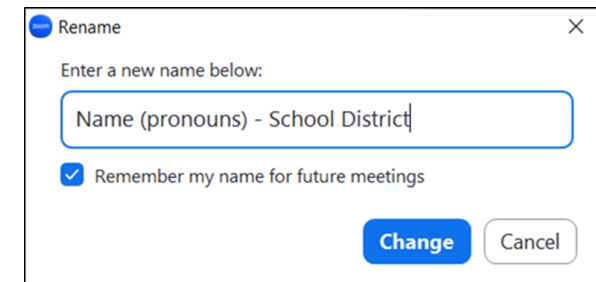
Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Engaging Opener



In the chat...

What are you hoping to learn today about the Early Learning Transition Check-In and the Family Conversation?

Facilitator's Requests

- Embrace an open mindset
- Support each other
- Remain family-centered
- Focus on equity
- Expect non-closure
 - Explore the issues together
 - Understand the complexities of transition



About Us



Oregon Department of Education (ODE)

ODE works in partnership with school districts, education service districts, and community partners.

MISSION: Oregon Department of Education fosters equity and excellence for every learner through collaboration with educators, partners, and communities.



Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC)

The Department of Early Learning and Care fosters coordinated, culturally appropriate, and family-centered services that recognize and respect the strengths and needs of all children, families, and early learning and care professionals.

MISSION: All children, families, early care and education professionals, and communities are supported and empowered to thrive.



Introductions ODE and DELC Staff

Oregon Department of Education

Sody Fearn, K-2 Balanced Assessment Specialist

Mindi Helmandollar-Armatas, PreK-3 Grade Coordinator

Andrea Lockard, Director of Assessment and Student Reporting

Carla Martinez, Administrative Support

Kai Tyler, Survey Analyst

Julia Pachicco, Psychometrician

Oregon Department of Early Learning & Care

Rachel Elliott, Head Start Collaboration Specialist

Karina Guzmán-Ortiz, Partner Engagement Specialist

Lauren Sigman, Preschool Specialist

Lizzy Tremaine, Research Analyst

Outcomes

Where have we been?

- Redesign
- Introduction to the Early Learning Transition Check-In
- Purposes

Where are we now?

- Family Conversation Pilot process
- Links to other Oregon initiatives

Where are we going?

- Preparing for Statewide Implementation

Questions?



Early Learning Transition Check-In: A Collaborative Engagement with Community



- Community engagement in **co-creation, a reimagined process**
- ODE and DELC are working in **collaboration** to respond to historical concerns about the former Kindergarten Assessment
- **Shifting focus away** from children's "readiness" for Kindergarten
- Creating a way to look at how **prepared** educators, schools, districts, communities, and **systems** are to support ALL children and families



Redesign Overview

Incorporate	Elevate	Strengthen	Inform	Improve
Incorporate anti-racist practices in assessment approach	Elevate community voice in assessment design	Strengthen connections between families and educators	Inform early learning and care programs, practices, and policies	Improve efforts to meet the needs of Oregon children and families



