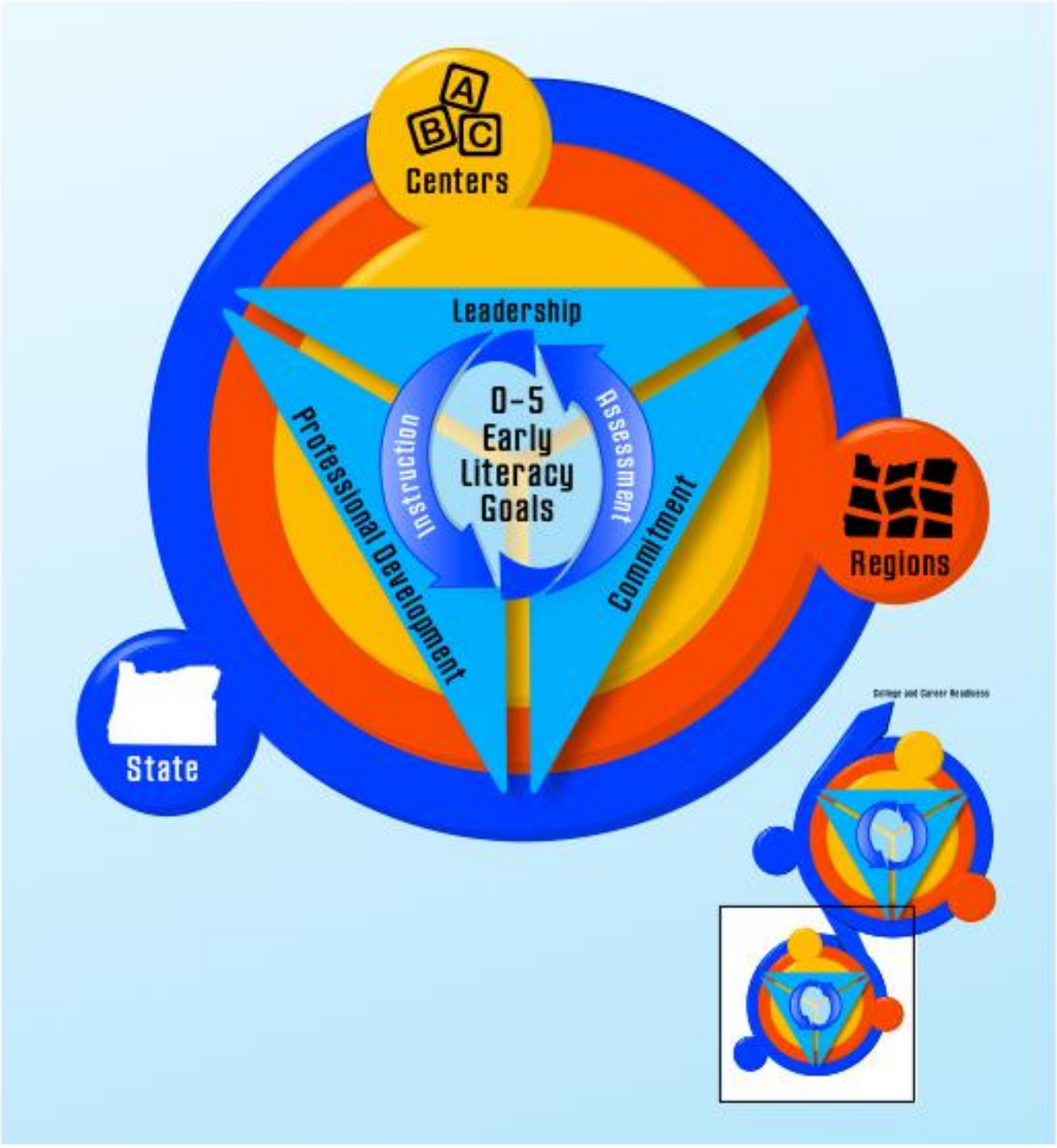
Oregon Literacy Plan: Birth to Five



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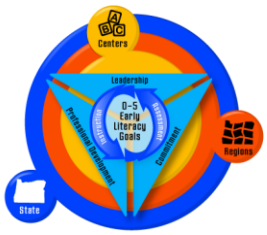


Birth to Five

Oregon Literacy Plan

How to Read the Birth to Five Oregon Literacy Plan

The Birth to Five Oregon Literacy Plan is divided into three major sections: the Narrative, the Self-Assessment, and the Implementation Guide.

The narrative consists of seven chapters: Introduction, Goals, Assessment, Instruction, Leadership, Professional Development, and Commitment. These chapters provide content knowledge and background on each of the six major components of the Oregon Literacy Plan, as applied to children ages birth to five. The principles and information presented in each chapter are distilled into specific strategies and recommendations for action within the Birth to Five Self-Assessment. The Implementation Guide provides directions for scoring the Self-Assessment and a strategy for identifying priorities and developing an action plan to achieve those priorities.

The Birth to Five Self-Assessment is modeled on the structure used in the Oregon K–12 Literacy Framework. The Framework was divided into three major sections—State, district, and school—to give direction for providing support at all levels of our education system. In Birth to Five, the same levels of systematized support do not exist. Nationally, there is a problem of a “non-system” in terms of coordinating programs and infrastructure for early child care and education. Oregon is no exception, as discussed briefly in the Introduction to this Birth to Five section of the Oregon Literacy Plan. Therefore, to approximate the Framework, the Birth to Five Self-Assessment is divided into the three levels of support that most closely mirror the levels of education and the existing early childhood infrastructure in the State of Oregon: (**1) State support, (2) Regional Support, and (3) Center-based Support**. Each of these three levels is defined more fully below. The self-assessment at each level of support is organized around the six major components of the Framework: (**1) Goals, (2) Assessment, (3) Instruction, (4) Leadership, (5) Professional development, and (6) Commitment.** (These six components are defined and described in the Introduction to the Oregon Literacy Plan). Each item on the Self-Assessment is rated according to whether implementation is not in place, partially in place, or fully in place. The three levels of support—State, regional, and center-based—are presented as stand-alone sections to be used by the appropriate agency or group.

Definition of State Support in Oregon:

Numerous government agencies provide services and support to Oregon's young children and their families. These include, but are not limited to, the Governor's Office and Early Learning Design Team, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), the Employment Department/Child Care Division, the Oregon Commission for Child Care, the Department of Human Services/Child Care Program, the Oregon State Library, and the Health Authority/Office of Family Health. In this document, "State" refers to the government agencies that serve young children and their families. Ideally, the "Self-Assessment—State Support" portion of the Oregon Literacy Plan should be completed by an agency or council that is able to represent the early childhood work of all these agencies. The Self-Assessment might also be completed separately by each governmental agency or department. However, this approach would not provide a coherent picture of the early childhood system throughout the State, and coherence is one of the primary goals of the Oregon Literacy Plan. Therefore, it is recommended that ODE take the lead in completing the assessment and encouraging the other governmental agencies to collaborate in the assessment. It is expected that ODE will, as outlined within the Self-Assessment, partner with the other governmental agencies in an effort to provide leadership in creating a coherent system of early childhood care and education in Oregon. ODE will pursue a strong partnership with the Governor's Office to support the Governor's efforts in early childhood education.

Definition of Regional Support in Oregon:

In K–12 education, the school district serves to operate the public schools and implement State and federal policy. In the State of Oregon, as in most states in the United States, no comparable infrastructure exists for reaching, supporting, and directing the numerous agencies that serve children age birth to five. Rather, several different groups serve different populations of young children and their families. Collaborative efforts among these different groups encourage them to work together. The four groups with the largest reach in Oregon are: **(1) Education Service Districts**—ESDs provide special education services to children ages 0 to 5 who have disabilities. The 36 counties in Oregon are served by nine ESD service areas. **(2) Oregon Head Start/Pre-K**—State and federal dollars are used to fund 28 grantees in the Oregon Head Start/Pre-K program. Grantees serve children living in poverty, and they must meet Head Start performance standards. Most of the grantees serve 3- and 4 year-old children in Head Start preschool centers. A small percentage of funds are used to support Early Head Start, which serves children ages birth to three who are living in poverty. Each grantee is headed by a director. Some grantees consist of only one Head Start center. Others have multiple centers. The number of children served by individual grantees ranges from 19 to 700. **(3) Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network**—The Oregon CCR&R serves as liaison to public and private agencies that support child care, and it provides support and leadership for the statewide system of CCR&R programs. Currently 13 CCR&R programs, statewide, offer support to more than 6,200 child care businesses, provide training opportunities to child care professionals, and assist 20,000 families in finding and managing child care. **(4) Public K–12 school districts—**provide funding for preschools within their own district. In addition, private preschools are now required to register with the State, but oversight is minimal.

Local public libraries are an additional regional source of outreach. Oregon has 127 public libraries. These libraries are locally funded. Many of the libraries provide a focus on early literacy activities. The

Ready to Read program, a general fund grant administered by the Oregon State Library and available to all public libraries, has a focus on early literacy and summer reading programs. Another source of outreach is efforts to reach children and families who belong to any of the nine Tribes in Oregon. The Tribes represent slightly less than 2% of the State's population. Each of these nine Tribes is a sovereign nation with its own government and own leaders. Members of the State government, tribal leaders, and tribal staff meet three to six times a year in small groups called "clusters." These meetings are organized around several key issues, including education and community services, and could serve as a good resource for informing and reaching out to young children and their families within the Tribes.

A significant percentage of Oregon's young children and their families—such as children who do not attend child care or preschool but who remain in the care of their parents, extended family, friends, or neighbors until they begin public school in kindergarten—are not reached by any of the direct-service groups. Furthermore, this group of children is not represented by a centralized or significant advocacy group or groups. Thus, a primary goal at each level of support (i.e., State, regional, and center-based) in the Oregon Literacy Plan will be to include effective and efficient outreach efforts to provide information and education to these children and their families.

Definition of Center-based Support in Oregon:

Center-based support refers to the physical locations where children who are ages birth to five receive services, child care, and early education. These include publicly and privately funded child care centers and preschools. Examples of publicly funded preschools include the individual Head Start centers that are funded as grantees through Oregon Head Start/Pre-K and the individual preschool classrooms that are funded by their own K–12 school district.

Introduction—Why Should Birth to Five Be Included as a Critical Component of Oregon's Literacy Plan?

"The [Oregon] Legislative Assembly finds and declares that:

(a) Children are our future;
(b) Healthy children and families are of fundamental importance to the vitality of Oregon;
(c) Children are entitled to safety and health;
(d) All children deserve love, respect, and guidelines for responsible behavior;
(e) Families should be supported and strengthened;
(f) Communities provide the context for healthy children and families, and strong families and healthy communities are interdependent; and
(g) Economic opportunity and social cohesion are essential for healthy communities."

Interstate Compacts on Juveniles and Children (2009 ed.)

Setting the Stage for School Readiness and Successful Academic Outcomes

Preparing our young people to be proficient readers with the requisite skills to perform successfully in college and compete productively in the workforce is a top priority of the State of Oregon and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE, 2010). Of course, proficient readers are not created in the final years of high school or even middle school. Surprisingly, perhaps, the foundation for literacy acquisition is not laid even in first grade or kindergarten, when formal reading instruction begins. Rather, the stage for reading acquisition is set in the years between the child's birth and entry into kindergarten (Dickinson, McCabe, & Essex, 2006). Those first years of life are a crucial period during which brain development is rapid and extensive and has lifelong implications for the child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive well-being (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

During the first years of life, every facet of a child's development is highly responsive and reactive to the environments and experiences encountered by the child (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Essential to healthy child development and learning is the presence of nurturing, responsive caregivers throughout infancy and early childhood (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) and a positive, warm relationship with early childhood teachers once a child begins preschool (Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009). A child's eventual achievement in reading is influenced not just by developmental processes that appear to be most closely associated with literacy acquisition, such as language and cognitive development, but by a host of factors that affect the development of the whole child, including his or her physical health, nutrition, and diet; exposure to environmental toxins; genetic endowment; socioeconomic status; educational level of his or her primary caretaker(s); exposure to a variety of risks; presence of a range of supports and family resources; and overall social-emotional development (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Thus, a comprehensive focus on the whole child beginning at birth (or prenatally) is necessary for Oregon's children to be ready to benefit from effective literacy instruction at kindergarten entry.

In an evaluation of data from all 50 states, The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP, as cited by the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, page 3) underscores the importance of focusing on the whole child in its recommendations for "Improving the Odds" for young children:

- "Focus on the whole child. Families with young children need multiple supports. Strong policies in just one policy area (e.g., health care) can be undermined by weak policies in another (e.g., child care).
- Increase access to critical services. Level the income eligibility for health care and child care support among states so all children have access to the basics.
- Invest in infants and toddlers. Research clearly demonstrates the benefits of early experiences in shaping social and brain development, preparing children to succeed in school and beyond."

Oregon Agencies that Support Health and Development of Young Children and Their Primary Environments

A growing national trend recognizes the critical importance of the first five years of life to the subsequent development of the individual, as well as the severe consequences to both the individual and society of failing to provide healthy, enriching supports to young children and their families. As a result, policy makers, legislators, and public and private foundations alike have directed more funds and resources toward improving the lives and outcomes for children in this age group.

The State of Oregon recognizes the opportunity and the responsibility to provide effective supports, programs, and interventions for young children and their families. This is evidenced in Oregon's legislative policy (e.g., Executive Order No. 10-06 and ORS 417.305), and by the number of government agencies, committees, and departments that have been charged with the purpose of providing strategic support, coordination, and facilitation of effective services across a wide range of needs and focus areas for children ages birth to five. These groups and their specific charges are listed in the following table on the Oregon Early Childhood System.

Oregon Early Childhood System

As Applicable to Early Childhood Literacy and Oregon Striving Readers Grant

Office of the Governor	
Planning & Policy Group	Charge
Early Learning Design Team (Governor appointed)	To develop a detailed plan to implement the recommendations provided in the Governor's "Early Childhood and Family Investment Transition Report." The Design Team is expected to work through June 30, 2011, in anticipation of being prepared for the 2012 Legislature.
Early Childhood Matters Advisory Council (ECMAC) (Governor appointed)	To adopt a statewide early childhood strategic report and a multiyear investment plan for Oregon based on recommendations from the Co-Chairs Work Group. The strategic report and investment plan will link existing and new public and private early childhood efforts into a coordinated and collaborative system that will foster optimal outcomes for quality comprehensive services for all children, ages birth to school entry, and their families. The ECMAC will provide recommendations to the Governor that will set strategic direction to support a quality and effective collaborative early childhood system.
Early Childhood Matters Co-Chairs Work Group	To coordinate and link the priorities and align strategies across the three standing committees; to anchor optimal measurable outcomes; to develop and apply criteria for prioritization of the recommendations forwarded by the three standing committees; to formulate options for recommendations to the ECMAC that emerge from the three standing committees; and to provide recommendations to the ECMAC on early childhood opportunities that are within the scope of the Early Childhood Matters Framework that may emerge from outside of the three standing committees.
Early Childhood Matters Standing Committees: **Early Learning Matters Committee (Early Education & Care) **Family Matters Committee (Safety, Parent Education, Family Support) **Health Matters Committee (Health, Social/Emotional Development, Mental Health)	To coordinate, facilitate and lead the work of assigned standing committee and to participate as a member of the Co-Chairs Work Group and to develop recommendations that coordinate and link relevant early childhood activities and address the goals and priorities in the Early Childhood Matters Framework.
Employment Department/Child Care Division—Oregon Commission for Child Care; Child Care and Education Coordinating Council	
Planning & Policy Group	Charge
Oregon Child Care Commission (OCCC) (Governor appointed)	To address issues, problems, and alternative solutions that are critical to accessible, affordable, and quality child care services; to advise the Governor and legislature on the issues, problems, and solutions related to the development of accessible, affordable, and quality child care in Oregon; and to advocate for the availability of safe, quality, and affordable child care. OCCC acts as an oversight body, ensuring accountability for children.

Child Care and Education Coordinating Council (CCECC) Standing Committees: **Professional Development Committee **Supply Committee **Health Links **Inclusive Child Care **Child Care Tax Credit Advisory **Child Care Research Partnership **DHS Child Care Advisory	To create a balanced system of care that supports and empowers working families and promotes safe, healthy child development and to serve as the advisory body for Oregon's Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan, which is submitted to the federal Child Care Bureau by the Child Care Division.
Education & Quality Investment Partnership (EQUIP) Steering Committee	To initiate, guide, and promote improvement efforts focused on the childhood care and education workforce and facilities through a public/private partnership known as the Education and Quality Investment Partnership (EQUIP). Workforce-level investments include creating incentives for early childhood care and education professionals to reach higher levels of education and training through scholarship programs and Education Awards. The Steering Committee provides guidance for the following quality efforts: Oregon Registry Training & Education Database, Oregon Registry Campaign, Quality Indicators Program, Oregon Registry Education Awards and scholarships, and Oregon Program of Quality.
Oregon Department of Education	
Planning & Policy Group	Charge
Early Childhood Foundations	Early Childhood Foundations *Charge:* To develop and implement early learning guidelines that describe what children should know, understand, and be able to do during the first five years of life. Oregon's early learning guidelines, *Early Childhood Foundations*, are available on the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) website. The *Foundations* support school readiness by promoting healthy child development, early learning, and effective teaching strategies that provide a common set of child outcomes for all early childhood programs. The *Foundations* are aligned with *Oregon's K–12 Standards* and the *Head Start Child Outcomes Framework*. Oregon has also developed a companion document, *Born to Learn*, as a training manual for providers, teachers, and parents.
Effective Behavior and Instruction Support Systems (EBISS)—Early Childhood	EBISS is part of a five-year federal grant from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) called the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). The purpose of the SPDG is to assist states in reforming and improving their systems for personnel preparation and professional development to improve results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Within EBISS, an initiative focuses

	on early childhood. Three programs, serving six counties, participate.
Oregon Commission for Children & Families	
Planning & Policy Group	Charge
Early Childhood and Community Schools Linkages Project	To promote school readiness and success by connecting Oregon's community schools model to its early childhood system of supports. This integrated approach coordinates efforts at three levels: individual children and their families, schools and communities, and State policy. The project initially focuses on three sites: Woodmere Elementary and Harold Oliver Primary schools in Multnomah County and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz. This effort is funded by the Kellogg Foundation.
Department of Human Services (DHS)/Child Care Program	
Planning & Policy Group	Charge
Child Care Advisory Committee	To provide a forum for partners, advocates, and field staff for discussing possible policy changes and service delivery issues regarding child care subsidies; to provide an opportunity to let the broader child care community know what is happening in the DHS Child Care program; and to provide advocacy for the subsidy program with their own and other organizations in the community as appropriate.
Health Authority/Office of Family Health	
Planning & Policy Group	Charge
Home Visiting Steering committee	To provide leadership and guidance for the development of a statewide home visiting system inclusive of all partners using home visiting as a primary strategy for delivering family and child support services.
Oregon State Library	
Planning & Policy Group	Charge
Reading for Healthy Families	In collaboration with Oregon Commission on Children and Families, to provide evidence-based early literacy training to librarians and family support workers across all 36 counties via a three-year grant.
Ready to Read	To establish, develop, or improve early literacy and summer reading services in local public libraries. Every public library in Oregon is eligible and frequently uses its funds to partner with other agencies serving young children.
Other	
Planning & Policy Group	Charge
Oregon Afterschool for Kids (Oregon ASK) Willamette ESD	To support, expand, and advocate for quality out-of-school time and extended learning opportunity programs and activities, both academic and enrichment, for children, youth, and families throughout Oregon. Oregon ASK is a statewide collaborative network of 26 public agencies, private organizations, and community members that seek to address common issues and concerns across all out-of-school time and extended learning opportunity services: child care, recreation, education, and youth development.

In addition to these governmental committees, offices, and councils, a large number of private and public agencies, foundations, and programs serve young children ages birth to five. Included in this group are college campuses that prepare early childhood professionals, the child care and preschool centers that provide direct services to children, and friends/family/neighbor care, an alternative to paid child care used by a significant minority of working parents. The table below provides a preliminary list of the early childhood programs and partnerships in Oregon.

Organization	Program and Partnership
Governor's Early Childhood Matters Advisory Council	Early Childhood Matters is Oregon's *call to action* on behalf of all children from Birth through Age five. Early Childhood Matters is intended to support State and local agencies, foundations, corporations, physicians, and communities in pursuit of a shared vision, priorities, and goals in concert with one another. The Governor's Council is a resource for working together and challenging the many partners to build on strengths and create a fully-integrated system.
Oregon Department of Education	Early Intervention (EI) (Birth–Age 3) Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) (Age 3–5) Early Head Start Oregon Prekindergarten Head Start/Federal Head Start (OPK) State Advisory Council for Special Education (SACSE) State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)
State Agencies and Departments	Oregon Commission for Children and Families (OCCF) Commission for Child Care Oregon Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCRRN) Health Authority Employment Department: Child Care Division Department of Human Services (DHS): Children, Adult and Families Division DHS—Early Childhood Program Oregon After School for Kids OAEYC (Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children) Oregon Center for Professional Development Oregon State Library
Federal Agencies	Region X Head Start Office Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region X Migrant Seasonal Head Start Tribal Head Start Training and Technical Assistance for Head Start Region X Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Northwest Regional Comprehensive Center (RMC, Ed Northwest)
Organizations, Foundations, and Advocacy	Parents Children's Institute Leaders Roundtable Oregon Education Association (OEA) Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) Oregon Library Association

	Stand for Children Education Northwest Child Care Improvement Project Oregon Community Foundation Children First National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
Higher Education	Educator preparation for credential in Early Childhood Education
Private Preschool	Numerous privately-run, tuition-funded preschools for young children
Private Child Care	Numerous privately-run, family-paid child care centers
Government-subsidized Child Care	Community Child Care Initiative Child Care tax credits
Family, Friends, and Neighbor Care	Alternative to paid child care used by a percentage of working parents

Key among these groups is the Governor's Council on Early Childhood Matters. Established by Executive Order No. 10-06, members of this Governor's Council include key stakeholders throughout the State of Oregon, representing the governor's office, the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Office of Family and Maternal Health, the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, the Oregon legislature, the Children's Institute (a research and policy institute), higher education, and many others.

In their own words, the Governor's Council on Early Childhood Matters is "Oregon's call to action on behalf of all children in the State from Birth through Age 5" (Oregon Commission on Children and Families, p. 2). The Council recently published a framework to guide the establishment of a statewide early childhood system that incorporates and uses the expertise and services of multiple State and local agencies, businesses, physicians, and community members. The primary vision of Early Childhood Matters is "Reaching our full potential for serving children: envision an Oregon in which young children are healthy, safe, and thriving in nurturing families and caring communities." (Oregon Commission on Children and Families, p. 1). The Council identified eight elements for building the early childhood system: (1) collaborative leadership; (2) family partnerships; (3) public awareness, commitment, and action; (4) cultural proficiency; (5) sustainable investments; (6) policy and resource alignment; (7) shared accountability for quality outcomes; and (8) workforce capacity. Each of these essential elements is interwoven into the content of the framework for the Birth to Five Oregon Literacy Plan.

Upon taking office in January 2011, Governor Kitzhaber established an Early Childhood and Family Investment transition team. This transition team was tasked with preparing a report to recommend changes to Oregon's early childhood system. The resulting report is called the "Early Childhood and Family Investment Transition Report" and is available at http://www.childinst.org/images/stories/documents/ec-transition-report.pdf.

The recommendations of the transition team are comprehensive and ambitious. They are reproduced below from the Executive Summary of that report (Early Childhood and Family Investment Transition Team, 2011, pp. 2–3):

1. Early identification and support
    a. Ensure early identification of families and children for critical, identified indicators of risk.
    b. Establish neighborhood catchment areas at elementary school sites where a Family Support Manager will coordinate support services for families and children.
    c. Outcomes, services, and resources will be managed by five regional entities at an average cost per child of $10,500 per biennium.

2. Shared measurement and accountability
    a. Convert current contracts with early childhood service providers to performance-based contracts with accountability for reaching identified goals. Disproportionality must be addressed in the efficacy of services and performance contracts should require measured progress.
    b. Outcome measures should be required for the following developmental domains: child health; child language, literacy, and learning; social-emotional development; parent, family, and support development; and cognitive development.
    c. A kindergarten-readiness assessment and early learning benchmarks should be adopted.
    d. An integrated statewide data system should be ready to deploy for this work on January 1, 2012.

3. Budget and governance
    a. Create an Early Childhood System Director in the Governor's Office and an Early Learning Council to consolidate multiple existing efforts, funding streams, and administrative structures.
    b. Data on the return on this investment must be collected and evaluated on a consistent platform at regular intervals to ensure results are produced."