Oregon's Growing Diversity

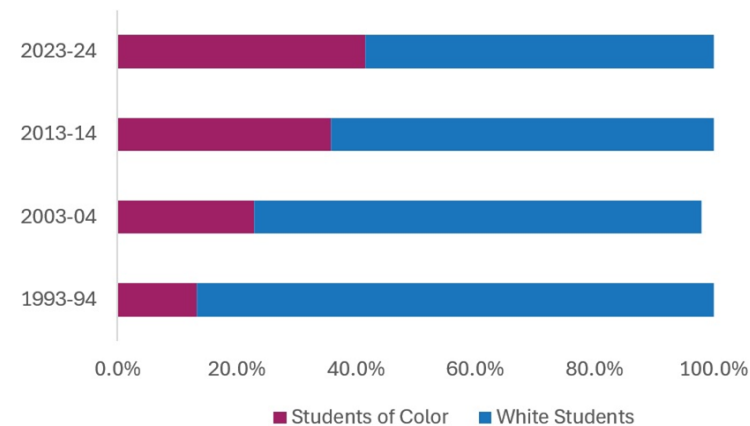
547,424 K-12 Students and 20,000 PreK*

More than 360 languages spoken

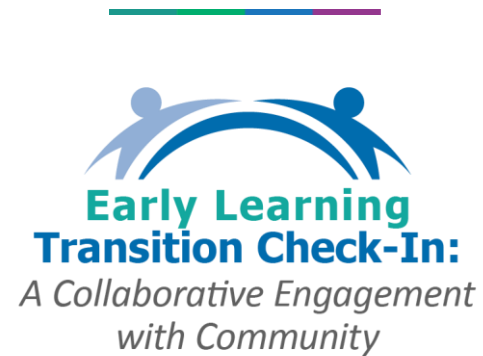
~35,000 Kinder Fall 2024

17 Early Learning Hubs

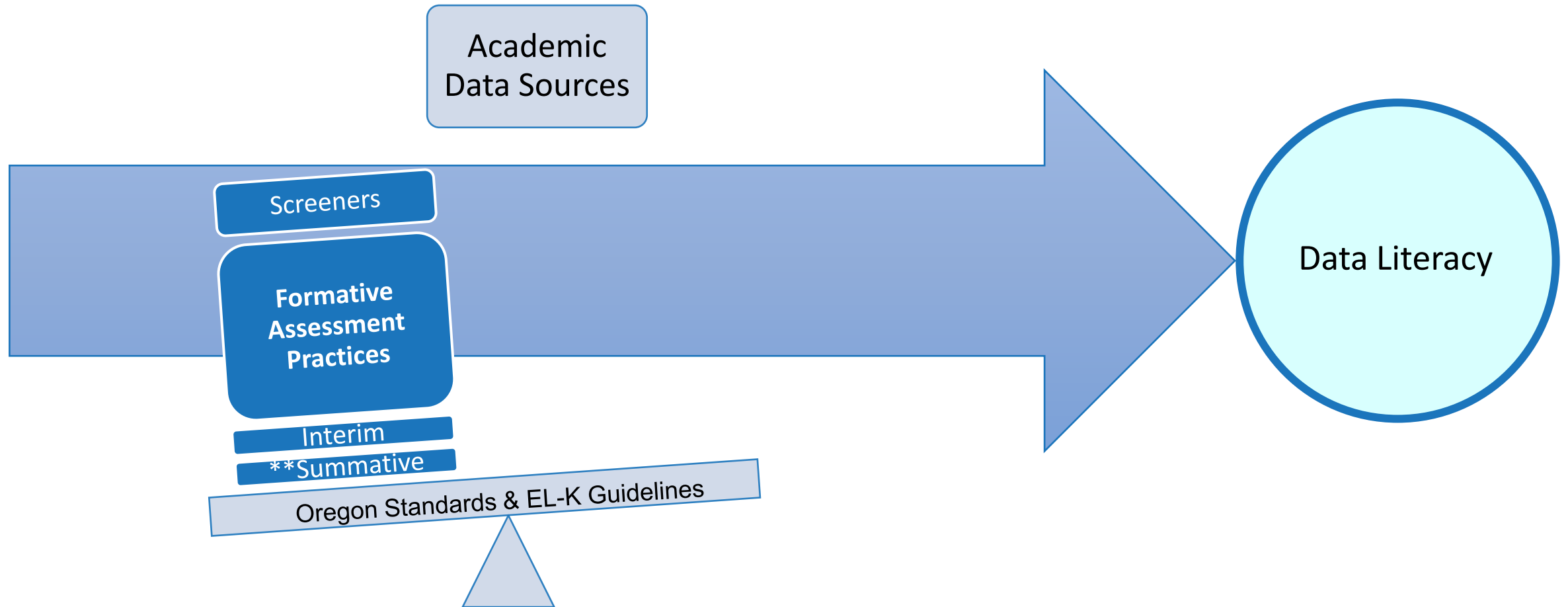
Includes Statewide Tribal EL Hub



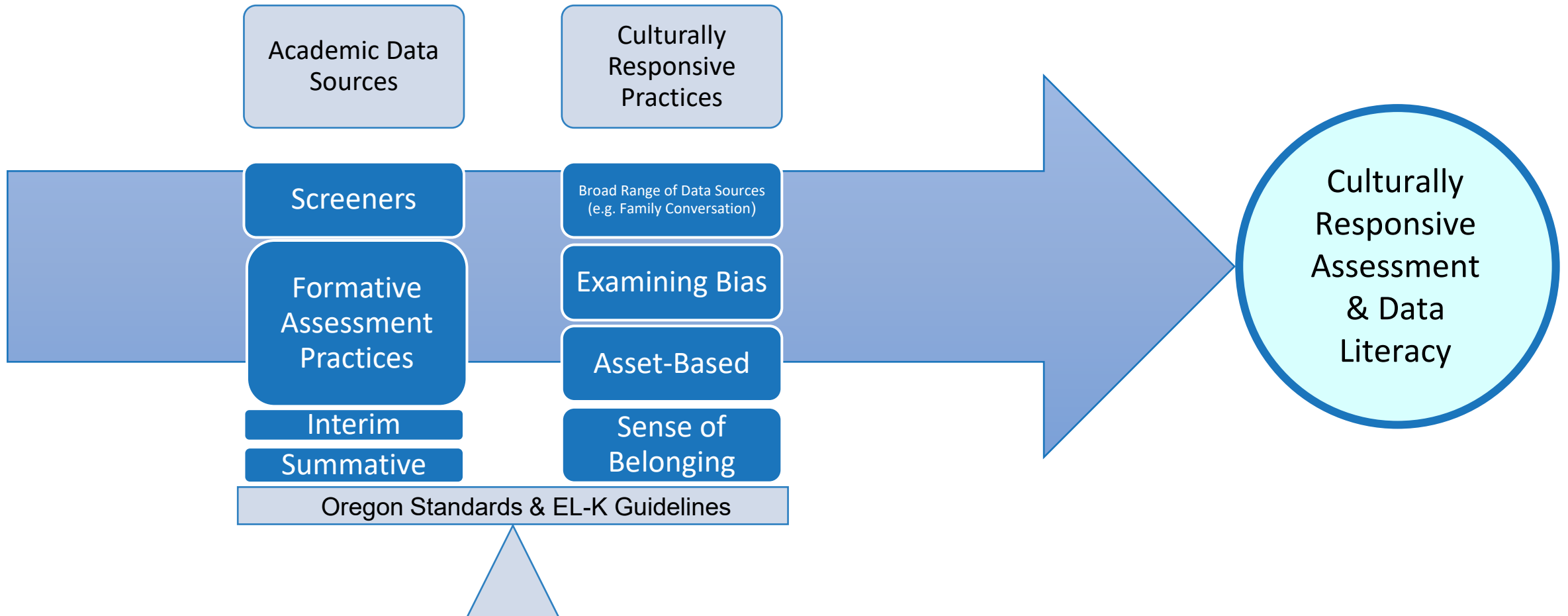
Where are we now?



School Aged Assessment System



K-2 Balanced Assessment System



Family Conversation

- Each fall, Kindergarten educators will meet individually with each family entering their classes.
- The Family Conversation is a tool to support educators' conversations with families.



What it does:

- Collects information about families' early learning and care experiences
- Builds relationships among educators, parents/caregivers, and children

How it advances equity:

- Takes a more holistic view of children
- Provides context about families
- Shifts focus off children's "readiness"

Comparing the Family Conversation to an Interview

What it is...



Two-way conversation



Chance for families to share contextual information about their child



Dedicated time to listen, and learn from children's first teachers



Creating space for connection with families to school staff and resources



One component of family engagement to support the transition to kindergarten

What it isn't...



Checklist



Time to complete academic measures



Quick, surface level Interview/Survey



Teacher led discussion



Transactional

Family Conversation Pilots to Date

2022-23

- Nine schools / Nine Districts
- 300+ Families Participated
- Oregon's Kitchen Table Family & Educator Feedback

2023-24

- 30 Schools / Nine Districts
- 1000+ Families Participated
- Oregon's Kitchen Table Feedback
 - Family & Educator
 - Community Partner

2024-25

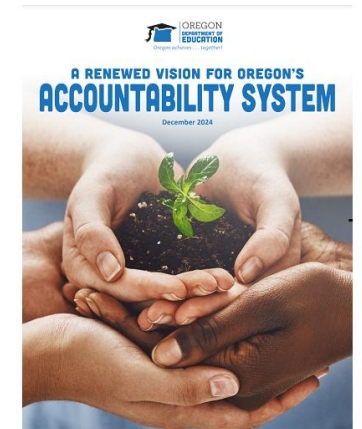
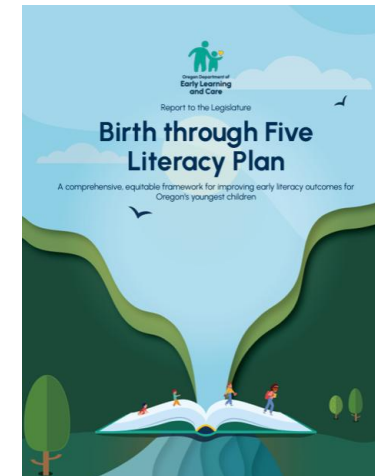
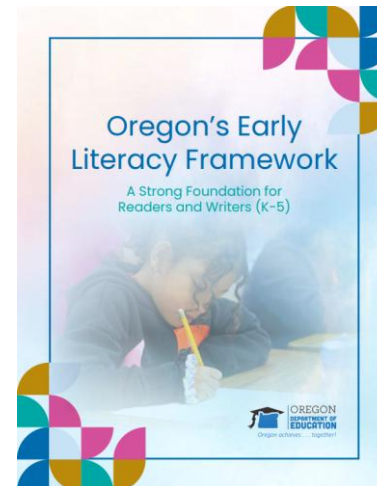
- 50 Schools / 15 Districts
- 1800+ Entries
- Educator Survey

2025-26

- 36 schools/12 districts (anticipated)
- Majority of districts are rural

Links to Oregon Initiatives

STUDENT SUCCESS ACT



Engagement

- **N (Need to Know)** – “What more do you need to know?”
 - **E (Excited)** – “What excites you about this?”
 - **S (Suggestions)** – “What suggestions or ideas do you have?”
 - **W (Worries)** – “What concerns or questions do you have?”
-
- **L** – What did you *Learn*?
 - **E** – What was *Engaging* or surprising?
 - **A** – What do you *Aspire* to try or apply?
 - **R** – What do you want to *Remember*?
 - **N** – What do you *Need* next?

Family Conversation Questions

The ELTC is designed to:

- help educators **connect with and learn about the children and families** entering their class
- **inform DELC and ODE about families' experiences** prior to starting Kindergarten

The ELTC uses two kinds of question types to reach these goals

- Open-ended questions allow for families to share their thoughts and experiences in their own words
 - e.g., “What are your hopes and dreams for your child?”
- Closed-ended questions where educators select from a list of common responses (informed from previous pilot iterations)
 - e.g., “What experiences, programs and/or services did your child receive or participate in to help them learn and grow?”

Connecting with and learning about children and families

Aspirations

"To be a kind friend and learn how to work through differences"