The Governor has accepted and endorsed the recommendations of that team and subsequently created the Early Learning Design Team. The Early Learning Design Team is charged with creating a plan to implement the transition team's recommendations. The Early Learning Design Team is expected to complete its plan by June 30, 2011.

As evidenced by the groups listed in the two tables above, although collaborative efforts exist among agencies, Oregon's current early childhood system is large and complex. However, legislation (e.g., ORS 417.305) provides the impetus, and the Governor's Early Learning Design Team provides the necessary State leadership that can bring coherence and alignment to the resources, services, and purposes of these multiple groups. The Birth to Five Oregon Literacy Plan, as outlined in this document, provides the framework for how to reach those common goals as they apply to language and early literacy development of Oregon's young children.

The Importance of Emergent Literacy Skills as a Foundation for Reading and Writing

Definition of Emergent Literacy Skills:

The process of becoming literate is not a one-time event that begins when children start formal schooling and reading instruction in kindergarten or first grade. Rather, the acquisition of literacy occurs as part of a developmental continuum that begins early in life, as early as birth and the first attempts at communication between a parent and child.

The term “emergent literacy skills” connotes the set of abilities developed throughout early childhood that are necessary precursors to learning to read and write. According to Whitehurst and Lonigan’s (1998) seminal conceptual paper on the topic, emergent literacy can be divided into two interdependent categories of skills and processes: those that support the ability to decode and read and those that support the ability to comprehend what is read. Skills that support decoding processes include alphabetic knowledge, emergent writing, syntactic awareness, phonological awareness, and phonemic awareness. Skills that support comprehension processes include semantic, syntactic, and conceptual knowledge of language; the ability to understand and produce a narrative; conventions of print; and emergent reading (i.e., pretending to read) (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The development of both sets of skills is affected by, and responsive to, the quality and quantity of adult–child verbal interactions experienced by the child. Strong correlations exist between the literacy environment encountered at home and a child’s language skills in preschool (Beals, DeTemple, & Dickinson, 1994). Consequently, both sets of skills are highly malleable and valuable targets for effective early intervention.

An expanded definition of the skills that support decoding is provided here. *Alphabetic knowledge* is the ability to recognize and name the letters of the alphabet. *Emergent writing* refers to children’s first attempts at writing. It begins with using a writing tool to mark lines or scribbles on a page, proceeds to notations that more closely resemble letters, and eventually to the writing of actual letters and words with high recognizability, such as the child’s name. Ultimately, children begin to use phonetic spelling to sound out and write words or short messages. *Syntactic awareness* is the ability to notice and correct grammatical errors, such as mistakes in word order. *Phonological awareness* is the ability to hear, understand, and manipulate different units of meaning in spoken language; for example, the ability to identify individual words within a sentence, pick out words that rhyme with a target word, or count the number of syllables in a multisyllabic word are all examples of phonological awareness. *Phonemic awareness* is a subtype of phonological awareness and refers to the ability to hear, understand, and manipulate the smallest unit of meaning in the English language, the phoneme. Specific examples of phonemic awareness skills include:

- The ability to blend individual phonemes into a word. For example, when a child hears the three sounds /c/, /a/, /t/ , she blends the word into “cat.”
- The ability to segment words into individual phonemes. For example, when a child hears the word “brick,” he produce 4 phonemes, /b/, /r/, /i/, /k/.

- The ability to delete or replace phonemes. For example, when asked, “What would ‘mat’ sound like if you removed the /m/ and replaced it with /s/?,” the child responds “sat.”

Children demonstrate phonemic awareness skills last within the developmental continuum of phonological awareness skills. This skill is essential to the acquisition of reading and writing, and, of all the code-focused, emergent literacy skills, it bears the strongest predictive relationship with subsequent reading achievement (see, e.g., Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, & Seiendberg, 2001; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Relationship between emergent literacy skills and reading achievement.

A strong, predictive link exists between emergent literacy skills in prekindergarten and early reading success in kindergarten and first grade. Children who possess basic emergent literacy skills in preschool learn to read sooner and more fluently than their peers who begin kindergarten without these basic skills. The advantage bestowed on these skilled preschoolers continues throughout elementary school. Juel (1988) reported that a poor reader at the end of first grade has a .88 probability of remaining a poor reader at the end of fourth grade. Struggling readers in Grade 3 are likely to not meet basic expectations or State standards in middle and high school, and are thus more likely to drop out of school prior to high school graduation. High school dropouts are more likely to be arrested, experience teen pregnancy, experience problems with alcohol or drug abuse, and be lower wage earners throughout their lifetimes.

The Importance of Oral Language as a Foundation for Reading

Early Oral Language Development

Language skills form the basis of communicating and understanding, both in oral and written forms. From the newborn’s first cries to signal hunger or discomfort to the infant’s first smiles and attempts to take turns cooing with a parent, from the baby’s first babbling sounds to the toddler’s first single words and two-word phrases and ultimately to the young child’s first multiword sentences that express complete and unique thoughts, infants’ and toddlers’ oral language develops at an explosive rate from Birth to Age 3. For example, from the age of 1 to the end of second grade, the average child learns approximately 860 root-word meanings per year, or roughly 2.4 root words per day. This equates to about 6,000 root words known in second grade. Unfortunately, 25% of children, those with the most limited vocabularies, acquire on average only 1.6 root words per day or the equivalent of 4,000 words by the end of second grade (Anglin, 1993; Biemeiller & Slonim, 2001; Biemiller, 2005). Imagine the difference in comprehension levels for children who can access the meaning of one-third fewer words that are encountered in their school texts and storybooks!

Environmental Impact on Language Development

The young child’s language development is highly dependent on the quality of environmental inputs he or she experiences. In their classic study on early language development, Hart and Risley (1995), recorded and transcribed the child-directed verbal interactions of 42 families with a 1- to 2-year-old child for one hour per month for nearly 2.5 years. They found, and other studies have corroborated (e.g., Hoff, 2006; Hoff & Nagles, 2002), that the number and variety of words the child understands and can use is to a large extent determined by the number of words spoken to him and the richness of the language used by

the primary caretakers in his life. Furthermore, when adults use a wide variety of sentence structures in their daily speech, children develop a more advanced understanding of the grammar of their language than do children who are exposed to a more limited set of sentence structures or paucity of vocabulary. As Hoff, succinctly noted in the *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (2006), "Children cannot learn words they do not hear. Thus children who hear only a limited vocabulary will acquire only a limited vocabulary," (Hoff, 2006, p. 166).

Relationship between Language Development and the Acquisition of Reading and Other Learning Skills

The findings of Hart, Risley, and others are especially noteworthy given that the size of a child's vocabulary is a significant predictor of the child's success in reading acquisition (see, e.g., Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Biemiller asserts that for children with reading problems, vocabulary plays an even larger role in reading comprehension than does the ability to decode the words. He bases this claim on evidence that by the end of third grade most children can read (i.e., decode) many more words than they can give meaning to or understand (Biemiller, 2006).

Of course, vocabulary is not the only aspect of oral language skill that influences reading achievement. Also important is understanding the use of syntax (Snow, et al., 1998) and discourse. Children develop grammatical skill more rapidly in situations that provide more opportunities for one-to-one interactions with adults, such as child care centers that maintain a high teacher-to-child ratio or being the oldest or only child in the family (NICHD Early Child CARE Network, 2000; McCartney, 1984). Familiarity with the way language is used in writing is also associated with greater ease in learning to read. This may be due to the stylistic differences between written and spoken language; i.e., written language is more formal (Ravid & Tolchinsky, 2002) and decontextualized (Watson, 2001). Familiarity with written language may be one outcome of shared book reading that mediates the relationship between frequency of shared book reading and success in learning to read. That is, children who are read to frequently are more likely to understand the stylized language of the written word (Hoff, 2006).

Language skills are implicated not only in eventual literacy acquisition but also in developing the social-emotional skills necessary to succeed in a classroom environment. Researchers have found evidence that language skills can yield an early, positive influence on a child's ability to demonstrate self-regulation, a critical skill for early school success (Dionne et al., 2003, and Hooper, Roberts, Zeisel, and Poe, 2003). Language, social-emotional, and self-regulation skills are all critical to a child's ability to build strong bonds with teachers and positive friendships with peers and to succeed academically in school.

Implications for Intervention

Clearly, language development is an important target for early intervention. Research shows small changes in adult-to-child interactions can yield large, positive outcomes. For example, the research on dialogic reading (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999; Whitehurst, et al., 1994; Whitehurst et al., 1999) demonstrates that significant improvements in expressive language and emergent literacy skills can be obtained for two-year-old and preschool-aged children, across socioeconomic status (SES) groups, after even relatively brief interventions. Dialogic reading during read-alouds is based on the adult's use of questions, queries, and follow-up prompts to help facilitate a child's comprehension (and vocabulary, discourse skills, etc.) through discussion. When using a dialogic approach, the adult tries to support a shared, active role for the child. For example, rather than listening passively, children participate actively by making text-to-life connections and building on ideas and personal interests. Whitehurst and

colleagues demonstrated that adults (e.g., parents and Head Start teachers) can be trained to effectively use this interactive style of shared reading after watching a short training video and participating in brief, guided practice (Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst, & Epstein, 1994).

In the Home-School Study of Language and Literacy Development, Snow and Dickinson (1991) also found that teachers' use of language has significant effects on preschool students' developing language and literacy skills (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). In the *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (2006), Farran, Aydogan, Kang, & Lipsey (2006) argue that preschool settings play a valuable role in fostering (or inhibiting) language development and in engaging children in literacy activities. These findings are especially important given the evidence demonstrating the robust stability of vocabulary growth in the early elementary years (Biemiller, 1999; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). For example, Storch and Whitehurst (2002) found that for every year between preschool and third grade, vocabulary scores from the previous year accounted for 88% or more of the variance in vocabulary scores for the following year. Given the findings discussed here, the preschool years may be a time point at which intervention in language development is more malleable and can make a critical difference in the reading readiness of young children.

Summary

Children learn a great deal about reading and writing prior to entering the schoolhouse door. Before the first day of kindergarten, children acquire extensive vocabulary, knowledge of syntax, an understanding of narrative structure, a grasp of the meta-linguistic characteristics of language such as phonological awareness, and basic concepts of print. Differences in the extent to which children grasp these concepts, prior to formal schooling, directly predict subsequent achievement in reading and writing. Emergent literacy and language skills can be taught to young children successfully by a wide range of adults, including parents and preschool teachers, in a wide variety of settings. The stakes of entering kindergarten without these basic skills are quite high. The ability of children to learn these skills with a modest amount of focused, effective, high-quality interaction and instruction is quite malleable. Therefore, it behooves the State of Oregon and its agencies that serve young children to provide the necessary instruction and interaction to promote their development of early language and emergent literacy skills.

Second-Language Acquisition and Early Reading

Definition of Second-Language Acquisition:

Second-language acquisition refers to the learning of a nonnative language after the learning of a native language. The main characteristic of second-language acquisition is that it takes place in the context of where that language is spoken (e.g., Spanish speakers learning English in the United States), and it may or may not take place in the classroom (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Learning a second language differs from learning a first language because a first language develops without formal teaching but by way of children being constantly exposed to language-rich environments over the course of many years. On the other hand, second-language acquisition usually occurs in a constricted environment such as the classroom or any other formal learning environment. Therefore, not all assumptions for children learning their first language apply to children learning a second language (Baker & Baker, 2009).

Acquiring a language means learning five main linguistic elements: phonology**,** syntax, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics. **Phonology** refers to knowing (a) what happens in words in fast speech as opposed to more carefully articulated speech and (b) the possible combinations of sounds and what sounds are found in the language being learned. For example, in the sentence: *I'm going to ride my bike*, it is plausible that a second language learner would say: I'm going to rideMYBIKE (i.e., the learner spoke so fast that the separation of words was not clear). Phonology also includes knowing all the sounds in a language and understanding how the sounds are combined to build words.

Syntax refers to what speakers know about grammar, the rules that govern word order in sentences. **Morphology** refers to the study of word formation. Morphemes represent the minimal unit of meaning in words. For example, the word *quickly* is made up of two morphemes: *quick* and *ly*. Words can be created by adding morphemes, as in cycle, re+cycle, and re+cycl+ing. Some words also go better with other words. For example, we say Mt. Hood is a high mountain but not that the Empire State Building is a high building. (The correct answer is: *The Empire State Building is a tall building*.) Sometimes the reason for certain word combinations is clear, while at other times it appears to be quite arbitrary. For example, what is the difference between *tall* and *high*? (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

Semantics refers to the study of meaning. Knowledge of the semantics of a language also includes knowledge of the reference of words, word combinations, and limitation of word meanings. For example, in English the word *tip* has multiple meanings (e.g., *the tip of a pen; giving a waiter a tip; or giving somebody a suggestion or a tip*). Thus, knowledge of multiple word meanings allows listeners and readers to interpret messages appropriately. Word combinations also help the listener understand meaning. For example, the meaning of the sentence *The man bit the dog* is different than that of *The dog bit the man,* although both sentences use exactly the same words*.* Limitation in word meaning cannot always be explained clearly.

Pragmatics refers to the way we use language in context. For example, when a teacher says "*Eyes on me,*" the expectation is that students will look at her; she does not mean that she has eyes on her clothes.

Each of these elements is dynamic, and their level of importance varies at different developmental stages. A mature speaker of a second language is doing something fundamentally different than a novice speaker of the language. Just as a reader needs to understand sounds in words and read words correctly to activate higher level processes that will help them understand sentences and connected text, the

speaker of a second language needs to acquire phonology, morphology, and semantics to understand the pragmatics of a language (Baker & Baker, 2009).

Relationship between Second-Language Acquisition and Early Literacy Skills

Research on the relation between emergent literacy and oral language indicate that phonological awareness and alphabetic understanding (e.g., letter sound correspondence) is not related directly to oral language (Chiappe, Siegel, & Wade-Woolley, 2002; Geva & Yaghoub Zadeh, 2006; Lesaux & Siegel, 2003). For example, an English-language learner as young as 5 years old can segment and blend sounds in the word "mat," a phonemic awareness task, without necessarily understanding the meaning of the word. Also, a child whose native language is based on the alphabetic system (e.g., Spanish) can recognize letter sounds that are similar in English and Spanish (e.g., almost all consonants) without speaking English (Bialystok, Luk, & Kwan, 2005).

Furthermore, research studies found that the best predictors of reading achievement in English for ELs in Grades K–2 are phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabetic knowledge because phonological awareness skills (including rhyming, syllable awareness, on-set rhyme recognition, blending, and segmenting phonemes) require the auditory recognition and manipulation of sounds not knowledge of morphology, semantics, or syntax (Chiappe et al., 2002; Durgunoglu, Nagy, & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993; Lesaux & Siegel, 2003; Oh, Haager, & Windmueller, 2004).

ELs can perform as well as English speakers on phonological awareness tasks such as syllable and phoneme identification and phoneme deletion. However, ELs show weaker performance on measures requiring greater vocabulary and memory demands (e.g., oral cloze test and memory for sentences [Chiappe, 2002, Lesaux, & Siegel, 2003]). Lesaux & Siegel (2003) also found that although ELs had difficulty in kindergarten with tasks related to language skills and memory, phonological processing was the single best predictor of word reading and comprehension in second grade. Moreover, by second grade, ELs performed better than native English speakers on word reading tasks, rapid naming, and real-word and pseudo-word spelling, suggesting that although language and memory skills were developing simultaneously with other reading skills, they did not account for a significant percentage of the variance explained in word reading.

In summary, ELs can learn emergent phonological awareness and alphabetic understanding in preschool even if their language proficiency is insufficiently developed. There is no need to wait until ELs have acquired a certain level of language proficiency to learn early literacy skills. In addition, ELs can also learn question formation and vocabulary of abstract words along with English speakers. However, teachers need to be aware that ELs might not know words or expressions that are commonly familiar to English speakers. Thus, special attention needs to be taken to teach ELs these words through the use of visuals, gestures, or prompts to ensure their quick assimilation into the preschool environment.

The "Achievement Gap" Seen at Entry into Kindergarten

The Achievement Gap and Poverty

Considerable differences exist in children's knowledge and skill bases prior to the beginning of formal instruction in kindergarten. These disparities are frequently and strongly associated with differences in the children's economic backgrounds and are highly predictive of their eventual performance in school.

Several researchers have noted significant differences in a number of specific school-readiness skills, including receptive and expressive language, ability to identify letters, and beginning sounds in words, colors, and numbers (e.g., Denton, West, & Watson, 2003; Vellutino, et al., 1995). Hart and Risley (2003) note large, SES-based, differences in the number of words a child is exposed to prior to kindergarten entry. Refer to the table below for a summary of these differences.

Beginning Kindergarten Students' School Readiness Skills by Socioeconomic Status

	Lowest SES	Highest SES
Recognizing letters of alphabet	39%	85%
Identifying beginning sounds of words	10%	51%
Identifying primary colors	69%	90%
Counting to 20	48%	68%
Writing own name	54%	76%
Amount of time read to prior to kindergarten[a]	25 hours	1,000 hours
Accumulated experience with words[b]	13 million words	45 million words

Note: This table is from Neuman (2006). Copyright 2006 by The Guilford Press. Originally adapted from Lee and Burkham (2002). Copyright 2002 by Economic Policy Institute.
[a] Adams (1990).
[b] Hart and Risley (1995).

Neuman (2006) calls attention to the additional problem of "the knowledge gap." That is, children from families with low income come to school with significantly less content and background knowledge and experience than their more advantaged peers. As Neuman noted (2006, p. 30), "Skill development apart from meaningful content has limited usefulness or staying power for the young children. Further, indications are that limited content knowledge might ultimately account for what appear to be comprehension difficulties or higher-order thinking difficulties in children."

This knowledge gap is rooted in the fact that poorer families have less access to the resources associated with knowledge acquisition. One important resource is access to printed material—books, magazines, newspapers, and the Internet. For example, in a study of differences between poor and middle-income neighborhoods, Neuman and Celano (2001) found severe disparities in the number of books available to young children. The financial and community resources available to children in middle-income neighborhoods afforded them access to an estimated 13 titles per child. *By stark comparison, estimates suggested that only one book per 300 children was available in the low-income neighborhoods.* Lack of availability of books creates a second, pressing problem: Fewer books means fewer opportunities to engage in shared reading with a child, which means that children will have significantly fewer opportunities to hear and learn rich vocabulary and develop experience with the formal, decontextualized style of written language. These differences tend to become magnified over time as seen in the differences noted by Adams (1990) and Hart and Risley (1995). *That is, children from the lowest-SES families begin kindergarten with approximately 25 hours of shared book reading and accumulated experience with about 13 million words, compared with approximately 1,000 hours of shared book reading and 45 million words experienced by children from the highest-SES families.*

The dramatic, harmful effects of poverty on children's developmental and academic outcomes have been demonstrated in hundreds of studies (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Addressing this crisis is critical, not only for the children and families whose future is at stake, but for our society as well.

The Achievement Gap and Language Status

The results of various analyses of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data all point to an academic achievement gap between English-language learners (ELLs) and native English speakers (Fry, 2007; National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). For instance, while 75% of non-ELLs reach basic or above reading levels by the Grade 8, only 28.8% of ELLs do so (see Figure 1). Reading scores in Oregon are lower for ELLs than is the case nationally. Figure 2 shows that across the U.S. 30% of ELLs in the Grade 4 are at or above basic levels in reading. However, this number is almost one-third lower in Oregon. *Furthermore, nationally 7.3% of Grade 4 ELLs are at or above proficient in reading. On the other hand, in Oregon less than 4% of ELLs achieve such proficiency in the Grade 4. As recently as 2007, in Oregon only 2.5% of Grade 8 ELLs and 3.7% of Grade 4 ELLs were at or above proficient reading levels, while more than 30% of both Grade 4 and 8 non-ELLs attained the same level of reading proficiency (see Figure 3 below)*.

Figure 1

4th and 8th Grade Reading Proficiency Levels by ELL Status in the United States

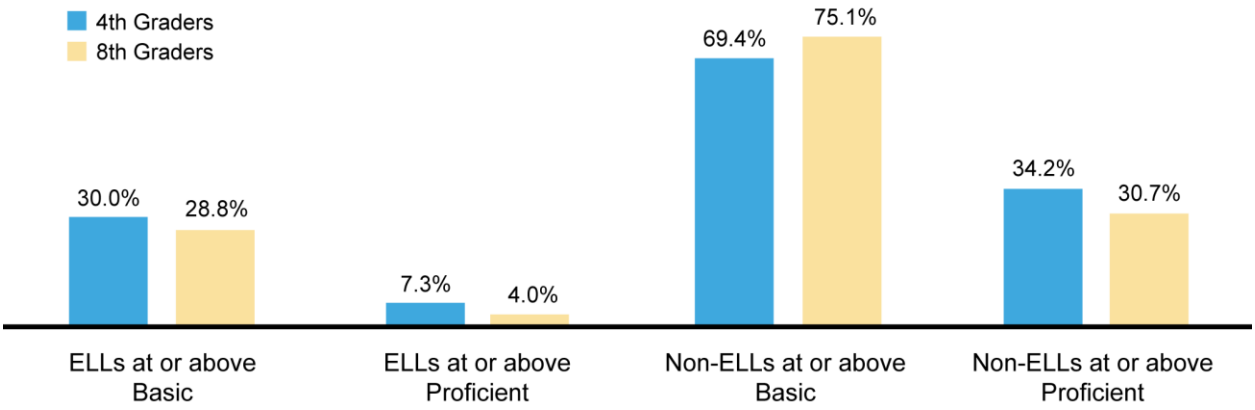


Figure 2

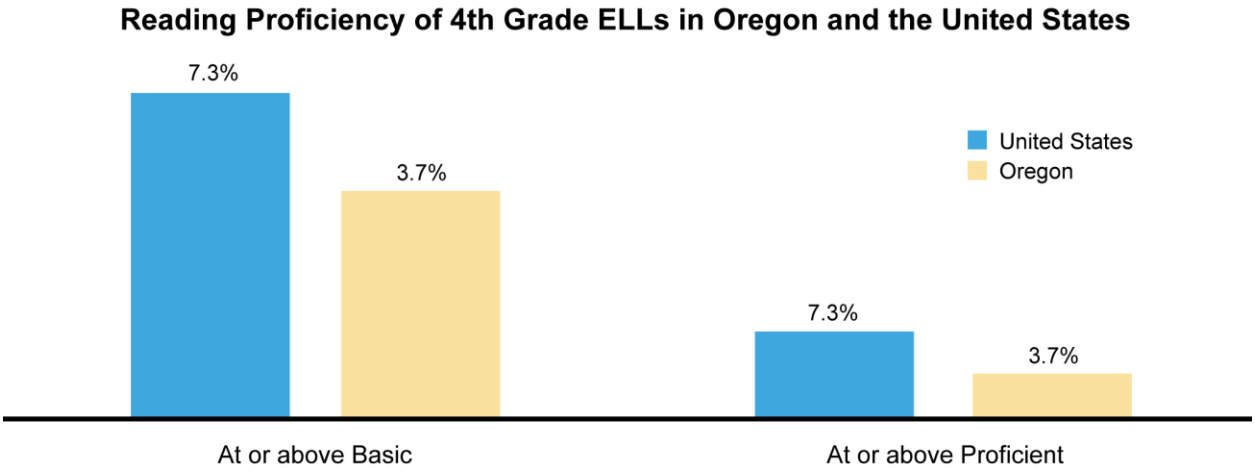
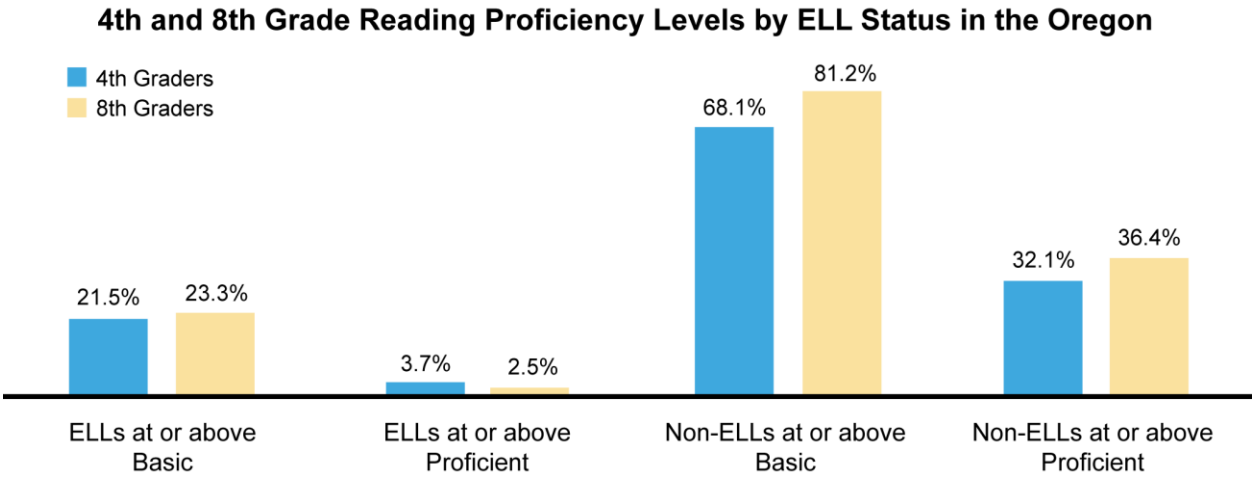


Figure 3



Nationally only 43% of Hispanic 3-to-5-year-olds attend center-based preschool programs vs. 59% of Whites and 66% of Blacks (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). However, in a recent survey almost all Hispanic families (97%) mentioned that if high-quality preschool programs were available in their community, they would enroll their preschool-aged children (Garcia & Gonzalez, 2006). Bridges & Fuller (2006) suggest an important reason to consider regarding the preschool attendance gap for Hispanic youngsters is that in primarily Latino communities the availability of high-quality, publically funded programs is very limited.