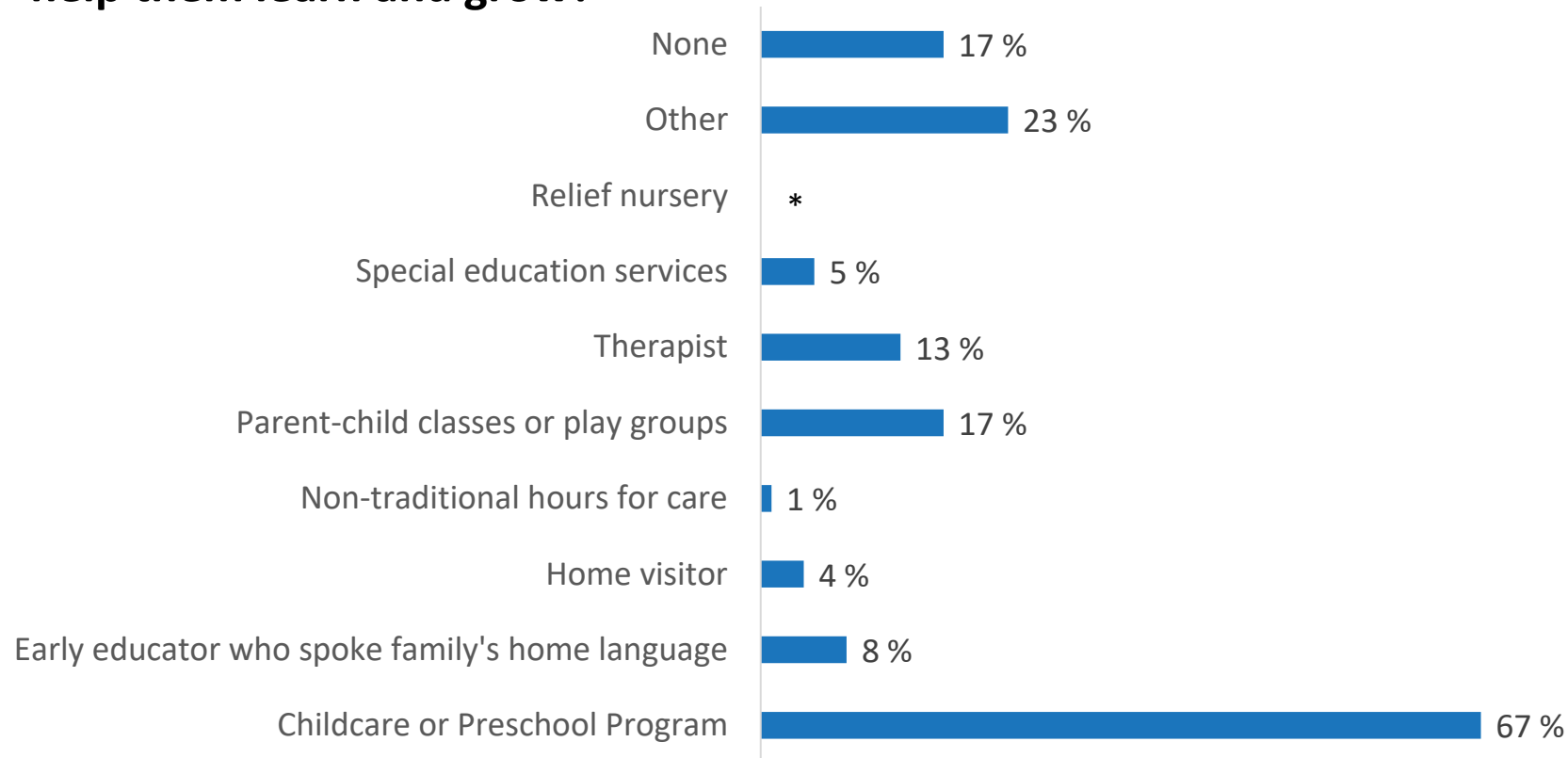
"Gain strong foundation of all subjects"

"We want her to blossom and thrive in this community"

"... feel loved at school"

Families' experiences prior to kindergarten

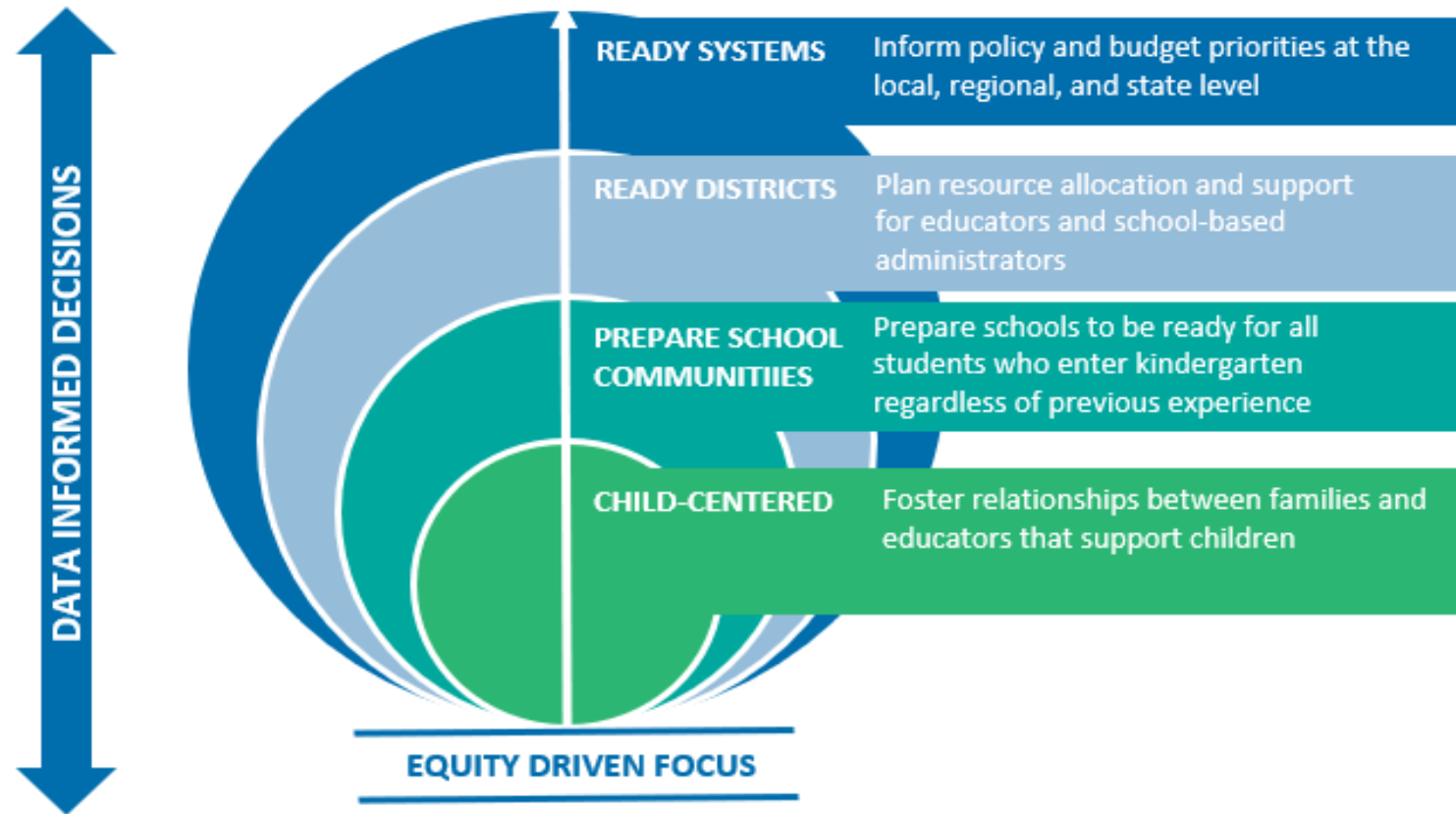
What experiences, programs or services did your child receive or participate in to help them learn and grow?



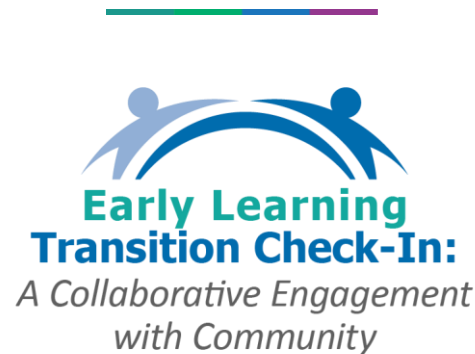
"He was able to make more friends and gain more independence at preschool."

"Speech was the most helpful. He learned about tools that help him express himself."

ELTC Data Informed Decisions



How will early implementation benefit your district/school?



What story is the data telling us?



- Families value the opportunity to share about their child
- Educators value the opportunity to meet with families
- Transformational shift

Administrator Quote



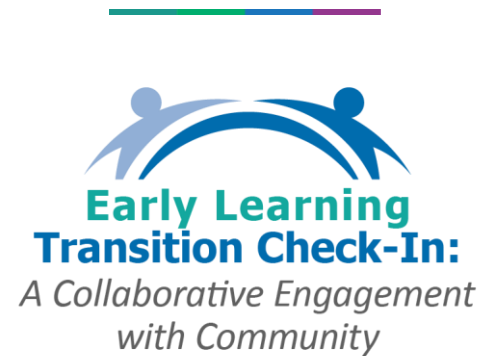
"I am so excited about this shift. We have done family conversations for years, and the impact it has and tone it sets from the start is incredible. I love listening to families tell us about their hopes and dreams and fears and welcome them to our school family! Can you imagine the cultural shift we could make statewide when all families entering school have an opportunity to meet with their school/teachers one-on-one from the start. So exciting!"

Family Quotation

"My child has faced significant challenges during the past year and can therefore display strong emotional reactions. However, my child has grown and healed tremendously, and I am very proud!"