Research shows that when Hispanic children attend high-quality preschools, they experience significant academic gains. Gormley (2008) found robust effect sizes for Latino preschoolers who attended Oklahoma's Pre-K program. Specifically, he found an effect size of 0.846 of a standard deviation for the Letter-Word Identification Test (prereading skills), 0.52 of a standard deviation for the Spelling Test (prewriting skills), and 0.38 of a standard deviation for the Applied Problems Test (premath skills). He also found that Hispanic students whose parents speak Spanish at home or whose parents were born in Mexico benefited the most. This becomes even more important when we know that an entire 30% percent

of Hispanic children are considered non-English proficient at the beginning of kindergarten (Reardon & Galindo, 2006).

Stability of the Achievement Gap

Perhaps one of the most distressing facts about the achievement gap—whether for ELLs, children from low-income families, or for other disadvantaged groups—is that these wide individual differences in critical language, literacy, and other school-readiness skills are rarely diminished as children proceed in their academic careers. It is more likely, in fact, that the gap will continue to widen ever farther. Some effective intervention programs in elementary and middle school have been found to reduce the gap and improve student's literacy performance. However, these programs often come at significant cost in terms of staff resources and student time and may not improve reading achievement enough to make a functionally important difference for the individual child.

On the other hand, there is persuasive, converging evidence that attending preschool prior to kindergarten entry can reduce the gap by a significant amount, with diminished but ongoing benefits (for the child and the community) into adulthood. Not surprisingly, higher-quality programs have a greater effect on children's development and school readiness. Pianta and colleagues (Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009, p. 50) summarized this difference in the effects of preschool in a recent monograph, "Unfortunately, the effects of various program models are quite varied, with some being rather weak and ineffective *while other scaled-up programs narrow the achievement gap by almost half.* It is quite clear that programs that are more educationally focused and well defined produce larger effects on child development. For children enrolled in preschool, features of their experience in those settings are important—particularly, the ways in which adults interact with them to deliver developmentally stimulating opportunities." Pianta and colleagues went on to note the opportunity that is lost when society settles for preschool and child care programs that do not meet a common standard of quality. "However, there is no evidence whatsoever that the average preschool program produces benefits in line with what the best programs produce. On average, the nonsystem that is preschool in the United States narrows the achievement gap by perhaps only 5% rather than the 30% to 50% that research suggests might be possible on a large scale if we had high-quality programs."

Unfortunately, high-quality preschools are not readily or consistently available to most 3- to 5-year-old children in the United States (Karoly, Ghosh-Dastidar, Zellman, Perlman, & Fernyhough, 2008; Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009). The availability and accessibility of preschool, especially high-quality preschool, is limited for children from families living in poverty. Ironically, Barnett & Yarosz (2007) found that children from lower, middle-income families have even more limited access to preschool care than do children from low-income families. This apparent paradox is probably due to maximum income enrollment criteria applied to access federally or State-funded programs such as Head Start.

The Status of Oregon's Children

Population by Ethnicity

The previous U.S. census was conducted in 2000. At that time, there were 248,667 children Ages 0–5 living in Oregon (approximately 6.5% of Oregon's population of 3,825,657). If we apply that same 6.5% rate to Oregon's current population (3,831,074), an estimated 249,019 children Ages 0–5 currently live in Oregon. These numbers are similar to those generated by the National Center for Children in Poverty

(NCCP) using data from the 2006–2008 Current Population Survey (http://www.nccp.org/tools/demographics/). Those analyses show there are more than 238,080 Oregon children Ages 0–5. To get a better sense of which ethnicities are represented by Oregon's children, we can use 2009 data available on the U.S. Census website (http://www.census.gov) estimated from the 2000 census numbers) as is shown in the table below.

Oregon Ethnicity Data for Children Ages 0–5

Ethnicity	Overall (% of column total)	Non-Hispanic Origin (% of column total)	Hispanic Origin (% of column total)
White Alone or in Combination	**265,809** (84.9%)	203,207 (83.6%)	62,602 (89.5%)
Black or African-American Alone or in Combination	**14,225** (4.5%)	11,910 (4.9%)	2,315 (3.3%)
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone or in Combination	**10,920** (3.5%)	7,354 (3.0%)	3,566 (5.1%)
Asian Alone or in Combination	**19,107** (6.1%)	18,068 (7.4%)	1,039 (1.5%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone or in Combination	**2,889** (0.9%)	2,454 (1.0%)	435 (0.6%)
TOTAL:	**312,950 Children 0–5**	242,993 Non-Hispanic Children 0–5	69,957 Hispanic Children 0–5
Note: Data based on Oregon *State by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin* estimates downloaded from http://www.census.gov/popest/states/asrh/stasrh.html on January 6, 2011.			

English-language Learners in Oregon

Nationally, ELLs are the fastest growing segment of the American public education system, and most of them are from Spanish-speaking backgrounds (Reardon & Galindo, 2006). This group of students is projected to continue to grow at an accelerated speed, with an expected total of 10 million by 2015 (NCELA, 2007). By the year 2025, they are projected to become one-quarter of the K–12 student population (NCELA, 2007). Oregon has been recognized as one of the states with the largest numerical growth of ELLs. In the decade between 1995 and 2005, Oregon experienced a 133% increase in the number of ELLs in its public schools (Payán & Nettles, 2008). As a result of this growth, 13% percent of Oregon fourth graders are ELLs, as compared with 9% nationally. This makes Oregon the state with the sixth-highest proportion of ELL students at the fourth-grade level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

School Readiness of Oregon's Children

In the past, Oregon administered an annual Kindergarten Teachers Survey on School Readiness that asked kindergarten teachers to rate all their students in five domains: (a) approaches to learning; (b) social and personal development; (c) physical health, well-being, and motor development; (d) general knowledge and cognitive development; and (e) communication, literacy, and language development. Participation by teachers was voluntary. In 2008, the most recent data available, teachers completed surveys about 23,382 public school kindergarten children representing 492 schools in 148 districts. Of all surveyed kindergarten children, 46.3% met all five developmental domains and 59.4% met four or more. However, only 29.6% of students who were English-language learners met all five domains, whereas 44.7% of ELLs met four or more domains. *This means that more than 40% of all Oregon children and greater than 55% of Oregon's ELL children entering kindergarten did not meet expectations and were*

"behind" their peers. From Day One of formal schooling, more than one-third of Oregon children and more than one-half of Oregon's ELL children were at a learning disadvantage.

Services Accessed by Young Children in Oregon

The State of Oregon has a few avenues for offering services to young children in need. The Education Service Districts, representing Oregon's 36 counties, provide services to children with disabilities ages Birth to 5. Oregon Head Start/Prekindergarten serves children of families living in poverty. In addition, Oregon offers a variety of support services for ELLs and their families. Oregon Pre-K programs provide bilingual and monolingual non-English classes; teachers receive professional development or coaching; programs screen and assess all children; parents receive information in their primary language; and if children do not speak English, translators or bilingual staff are available (Barnett, Epstein, Friedman, Sansanelli, & Hustedt, 2009).

It is not entirely clear what percentage of Oregon's children receive the Birth to Five services for which they are eligible. However, the State can estimate what percentage of children receive care and education in programs that provide comprehensive services and meet federal Early Head Start (Ages 0–3) and Head Start (Ages 3–4) performance standards and eligibility requirements. Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten (including State, federal, and jointly-funded Head Start and Title 1 Portland Public Schools) serves 66.7% of the State's "income-eligible" 3–4-year olds as well as a small number of "over-income" children, one-quarter of whom have identified disabilities. Oregon Early Head Start (broadly defined) provides year-round care to 5.7% of the State's "income-eligible" 0–3-year olds as well as a handful of "over-income" children, more than one-quarter of whom have identified disabilities. This data, also depicted in Figures 4 and 5 below, was compiled by the Early Childhood Section of the Office of Student and Learning Partnerships at the Oregon Department of Education.

Figure 4a depicts what percentage of the total Oregon **3–4-year-old population** (whether *income eligible* or *over income*) is and is not served by comprehensive programs meeting federal Head Start Performance Standards and eligibility requirements. Note: the Over Income-Unserved categories in both charts below can be misleading. The percentages only indicate those who are not in Oregon Head Start Pre-Kindergarten; we do not have data for those children who attend private, community preschool.

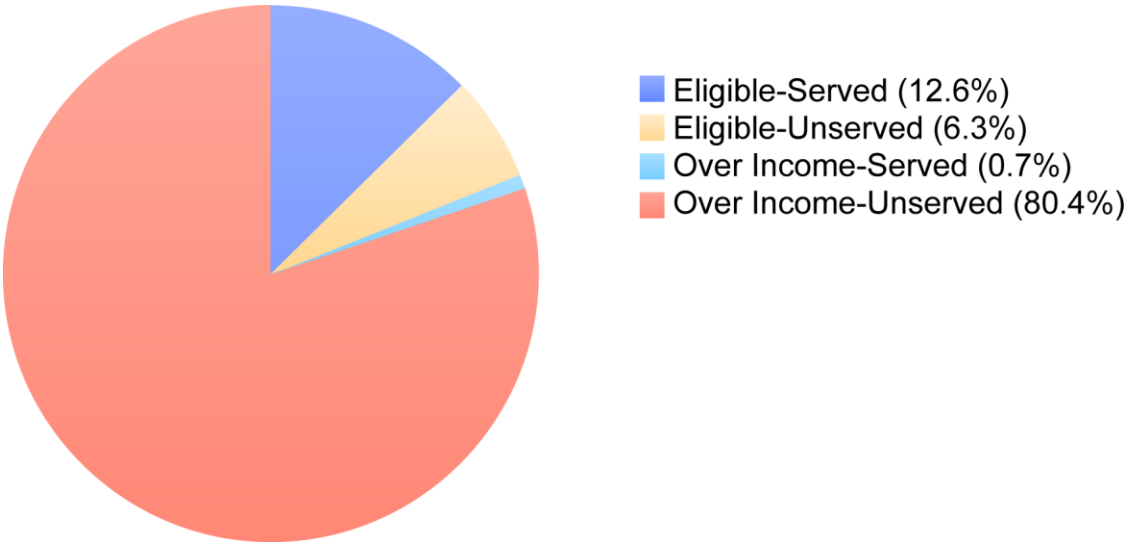


Figure 4b depicts what percentage of the total Oregon **0–3-year-old population** (whether *income eligible* or *over income*) is and is not served by comprehensive programs meeting federal Early Head Start Performance Standards and eligibility requirements.

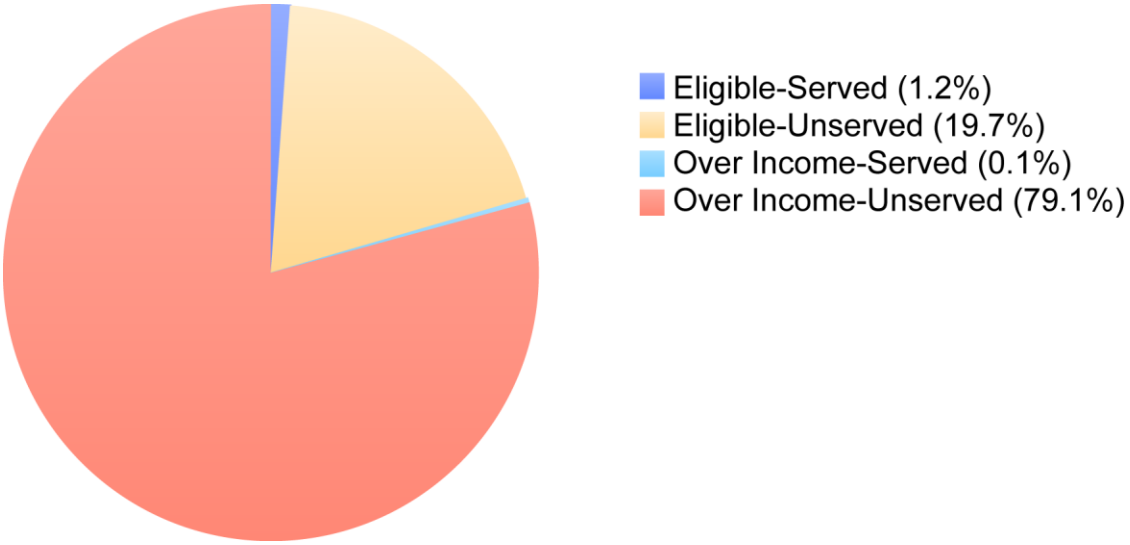


Figure 5a depicts what percentage of the ***income eligible*** **Oregon 3–4-year-old population** is and is not served by comprehensive programs meeting federal Head Start Performance Standards and eligibility requirements.

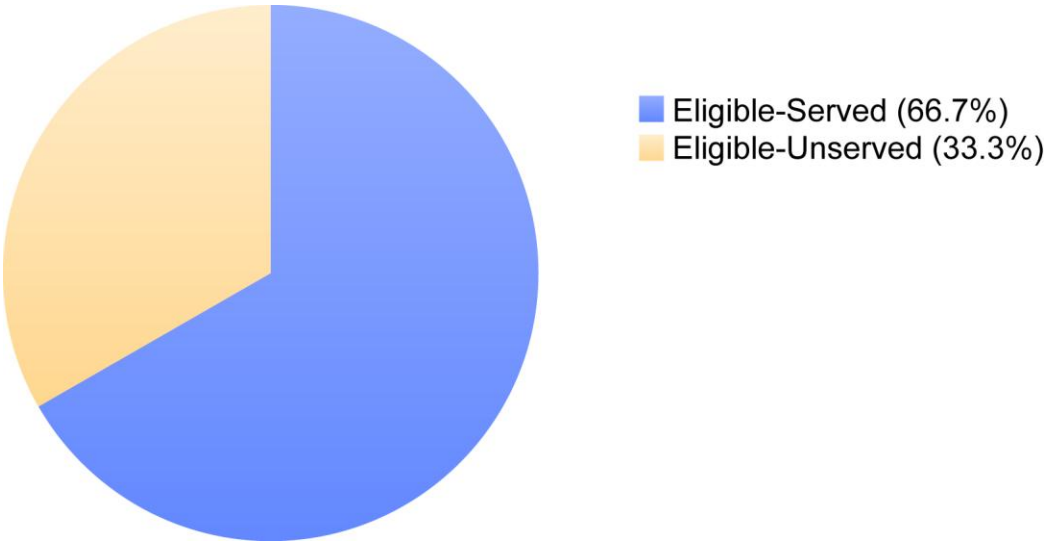
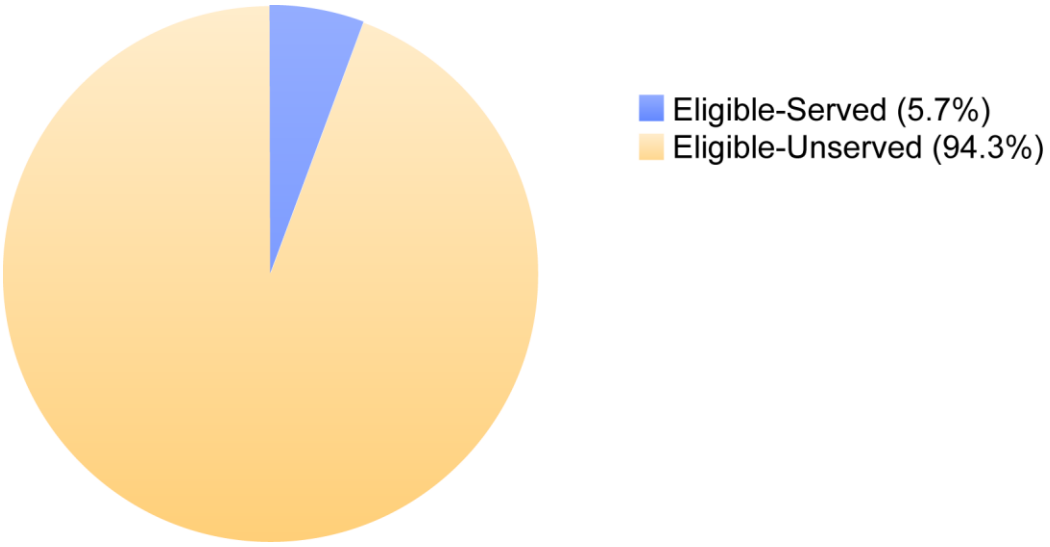


Figure 5b depicts what percentage of the ***income eligible*** **Oregon 0–3-year-old population** is and is not served by comprehensive programs meeting federal Early Head Start Performance Standards and eligibility requirements.



The Oregon Kindergarten-Readiness Survey Report (2008) looks at the use of services in another way: 61.2% of the 23,382 kindergarten children included in the survey had attended some type of early childhood education program; 38.8% attended preschool, 16.4% attended Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten, and 6% attended Early Childhood Special Education. The percentage varied by ethnicity from a low of 47.8% Hispanics attending and a high of 73.1% American Indian/Alaskan Natives attending (2008 Kindergarten readiness survey, p. 11). This result mirrors the research literature that shows that Hispanic children are the least likely of all racial or ethnic groups to take part in early childhood education, especially center-based programs before formal K–12 schooling (Buysse, Castro, West, & Skinner, 2005; Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005).

Cost-effectiveness of High-quality Services from Birth to Five Relative to Remediation or Intervention in K–12

Improving access to high-quality child care and education for all children ages birth to five, but especially for disadvantaged children, is a moral imperative. For those individuals, agencies, and policy makers not swayed by the evidence presented thus far, it is a financial imperative as well. Numerous analyses of the cost-effectiveness associated with investing in early childhood programs and outcomes have delivered the resounding message that the benefits far outweigh the costs. Two examples are presented below.

Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, and Thornburg (2009) reported on cost–benefits analyses of three well-known longitudinal studies of the short and long-term effects of preschool programs provided to economically disadvantaged children: the Perry Preschool (Barnett, 1996; Belfield, Nores, Barnett, & Schweinhart, 2006), Abecedarian (Barnett & Masse, 2007), and Chicago Child Parent Center (CPC) (Temple & Reynolds, 2007). The Abecedarian project was an intensive, full-day, year-round educational program beginning at approximately 4 months of age and continuing until kindergarten, The Chicago CPC study was a public school program that offered half-day preschool, then kindergarten, and then a follow-on elementary school component for child participants. It included a component for family outreach and support. The Perry Preschool project was a half-day preschool program that included home visits from teachers. Children attended for two years.

The average total cost per child for the three studies (Abecedarian, CPC, and Perry Preschool) was $75,568, $8,830, and $18,481, respectively. (Note that these programs were multiyear, so the cost per child per year would be much lower). The average benefit per child across the three programs was $188,441, $89,698, and $298,453, respectively, or a cost-to-benefit ratio of 2.5, 10.2, and 16.2, respectively (as reported in Pianta, et al., 2009). Some of the financial benefits or cost savings that were incorporated in the analyses included maternal earnings, K–12 cost savings, abuse and neglect cost savings, crime cost savings, welfare cost savings, health cost savings, and earnings as an adult. Each of these early childhood programs proved to be a shrewd financial investment of public dollars. The positive long-term effects of investing in effective, high-quality early childhood and preschool programs far outweigh the upfront costs that must be paid to invest in those programs.

This conclusion is supported by no less an advocate than Nobel-prize winning economist, Dr. James J. Heckman. In a letter to the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Reform, Dr. Heckman poses the question, “How can we best invest in human capital development to increase workforce capabilities, raise productivity and social cohesion, and assure America’s economic competitiveness in the global economy?” *His unequivocal response is that “Data from economists, social*

scientists, and medical experts conclusively shows that the answer is to invest in comprehensive early childhood development—from Birth to Age five—particularly in disadvantaged children and their families." (Heckman, pp. 1–2).

Dr. Heckman goes on to outline in detail the economic and evidence-based reasons for his assertion. He concludes his letter to the Commission by making five specific recommendations: (1) invest significant resources in a quality early childhood education system for disadvantaged children; (2) put money in quality programs; (3) expand upon proven models; (4) braid funding streams; and (5) collect and analyze data to track the progress of children from early childhood education through to college and career (Heckman, p. 11).

The new governor of Oregon, John Kitzhaber, who took office on January 10, 2011, is focusing heavily on the early childhood years as part of his initiative to improve Oregon's education system. Governor Kitzhaber's key policy initiatives for early childhood (released prior to the November election as part of his plan to transform public education in Oregon) include (Kitzhaber, p. 3):

- "Aligning systems and resources for health care, family support, child care, and Pre-K education to maximize our investment across the range of risk factors for young children. It would also include approaches to early identification and prevention.
- Building on work currently underway, establish an Early Childhood Coordinating Council in the Governor's Office. The Council would lead the way to align efforts, measure progress and ensure accountability, ensure efficiency in resources, and maximize federal dollars for these efforts.
- Creating uniform standards for early care and education programs, including workforce training to ensure Oregon's early childhood professionals have sufficient training and consistent quality to prepare Oregon's children for kindergarten.
- Evaluating outcomes and committing ourselves to excellence in all early childhood programs. Commitment to excellence is essential to success and to our ability to confirm that desired outcomes have occurred. This would include linking Pre-K and K–12 data systems, ensuring that we have access to superior data on outcomes, and using prospective population measurement techniques to continually assess the opportunities to improve and the barriers that stand in our way.
- Providing increased opportunities for early learning and education and need-based incentives to enable parents to enroll children in quality programs.
- Creating incentives for integration of services and supports in local communities. This may include integration of early learning, mental health, health care, parent education, and other early childhood supports.
- Creating incentives for new, expanded, and retrofitted public buildings to include integrated early childhood services."

The recommendations of Dr. Heckman and Governor Kitzhaber overlap significantly with the argument and priorities for early childhood care and programs that have been built into this introduction. Furthermore, they align with the strategies and recommendations that make up the Self-Assessment for the Birth to Five Oregon Literacy Plan.

Upon taking office in January, Governor Kitzhaber immediately prioritized his education agenda with a special emphasis on early childhood. The recommendations of the Early Childhood and Family Investment Report were provided earlier in this chapter. That report, the work of the Early Learning Design Team, and Oregon's Birth to Five Literacy Plan, presented in the following pages, will move Oregon forward in establishing a coherent, comprehensive early childhood care and education system that meets the needs of and is accountable to all of Oregon's young children and their families.