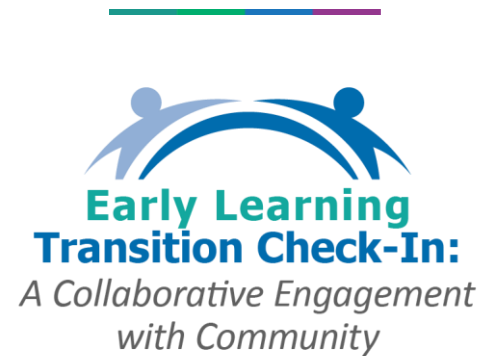
District Testimonial



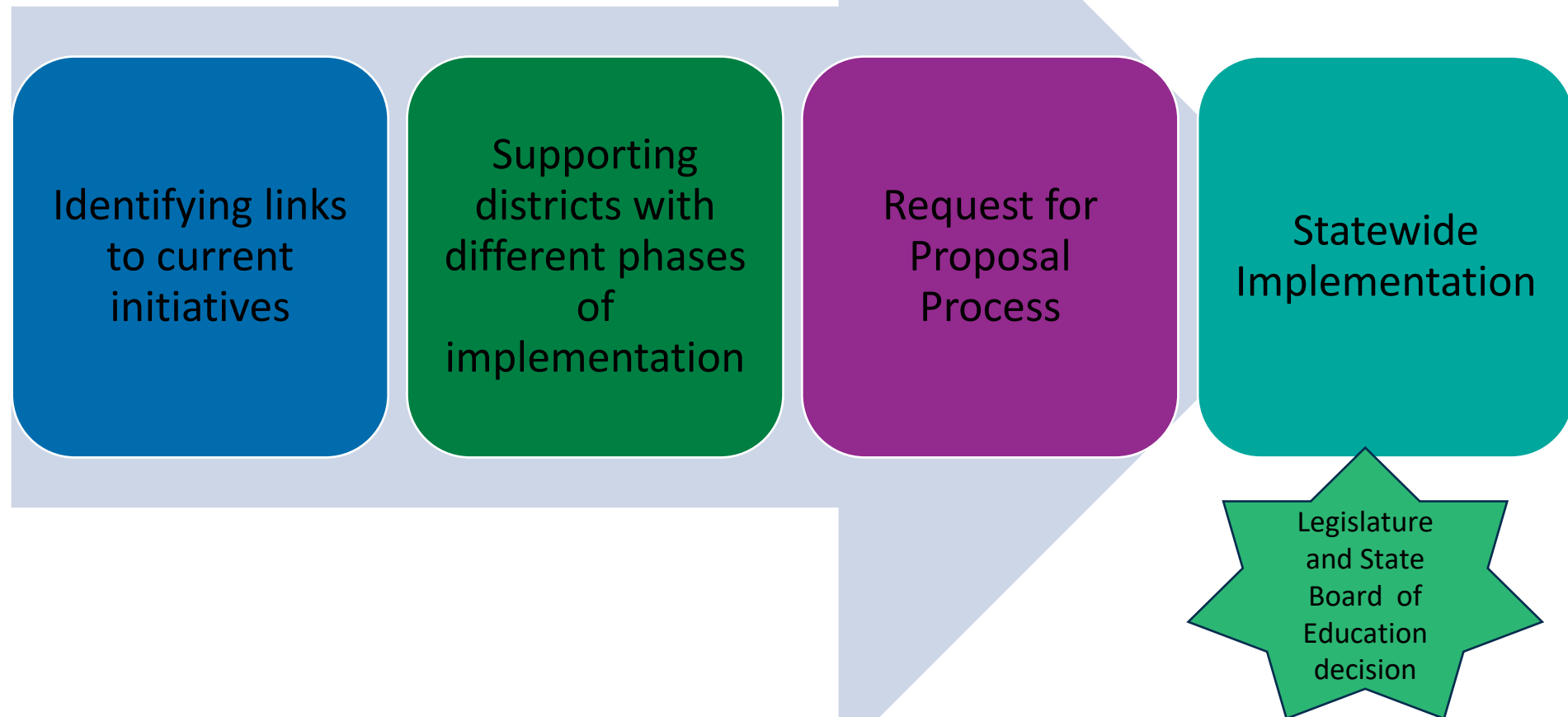
Questions for District/School Leaders



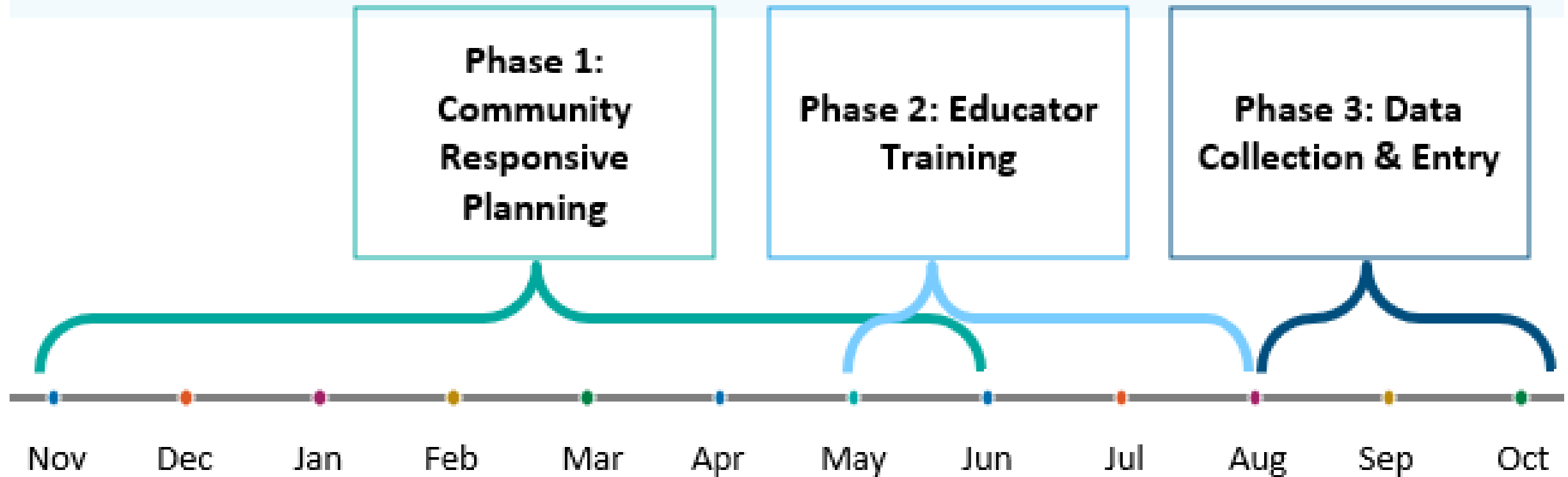
Where are we going?



Preparing for Successful Statewide Implementation



Early Learning Transition Check-in Timeline



Professional Learning

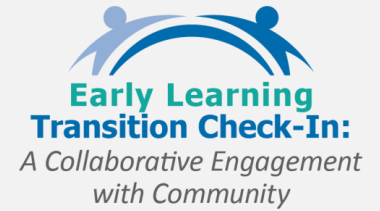
November Informational Session

February Onboarding Meeting for district leaders

May distribution of professional learning materials

May, June, August, September Office Hours

Getting District-Wide Systems Ready



Begin internal conversations about:

- Current transition into kinder activities

- Engagements with families, communities and education partners

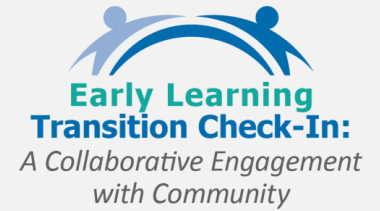
- District-wide calendars both student contact and training

- Identifying who will be on the team to support change management

What district policies or bargaining agreements need to be considered?

What proactive steps can be taken to honor and meet the language needs of families?

Resources



For ALL Schools:

OAR 581-022-0102 30b: Instructional time shall include: (B) Time that a student spends in statewide performance assessments

OAR 581-022-2320 6e: Upon approval by the local school board, a district may include in its calculation of instructional time, up to...30 hours for parent teacher conferences

For Certain Schools:

Title I-A Schoolwide Programs: Activity must be identified in the school's needs assessment

Summer Learning Funds: Funds can be used to support entering Kinder students enrolled in Summer Learning activities

Reflection Question

Based on what you've heard thus far, what are you already doing?

What is something you could build upon?

Who in your district can support the implementation? Who can help you move this work forward in your district? Internal support?

What supports can ODE and DELC provide to help you get started?

What to expect from ODE and DELC?



Communication via Assessment and Accountability Listserv (A & A Update)



January Communication: Training for District Level Staff (ODE's Point of Contact) & Building Principals



All Training Materials by May 1st of each year



Office Hours offered in June and August

Inquiry

Before you leave, please complete this brief [Exit Survey](#)



Thank you

For more information or if you are interested in participating in the 2026-27 pilot, contact PreKCheckIn@ode.oregon.org

District Informational materials can be found at [ODE's Community Informed Information Gathering Process at Kindergarten Website](#)