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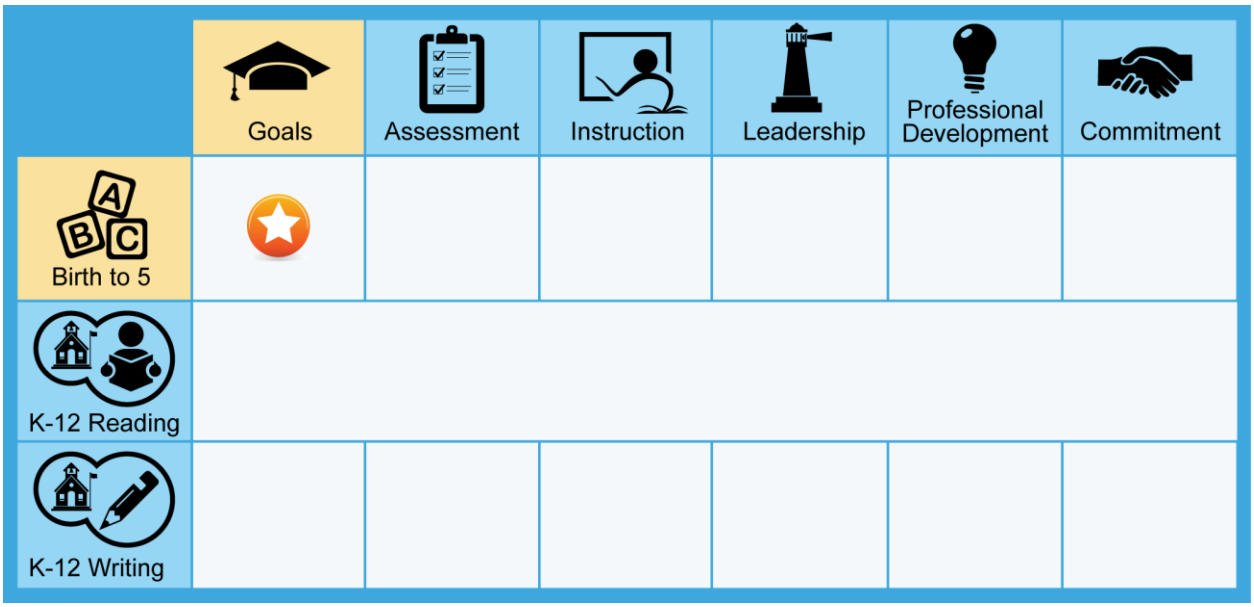
Birth to Five

Goals

Oregon Literacy Plan



Goals—Overview

By setting clear, measurable goals for the development of language and early literacy skills, Oregon creates a common mission toward which all agencies and groups that serve young children can work. Measurable goals also create accountability for striving toward and meeting those goals. This first component of Oregon's Birth to Five Literacy Plan guides the direction and priorities of each of the remaining five components—Assessment, Instruction, Leadership, Professional Development, and Commitment.

Two overarching goals anchor Oregon's vision for the Birth to Five Literacy Plan:

1. **All children should begin kindergarten ready to learn.**

2. **The achievement gap, seen at kindergarten entry, between children from low-income families, of minority status, or of English-learner status, and their more advantaged peers must be eliminated.**

These essential, summative goals are more fully explicated below:

All children should begin kindergarten ready to learn.

- This goal requires the State to develop a specific, measurable definition of "ready to learn" or "kindergarten readiness." Aspects of physical health, cognitive development, and social-emotional skills, in addition to language and early literacy development should be included in definition.
- All children should begin kindergarten with the foundational skills necessary to make adequate progress towards meeting expectations for the kindergarten Common Core State Standards in English language arts (NGA & CSSSO, 2010). This will require identification of the precursor skills that lay the foundation for literacy development in kindergarten. These include language development (vocabulary, syntax, and store of knowledge), early literacy skills (phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and basic concepts of print) and social-emotional skills and competencies (attention, engagement, and participation in adult-directed activities).

Key foundational documents such as the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (Head Start Resource Center, 2010), Oregon Early Childhood Foundations (Oregon Department of Education, 2007), and Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) can be used to generate this definition. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) will take the lead in developing this definition and will collaborate across departmental lines. ODE will also provide opportunities for input from public and private sources in order to establish a common definition that will be used by the multiple agencies and groups that serve young children and their families.

The achievement gap that exists at kindergarten entry, between children from at risk groups (e.g., children from low-income families, of minority status, or of English-learner status), and their more advantaged peers must be eliminated.

- Children from low-income families, of minority status, of English-learner status, with disabilities, or otherwise at risk should demonstrate adequate progress toward meeting readiness goals, at such a pace that the achievement gap can be eliminated.
- Adequate progress must be defined operationally.
- Children should be able to demonstrate the skills identified in the Oregon Early Childhood Foundations (ODE, 2007) and Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (Head Start Resource Center, 2010) documents within a developmentally appropriate timeline. Children who are unable to do so should be identified early and provided with appropriate, adequate, evidence-based intervention and support.

Summative and Formative Goals

The two primary goals above are *summative goals*. They represent an end point, what we expect for children, at the beginning of kindergarten. A second type of goals, *formative goals*, are measurable goals that are used to determine whether children are on track to be ready and able to learn, along with their kindergarten peers, by demonstrating proficiency in essential, foundational subskills.

Meeting or exceeding formative and summative goals means that at kindergarten entry, children have the knowledge and skills they need to understand and benefit from formal instruction in reading and to

eventually become successful readers. Not meeting formative and summative reading goals means that children should receive the necessary instruction or intervention to help them gain these critical foundational skills and knowledge.

Key resources for identifying formative goals.

In identifying formative goals, Oregon will draw on two key resources: the newly released Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (Head Start Resource Center, 2010) and the Oregon Early Childhood Foundations (ODE, 2006). A third resource, the Common Core State Standards (NGA & CSSSO, 2010), will be used to supplement the first two resources.

The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework was released in December 2010. It is the revision of the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework (Head Start Resource Center, 2003). The need for a revision to the original framework was driven by new research on school readiness, as well as by the *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act* (2007). The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework can be used by Head Start programs and other early childhood programs to identify the developmental skills necessary for children to achieve long-term academic and life success. In their own words, "The Framework outlines the essential areas of development and learning that are to be used by Head Start programs to establish school-readiness goals for their children, monitor children's progress, align curricula, and conduct program planning" (Head Start Resource Center, 2010, p. 2). The Framework identifies 11 domains of child development and early learning. Ten of these domains apply to all children, the 11th, English Language Development, applies to children who speak a language other than English at home. Within each domain, the Framework identifies a number of Domain Elements. These elements further explicate each domain. Finally, several examples of specific knowledge, behaviors, or skills are provided for each domain element. The examples are meant to be illustrative and not exhaustive.

The 11 domains of the Framework are listed below:

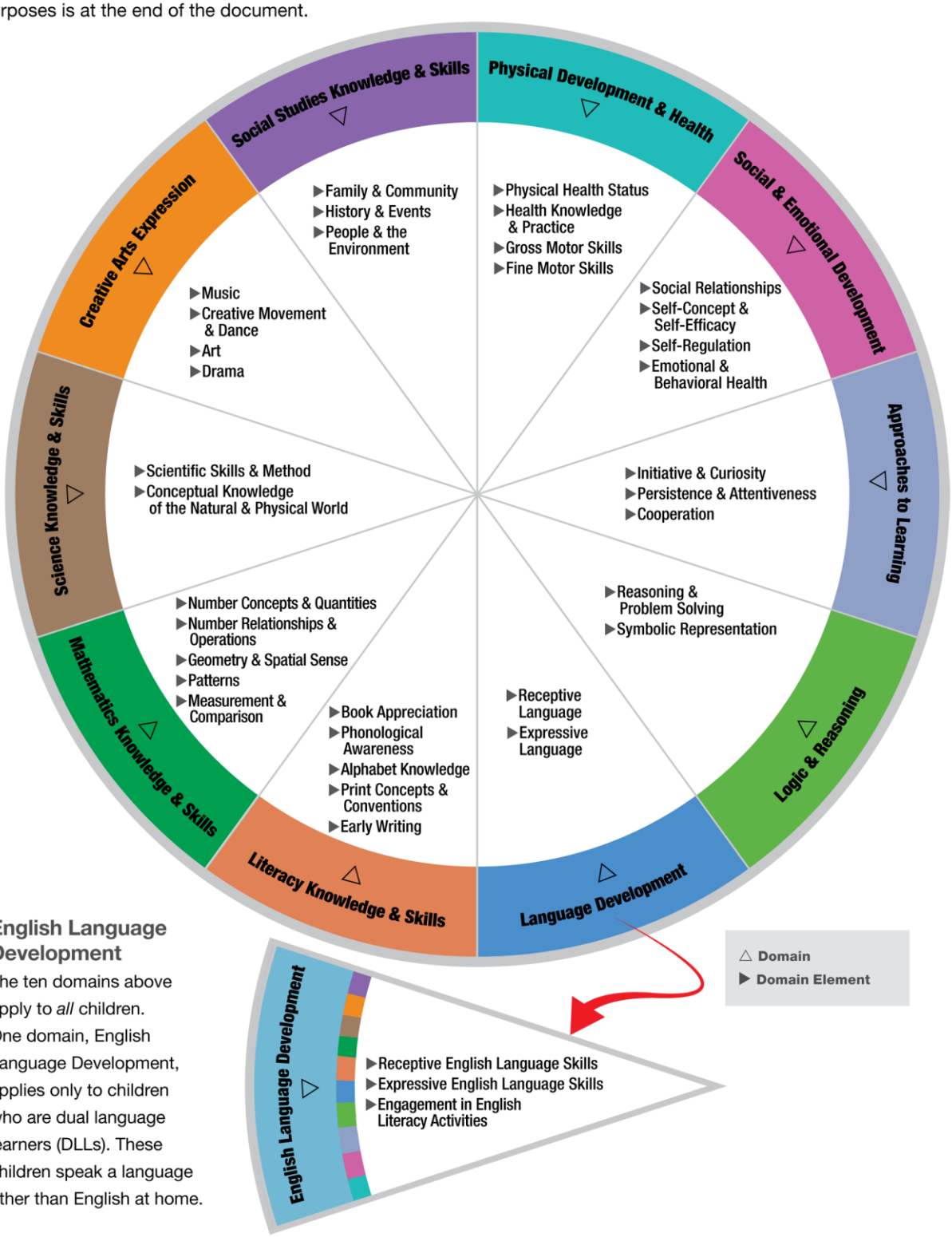
- Physical Development & Health
- Social & Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Language Development
- Literacy Knowledge & Skills
- Mathematics Knowledge & Skills
- Science Knowledge & Skills
- Creative Arts Expression
- Logic & Reasoning
- Social Studies Knowledge & Skills
- English-Language Development

Each of these domains and their corresponding elements are depicted in the figure below (Reprinted from the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Head Start Resource Center, 2010, p. 6).

Each of these domains is critical to the overall development of every child. Three domains in particular are especially relevant to the content, and to the formative goals, of the Oregon Birth to Five Literacy Plan. These domains include (1) Language Development, (2) Literacy Knowledge & Skills, and (3) English Language Development. The definition of each of these three domains, their corresponding domain element, and the examples provided in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework are provided in the pages following (Reprinted from the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Head Start Resource Center, 2010, pp. 13, 14–15, 21–22). This content provides an example of the information that can be used to develop and define Oregon's formative goals for the Birth to Five Literacy Plan.

FIGURE 1: The Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

These domains △ and domain elements ▶ apply to all 3 to 5 year olds in Head Start and other early childhood programs, including dual language learners and children with disabilities. A black and white figure for reproduction purposes is at the end of the document.



English Language Development

The ten domains above apply to *all* children. One domain, English Language Development, applies only to children who are dual language learners (DLLs). These children speak a language other than English at home.

△LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Language Development refers to emerging abilities in receptive and expressive language. This domain includes understanding and using one or more languages. Language development is among the most important tasks of the first five years of a child's life. Language is the key to learning across all domains. Specific language skills in early childhood are predictive of later success in learning to read and write. Also, children who are skilled communicators are more likely to demonstrate social competence. In the domain of Language Development, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = Domain ▶ = Domain Element • = Example

The domain elements for Language Development for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

The ability to comprehend or understand language.

- Attends to language during conversations, songs, stories, or other learning experiences.
- Comprehends increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
- Comprehends different forms of language, such as questions or exclamations.
- Comprehends different grammatical structures or rules for using language.

▶ EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

The ability to use language.

- Engages in communication and conversation with others.
- Uses language to express ideas and needs.
- Uses increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
- Uses different forms of language.
- Uses different grammatical structures for a variety of purposes.
- Engages in storytelling.
- Engages in conversations with peers and adults.

△LITERACY KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Literacy Knowledge & Skills refers to the knowledge and skills that lay the foundation for reading and writing, such as understanding basic concepts about books or other printed materials, the alphabet, and letter-sound relationships. Early literacy is the foundation for reading and writing in all academic endeavors in school. It is considered one of the most important areas for young children's development and learning. Early literacy learning provides children with an opportunity to explore the world through books, storytelling, and other reading and writing activities. It is a mechanism for learning about topics they enjoy and acquiring content knowledge and concepts that support progress in other domains. It is critical for supporting a range of positive outcomes, including success in school and other environments. In the domain of Literacy Knowledge & Skills, programs need to ensure that children who are dual language learners can demonstrate their abilities, skills, and knowledge in any language, including their home language.

KEY △ = Domain ▶ = Domain Element • = Example

The domain elements for Literacy Knowledge & Skills for 3 to 5 year olds are:

▶ BOOK APPRECIATION AND KNOWLEDGE

The interest in books and their characteristics, and the ability to understand and get meaning from stories and information from books and other texts.

- Shows interest in shared reading experiences and looking at books independently.
- Recognizes how books are read, such as front-to-back and one page at a time, and recognizes basic characteristics, such as title, author, and illustrator.
- Asks and answers questions and makes comments about print materials.
- Demonstrates interest in different kinds of literature, such as fiction and non-fiction books and poetry, on a range of topics.
- Retells stories or information from books through conversation, artistic works, creative movement, or drama.

▶ PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

An awareness that language can be broken into words, syllables, and smaller pieces of sound.

- Identifies and discriminates between words in language.
- Identifies and discriminates between separate syllables in words.
- Identifies and discriminates between sounds and phonemes in language, such as attention to beginning and ending sounds of words and recognition that different words begin or end with the same sound.

Continued on next page...

△LITERACY KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

...Continued from previous page

▶ ALPHABET KNOWLEDGE

The names and sounds associated with letters.

- Recognizes that the letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.
- Recognizes that letters of the alphabet have distinct sound(s) associated with them.
- Attends to the beginning letters and sounds in familiar words.
- Identifies letters and associates correct sounds with letters.

▶ PRINT CONCEPTS & CONVENTIONS

The concepts about print and early decoding (identifying letter-sound relationships).

- Recognizes print in everyday life, such as numbers, letters, one's name, words, and familiar logos and signs.
- Understands that print conveys meaning.
- Understands conventions, such as print moves from left to right and top to bottom of a page.
- Recognizes words as a unit of print and understands that letters are grouped to form words.
- Recognizes the association between spoken or signed and written words.

▶ EARLY WRITING

The familiarity with writing implements, conventions, and emerging skills to communicate through written representations, symbols, and letters.

- Experiments with writing tools and materials.
- Recognizes that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes, such as giving information, sharing stories, or giving an opinion.
- Uses scribbles, shapes, pictures, and letters to represent objects, stories, experiences, or ideas.
- Copies, traces, or independently writes letters or words.

△ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

...Continued from previous page

- Comprehends and responds to increasingly complex and varied English vocabulary, such as "Which stick is the longest?" "Why do you think the caterpillar is hungry?"
- Follows multi-step directions in English with minimal cues or assistance.

▶ EXPRESSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

The ability to speak or use English.

- Repeats word or phrase to self, such as "bus" while group sings the "Wheels on the Bus" or "brush teeth" after lunch.
- Requests items in English, such as "car," "milk," "book," "ball."
- Uses one or two English words, sometimes joined to represent a bigger idea, such as "throwball."
- Uses increasingly complex and varied English vocabulary.
- Constructs sentences, such as "The apple is round." or "I see a fire truck with lights on."

▶ ENGAGEMENT IN ENGLISH LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Understanding and responding to books, storytelling, and songs presented in English.

- Demonstrates eagerness to participate in songs, rhymes and stories in English.
- Points to pictures and says the word in English, such as "frog," "baby," "run."
- Learns part of a song or poem in English and repeats it.
- Talks with peers or adults about a story read in English.
- Tells a story in English with a beginning, middle, and end from a book or about a personal experience.

The Oregon Early Childhood Foundations (ODE, 2007) are learning guidelines that describe what children should know, understand, and be able to do during the first five years of life. The *Foundations* support school readiness by promoting healthy child development, early learning, and effective teaching strategies. They inform parents about healthy child development and assist parents in supporting their children. Additionally, the *Foundations* are intended to be used by early childhood providers and teachers working with young children in all settings including child care centers, family-based child care homes, private preschools, Early Head Start/Head Start, and others. The *Foundations* were created in 2007 to align with the Head Start Outcomes Framework. It is expected that they will be revised in the near future to align with the newly published Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. Links to PDF versions of the Oregon Early Childhood Foundations can be found on the Oregon Department of Education website at http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=1286.

The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts (NGA & CSSSO, 2010) are described more fully in the K–12 sections of the Oregon Literacy Plan. In brief, these standards represent a set of expectations for student knowledge and skills that high school graduates need to master to succeed in college and careers. The standards span Grades K–12. The State of Oregon adopted the standards in October 2010. Knowledge of the English language arts skills that children must possess in order to succeed in kindergarten, as outlined in the Common Core State Standards, can be used to identify the foundational skills they must develop during the Birth to Five years. Thus, an important effort of Oregon's Literacy Plan will be to align the formative goals for language and early literacy development in the Birth to Five years with the Common Core State Standards for English language arts in kindergarten.

Goals that Address the Quality of Child Care and Preschool Settings

In addition to the summative and formative goals set for individual children, it is important to identify goals for the quality of care provided to children in child care and preschool settings. Although the focus of this document is on the literacy and language development of young children, multiple domains of cognitive, social, and physical development affects the young child's ability to learn. A high-quality early childhood setting that supports the development of the whole child will support the child's language and literacy development. Furthermore, many of the commonly used instruments for assessing quality of early childhood environments also assess the quality of multiple aspects of the environment (e.g., the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised). Thus, using evidence-based standards and current research, the State will develop a definition of high-quality instruction, care, and environment for both child care and preschool settings. This definition will addresses multiple facets of care, including, but not limited to (a) safety and hygiene; (b) health and nutrition; (c) materials available to children to promote healthy, cognitive, and socio-emotional development; (d) child care interactions between adults and children that promote healthy development; (e) number and type of books; (f) ratio of adults to children; (g) education and training of child care and teaching professionals; (h) activities and scheduling; and (i) communication with parents/families.

Communication and Dissemination of the Goals

Once established, the goals must be disseminated widely to key stakeholders who serve children ages birth to five and their families. Key stakeholders include, but are not limited to, Early Intervention/Early

Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) programs, Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten grantees, and other government agencies, public and private preschools, public and private child care providers, parents, libraries, and pediatricians. Given the large population of Spanish-speaking families with young children in Oregon, the goals should be translated and made available in Spanish to key stakeholders who serve Spanish-speaking children and their families. Further efforts should be made to translate the goals into other languages spoken by a significant minority of Oregon families. Regional providers (e.g., EI/ECSE programs, Oregon Head Start Pre-K) and center-based preschool and child care providers should be encouraged to adopt these goals through incentives and support provided by the State and other agencies.

Extensive efforts should be made to communicate these goals directly with families of young children. Parents serve as a child's first teachers. They have substantial, yet often undervalued or underutilized, influence on their child's development. Parents' ability to support their child's healthy development will be improved to the extent that they understand the formative milestones a child should meet in his or her progress towards school readiness. To that purpose, the State should prioritize outreach to families of young children through the following specific strategies: (a) sharing evidence-based information about best practices for supporting young children's language and early literacy development; (b) identifying and sharing a network of resources that families of young children can access to address individual needs and provide support; (c) obtaining information from families regarding their specific needs, questions, and concerns for their young children; and (d) providing leadership to the variety of community agencies and key stakeholders that serve young children and their families to create a coherent message and support system for promoting the language and early literacy development of young children.

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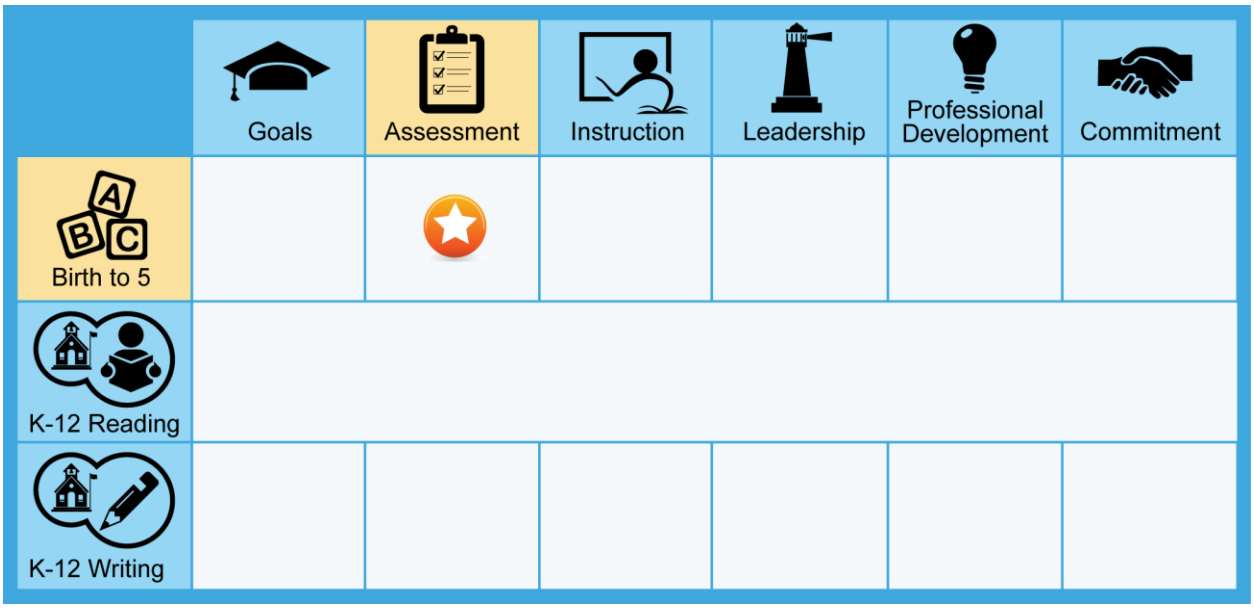
Birth to Five

Assessment

Oregon Literacy Plan



Domains of Assessment

Theoretical (Sénéchal, LeFevre, Smith-Chant, & Colton, 2001; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998) and empirical (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008) reviews of essential aspects of child development that will serve as a foundation to later reading proficiency are beginning to converge, suggesting four key areas of skill development for young children. These four areas include:

- *Oral language development*, most notably vocabulary (Hart & Risley, 1995; Walker, Greenwood, Hart, & Carta, 1994), but also other aspects of language, including semantics, syntax, and pragmatics;
- *Phonological awareness*, or children's ability to detect and act on units of speech smaller than whole words (Lonigan, Burgess, Anthony, & Barker, 1998; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008), skills such as rhyming, alliteration, segmenting, and blending;
- *Alphabet knowledge and print awareness,* including knowledge of letter names and sounds and compliance with various English-language print conventions (e.g., top-to-bottom and left-to-right reading) (Snow, Burns, & Griffin,1998; Treiman, Tincoff, Rodriguez, Mouzaki, & Francis, 1998); and

- *Comprehension*, or understanding, responding to, and acting on the meaning of spoken or printed text. This is perhaps the most underdeveloped aspect of early literacy development, but it is an area of new research that will bring initial clarity and direction to program and practice work in this area.

Development of language and early literacy competence in the preschool years is also affected significantly by the behavior of adults—including parents, grandparents, and other care providers—who interact regularly with young children. Adult actions and characteristics associated with children's acquisition of language and early literacy skills include:

- Talking, particularly open-ended conversations and interactions that extend children's engagement, speech, and knowledge (Hart & Risley, 1995);
- Dialogic reading and interactive shared book reading, where adults both read from and interact more broadly about picture and other simple story books with young children (e.g., Justice & Ezell, 2002; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003);
- Milieu language interventions, home- and classroom-based interventions that provide modeling, prompts, requests for expansions, and access to naturally occurring reinforcement for language production by young children (Yoder et al., 1995); and
- Provision of language- and literacy-rich home and classroom environments, including access to books and other literacy materials, activity and social structures that promote interaction with these materials, rich and detailed models for using language, and engaging in literacy activities (e.g., Casbergue, McGee, & Bedford, 2008; Payne, Whitehurst, & Angell, 1994).

Universal Screening

Research during the past two decades has expanded our understanding of children's paths to becoming competent readers. Older notions of the development of competent reading assumed it to be a skill that is fully absent at, or around the time of, kindergarten entry and that develops quickly as the result of instruction over the first two or three years of formal schooling. More nuanced views of reading and literacy development now acknowledge that reading and literacy are a complex set of skills that develop over an extended time, beginning early in a child's life and reaching some degree of sophistication and competence before most formal reading instruction begins at or around Age 5 or 6 (e.g., Snow, et al., 1998; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Further, this research has made clear that development before kindergarten is not general and nonspecific; rather, we are quickly identifying specific skill sets that predict, and are functional prerequisites for, later reading competence such as vocabulary acquisition, semantic and syntactic language skills, listening comprehension, phonological awareness and analysis, and print recognition and understanding of written language conventions (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006; Hart & Risley, 1995; Hart & Risley, 1999; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Neuman & Dickinson, 2002; Walker, et al., 1994).

Although this descriptive research has added substantially to our theoretical and empirical understanding of literacy and reading competence (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006; Hart & Risley, 1995; Hart & Risley, 1999), it also has provided an essential, and increasingly important, foundation for *altering the course of literacy development* for young children at risk for later reading achievement difficulties (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Neuman & Dickinson, 2002; Walker, et al., 1994). As researchers identify these

precursors and predictors of later reading achievement, we have also gained the content for an early identification and intervention system that, we expect, will contribute substantially to the design of effective preschool instructional interventions. In particular, increased knowledge of developmental precursors to later reading competence is leading to the development of valid and reliable tests and measures of these important preschool skills. Additionally, we are seeing growth in the development of empirically validated interventions for teaching or promoting more rapid development of many language and early literacy skills. In other words, expanded and improved tools for assessing and identifying early skill deficits or delays paired with intervention programs that successfully address these deficits or delays provide a basis for current research and development of intervention systems in which risk for delays in language and early literacy development can be identified early enough that differentiated intervention—that is, supplemental services that match the content or intensity of intervention to the needs of individual children—will increase the likelihood that children will start kindergarten ready to learn to read. Next, we describe an intervention system that could be applied in preschool settings. The intervention system is directly tied to assessment of children's development in critical language and preliteracy skills.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is perhaps the best-known, most current example of a system of decision-making that focuses on differentiated interventions to meet the needs of all children in a preschool. Although RTI is most commonly implemented in elementary and secondary schools (Haager, Klingner, & Vaughn, 2007), adaptations of RTI to preschool children and early care and education settings are currently underway (see www.crtiec.org for more information). Like most tiered intervention systems and services for older children, early childhood RTI requires three elements: (1) universal support to all, (2) assessments of risk or developmental status in the area(s) of interest, and (3) differentiated interventions (Greenwood, 2009; McConnell, 2008). Next, we describe each of these three elements.

Universal support*.* To be maximally efficient, RTI and other tiered intervention models rely on access to *all* individuals. For instance, all Head Start students receive instruction on language development (and, thus, might benefit from supplemental instruction). To ensure this universal support, RTI assumes that efficient means exist to test whether each and every individual who *might* need supplemental supports would, actually, benefit from that service.

It should be noted that, due to common service delivery patterns and contemporary arrays of services, universal access (even broadly defined) is more difficult to achieve in many early childhood programs than in elementary and secondary programs in the same communities (Rafdal, Martin, & McConnell, 2010, March). Rather than including all or most of the children in a given community, as would be the case in school-based programs for children in kindergarten through Grade 12, preschool and other early childhood programs are typically not universal. Furthermore, they are typically segregated by underlying characteristics of the children they serve. In particular, publicly funded preschool programs, nationally and in Oregon, are more likely to be designed for, and restrict access to, children who have disabilities or other special needs, children who are living in poverty, or (in more select instances) children who speak languages other than English or have other risk factors. Although many more children from the general population may be enrolled in one or more formal child care or early education programs, the programs serving these children are less likely to be publicly funded and, therefore, are less likely to fall under administrative purview of State or regional agencies that facilitate systematic access, screening, and intervention based on population needs. This State of fragmented and non-universal service does not prevent an early identification and differentiated intervention model for language and literacy development

of preschool children. However, it does present special challenges for the design and implementation of universal screening (Rafdal et al., 2010).

Indicator-level assessment. RTI systems also must have efficient yet effective formative assessments for identifying those individuals who would, or would not, benefit from targeted intervention. By design, these formative assessments should be *closely related to the outcome(s) of interest* (e.g., phonological awareness, letter names, vocabulary, print awareness, and listening comprehension), be **brief** (so as not to interrupt ongoing efforts to provide intervention) and be *appropriate for repeated use* (to detect delays or deficits as soon as possible after they begin).

In recent years, several sets of formative assessments have emerged that can be used for periodic assessment of large groups of children. For example, *Get Ready to Read* (GRTR; Whitehurst, 2003) is a commercially published screening tool, developed in association with the National Center for Learning Disabilities, that measures print knowledge and phonological awareness. Investigations in the last decade indicate that the tool functions well as a general screener and has moderate-to-strong relations to other measures of early literacy development (Molfese, Molfese, Modglin, Walker, & Neamon, 2004; Phillips, Lonigan, & Wyatt, 2009). *Individual Growth and Development Indicators* (IGDIs; Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development, n.d., see http://igdis.umn.edu/get-started/get-it/) are individually administered, brief, and repeatable measures of oral language and phonological awareness skills that have also been used for screening and progress monitoring purposes with extensive application in Early Reading First and other compensatory preschool programs (McConnell & Missall, 2008).[1] Recent research and development work is underway to elaborate and extend IGDIs to improve assessment of language and early literacy in preschool and specifically to support RTI programs. Updates can be found at http://www.crtiec.org. Both GRTR and IGDIs have been evaluated together in a small number of studies, with evidence that each has merits in assessment of early literacy status and contributions to an RTI model (Carta, Greenwood, & Atwater, 2010; Wilson & Lonigan).

Although the IGDI measures are still in development, and should be used prudently, practitioners and early childhood programs are able to periodically screen all children and to make "identification" decisions about levels of service (i.e., Tier 2 and Tier 3 services in RTI models) that might be most appropriate for individual children. Moreover, once children are identified for additional services, frequent progress monitoring to assess the effectiveness of the supports given or to identify a need for more intensive interventions or supports should be put in place. However, it is important to note that screening measures are not sufficiently robust to be used in isolation for high-stake decisions without additional information from parents, teachers, and/or other assessment instruments. Moreover, some responses; e.g., slow rates of change and/or low levels of performance, might be caused by additional factors such as second-language acquisition, children's lack of experience in a preschool setting, or lack of home support to develop early literacy skills.

Differentiated instruction and intervention. After the identification of children's need of support, effective interventions targeting specific literacy and language skills can begin. The intensity and scope of services children need should be matched as closely as possible to the current developmental status of individual children (e.g., Prinz, Sanders, Shapiro, Whitaker, & Lutzker, 2009).

[1] Individual Growth and Development Indicators for language and early literacy in preschool were developed largely by a group at the University of Minnesota led by Scott McConnell, who contributed to drafting this document.

In early childhood education, variations in intensity and scope of services is generally expressed as a range of program services and informal supports matched to the needs of identified children. These services and supports may include broad, community-wide interventions to promote appropriate language interactions and shared book-reading with children (Burger & Landerholm, 1991; Payne, et al., 1994), more focused information and general education to parents of children with mild language or early literacy delays (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003), or access to specialized and intensive classroom-based programs in existing or new service delivery settings (such as Head Start or early childhood special education services). Whatever the service or support, there should be a match between a child's current developmental status and the gains to be expected given the supplemental intervention. Progress monitoring is used to confirm the adequacy of this plan or to identify a need for more intensive interventions or supports.

Available Assessment Tools

Currently, only a small set of commercially published and research-based tools is available for universal screening and assessment of infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children due to the relatively recent attention to expanding options for formal, brief, standardized assessment of specific language and literacy skills for preschool-based intervention (McConnell & Missall, 2008; National Research Council, 2008). The measures described below are designed to be completed either indirectly by a parent or teacher report *or* through direct assessment of individual children.

Given the brief history and attention to universal screening in early childhood prior to identifying specific measure(s) for use in Oregon's preschool programs, a thorough review and analysis of available assessment instruments should be conducted. This review should include attention to criteria for assessment selection and use generally (National Research Council, 2008) and in early language and literacy development specifically. The review should be considered within the context of RTI or other differentiated intervention models (McConnell & Missall, 2008). Further, this review should include information regarding the reliability and validity of the measures. The population of children that will be screened with these assessment tools should be taken into account. For example, the scores of a formative assessment tool in English to screen English learners with limited English proficiency at the beginning of preschool should be interpreted with caution to avoid the misidentification of children in need of more intensive language and literacy support. Moreover, the State could provide preschools in regions with a large population of Spanish-speaking children funding to purchase Spanish measures and train native Spanish speakers on the administration and scoring of early screening measures.

As part of the formal review, the State should consider assessment measures with demonstrated reliability and validity for the populations of children for which they are used. A list of assessment measures for initial review are described below. The State should conduct a thorough review of available assessment measures and their properties to identify and recommend a set of viable options. In addition, given the large population of Spanish-speaking children and families in Oregon, the State should consider instruments that can be administered in Spanish (and other languages, where available).

Screening and/or Formative Measures

- *Letter Naming Task in Spanish and English* (Bryant, Barbarin, & Aytch, 2001) is an unpublished simple naming task that has been used at the National Center for Early Learning in Chapel Hill, NC.
- *Get Ready to Read* (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2001) is a 20-question assessment that incorporates visual and auditory items that allow children to demonstrate their skills in print knowledge, book knowledge, phonological awareness, and phonics in English and in Spanish. The screening tool takes less than 10 minutes to administer. The English-language GRTR screening tool has acceptable internal consistency reliability (α = .78), and it has good concurrent validity as measured by its correlations with a diagnostic measure of early literacy skills (the Developing Skills Checklist; CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1990; *r* = .69), a measure of receptive vocabulary (the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test; Dunn & Dunn, 1981; *r* = .58), a measure of letter knowledge (*r* = .66), and a measure of phonological awareness (*r* = .58).
- GRTR also has a Spanish version. The Spanish-language GRTR has been reported to have stable psychometric properties (Lonigan, 2003).
- *Individual Growth and Development Indicators* (IGDIs; Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development, n.d., see http://igdis.umn.edu/get-started/get-it/) are individually administered, brief, and repeatable measures of oral language and phonological awareness skills that also have been used for screening and progress monitoring purposes with extensive application in Early Reading First and other compensatory preschool programs (McConnell & Missall, 2008).[2] IGDIs take 6 to 10 minutes to administer and can be administered as often as weekly to provide repeated measures of a specific skill. Recent research and development work is elaborating and extending IGDIs to improve assessment of language and early literacy in preschool, and specifically to support RTI programs, is underway. Updates can be found at http://www.crtiec.org. A study to develop a Spanish version of the measures is currently under way (Duran, L. personal communication, September 2010).

Summative Measures

- *Preschool Language Scale-4 English* (Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2002a) is an individually administered, standardized test for use with infants and children from 2 days to 6 years, 11 months. The PLS will assess children's receptive and expressive language abilities using two subscales: Auditory Comprehension and Expressive Communication*. Reliability information for the English version:* The PLS-4 standardization sample included 1,564 children, ages 2 days to 6 years, 11 months. The test-retest stability coefficients ranged from .82 to .95 for the subscale scores and from .90 to .97 for the total language score. The internal consistency reliability coefficients range from .66 to .96 (for most ages the coefficients are .81 and higher).
- *Preschool Language Scale-4 Spanish* (Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2002b). The standardization sample of the PLS-4 Spanish was 1,188 children (2 days to 6 years, 11 months).

[2] Individual Growth and Development Indicators for language and early literacy in preschool were developed largely by a group at the University of Minnesota led by Scott McConnell, who contributed to drafting this document.

The test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from .73 to .86 for the subscale scores and from .80 to .89 for the total language score.

- *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised* (PPVT-R; Dunn & Dunn, 1981) is an individually administered norm referenced test of single-word receptive vocabulary.
- *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody* (Dunn, Lugo, Padilla, & Dunn, 1986) is the Spanish version of the PPVT. The norming samples for the TVIP included 1,219 Mexican children ranging from 2 years, 6 months to 15 years, 11 months, and 1, 488 Puerto Rican children ranging from 2 years, 6 months to 17 years, 11 months.

Each of the measures described above have a Spanish version that can be used with Spanish-speaking children who are participating either in an English-only preschool or in a preschool where the main language of instruction is Spanish. In an English-only preschool, the Spanish measures can be used with students who appear to have very low language skills in English, but where the information on the language skills in their native language (e.g., Spanish) can determine if students (a) only need to be taught in English following the current program because students will be able to transfer their language skills form Spanish to English (Cummins, 1979) or (b) where the student native skills are so low that children will need to receive additional doses of an intervention in English focused on vocabulary and language development given that it is unlikely for low skills in the native language to transfer. In the section of instruction, we will discuss the type and language of instruction that appears to provide the most benefit for ELs based on recent evidence-based studies.

Additional information about other measures that can be used for formative or summative assessments can be found in the following websites:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire Third edition (ASQ-3) (http://www.agesandstages.com). The ASQ-3 is a measure used to screen for attainment of developmental and social-emotional milestones from one month to 5.5 years of age. The ASQ-3 is completed by parents. The ASQ-3 is available in English and Spanish. The English version of the ASQ-3 was developed using a sample of more than 15,000 children representing all 50 states.
- PALS-PreK (http://pals.virginia.edu/tools-prek.html). The PALS-PreK is a phonological awareness and literacy screener used for preschool-aged children. The results can be used to provide guidance to pre-K teachers to modify instruction to meet children's individual needs.

As the State conducts its review and recommendation of one or more measures for universal screening and use within an RTI model, additional consideration should be given to three broad factors. First, validity evidence should be reviewed to ensure that selected measures are associated with outcomes and child characteristics that are consistent with State-held goals for language and literacy development (as described in the Oregon Early Childhood Foundations, Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework, and Common Core State Standards). Second, every effort should be made to select measures that are maximally useful, including application in progress monitoring and other child- and program-level evaluation activities. Third, to the extent possible, measures should be selected that will be consistent with, and naturally align with, the State's existing and emerging universal screening and early identification activities—particularly those associated with Child Find for early intervention and early childhood special education.

Setting Goals for Groups and Individuals

As the State identifies measures and interventions that are consistent with common goals (e.g., the Oregon Early Childhood Foundations, Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and the Common Core State Standards recently adopted by Oregon), it becomes feasible to set program goals for all children that are achievable and include children from diverse backgrounds and different literacy skills. These program goals can articulate short, intermediate, and long-term goals for improvement that are the result of increased and improved intervention services. At the child's individual level, this is seen through careful specification of current needs, allocation of appropriate and effective services and supports, and ongoing assessment of child performance. As supplemental interventions continue, accelerated rates of child development toward individual goals are likely to be observed.

Although the mechanisms of action are somewhat different, similar effect can be foreseen for early childhood centers and/or regions. Here, changes in both rate of growth and current status for *groups* of children will begin to change as service units (either centers or regions) increase time spent in effective intervention, identify and implement known-effective curricula and instructional practices, and identify and allocate intervention and instruction services based on individual need. As the effects of various policy, program development, and program improvement efforts continue, one would reasonably expect to see ongoing improvements in mean performance for groups of children affected. By analogous processes, one can also expect changes in average performance for groups of children in successive kindergarten-entering cohorts as the State more fully articulates and provides financial and programmatic resources for language and early literacy intervention.

Although early in empirical and practical development, standards are emerging for building and evaluating continuous improvement efforts at individual, center, regional, and State levels. More guidance can be found for similar work in the elementary grades, and two sets of standards can be described for use in early childhood settings. First, standards can be based on logical analysis of expected skill development, as represented in the Oregon Early Childhood Foundations. Using either logical analysis or more formal standard-setting procedures (Cizek & Bunch, 2007), Oregon's current expected levels of development for end of preschool or beginning of kindergarten can serve as a basis for determining specific cut scores or benchmarks for evaluating performance, and these cut scores can be used to develop expected rates of development or change for individuals, centers, regions, or the State as a whole based on observed level of development at any point in time. Second, standards can be set empirically, primarily by conducting longitudinal analysis of cohorts of children and indexing preschool performance against later proficiency-level performance on reading or other achievement results. Analyses of this sort have been conducted for both IGDIs (Missall et al., 2007) and GRTR (Phillips et al., 2009); these and similar evaluations will be useful for developing specific standards for Oregon's preschool children.

Given the development of either standards-based or empirical cut scores for evaluating language and early literacy performance at different time points during the preschool years, sufficient information exists to make preliminary decision rules for identifying children who would benefit from various forms of intervention *while at the same time* conducting research in action—ideally, longitudinal assessments of rather large and diverse samples of Oregon preschool-to-early-elementary students—to improve identification procedures over time. Although RTI and similar decision rules have become widely available and carefully evaluated for older children (Fuchs, 2003; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007; Fuchs et al., 2000), formal procedures for extending this logic to early childhood settings are still emerging and are likely in need of further development and evaluation prior to wide-scale implementation. However, strong

recommendations and solid models have emerged and can be consulted for preliminary guidance and action (Coleman, Buysse, & Neitzel, 2006; Coleman, Roth, & West, 2009; McConnell, 2008).

Putting It All Together: Recommended Practices for Assessment to Promote Language and Early Literacy Development

Assessment alone will not lead to improved performance for individuals or groups in language, early literacy, or other aspects of development, but assessment can be an essential condition for a broader, more comprehensive set of activities that produce expected improvement. Assessment practices will contribute to improved developmental outcomes for children if they contribute to allocation, evaluation, and ongoing improvement of intervention services for children and the individuals who are raising and teaching them.

At the individual child's level, we have noted resources for periodically screening children, comparing their observed level of performance or rate of development to some skill- or empirically-based standard and using this information to identify instances in which supplemental intervention and instruction may be warranted. When individual children are thus identified and supplemental services arranged, assessment must continue to *monitor progress and the effects of intervention* for this individual child. This progress monitoring assessment can be used to confirm the effectiveness of the supplemental interventions or supports or to cue parents, teachers, or others that some change in intervention is warranted to increase the child's rate of development toward some longer-term goal.

To be maximally effective, this progress monitoring must be frequent and highly sensitive to changes in the child's performance and rate of development (Greenwood et al., 2008; McConnell & Missall, 2008). This assessment might be a general outcome measure—measuring progress toward a long-term outcome—or a mastery monitoring one—measuring acquisition of specific skills included in intervention (Fuchs & Deno, 1991)—but in either instance should provide parents and practitioners information about the effect of an intervention and changes in the child's likely achievement of longer-term desired outcomes.

When aggregated and treated as a measure of group performance, periodic screening measures (and, under some conditions, progress monitoring measures) can be used to monitor and evaluate effectiveness of formal and informal services and supports at the program, community, regional, or State level. Periodic screening measures, if universally representative, can provide valuable information about the effects of various interventions (from general to specific) as well as needs-assessment data for preschool and early elementary programs. By collecting periodic, reliable, and comparable data across children, programs, and communities and by paying careful attention to levels of aggregation and analysis, program managers at different levels of responsibility (e.g., from center directors responsible for two or more teachers to State-level policy makers responsible for program services) can identify needs for ongoing program development, revisions or expansions to professional development, and redirection of program improvement, access, or quality resources.

An integrated assessment system can efficiently contribute to ongoing monitoring and assurance of program quality and enhanced outcomes for individuals and small or large groups. An integrated assessment system would have the following characteristics: it (1) selects conceptually and empirically related measures for younger and older preschoolers, (2) is related to kindergarten and elementary

standards and goals, (3) integrates both periodic screening and progress monitoring, and (4) is coherent at different levels of aggregation and analysis.

Product and Ordering Information for Assessments Listed in this Chapter

Screening and/or Formative Measures

- *Letter Naming Task in Spanish and English:* Bryant, D., Barbarin, O., & Aytch, L. S. (2001). *Naming letters. English and Spanish versions.* Unpublished measure. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina; Frank Porter Graham Child Developmental Center.

  The measure is currently unpublished. However, the primary author can be contacted through the Frank Porter Graham website at http://www.fpg.unc.edu/, by following the link to "People" and typing in the first author's last name.

- *Get Ready to Read!:* Whitehurst, G. J., & Lonigan, C. J. (2001). *Get ready to read! An early literacy manual: Screening tool, activities, & resources*. Columbus, OH: Pearson Early Learning Group.

  More information about *Get Ready to Read!* can be found on the website http://www.getreadytoread.org/.

  To order the newly enhanced *Get Ready to Read!* Screening Tool, visit the publisher's website at http://psychcorp.pearsonassessments.com/haiweb/cultures/en-us/productdetail.htm?pid=PA_GetReadytoRead&Community=CA_Speech_AI_EarlyChild or call (800) 627-7271.

- *Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs):* Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development. (n.d.). Individual Growth and Development Indicators.

  Information about purchasing an IGDI kit or signing up for online training can be found at http://igdis.umn.edu/get-started/get-it/.

Summative Measures

- *Preschool Language Scale-4 English and Spanish versions:* Zimmerman, I. L., Steiner, V. G., & Pond, R. E. (2002a). *Preschool Language Scale 4-PLS-4. English*. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corp., and Zimmerman, I. L., Steiner, V. G., & Pond, R. E. (2002b). *Preschool Language Scale 4-PLS-4. Spanish*. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corp.

  A product summary and ordering information can be found on the Pearson website at http://www.pearsonassessments.com/HAIWEB/Cultures/en-us/Productdetail.htm?Pid=015-8659-406

- *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Revised:* Dunn, L., & Dunn, M. (1981). *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Revised*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service.

A product summary and ordering information can be found on the Pearson website at http://psychcorp.pearsonassessments.com/HAIWEB/Cultures/en-us/Productdetail.htm?Pid=PAa30700

Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody: Dunn, L. M., Lugo, D. E., Padilla, E. R., & Dunn, L. M. (1986). *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody (TVIP)*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service.

A product summary and ordering information can be found on the Pearson website at http://psychcorp.pearsonassessments.com/haiweb/cultures/en-us/productdetail.htm?pid=PAa2600&Community=CA_Speech_AI_Vocab

Additional Measures that Can Be Used for Formative or Summative Assessments Include:

- *Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3)*

  Product information and ordering information can be found on the ASQ website at http://agesandstages.com/asq-products/ or by ordering directly from the publisher, Brookes Publishing, at www.brookespublishing.com/asq.

- *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS-PreK)*

  Additional information about the PALS-PreK can be found at http://pals.virginia.edu/tools-prek.html. Ordering information about the PALS-PreK can be found at http://www.palsmarketplace.com/.

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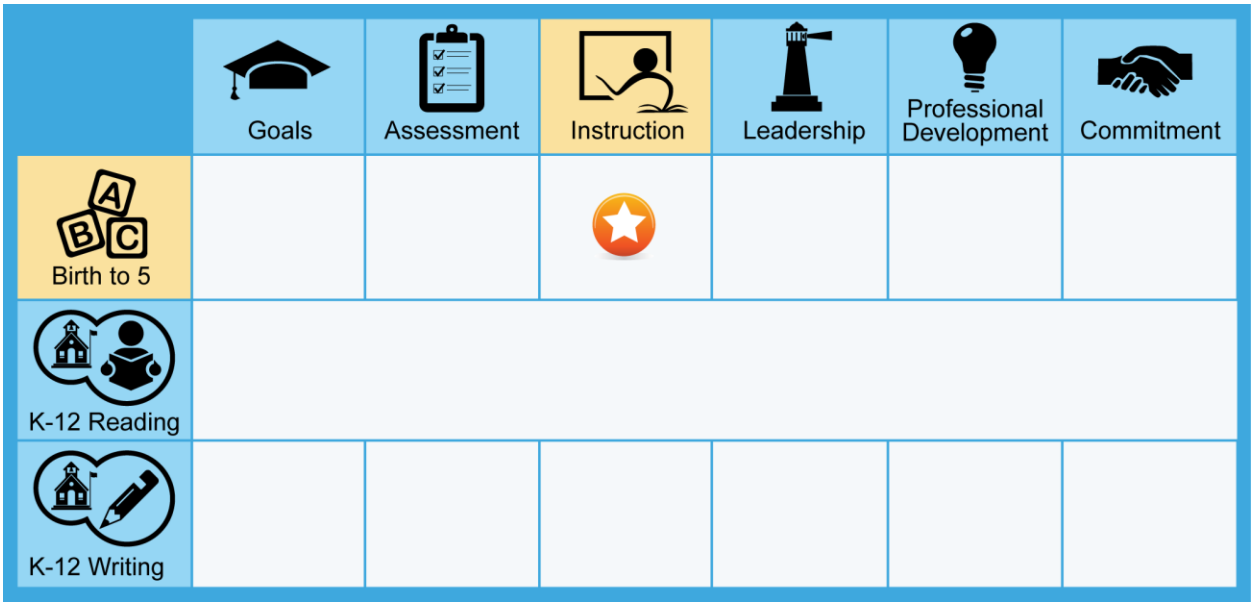
Birth to Five

Instruction

Oregon Literacy Plan



Context for Instruction in Early Childhood

Education and psychology, both in the United States and internationally, have a long tradition of attention to early childhood development, yet wide-scale efforts to prevent and remediate early learning deficits lag significantly behind what is known about how to do so. From the turn of the twentieth century, theorists and social activists such as Maria Montessori, Alfred Binet, J. McVicker Hunt, Benjamin Bloom, Carl Bereiter and Edward Ziegler have advocated for, developed, and/or evaluated the benefit of home- and classroom-based, at times highly-structured, preschool programs for children who are considered to be at risk for later academic difficulties or other achievement problems. Still, wide-scale use of such intervention programs lags well behind the knowledge which underpins them. Perhaps one explanation for this phenomenon is the developmental view that simply allowing more time will resolve the problem. Yet many early deficits are not resolved with time. They more likely predict continued difficulty as time goes by. What is missing, it seems, is the realization of the need for active intervention for children with

early learning deficits, the explicitness of instruction needed to reverse these concerns, and the training needed for those who will carry out this intervention.

Nonetheless, broad-scale design and implementation of compensatory or preventive early education programs in the United States has, at most, a 50-year history. In 1965, as part of the larger War on Poverty, the federal government launched Head Start to promote "school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to enrolled children and families." While Head Start maintained a primary focus on children in poverty, soon thereafter the federal government (following the lead of local agencies and pioneering states) expanded preschool services for children with developmental and other disabilities. Starting with the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* in 1975, Congress permitted the use of federal funds to find and serve children with disabilities starting at Age 3. This service option expanded, becoming a mandate for special education for children with disabilities from birth with the passage of the *Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986*. More recently, states and local communities have been expanding services—both voluntary (e.g., Florida) and universal (e.g., Georgia and New Jersey)—for preschool-aged children. To date, however, these programs are far from universal in scope, and the system of care and education is at best described as fragmented, disjointed, and underdeveloped (McKinsey and Company, 2005; Shonkoff & Meisels, 2000).

While the past two decades have seen an explosion of research on developmental precursors to academic and social achievement and to interventions that promote this development (Dickinson & Neuman, 2008; Guralnick, 1997; Justice & Vukelich, 2008; National Early Literacy Panel, 2009; Neuman & Dickinson, 2001, 2011; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) few would argue that this research is yet producing a wide-scale, close-point effect on practice for all preschool children. Further, perhaps because of the relatively short history of this research, findings are still somewhat general or plagued by inconsistent results. As a recent report by the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education asserts (http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/pubs/20082009/index.asp, retrieved January 11, 2011):

> A variety of preschool curricula is available and in widespread use, however, there is a lack of evidence from rigorous evaluations regarding the effects of these curricula on children's school readiness. The lack of such information is important as early childhood center-based programs have been a major, sometimes the sole, component of a number of federal and State efforts to improve young at-risk children's school readiness (e.g., Head Start, Even Start, public prekindergarten). In 2005, nearly half (47%) of all 3- to 5-year-old children from low-income families were enrolled in either part-day or full-day early childhood programs (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

Perhaps due to the short history and the relatively minor effect of research-based knowledge and evidence-based practice on early education services, significant parts of "the field" appear still somewhat reluctant to embrace intentional, future-oriented intervention. The evidence for this claim is somewhat indirect but can be seen in evolving concepts regarding developmentally appropriate practice, assessment, and the nature of early childhood education.

Developmentally appropriate practice has been defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the largest professional organization in early childhood education, as "a framework of principles and guidelines for best practice in the care and education of young children, birth through age 8." In the 1980s and 1990s, the principle of developmentally appropriate practice (or DAP) was offered as

a counter approach to "direct instruction," a rather broad term for intervention that relied on more than a small amount of adult direction and/or presented learning opportunities and teaching (Carta, Atwater, Schwartz, & McConnell, 1993; Carta, Schwartz, Atwater, & McConnell, 1991). Although still a point of discussion and some controversy, the positions of researchers, advocates, and professional organizations have softened; recently, the official position of the National Association for the Education of Young Children even supported, in some instances, intensive and direct intervention:

> [f]ortunately, a continually expanding early childhood knowledge base enables the field to refine, redirect, or confirm understandings of best practice. The whole of the present position statement reflects fresh evidence of recent years and the perspectives and priorities emerging from these findings (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009, p. 6.)

To be certain, however, this broader view of appropriate intervention, including when warranted and necessary more intensive instruction and structure, has not been fully accepted by practitioners, program managers and directors, and many State-level administrators. This issue warrants attention because the revision or expansion of early childhood services will likely require the skills, efforts, and commitment of many individuals—including those already in the field, some of whom have longstanding concerns about the possible harm of direct, structured intervention. It is possible that some degree of dialog and conceptual leadership, as well as gentle but persistent encouragement to adopt new practices, may be needed to promote broad-scale application of research-based procedures that rely on adult direction to promote language and literacy development for preschool children.

Taken together, the short history of community-based preventive early education programs, the still relatively weak infrastructure of research-based knowledge and evidence-based practices, and possible "culture clashes" in implementation of certain types of intervention may present significant challenges to articulating, designing, and implementing a well-conceived, likely-effective set of instructional practices. Further, given the state of knowledge and practice in early education currently, it is *very likely* that the State and its regions and centers will need to continuously monitor and refine or improve features of this instructional system.

Major Components of Instruction in Early Childhood Language and Literacy

Research, syntheses and summaries of this research, and emerging policy suggest at least four overlapping components that must be considered to design maximally effective early childhood language and early literacy interventions. These components include *the role of parents as first and most consistent teachers* for young children, *contributions of physical and social environments* in providing learning and developmental opportunities for young children, the *effect of curriculum* on children's activities and teachers' instructional practices, and *instructional practices and intervention procedures* that add value to early childhood programs.

Although research provides *some* guidance for the specification and selection of elements within each of these four components, it is difficult to identify a well-substantiated set of practices in any of these four areas at this time. Rather, State-level program developers will likely best proceed by reviewing available research, forming standards for sorting and analyzing the information presented, using these standards to identify promising practices, and then evaluating these practices when implemented in real-world settings.

A variety of resources are available to support this review and ongoing analysis. Scholarly volumes (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006; Guralnick, 1997; National Early Literacy Panel, 2003; Neuman & Dickinson, 2001, 2011; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) and a number of web-based resources also provide up-to-date information, reviews, and synthesis of relevant research; most noteworthy may be the What Works Clearinghouse (www.whatworks.ed.gov/), the Best Evidence Encyclopedia (http://www.bestevidence.org/early/early_child_ed/early_child_ed.htm), and the early childhood section of the Florida Center for Reading Research (http://www.fcrr.org/). Finally, a number of local universities and educational research organizations are producing more focused summaries and syntheses for particular aspects of language and early literacy intervention that may be useful in this work.

As a result of the dynamic nature of information in this area, the following section will provide general information that can serve as a beginning and a basis for ongoing review and refinement of specific intervention plans.

Parents as First Teachers

Interventions for language and early literacy development for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children must give first attention to parents' contributions to child growth in this area. Most obviously, parents have a special commitment to the development of their own children.

Parent–child interactions contribute to both language and early literacy development. Although substantial research exists about parents' effect on vocabulary and language acquisition, Hart and Risley's (1995) study is perhaps best known and broadly indicative of work in this area. Hart and Risley (1995) identified 42 families of very young (approximately 9 months) infants and visited those infants and families monthly until the children reached 36 months of age. During these monthly visits, Hart and Risley's team noted language that came *from* the child as well as language directed *to* the child. With these data and a battery of child and parent assessments, Hart and Risley's analyses revealed the significant contribution of what parents said (i.e., features of speech and language directed to the child) and, more importantly, how much they talked (i.e., frequency of language behavior directed toward the child) to children's overall language acquisition. In turn, children's language competence at Age 3 was a strong and significant predictor of children's reading performance four or five years later (Walker, Greenwood, Hart, & Carta, 1994).

A variety of important facts can be derived from Hart and Risley's work (and their follow-up report, 1999), but two conclusions are particularly relevant for planning language intervention for young children. First, as Hart and Risley emphasized, *all* parents demonstrated skills essential to teach and promote language acquisition and growth for their children. Parents differed in their rates of using these teaching skills and these differences can be important, but all parents in Hart and Risley's group demonstrated at least basic proficiency. Second, this "naturally occurring teaching" happened in the context of everyday activities and routines, often without special materials or instructional protocols.

Taken together, these conclusions suggest that interventions can provide support to parents in ways that contribute to children's language development. For instance, Ann Kaiser and colleagues have adapted milieu language intervention (a tactic initially developed for children with significant disabilities and often used in classroom settings) for use with parents (Hancock, Kaiser, & Delaney, 2002; Kaiser & Hancock, 2003).

Parents also contribute, indirectly and directly, to children's early literacy development (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006; Marvin & Mirenda, 1993; Neuman & Dickinson, 2001). Findings in this area frequently cite some relation between children's preschool early literacy development and static parent and family variables, such as the number of books in a home or visits to local libraries. Building on typical parent–child interactions, successful interventions have also been constructed around shared book reading (Bus, 2001; Justice & Ezell, 2002; Neuman, 1996; Schetz, Stremmel, Murphy, Singh, & Fox, 2000) and its variant, dialogic reading (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003).

A comprehensive, efficient, and differentiated intervention model to promote language and early literacy development among preschool children must include purposeful, integrated, and intensive attention to parents' contributions. Parent–child interactions to promote language and literacy development might be fostered through a variety of means; in addition to outreach efforts through existing school and child care programs, communities may benefit from collaboration with other agencies like public libraries (see *Every Child Ready to Read*, an intervention of the Public Library Association, http://www.everychildreadytoread.org).

Working with Parents of English Learners

Preschool programs and new State preschool standards emphasize the importance of parents participating in their children's academic development because the evidence indicates that the integration of school-based literacy practices into home literacy practices has positive effects (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Oregon Department of Education, 2006; Pellegrini, 2001; Puma et al., 2010; Rodriguez-Brown, 2009; Sénéchal & Young, 2008; Even Start Report, St. Pierre et al., 2003). However, very few investigations have focused on the home literacy practices of low-income Latino families (Garcia, 2000; Tardaguila-Harth, 2007). The limited research evidence is particularly problematic given the growing size of the Latino population. Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the country; 20% of children born in 2009 were Latino (Hamilton et al., 2009; Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). School readiness of Latino children is below the readiness of children in other ethnic groups and below what is necessary for Latino children at the beginning of kindergarten to get off to a good start in school (Lee & Burkam, 2002).

Reports about the involvement of parents in preparing their children for school readiness have been mixed despite the efforts of federally funded preschool programs (e.g., Head Start, Even Start Family Literacy Program) to involve parents. This is especially true with parents from low-income, ethnically diverse populations. For example, the most recent Head Start report (Puma, et al., 2010) indicates that only 45% of parents of 4-year olds and 35% of parents of 3-year olds, including parents who speak a language other than English at home, report reading to their children every day. Recent studies that interviewed parents about their involvement in their children's academic life indicate that a plausible factor for the lack of effects of family programs on increasing parental engagement might be explained by (a) the lack of understanding by program staff of the realities of Latino working-class families, particularly families who have recently immigrated to the United States and who might not speak English, (b) lack of understanding by program staff of Latino parents beliefs, and (c) a discontinuity between home and preschool activities (Espinosa, 2005; Perry, Kay, & Brown, 2008; Tardaguila-Harth, 2007).

To better understand how Latino parents generally viewed school-designed literacy activities, and specifically how Latino parents supported bilingual language development, Perry et al. (2008) studied 13

low-income Latino families enrolled in an Even Start Family Literacy program and two teachers who provided parenting education. Findings indicated that parents supported their children's literacy learning in five specific ways: First, they engaged in pleasurable and interactive literacy experiences such as playing games that incorporated cultural assets. Second, parents carefully observed how their child did in these activities and provided informal scaffolding supports for them, such as prompting and demonstrations, to help them succeed. Third, parents took advantage of opportunities to address moral aspects of the activities by explaining, for example, the meaning of rules. Fourth, parents used their primary language to engage in these interactive experiences. Fifth, parents involved older and younger siblings in the family activities. Parents reported that they valued interactive literacy activities because they promoted family connections. These findings corroborated other findings in studies with Latino families (Correa, Bonilla, & Blanes, 2010; Tardaguila-Harth, 2007).

In conclusion, involving Hispanic parents in the education of their young children potentially can increase the school readiness of Spanish-speaking English learners who are at risk of experiencing academic reading difficulties in the upper grades. The support preschools provide to parents of minority students is crucial to ensure effective literacy practices at home. This support can be provided during home visits by modeling effective read-aloud practices that encourage a conversation with a child and by modeling positive-behavior support practices. Coaching for parents can be provided by inviting parents to assist in the classroom or in public places such as libraries (see the Early Child Ready to Read intervention promoted by the Public Library Association mentioned earlier).

Physical and Social Environments

Features of the physical and social environment set the stage for interactions in which learning occurs, either through direct interaction between children and materials (including electronic media) or through interactions with other children or adults that are affected by the surrounding environment (Barnett et al., 1997; Odom, Peterson, McConnell, & Ostrosky, 1990; Wahler & Fox, 1981). Research about the contributions of the physical and social environment and its effect on learning language and early literacy has examined relatively static variables (e.g., presence of books or particular social and instructional materials), more dynamic but slow-moving features (e.g., designated activities or peer group composition), and fairly transient features (e.g., teacher management of instructional and social-emotional tone [Carta, Greenwood, & Atwater, 2010; Mashburn et al., 2008]).

Although there is little evidence, nor theoretical rationale, to assume that qualities of the physical and social environment will be sufficient for promoting language and early literacy growth (especially in high-risk learners), there are practical, empirical, and theoretical reasons to attend to possible contributions. A variety of tools have emerged in recent years (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008; Smith, Dickinson, Sangeorge, & Anastasopoulos, 2002) that describe these environments, and professional development approaches have been developed, evaluated, and distributed broadly (e.g., http://www.myteachingpartner.net) to help classroom programs assess and improve environmental features (Henry & Pianta, 2011).

Curriculum

Although some confusion in practice surrounds the term, a "curriculum" in early childhood education has similar functions and characteristics to those found in elementary and secondary education: A curriculum primarily presents a sequence of skills and competencies, as well as contexts or materials for learning these skills and competencies, and (at least implicitly) some information about how to engage children's attention and interaction related to these identified skills and competencies. Curricula vary widely in early childhood education, from broad descriptions of classroom characteristics and activities to be made available to children to rather explicit, sometimes day-by-day and period-by-period listings of materials, skills, and instructional activities to be completed.

Curriculum review—both content or program reviews and summary judgments of supporting research—is a major focus of several of the online research review portals mentioned above. These sites (e.g., What Works Clearinghouse, Best Evidence Encyclopedia, and Florida Center for Reading Research) typically describe criteria for evaluating any curriculum's efficacy, standards for judging evidence from different investigations, and results of these empirical evaluations. In early 2011, What Works Clearinghouse listed six early childhood curricula—Bright Beginnings, DaisyQuest, Doors to Discovery, HeadSprout, Literacy Express, and Sound Foundations—that had some evidence and positive effects in oral language and/or some component of early literacy. By contrast, Best Evidence Encyclopedia listed three curricula—Curiosity Corner, Let's Begin with Letter People, and Ready Set Leap!—and three intervention approaches—direct instruction, early literacy and learning model, and interactive book reading—as having "strong evidence" of effectiveness.

In 2002, the Institute of Education Sciences launched a rather large, systematic investigation of curriculum effects in early childhood education (Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research Consortium, 2008). Twelve groups of investigators implemented two or more curricula in randomized control trials in preschool programs serving primarily low-income, high-risk children. Common measures were used across all 12 investigations. Results for oral language and early literacy outcomes suggested that only one curriculum arrangement—DLM with Open Court—produced statistically significant change in group estimates of students' performance.

A variety of other issues—skill, knowledge, and preparation of individuals implementing any curriculum; fidelity of implementation; alignment with K–3 reading curriculum; and others—likely will affect the efficacy and impact of any language and/or early literacy curriculum in any particular preschool program. Careful analysis of available information, systematic selection of curriculum components, and high-integrity implementation and ongoing support for curriculum implementation will likely be essential to ensure high-quality intervention.

Instruction and Intervention

For a variety of reasons, "instruction" in early childhood education is rarely as distinct as what one might expect in later elementary and secondary classrooms. Nonetheless, instruction (if defined as intentional adult behavior directing children's attention toward instructional materials and developmental opportunities and providing corrective feedback following child responses) does occur.

A number of curriculum and program developers have designed teacher-guided instruction that occurs during "circle time" or other large-group activities in preschool classrooms (e.g., O'Connor, Notari-

Syverson, & Vadasy, 1996). These instructional interactions may be sequenced across time and supported by materials present during the instructional period or may relate to activities and materials the children will encounter throughout the classroom day.

Other instructional interventions are designed to occur in less structured ways, as children and teachers interact during a series of activity times. In some instances, these interactions may be specifically structured to promote language or literacy interactions (Yoder et al., 1995). In others, teachers are encouraged to find "teachable moments" and embed appropriate instructional interactions with children in the midst of ongoing activities (Henry & Pianta, 2011).

Shared book reading and dialogic reading as language and early literacy interactions are examples of teacher–child instructional interactions designed to promote child development (Justice & Ezell, 2002; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003).

Instruction is oftentimes a fluid, less formal set of adult behaviors in early childhood settings. As curricula continue to grow in sophistication, as research further specifies discrete skills that children must master, and as professional development programs expand, changes may occur. Recent research by Carol Connor and colleagues (c.f., Connor, 2011) highlights ways in which instructional/intentional interactions for young students interact directly with skill and background characteristics of these children to produce differential outcomes. As findings like these are extended and replicated, and as we develop a stronger technology for bringing effective instruction that is suited to the demands of early education settings, instructional practices can be expected to change.

Second-Language Instruction

Very few studies have researched the specific instructional variables that affect second-language learning (Gersten & Baker, 2000; Saunders & O'Brien, 2006). However, it stands to reason that similar strategies used to develop student academic skills could also be used to develop oral language. Coyne, Kame'enui, & Carnine (2006) suggest the following research-based principles of instruction for diverse learners as the foundation for effective instruction: conspicuous strategies, mediated scaffolding, strategic integration, primed background knowledge, and judicious review. **Conspicuous strategies** refer to a series of teaching events and teacher actions that make abstract learning clear and concrete. Strategies are made explicit by using visual models, verbal directions, full and clear explanations, and outlined steps. **Mediated scaffolding provides** temporary scaffolding, or instructional supports, for students to learn new material. As students assume more control of their learning, scaffolding is faded over time. **Strategic integration** is the careful sequencing of instruction that makes connections between new material and previously taught material. **Primed Background knowledge** includes the general knowledge that students must already possess in order to understand and acquire new knowledge. **Judicious review** is reviewing materials sequentially, adequately, and cumulatively. Review includes sufficient variety that students do not memorize answers but can generalize the information learned to other similar content.

In addition, Gersten & Baker (2000) also suggest the **modulation** of cognitive and language demands to support students' understanding of academic content and development of oral language. Modulation means that when the focus of the instruction is on academic content, teacher feedback needs to be on ensuring students are understanding the content taught, independently of how truncated students answers might be (e.g., student answers with one word or answers with a wrong verb conjugation). On

the other hand, when the focus of the instruction is language development, teacher feedback needs to be on student use of correct syntax and vocabulary.

Although research about second-language acquisition is scarce, two areas have received some attention: question formation and vocabulary. Question formation and the acquisition of question forms appear to be similar to those observed among monolingual English-speaking students. In two studies conducted in the 1980s on the developmental progression of question formation, findings indicated that students with low levels of English-language proficiency could ask questions for information and yes/no questions. As their language proficiency increased, their question formation and question types became more varied and sophisticated. (Lindholm, 1987; Rodriguez-Brown, 1987).

Regarding vocabulary instruction for English learners (ELs), studies indicate that ELs need vocabulary instruction at three different levels: First, they need to be able to understand words in everyday life such as *toothbrush, stairs,* and *walk*. Second, they need to understand and practice words that are abstract and can be used in multiple different texts such as *protect, mammals,* and *vegetables.* Third, they need to understand content knowledge words such as *addition, subtraction*, and *multiplication* (Hiebert, 2006). Visuals are particularly important when teaching words because they help learners visualize the abstractions of language (Rousseau, 1994; Saunders et. al, 1998). Words that are abstract or content-specific are words that English-only students also need and, therefore, these words can be taught to ELs and English-only (EO) students together.

For example, Silverman (2007) examined the effectiveness of a vocabulary intervention that included storybook read-alouds. The intervention was implemented over 14 weeks, three days per week for 30–45 minutes each day in mainstream classrooms with ELs and English speakers. The ELs were in either a two-way bilingual classroom or a structured immersion classroom in which instruction was only in English. Findings indicated that both English speakers and ELs showed significant improvement in knowledge of target words from pretest to posttest. In fact, ELs learned, on average, more words (i.e., 20) than English speakers (i.e., 14), suggesting that ELs, when taught explicitly with appropriate strategies, can learn vocabulary words as fast or faster than their EO peers.

Snow, Cancino, Gonzalez, & Sriberg (1989) conducted a study to examine the relationship between informal and formal definitions and receptive vocabulary. Findings indicated that students at low levels of language proficiency started with informal definitions, and as they progressed in their language proficiency, they demonstrated a greater capacity to define words using formal definitions. In fact, ELs in this study with high levels of language proficiency were able to use formal definitions as well as English-only students. Carlisle, Beeman, Davis, & Spharim (1999) corroborated the results by Snow et al. (1987) and also found that informal definitions were moderately related to receptive vocabulary in English and in Spanish (r = 0.67 in English and r = 0.79 in Spanish), while formal definitions were weakly related to receptive vocabulary (r = 0.36 in English and r = 0.43 in Spanish) suggesting that being familiar with words might be qualitatively different than explaining words using formal definitions.

Gersten & Baker (2000) have also suggested that a strategy to build language proficiency in ELs by implementing cooperative learning and peer-tutoring strategies in which learners, ELs and English speakers, can work together to achieve a common goal. These strategies, however, depend on (a) ELs' level of language proficiency and (b) the nature of the task. For example, in a study of naturally occurring interactions with kindergartners, Cathcart-Strong (1986) found that response patterns of native English-speaking peers did not contribute to ELs language development. August (1987) and Peck (1987) found

that ELs appeared to benefit more from structured tasks and adult interlocutors than from ELs interacting with English speakers peers only. Moreover, ELs in the mid- or high levels of proficiency benefitted more from interactions with English speakers than students at a low-proficiency level.

In the research synthesis conducted by Saunders & O'Brien (2006), the authors found only a handful of studies that have examined the rate of language proficiency development. All studies have concurred that (a) ELs tend to make more rapid progress from lower to middle levels of proficiency (e.g., moving form Level 1 to Level 3) and less progress moving from Level 3 to native-like language proficiency and that (b) the rate of oral language growth appears to be similar for all ELs independent of the type of program in which they are participating (e.g., bilingual or English immersion), the measures used to assess EL language proficiency, or the different sample population. Although the reason for similar growth could be developmental (i.e., all ELs develop their language proficiency in the same way), research needs to be conducted to determine if the reason for slower growth in the middle to advanced levels of language proficiency is because less instructional attention is being placed on oral language development after students attain middle levels of proficiency or above, thereby slowing the development of language acquisition.

Another important area of research in second-language acquisition is the need to empirically validate estimates of growth in language proficiency, particularly in an era of accountability when states, districts, and schools throughout the country are trying to define criteria for adequate yearly progress of language development without any research evidence. Research also needs to focus on examining the reliability and validity of language assessments given that most oral language assessments currently being used produce different results. Thus, the interpretation of the findings in language proficiency assessments should be taken cautiously (Saunders, & O'Brien, 2006).

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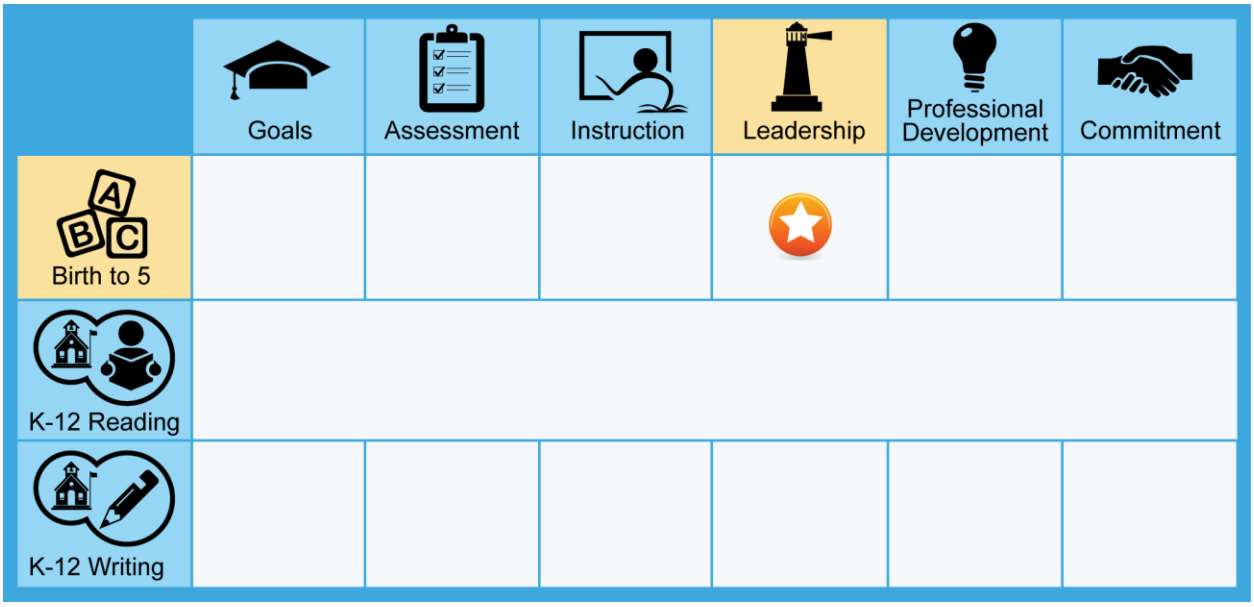
Birth to Five

Leadership

Oregon Literacy Plan



"Even a superficial look at history reveals that no social advance rolls in on the wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of dedicated individuals. Without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of irrational emotionalism and social stagnation."

Martin Luther King,

Leadership—Overview

Nationally, the concept of leadership, as applied to Birth to Five policy and program development and implementation, is complex and multifaceted. Although there is widespread recognition among researchers, policy makers, and practitioners that the first years of life are of critical importance, there is little coherence in terms of the policies and practices in place to serve young children and their families. There is little oversight of private child care and preschool centers. Standards for programs, curricula, and professional credentials vary widely. Multiple agencies, both public and private, offer disparate services, usually directed toward a narrowly defined population of children. Only a handful of states offer universal preschool, let alone universal services for children ages birth to three. In other words, when reflecting on the concept of leadership in Birth to Five, it is difficult to pinpoint who the leaders are—or ought to be.

Pianta and colleagues have described this state of affairs as a "fragile and vulnerable nonsystem through which many of our most fragile and vulnerable citizens pass" (Pianta, et al., 2009, p. 49).

Oregon is no exception in its complexity and multiplicity. As noted in the Introduction, dozens of public and private agencies, groups, foundations, and programs serve young children in Oregon. These groups include multiple governmental departments; e.g., Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Office of the Governor, Employment Department/Child Care Division, and the Department of Human Services, Child Care Program. ODE also oversees the Oregon Head Start/Prekindergarten intervention program that serves three- and four-year-old children living in poverty. ODE provides Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education services to children with disabilities, ages birth to five. ODE also has indirect influence on preschools that are run by or subsidized by their school districts. The percentage of Oregon's young children that can be reached through the direct purview of ODE is small. *Thus, a critical, foundational element of the Oregon Literacy Plan is for ODE to lead robust efforts toward coordination and cooperation among the multiple groups serving young children and to identify and support a set of common goals, mission, and vision.*

Shortly after taking office, Governor Kitzhaber began advancing his agenda for early childhood care and education. The Early Learning Design Team is tasked with turning the ambitious recommendations of the Early Childhood and Family Investment Transition Report (2011) into a reality. Thus, it is expected that the Governor's Office and the Early Learning Design Team, as well as ODE, will play a strong leadership role in reforming and improving Oregon's current early childhood system.

Functions of Leadership

The Framework, adopted by the Oregon Department of Education in 2009 and incorporated into this draft of the Oregon Literacy Plan, identifies four important functions of leadership. These important principles, as applied to the early childhood system, are listed below.

- State and regional leaders, along with leaders of direct service agencies, *work together to create a coherent plan* for supporting and promoting the successful language and early literacy development of children ages birth to five.
- *Leadership structures exist across agencies and at multiple levels*—State, regional, center-based—to maintain the focus on all children meeting formative goals to establish the necessary infrastructure, communication, and accountability mechanisms to support young children's language and early literacy development.
- State and regional leaders, along with leaders of direct service agencies*, focus on **all** students* meeting or exceeding formative goals for language and early literacy development and *prioritize eliminating the achievement gap* that exists at kindergarten entry between children from low-income families, of minority status, or of English learner status, and their more advantaged peers.
- State and regional leaders, along with leaders of direct service agencies, *are knowledgeable* about the formative goals for language and early literacy development, valid and reliable assessments for measuring development towards those goals, and evidence-based programs, strategies, and materials that support that development.

Leadership Creates a Coherent Plan for Language and Early Literacy Development

The Office of the Governor has taken the lead in prioritizing early childhood education and care. Through the appointment and work of the Governor's Council on Early Childhood Matters, the Early Childhood and Family Investment transition team, and the Early Learning Design Team (described in the Introduction), efforts to reach key stakeholders and develop a common mission and vision are underway. An important second step in moving toward a coherent and coordinated early childhood system necessitates that the State conduct a thorough analysis of the current status of the early childhood system in Oregon. The goals of such an analysis would be to (1) understand how the current status will affect efforts to effectively implement the Birth to Five Literacy Plan, (2) to identify specific changes that need to be made in the system, and (3) to identify important leverage points for bringing about those changes. One avenue to accomplish these goals is through the implementation of the recommendations of the Early Childhood and Family Investment Transition Report and of the Early Learning Design Team. Another avenue is through completion of the Self-Assessment for State Support, provided within this document.

Effective Leadership Is Distributed, Connected, and Consistent

As discussed previously, leadership within the early childhood system is distributed across multiple agencies, with multiple purposes, serving multiple populations of young children and their families. At the State level, there are a number of governmental departments and committees charged with a specific, early childhood-focused purpose. Within these departments, individuals lead specific initiatives. Many of these initiatives are time-limited, or dependent on the continuation of grant funding. At the regional level, leaders have direct access to a number of direct care providers. For example, grantee directors of Oregon Head Start/State PreK have jurisdiction over a number of Head Start centers that fall within their grant. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) could explore other sources of regional leadership within Oregon that fall out of its direct purview to develop or deepen collaborative relationships with those groups. For instance, strengthening a working partnership with the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network or the Oregon Commission on Children and Families could help reach a broader segment of the birth to five population. There are also leaders at the center-based level. The number of children served and number of staff employed at center-based child care and preschools can vary dramatically—from corporate-run agencies like Kindercare, serving hundreds of children and employing dozens of staff, to school district-run preschools serving two or three classrooms of children, and a handful of staff, to a private child care center serving five or six children, with one employee. The roles and responsibilities of "center leader" will also vary. One priority, at the State level, will be to find an effective means to reach, communicate, and include the leaders of these centers across these multiple configurations of center-based care.

Leadership Prioritizes Attainment of Goals for All Young Children

The two overarching goals anchoring Oregon's vision for the Birth to Five Literacy Plan are:

1. All children should begin kindergarten ready to learn.

2. The achievement gap, seen at kindergarten entry, between children from low-income families, of minority status, or of English learner status, and their more advantaged peers should be eliminated.

In order to achieve these goals, leaders at the State, regional, and center-based levels must be committed to the vision of attaining language and early literacy formative goals, for ALL children. Processes must be put in place to identify children who are at risk for not meeting these goals and for putting evidence-based supports in place for those children. These processes were discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, Assessment and Instruction. Leaders must be committed to communicating clearly with their staff and with the families they serve about the need for these assessments and the effective use of data for identifying appropriate supports. Leaders must be committed to providing adequate professional development and training opportunities for early childhood professionals to successfully implement evidence-based programs and strategies. As reiterated in the Framework (p. L-2), "Successful leaders help identify variables under (their) control that may be contributing to poor outcomes, establish and implement plans to change or alter those variables, and collect data to determine whether the changes made have resulted in better outcomes." As progress is made and child care and preschool agencies find that children are meeting language and early literacy goals, leaders must remain committed to a process of continuous improvement, informed by ongoing, local data collection.

Leadership Is Knowledgeable about Goals, Assessment, and Evidence-Based Practices

The field of early childhood care and education is a burgeoning area of research and development. As Pianta and colleagues succinctly note (Pianta, et al., 2009, p. 49), "Early childhood education is at the nexus of basic developmental science, policy research and analysis, and the applied disciplines of education and prevention science. The field has become one of the most vibrant areas of scientific activity in terms of the connections among scientific advances and theory, program design, policy, and classroom practices. But despite the potential links between research and evaluation on the one hand and program development, practices, and public policy on the other, there are too many key areas in which public policy and practice are not well aligned with the knowledge base."

State, regional, and center-based leaders must make the commitment to become deeply knowledgeable about the current research on best practices in early childhood care and education, especially as these practices relate to language and literacy development. Several key resources for acquiring and filtering this knowledge are noted here: Literature reviews such as the *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006, Neuman & Dickinson, 2010), Eager to Learn (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001); *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000), and the *Report of the National Early Literacy Panel* (2008). Websites such as the What Works Clearinghouse (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/), Doing What Works (http://dww.ed.gov/), and the Center for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood (CRTIEC) (http://www.crtiec.org/). Sifting through these resources, and others, is a time-consuming and challenging task, but it must be taken on by those leaders who intend to improve the standard of early childhood care and education in Oregon. The Literacy Leadership State Team (LLST), Oregon Department of Education and/or the Governor's Early Learning Council should implement a schedule in which knowledge and research from reputable sources is continually accessed and reviewed with intent of integrating the most recent research on effective early education practices into planning and development. Furthermore, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and other government

departments serving young children should collaborate across departmental lines so that Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten programs, EI/ECSE programs, preschools, child care centers, school districts and schools receive a consistent message (goals, training resources) about how to improve children's literacy outcomes from Birth through
Grade 12.

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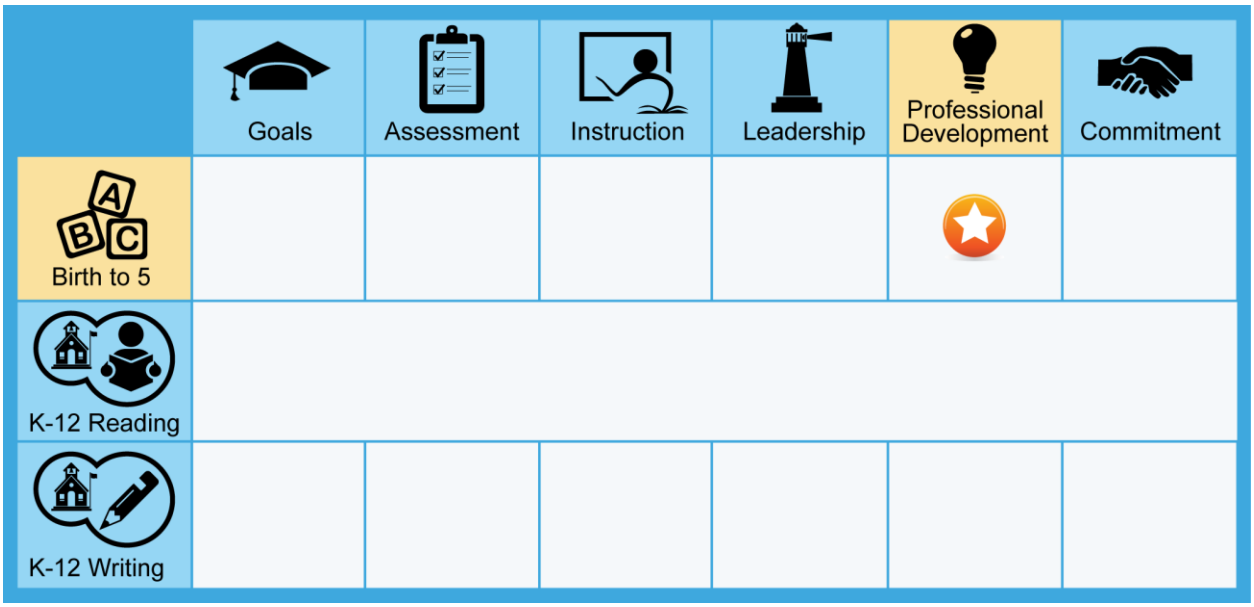
Birth to Five
Professional Development

Oregon Literacy Plan



In this chapter, we review the existing status of requirements for qualifications and certifications for early childhood professionals in Oregon. We also briefly review early childhood professional training programs available in two- and four-year colleges in Oregon. Review of the current status provides a picture of areas that need improvement and that should be prioritized as part of Oregon's Birth to Five Literacy

Qualifications or Certifications Required of Current Child Care Providers/Preschool Teachers in Oregon

Currently, there is no Oregon child care or preschool provider certificate for personnel providing services to children ages birth to five. However, a certificate is in development for preschool providers. Requirements for non-Head Start child care providers are outlined in the Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 414-300-0000 through 414-300-0415, 414-350-0000 through 414-350-0405, and 414-205-0000 through 414-205-0170. These rules can be found at http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_400/OAR_414/414_tofc.html. Of note within these rules, "Center Directors shall be at least 21 years of age and have at least one year of training and/or experience in management and supervision. Child-care providers and preschool teachers must be at least 18 years old and have either (a) 20 semester hours of

training in a college or university in early childhood education, child development, or special education; (b) a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential (described below); or (c) at least one year successful, full-time work as a teacher in a group program for children. Level II Teacher Aids must be at least 18 years of age and have worked at least six months at the center where they are now employed. Center staff must also pass State and, in some cases, even federal background checks and have current certification in first aid and CPR."

For purposes of documentation and recognition of professional achievements, people who work in the field of childhood care and education can apply to the Oregon Registry (www.centerline.pdx.edu/oregonregistry/index.php). This voluntary, statewide program documents and recognizes their professional achievements. The Oregon Registry Steps are referenced by the Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs). The OARs provide a useful frame of reference for child-care staff, their employers, and potential employers because each Step represents further training and education in the Oregon Core Body of Knowledge for the Childhood Care and Education Profession.

As indicated above, Oregon incorporates the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential into its child-care center licensing regulations. The credential is awarded to individuals across the nation who have successfully completed the CDA assessment process. During the assessment process (described in detail at http://cdacouncil.org/the-cda-credential), candidates are evaluated through (a) the CDA Assessment Observation Instrument completed by the individual's advisor[3] in the setting for which a credential is being sought, (b) parent-opinion questionnaires, and (c) materials referencing the candidate's work, as well as a multiple-choice examination (i.e., the Early Childhood Studies Review) and an interview with a Council Representative about early childhood care and education practices). The CDA Assessment Observation Instrument focuses on the CDA Competency Standards, which comprise the six Competency Goals and 13 Functional Areas (the specifics of which vary by setting) shown in the table below. It is designed to document the candidate's hands-on skills in working with children.

[3] Selected by the candidate through the Council for Professional Recognition's Advisor Registry, but must meet specific requirements.

CDA Competency Goals and Functional Areas

(Retrieved on January 8, 2011, from http://cdacouncil.org/the-cda-credential/about-the-cda/cda-competency-standards)

CDA COMPETENCY GOALS	FUNCTIONAL AREAS
Goal I. To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment	1. Safe 2. Healthy 3. Learning Environment
Goal II. To advance physical and intellectual competence	4. Physical 5. Cognitive 6. Communication 7. Creative
Goal III. To support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance	8. Self 9. Social 10. Guidance
Goal IV. To establish positive and productive relationships with families	11. Families
Goal V. To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs	12. Program Management
Goal VI. To maintain a commitment to professionalism	13. Professionalism

According to the CDA council, those granted CDAs have demonstrated an ability to "meet the specific needs of children and work with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework" (http://cdacouncil.org/printable_version/what_cda_p.htm). The credential is awarded for one of three settings (i.e., center-based, home visitor, or family child care programs, with an age and/or language endorsement.) Individuals seeking a CDA must be at least 18 years old, hold a high school diploma or GED, have 480 hours of experience working with children within the past five years, and have 120 clock hours of formal child-care education within the past five years. Those seeking a bilingual endorsement must also speak, read, and write well enough in English and another language to understand—and be understood by—both children and adults. The CDA is valid for three years and then must be renewed every five years in order to remain valid.

Head Start

Oregon's Revised Statute 329.195 states that all Oregon Head Start prekindergarten programs are required to adhere to federal Head Start Performance Standards outlined in the Head Start Act (Public Law 110-134). Regulation, as outlined in Section 648a of the Head Start Act, and presented below, goes into effect in three phases:

1. Time of adoption (1987): Each classroom must have at least one teacher with, at a minimum, a CDA or State-awarded certificate. Many programs already require more than this (e.g., October 1, 2011, requirements outlined below).

2. October 1, 2011: Each Head Start classroom in center-based programs must have a teacher meeting one of the following requirements:
    - an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in early childhood education;
    - an associate degree in a field related to early childhood education and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children;
    - a baccalaureate or advanced degree in any field and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children; or
    - a baccalaureate degree in any field and has been admitted into the Teach For America program, passed a rigorous early childhood content exam, such as the Praxis II, participated in a Teach for America summer training institute that includes teaching preschool children, and is receiving ongoing professional development and support from Teach for America's professional staff.
3. September 30, 2013.
    - Head Start teachers
        - Each Head Start classroom in a center-based program is assigned one teacher who has demonstrated competency to perform functions that include
            - (a) planning and implementing learning experiences that advance the intellectual and physical development of children, including improving the readiness of children for school by developing their literacy, phonemic, and print awareness, their understanding and use of language, their understanding and use of increasingly complex and varied vocabulary, their appreciation of books, their understanding of early math and early science, their problem-solving abilities, and their approaches to learning;
            - (b) establishing and maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment;
            - (c) supporting the social and emotional development of children; and
            - (d) encouraging the involvement of the families of the children in a Head Start program and supporting the development of relationships between children and their families.
        - At least 50 percent of Head Start teachers nationwide in center-based programs have
            - (a) a baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education or
            - (b) a baccalaureate or advanced degree and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children.
    - Head Start education coordinators, including those who serve as curriculum specialists, nationwide in center-based programs have the capacity to offer assistance to other teachers in the implementation and adaptation of curricula to the group and individual needs of children in a Head Start classroom and have
        - (a) a baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education or
        - (b) a baccalaureate or advanced degree and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children; and
    - Head Start teaching assistants nationwide in center-based programs have
        - (a) at least a Child Development Associate credential;
        - (b) enrolled in a program leading to an associate or baccalaureate degree; or
        - (c) enrolled in a child-development associate credential program to be completed within two years. (Head Start Staff Qualifications and Development)

Staff Professional Development

Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 414-300-0120 pertains to (a) staff training and addresses initial safety- and emergency-procedures training (including reporting requirements related to abuse and neglect), (b) the requirement that directors, head teachers, and all teachers participate yearly in at least 15 clock hours of training or education related to child care and child development or early childhood education, and (c) the types of training and how many clock hours are appropriate.

Oregon Head Start prekindergarten teachers must maintain their qualifications so they are compliant with the Head Start standards. In addition, "Head Start grantees must provide preservice training and in-service training opportunities to program staff and volunteers to assist them in acquiring or increasing the knowledge and skills they need to fulfill their job responsibilities. This training must be directed toward improving the ability of staff and volunteers to deliver services required by Head Start regulations and policies . . . Head Start grantees must provide staff with information and training about the underlying philosophy and goals of Head Start and the program options being implemented" (45 CFR 1306.23). Annual performance reviews of each Oregon Early Head Start and Head Start staff member must be utilized to identify training and professional development needs and improve individuals' skills and professional competencies (45 CRF 1304.52).

State-funded programs must allocate 2.5% of State Head Start funds to ongoing professional development and technical assistance. Teachers in State-funded programs have access to the federal Head Start program trainings. Currently, trainings have two major emphases driven by Oregon Department of Education (ODE) priorities and program needs: (a) the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and (b) child assessment.

(a) In part because classroom quality assessments are a Head Start requirement, Oregon Prekindergarten Head Start uses the CLASS observation tool to monitor its programs. The programs are interested in learning how to reliably use this tool as a formative assessment of teacher–child interactions in their classrooms.

(b) Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten programs are required to individually assess children on a regular basis. ODE encourages programs to use online assessments and supports programs by helping them find professional development to support implementation or by providing training for particular assessments through conference calls and webinars.

Some examples of other training topics offered are program management, positive-behavior intervention and support, children with special health needs, and professional development networks (conference calls and conferences to discuss professional development and program relationships with representatives from higher education).

Provider Licensing

Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 414-300-0000 through 414-300-0415 are the minimum requirements for the licensing of Certified Child Care Centers. OAR 414-350-0000 through 414-350-0405 are the minimum requirements for certified family child care home licenses. OAR 414-205-0000 through 414-205-0170 are the Child Care Division requirements for licensing registered family child care providers. These rules may be found at http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_400/OAR_414/414_tofc.html. As noted in the introduction to the Rules for Certified Child Care Centers (OAR 414-300-0000 through 414-300-0415), the Child Care Division (CCD), with the assistance of center directors, the Oregon Association for the

Education of Young Children (OAEYC), the Oregon Association of Child Care Directors (OACCD), State resource and referral agencies, the Commission for Child Care, local commissions on Children and Families, the Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education, and a number of State agencies involved in child care developed the administrative rules pertaining to child care.

In Oregon, the CCD (established within the Oregon Employment Department) inspects and licenses child care facilities, assesses child care complaints against facilities, and provides technical assistance to child-care providers. Upon request, the Division provides a child-care provider's history of complaints and instances of regulation noncompliance. The Childhood Care & Education Coordinating Council—a consortium of agencies, providers, and parents—advises the Division on child-care issues.

Federal Head Start Programs are overseen by the Head Start Bureau—the division of ACF, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) that administers the Early/Head Start Prekindergarten program. The Bureau develops and enforces regulations based on the Head Start Act, Program Performance Standards, and other legislation. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is responsible for monitoring State Head Start Programs and ensuring that State standards and regulations are followed. Specialists at ODE use the State of Oregon Accountability Review (SOAR) process to monitor State-only programs (programs funded solely with State funds) and jointly funded programs (those receiving both State and federal Head Start funds). SOAR requires programs to submit reports, statistics, summaries, and audits as well as self-assessment results, community needs assessments, and sample child files. The program is assessed based on how the program is addressing areas identified in the *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act* (2007):

- Population and community needs
- Needs of dual-language learners
- Communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment
- Innovative and effective efforts to collaborate with community partners
- Barriers to community collaboration
- Fiscal management
- Enrollment, recruitment, selection, eligibility, and attendance
- Enrollment and services for children with disabilities, including collaboration with EI/ECSE providers
- Child outcomes related to school readiness
- Compliance with performance standards (especially as reported in the grantee's self-assessment)
- Other topics of interest and concern

All licensed child care facilities are required to pass an inspection prior to licensure. Certified facilities are also required to have approval from a Health Department Environmental Health Specialist and a fire marshal prior to licensure by the Child Care Division (CCD). Division licensing staff conduct annual visits to licensed child-care facilities. A number of child-care providers are exempt from regulation: (a) providers caring for three or fewer children (not including their own children), (b) providers caring for children from

the same family, (c) those providing care to a child in his/her home, (d) care by a relative (by blood, marriage, or adoption) of a child, (e) school district programs, and (f) limited duration programs such as summer camps.

Brief Review of Early Childhood Professional Training Programs in Oregon

What Degrees/Certifications Are Awarded?

The State of Oregon requires child-care workers to meet Child Care Division guidelines, but it does not require specific degrees, licenses, or certifications to work with very young children. Thus the goals of training programs around the state vary. Programs that train teachers to work with children Age 3 through Grade 8 may result in a recommendation to the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) for an Initial Teaching License in Early Childhood/Elementary Education.

To illustrate the types of degrees and certifications awarded in Oregon, we use examples from the teacher training programs of Lane Community College, Oregon State University, and the University of Oregon. This information was drawn from the programs' websites, application materials, and correspondence with program staff. These are just three examples of the many programs available in Oregon. For a full list of institutions offering teacher education programs approved by the Oregon TSPC, and offer endorsements of particular interest, please refer to the table below.

Institutions offering teacher education programs approved[a] by the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC)

Institution Name	Offers the **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)/Bilingual** endorsement for Early Childhood Age 3–Grade 4	Offers the **Special Education** endorsement for Early Childhood Age 3–Grade 4	Offers the **Early Intervention/ Special Education** endorsement for Early Childhood Age 3–Grade 4
Cascade College			
Concordia University—Oregon			
Corban University	X (graduate)		
Eastern Oregon University	X (undergraduate)	X (graduate)	
George Fox University	X (graduate)		
Lesley University			
Lewis and Clark College	X (graduate)	X (graduate)	
Linfield College			
Marylhurst University			

Multnomah University			
Northwest Christian University	X (undergraduate)		
Oregon State University	X (graduate)		
Pacific University	X (undergraduate)	X (graduate)	
Portland State University[a]	X (graduate)	X (undergraduate)	X (graduate)
Southern Oregon University	X (graduate)	X (graduate)	
University of Oregon[a]	X (graduate)	X (graduate)	X (graduate)
University of Phoenix—Oregon			
University of Portland		X (undergraduate)	
Warner Pacific College			
Western Oregon University[b]	X (undergraduate)	X (graduate)	X (graduate)
Willamette University	X (graduate)	X (graduate)	
Information from http://www.tspc.state.or.us/programs.asp on January 22, 2011. [a] Successful graduates of these programs are recommended for a teaching license.			

Lane Community College (LCC) offers an *Early Childhood Education* one-year Certificate and a two-year Associate of Applied Science (in addition to, or including, course work called for by the CDA Credential and State-mandated update training for individuals already in the field).

Oregon State University (OSU) offers one undergraduate *Education Double Degree* option requiring 40 hours of course work and field experience in addition to requirements in students' chosen field and two graduate-level Professional Teacher Education Programs in *Early Childhood and/or Elementary Education*. Successful students in all programs are recommended for an initial teaching license in Early Childhood/Elementary Education (Age 3–Grade 8).

The University of Oregon (UO) offers an *Educational Foundations* undergraduate major targeting (1) learning, teaching, and assessment; (2) curriculum theory; (3) technology as education; and (4) equality of opportunity. This course of study results in a bachelor's degree (i.e., not a teaching license) but prepares students to apply to teacher-preparation graduate programs. The UO offers a one-year program in its *UO Teach: K–12 Teacher Licensure and Master's Degree in Curriculum & Teaching* program to future teachers who are working on or have completed their undergraduate studies. After students complete a year of postbaccalaureate study in the UO *Teach*: Elementary strand, the program recommends graduates for an Initial Teaching License in Early Childhood/Elementary Education (Age 3–Grade 8). The UO also offers training through the *Early Intervention Program* (Department of Special Education and Clinical Sciences). Students in this program learn how to provide educational and therapeutic services for infants and young children (Birth through five years) who are at risk or disabled

(and their family members). At the conclusion of that year, the program recommends graduates for Special Educator Early Childhood/Elementary License.

What Courses Are Required?

Courses required of aspiring early childhood education teachers vary widely. The table below shows sample classes from the three Oregon teacher preparation program examples. Courses include classroom management classes, pedagogy classes, content classes (e.g., math, reading, and music), and, in some cases, child development and educational psychology courses (although these are often required prerequisites for programs at four-year institutions). Additional coursework may be offered so that teachers can receive the ESL/bilingual endorsement on their teaching license.

Sample course requirements from three Oregon teacher preparation programs

Lane Community College AAS option (does not result in initial teaching license)[a]	**Oregon State University** 1-year, full-time option (Results in initial K–12 teaching license)[b]	**University of Oregon** 1-year, full-time (Results in initial K–12 teaching license)[c]
First Year Fall ECE 120 Intro to Early Childhood Education ECE 130 Child Care and Guidance ***ECE 140 Theory and Supervised Teaching 1*** HDFS 226 Child Development WR 115W Introduction to College Writing: Workplace Emphasis or other AAS equivalent Winter ECE 110 Observing Children's Behavior ECE 150 Creative Activities for Children ECE 170 Infants and Toddlers ***ECE 140 Theory and Supervised Teaching 1*** MTH 025 Basic Math Applications or higher level mathematics Program elective[d] Spring ECE 160 Exploring Early Childhood Curriculum ECE 240 Theory and Supervised Teaching 2 FN 230 Family, Food and Nutrition Choice of: ANTH 103 Cultural Anthropology CG 203 Human Relations at Work Second Year Fall ECE 210 Applying Early Childhood Curriculum ***ECE 240 Theory and Supervised Teaching 2*** Program elective[d] Science/ Math/Computer Science requirement	Prerequisites: Courses/competency regarding content areas of interest, human development for the appropriate age, education, and community collaboration. Prior to start of program TCE 411 (3) Educational Psychology or TCE 253 (3) Learning Across the Lifespan TCE 216 (2) Foundations of Education TCE 219 (2) Multicultural Issues in Educational Settings; or TCE 522 (3) Racial and Cultural Harmony in the K–12 Classroom Discrimination for the Oregon Educator Workshop Summer TCE 599 (2) St/Science Methods TCE 527 (2) Alternative Assessment TCE 409 (4) Intro to Professional Teacher Education Program Fall TCE 520 (3) Classroom Management TCE 555 (3) Integration of the Disciplines TCE 563 (2) Students with Special Needs **TCE 510 (1) Internship** Winter TCE 557 (3) Strategies of Teaching Mathematics TCE 599 (2) Language Arts Methods TCE 573 (3) Instructional Approaches for P–12 English Language Learners ***TCE 510 (4) Internship/Student Teaching***	Prerequisites: MATH 211, 212, and 213 Fundamentals of Elementary Mathematics I, II, III EDST 411 (or 441) Early Childhood and Pre-Adolescent Development EDST 440 PE for Diverse Learners MUS 322 Music Fundamentals AAD 430 Youth Art Curriculum and Methods Summer I EDST 612 Foundations of Teaching and Learning (4 credits) EDST 614 Cultural Context of Education (4) *OR* EDST 616 Language, Power and Education (4) EDST 620 Evolution and the Math Wars (4) LT 629 Foundations in Language (4) Fall SPED 511 Foundations of Disability I (3) EDST 613 Motivation and Management (4) EDST 643 Teaching Mathematics: Facts and Inquiry (4) EDST 646 ESOL Pedagogy for Elementary Classrooms (4) Winter ***EDST 609 Practicum (supervised practicum, part-time) (4)*** EDST 640 Constructing Meaning through Literacy (4) EDST 642 Pedagogical Methods in the Humanities (4) EDST 645 Teaching Science:

Lane Community College AAS option (does not result in initial teaching license)[a]	**Oregon State University** 1-year, full-time option (Results in initial K–12 teaching license)[b]	**University of Oregon** 1-year, full-time (Results in initial K–12 teaching license)[c]
<u>Winter</u> ECE 230 Parent–School–Community Relations HDFS 227 Children Under Stress ***ECE 240 Theory and Supervised Teaching 2*** General Education requirement, choice of: Arts/Letters Social Science Science/ Math/ Computer Science <u>Spring</u> ECE 260 Administration of Child Care Centers ED 280EC Co-op Ed: Early Childhood Ed Arts/Letters requirement ECE 250 Infant and Toddler Environments Choice of: Health requirement Physical Education Activity requirement 2	<u>Spring</u> TCE 599 (1) Action Research ***TCE 510 (11) Internship/Student Teaching*** <u>Summer (required for master's degree)</u> TCE 530 (3) Fundamentals of Counseling TCE 560 (3) Research in Learning TCE 506 (1) Portfolio Development 9 additional credits in the Summer complete the requirement for the ESL/Bilingual endorsement	Detail and Discovery (4) <u>Spring</u> ***EDST 609 Student Teaching (12) (full-time student teaching)*** EDST 616 Language, Power and Education (4) *OR* EDST 614 Cultural Context of Education (4) <u>Summer II</u> EDST 611 The Scholarship of Teaching I (4) EDST 615 Critical Studies: Technology and Education (4) EDST 641 Reading as a Cultural Practice (4) EDST 644 Teaching Mathematics: Inquiry in Context (4)

NOTE: ***Bold and italicized*** courses are practicum/field experiences.

[a] Taken from *Early Childhood Education AAAS and one-year certificate* brochure downloaded January 2011 from http://www.lanecc.edu/collegecatalog/careertech.html

[b] Taken from http://oregonstate.edu/education/programs/eecourses.html

[c] Taken from *2010–11 Program Handbook* downloaded January 2011 from http://education.uoregon.edu/field.htm?id=147

[d] Program electives may be selected from the following list or be approved by the ECE Program Coordinator in advance: CG 191 Issues in Cultural Diversity, CG 204 Eliminating Self-Defeating Behavior, CG 205 Introduction to Assertive Behavior, CG 206 Coping with Stress and Depression, CG 211 Dreikursian Principles of Child Guidance 1, CG 212 Dreikursian Principles of Child Guidance 2, ECE 240 Infant Practicum (extra term), ED 209 Seminar Education Foundations Part 1, ED 210 Seminar Education Foundations Part 2, ED 225 Creative Dance for Children, ENG 100 Children's Literature, HDFS 228 Exceptional Child, HDFS 229 Middle Childhood, HDFS 233 Parenting, HDFS 298 IS: Child Development, HS 207 The Dysfunctional Family, or ECE 253 Diversity Issues In ECE

What Practicum Experiences Are Provided?

Practicum experiences (i.e., teaching experience in real classrooms) vary in duration, scope, and intensity/responsibility. In some cases, multiple shorter experiences are required, while in others, one or two teaching experiences are required but allow the student teacher to take full responsibility for teaching students for weeks or months at a time. As is expected for any fieldwork experience, the types of care settings, classrooms, and districts available, as well as the mentoring provided by the mentor teacher varies program by program. Elementary settings tend to be the emphasis in degree-granting programs, but there are exceptions, particularly when the program is linked to an onsite early care/education facility (e.g., a "lab school") or when a separate early education or intervention option is offered. The table above shows the required classroom experiences (in bold and italic) for three Oregon programs. Additional detail is provided here:

The program at Lane Community College prepares students to work in settings serving 0–5-year olds. Throughout their coursework, students work at the on-site LCC Child and Family Center, but in their final term, they work in a community child care center.

Undergraduates pursuing the *Human Development & Family Sciences—Child Development* option at Oregon State University (OSU) conduct their student teaching in the OSU Child Development Lab (CDL) during a 12-credit course (Student Teaching in Early Childhood Development) at the end of their studies. They participate and teach in the CDL approximately 24 hours per week. The CDL serves 3–5-year old children in Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten and the local community, children with special needs, and English-language learners. Though the graduate program prepares students to work with 3- and 4-year-olds, field experiences take place only in elementary schools. For those interested in working with very young children and elementary students, a month-long September practicum takes place in a public primary school with a cooperating teacher. Later in the fall, prospective teachers work approximately two days a week in that school. In the winter, students spend approximately six weeks in the classroom, whereas in the spring, they are in the classroom for a full quarter.

Potential teachers in the University of Oregon *Teach* program briefly visit classrooms in September, observe for one term, complete a one-term practicum, and finally teach full-time for one term. All student teaching experiences for teachers interested in an elementary license take place in public elementary schools. In contrast, those in the Early Intervention program have access to a variety of settings, including home and community-based EI/ECSE programs and research-based programs for children and their families, public schools (typical and alternative), community preschools, and Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten programs.

What Are the Graduation Rates? What Are the Rates of Employment in Related Positions within Oregon?

Schools of education track graduation and employment rates to varying degrees. Graduation and employment rates were not available for Lane Community College and Oregon State University when the Oregon Literacy Plan was written. The University of Oregon *Teach* program is new, but before the restructuring, graduation rates for the general education teacher preparation program were greater than 90%, according to program staff. Job placement information is "self-report" and is not tracked officially.

The *Early Intervention* program graduated 16 students last year (100%): 11 are working in Oregon, 2 are working in other states, and the employment status of 3 is unknown.

How Are Graduates Evaluated in Terms of their Effectiveness as an Early Childhood Care Provider or Instructor?

Evaluations of aspiring teachers' effectiveness vary, but heavily weight the independent student teaching experiences. For example, evaluations tend to include lesson plans, reflections and journal entries, and feedback from the cooperating or mentor teachers in the classrooms in which the candidates teach.

At Oregon State University, undergraduates in the student teaching class plan and implement a lesson unit for a specific group of learners, conduct pre- and posttesting, reflect on and adapt their teaching, and consider the implications of student data. This is captured in a Work Sample that meets the basic structural requirements of the Oregon Teachers Standards & Practices Commission (TSPC). Oregon State University is also exploring the use of the CLASS, a tool for assessing classroom climate, as a peer-review tool. Master's-level students also create the Work Sample as part of their larger teaching portfolio that they must defend during oral exams.

At the University of Oregon, two major components of instructor effectiveness are considered prior to granting a degree and a license recommendation: a work sample and a professional growth assessment (PGA). During both the part-time and full-time practica, students design and implement a unit of study for a minimum number of lessons and weeks of study. Multiple subjects may be the focus of the lessons; however, one lesson must contain at least one reading benchmark and one lesson must contain at least one math benchmark. Pre-, post-, and, ideally, formative assessment data, lesson plans, journal entries, and observation notes are collected as samples of the student's proficiency as a teacher. The PGA is created by the student, his or her cooperating teacher in the classroom, and his or her supervisor during evaluation meetings at the middle and end of each term to document a student's progress toward meeting Oregon's standards for licensure.

Additional Resources for Professional Development in Oregon

One of the many valuable services provided by Oregon's Child Care Resource & Referral Network (OCCRRN) is professional development and training across a number of early childhood topic areas (see http://www.oregonchildcare.org/). According to its 2009–2010 annual report, nearly 2,500 trainings were posted on its training calendar, available at: http://www.oregonchildcaretraining.org/

According to the 2009–2010 annual report (p. 11), Oregon's CCR&Rs provide training and professional development services in the following areas:

- "Overviews and Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Care Orientations for family child care businesses and licensed exempt caregivers
- Trainings required to become a registered family child care business

- Trainings that can be used to fill the ongoing licensing requirements for family and center child care professionals
- Trainings that help child care professionals do their jobs better, enjoy their work more, build their businesses, and keep children in their care happy and healthy
- Trainings in business management, stress reduction, child development, fun learning activities, and more
- Special needs and inclusion trainings to help child care professionals care for all kinds of children
- Trainings that help child care professionals better understand how to keep children healthy and safe and to understand the various stages of child development
- Assistance with understanding Oregon's professional development system and help with the Oregon Registry
- Assistance with articulation programs that help child care professionals obtain college credit for real-life experience and trainings they have taken
- Scholarship funds or referrals to offerings that help child care professionals access these funds to pay for their trainings."

Planning for Professional Development and Preservice Training in the Oregon Literacy Plan

The systems for credentialing, regulation, licensing, and preservice training in the area of early childhood are complex and varied. One initial step of the Oregon Literacy Plan should be to evaluate the existing early childhood professional training programs in two-year and four-year colleges in Oregon, as well as the current requirements for qualifications or certifications of child care providers and preschool teachers using the research evidence for the types of training and professional development that best support the language and early literacy development of young children. This evaluation could attempt to address the following questions:

- What improvements can be made for preservice preparation?
- How could those improvements be rolled out over time?
- How could the impact of improvements be evaluated?

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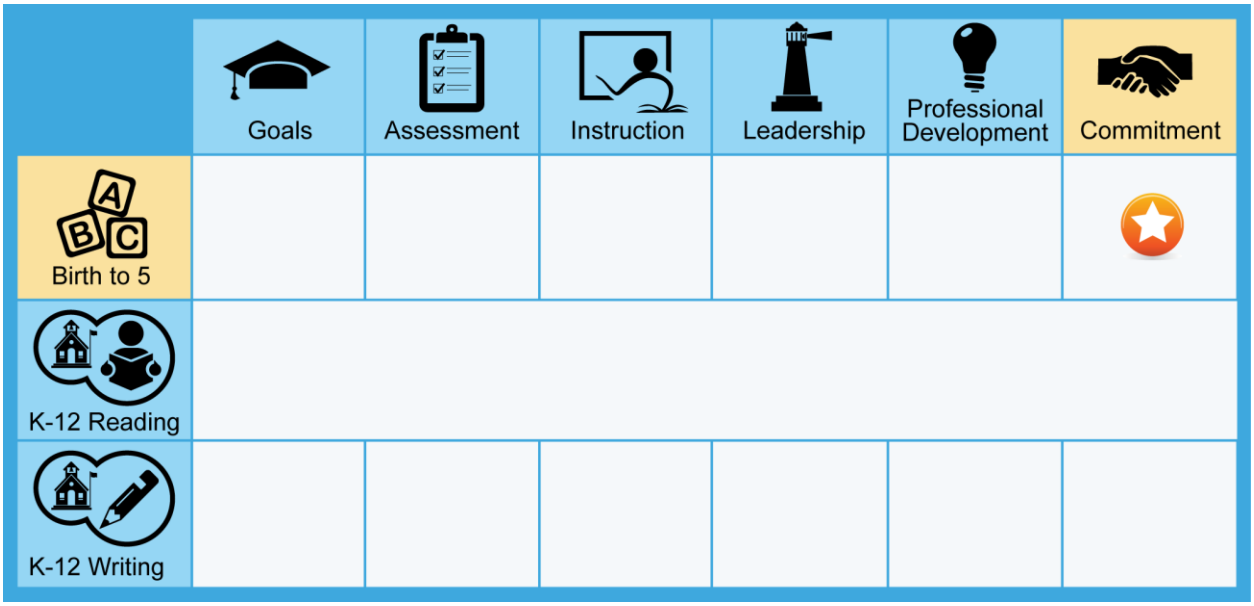
Birth to Five Commitment

Oregon Literacy Plan



Commitment—Overview

Oregon's Birth to Five Literacy Plan is comprehensive, ambitious, and full of challenges. Executing the Plan and achieving its goals will require powerful commitment of time, resources, collaborative efforts, and effective planning. By creating this Plan, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), the Literacy Leadership State Team (LLST), and partners commit to providing the necessary leadership, seeking available funding streams, and cooperating across department lines to bring about the vision of supporting all children Birth to Five. In this chapter, we identify and discuss priorities for commencing and sustaining the initial roll-out of the Birth to Five Oregon Literacy Plan.

1. Define the key content areas, goals, and assessments.
2. Commit to the goal that all children who are eligible for services receive them.
3. Commit to the principle that outreach to parents and families is critical to the success of any plan that involves children ages birth to five.
4. Commit to creating a coherent early childhood system.

5. Focus on critical time points within the Birth to Five years.
6. Commit to improving the qualifications of early childhood professionals and the quality of care or instruction delivered to young children.

Define the Key Content Areas, Goals, and Assessments

For children Birth to Age three, the focus is on language development and the adult interactions that promote language development. Children's receptive and expressive vocabulary, listening comprehension, beginning use of syntax, and development of content knowledge can all be developed and enhanced through frequent, stimulating language interactions with their parents and primary caregivers (Dickinson & Neuman, 2006). Children's emerging interest and engagement in literacy-related activities should be promoted through adult modeling of the use of print in everyday activities, availability of print resources (children's books, magazines, labels, etc.) in the child's environment, and frequent opportunities for shared book reading with a nurturing adult. Parents should be encouraged to read with their child every day.

For children Ages 3 to 5, an emphasis on language development and engagement in reading and related activities remains essential. A focus on phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, basic concepts of print, and other emergent literacy skills are introduced at this time. Age-appropriate, formative goals for development of these skills (oral language, vocabulary, syntax, comprehension, content knowledge, phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and basic concepts of print) should be identified. These goals will correspond to the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (Office of Head Start, 2010) and Oregon Early Childhood Foundations (ODE, 2006) (http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=1408). Efforts will be directed toward alignment of these goals with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts in kindergarten (NGA & CSSSO, 2010).

Valid and reliable measures for assessing these abilities should be used by individuals with the proper training and skills. For English-language learners, tools that provide a valid assessment of the child's ability, and not a measure of the child's fluency (or lack thereof) with the English language, must be used. For ELLs, goals and assessments incorporate the research on dual-language acquisition and of the unique needs of children growing up in a culture where the majority language differs from the primary language spoken in their homes.

Commit to the Goal that All Children Who Are Eligible for Services Receive Them

One avenue for identifying young children in need of early intervention or special education services is the Child Find program, required by the ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*** (***IDEA, 2004***). As described on its website (http://www.childfindidea.org/overview.htm), **"**Child Find is a continuous process of public awareness activities, screening and evaluation designed to ***locate, identify, and refer as early as possible*** all young children with disabilities and their families who are in need of Early Intervention Program or Early Childhood Special Education . . . IDEA requires all states to have a 'comprehensive Child Find system' to assure that all children who are in need of early intervention or special education services are located, identified, and referred. Each state is responsible for planning and implementing a comprehensive child find system."

The universal screening process recommended in Chapter 2 (Assessment) is a second method for early identification of children who may be at risk for delayed language or early literacy development and who could thus benefit from early intervention or support services.

All preschool-aged children living in poverty are eligible to attend Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten programs, although not all of those who are eligible actually do attend Head Start. The Oregon Department of Education, in cooperation with other governmental agencies serving young children and their families, are committed to identifying and offering services to all children deemed eligible.

Programs like Child Find, universal screening, and the outreach efforts of Head Start centers are a few methods for finding these children. Additional efforts, including efforts designed to effectively reach English-language learners or families who do not access the typical avenues for receiving social services, must be identified and employed.

Commit to the Principle that Outreach to Parents and Families Is Critical to the Success of Any Plan that Involves Children Ages Birth to Five

Parents are a child's first teachers. The daily decisions parents make regarding their child's care, diet, sleep, discipline, safety, and activities strongly influence the adult the child will become (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). The language interactions parents have with their child lay the foundation for the child's eventual language development (Hart & Risley, 1995). Their models of reading-related behaviors and the availability of print materials in the home affect the child's development of early literacy skills and eventual reading achievement (Landry & Smith, 2006). Yet, the influence that parents have on a child's development is frequently undervalued. *Leaders at the State, regional, and center-based levels must recognize the considerable and critical influence that parents have on the ultimate development of their children. Leaders must commit to substantial outreach efforts to successfully connect with the parents of young children and effectively involve them in supporting and enhancing their child's language and early literacy development.*

Commit to Creating a Coherent Early Childhood System

In this document, the complexity of Oregon's current early childhood system has been noted. Dozens of public and private agencies, groups, foundations, and programs serve young children and their families—sometimes at cross purposes. To make a true impact on children's language and early literacy development, through the Oregon Literacy Plan, leaders at the State, regional, and center-based levels must commit to developing policy and coordination efforts that work toward building a coherent early childhood system across the multiple groups that serve children Birth to Five. Emphasis should be placed on leveraging existing resources, especially by increasing alignment and coordination across currently separate elements of the early childhood system (e.g., school-based programs, child care programs, and libraries). This is a difficult task. However, as noted in the Introduction, efforts are already underway, through the Governor's Council on Early Childhood Matters, the Early Childhood and Family Investment transition team, the Early Learning Design Team, and the Oregon Literacy Plan to begin the necessary dialogue and hard work toward achieving this goal.

The Oregon Literacy Plan recommends that the State begin with an analysis of the existing system of early childhood care and education in Oregon. The following key questions should be thoroughly probed

and answered: (1) What is the primary purpose of each of the different agencies or groups? (2) How do the existing agencies collect information to assess their effectiveness in meeting their primary purpose? (3) How do the different agencies and groups currently communicate between each other (4) What can be done to improve the effectiveness of that communication?

One recommendation for increasing collaboration and improving communication is to build a statewide data system that allows for easy sharing of child-centered information across key stakeholder groups. Agencies and groups will be encouraged to connect to, use, and share the data system. Establishing an integrated, statewide early childhood data system is one of the primary recommendations of the Early Childhood and Family Investment Transition Report (2011).

Focus on Critical Time Points in Birth to Five Years

During certain times in the Birth to Five years, the State and K–12 education has the greatest opportunity to leverage its resources to make an impact for young children. Currently, these times appear to include birth, preschool, and the transition from preschool to kindergarten. For each time point, the Oregon Literacy Plan recommends the following strategies.

The State could utilize a database of new births to communicate important messages regarding health, language development, shared reading, and the elements/availability of high-quality child care.

The State could direct efforts at increasing the number of eligible children enrolled in State-funded preschool and at improving the quality and outcomes of State-funded preschool.

The State could improve communication between kindergartens and their “feeder” preschools, work to align assessments and curricula across the preschool and kindergarten years, and improve outreach efforts to parents and families in the transition between preschool and kindergarten in an effort to increase family involvement in the child’s ongoing education. A special emphasis should be placed on reaching priority populations—children with disabilities and children who are English-language learners.

Commit to Improving the Qualifications of Early Childhood Professionals and the Quality of Care or Instruction Delivered to Young Children

Evidence-based standards for the training and certification of early childhood professionals should be researched, adopted, and adhered to. National organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provide recommendations, resources, and training opportunities. The resources offered through NAEYC can serve as a starting point and should be fully explored. An initial introduction to the existing standards for qualifications and certifications of early childhood professionals was presented in Chapter 5 (Professional Development). This topic should be further explored. A commitment should be made to conducting a thorough analysis of the current systems and for identifying needs and opportunities for improving those systems.

Final Considerations

Once implementation of the Oregon Literacy Plan begins, additional priorities will likely surface. Implementation of the Plan should be dynamic, in that key stakeholders should continually seek out and

incorporate recently published research and policy into the strategies, recommendations, and practices, while holding steady to the purpose of improving language and early literacy outcomes for all young children in Oregon.

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