

March 2024

JUMP START KINDERGARTEN TOOLKIT

Resources for Implementing a High-Quality Summer
Kindergarten Transition Program



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Oregon achieves . . . together!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Districts across the state have been hosting innovative kindergarten transitioning programs for many years and those programs inspired the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Jump Start Kindergarten initiative. This toolkit includes the best practices of districts and partners across the state including, but not limited to, the 28 Jump Start Kindergarten district grantees: Beaverton, Centennial, Central, David Douglas, Dayton, Forest Grove, Gervais, Gresham Barlow, Hermiston, Hillsboro, Hood River, Jefferson County, Klamath County, Klamath Falls City Schools, Lincoln County, Morrow County, North Wasco County, Ontario, Parkrose, Phoenix-Talent, Reynolds, Seaside, St. Paul, Tillamook, Umatilla, Vale, Warrenton-Hammond, and Woodburn. **Thank you for generously sharing your resources, tips, and stories.**

The Jump Start Kindergarten toolkit is a collaborative project of many teams at ODE, the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC), representatives from school districts, and community-based organizations. Jump Start Kindergarten is a key investment of ODE's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, a federal program administered by the Department of Education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, visit the [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund III \(ESSER III\) website](#).

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit offers examples and resources that can be customized to meet the unique needs of your school community, and is organized into six sections:

- **Section 1: A Program Grounded in Equity** - highlights the Jump Start Kindergarten strengths-based vision of support and connection with children and families disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- **Section 2: Planning with Partners** - offers tools for planning with community-based partners, including early learning partners.
- **Section 3: Family-Centered Outreach** - includes “Register for Kindergarten Today!” materials and family-centered approaches to outreach.
- **Section 4: Planning the Jump Start Experience** - provides examples of hands-on, literacy-enriched curricula from across the state and beyond.
- **Section 5: Engaging All Families** - includes family engagement activities accompanied by dynamic tools.
- **Section 6: Making a Difference** - summarizes the toolkit and encourages continued systems work to align and connect learning.

A NOTE ON TERMS

- **Families:** Throughout this toolkit, the term “families” is defined broadly as anyone in a caregiving role for the child, as well as family members, relatives, and guardians supporting the child.
- **Jump Start Kindergarten:** Except when discussing specific ODE program requirements, “Jump Start Kindergarten” is used to refer to summer kindergarten transition programs in general.
- **Early Learning Programs:** This term includes federally and state-funded programs like Head Start and Preschool Promise, as well as private preschools, child care settings, and home-based programs.



Look for the icon highlighting best practices from districts and partners across the state.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
▶ A Strong Start	6
SECTION 1: A PROGRAM GROUNDED IN EQUITY	7
▶ The Jump Start Kindergarten Vision	7
▶ An Equity Lens	8
▶ An Equity Stance	8
▶ Equity Decision Tools for Leaders	8
▶ Supporting Regular Attendance for Kindergarten Students	9
▶ Jump Start Kindergarten Program Goals	11
SECTION 2: PLANNING WITH PARTNERS.....	12
▶ Building Diverse and Inclusive Teams	12
▶ Access to Programs for Families	14
▶ Recruiting Staff	15
▶ Tribal Partnership and Consultation	16
▶ Planning with Early Learning Partners	17
SECTION 3: FAMILY-CENTERED OUTREACH	23
▶ Early Registration	23
▶ Families Experiencing Houselessness	26
SECTION 4: PLANNING THE JUMP START EXPERIENCE.....	27
▶ Building the Bridge From Home	27
▶ Building the Bridge to the Classroom	28
▶ Early Literacy	29
▶ Sample Program Curriculum and Schedules.....	32
SECTION 5: ENGAGING ALL FAMILIES	34
▶ Family Engagement Events	37
▶ Home Visits.....	43
▶ Jump Start Kindergarten Orientations and Reunions	43
SECTION 6: MAKING A DIFFERENCE.....	44
▶ Measuring Impact.....	44
▶ Beyond Jump Start Kindergarten.....	45

INTRODUCTION

The first day of kindergarten is a significant milestone for families and children, marked by both excitement and, at times, apprehension. While kindergarten opens the door to new experiences, knowledge, and friendships in a classroom community, elementary school is also a new setting for many children and families.

When Jump Start Kindergarten programs prioritize cultural responsiveness and recognize families as the child's primary educators, children and families feel seen, valued, and equipped for a robust start to their educational journey, setting a firm foundation for future academic success.

Programs like Jump Start Kindergarten may help promote better and more immediate school adjustment, long-term social and emotional development, improved attendance, and greater academic success.¹ Essentially, the kindergarten transition can be challenging, but with two-way communication and increased access to resources, families and children can feel more prepared and confident as they embark on the K-12 journey.

In Oregon, with over 1,200 public K-12 schools spread across 197 districts, resources for supporting kindergarten transitions can vary significantly. Our goal with this toolkit is to provide a range of resources to support the development and implementation of engaging, culturally responsive programs for our youngest learners and their families.

At the heart of this toolkit is the idea that coordination between early learning providers and K-12 school systems is essential for success. This toolkit emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts between districts, schools, and communities to create effective transition programs.



JUMP START KINDERGARTEN is an opportunity to center equity and focus less on how “ready” children are for kindergarten and more on how prepared Oregon’s educators, schools, districts, communities, and systems are to receive and support ALL young children and their families.



EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICTS (ESDs) AND EARLY LEARNING HUBS

For communities with limited resources, connecting with Educational Service Districts (ESDs) and Early Learning Hubs can be an excellent starting point. [Section 2: Planning with Partners, on page 12](#) of the toolkit provides further information on Early Learning Hubs and other resources that can aid in supporting successful kindergarten transitions.

A Strong Start

Jump Start Kindergarten is an evidence-based kindergarten transition program that occurs in the summer before kindergarten starts. Jump Start Kindergarten serves as an important bridge for young children and families, building on their strengths and lived experiences to secure belonging and promote early learning. By providing children and families a chance to ease into kindergarten routines, activities, and learning time with fewer children and more adult support, the conditions for belonging, success, and learning take root.

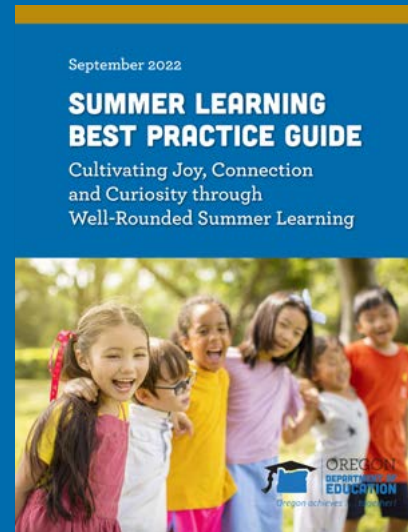


COMPANION RESOURCES

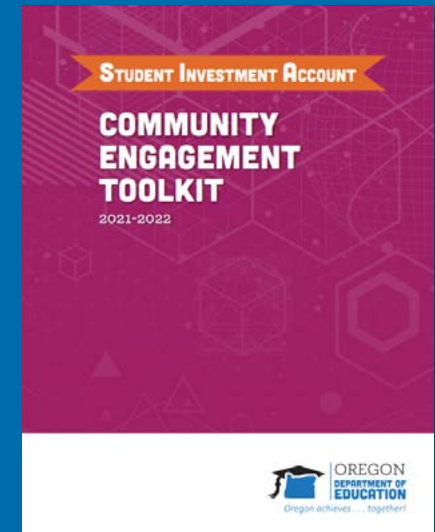
The following documents provide more information and resources on summer programming and community engagement. Please bookmark them to use alongside the tools for Jump Start Kindergarten.



- ▶ [Summer Learning Toolkit: Practical Tools and Resources for Planning Summer Learning Programs.](#)
- ▶ [Summer Learning Best Practice Guide: Cultivating Joy, Connection and Curiosity through Well-Rounded Summer Learning.](#)



- ▶ [ODE Student Investment Account: Community Engagement Toolkit, 2021-22.](#) This document offers district and school leaders the information and tools needed to engage the community, assess needs, plan well, and implement programs.



SECTION 1: A PROGRAM GROUNDED IN EQUITY

The Jump Start Kindergarten Vision

Jump Start provides a unique opportunity to build relationships, spark joy and deepen family engagement to support a seamless start to school.



Connection as the Foundation for Learning

Children flourish and learn best in the context of **strong and supportive relationships** and in joyful child-centered environments. Incorporating families' cultures into the classroom curriculum and family engagement activities gives children a sense of belonging.



Co-Creation and Innovation

Children succeed when families, schools, and communities **work together** during the pre-kindergarten (pre-k) year.



Purposeful Outreach and Engagement

Children and families feel connected to school when engagement is **culturally affirming** and **aligned** with early learning activities and providers. Outreach and enrollment is successful when schools prioritize families most underserved by our system and disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

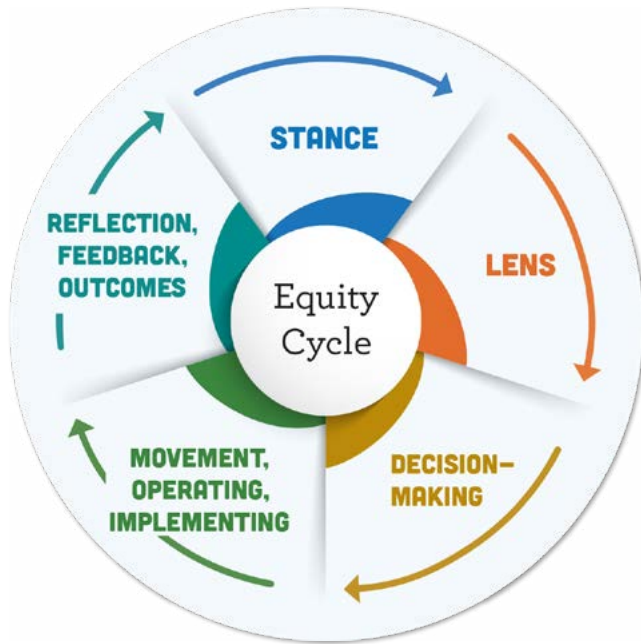


I GOT THIS!

Jump Start Kindergarten allows children to dip their toes in the water and see that school is a warm and welcoming place. I knew of one Jump Start student that had a hard time leaving his mother in the morning. He was assigned to my class this year, and came in on the first day with a beaming smile and a lot of confidence. It's a powerful thing to be able to arrive on your first day of kindergarten, the beginning of your elementary experience, and be able to think to yourself, 'I got this!'. That is what the Jump Start Kindergarten program gave him, and I couldn't be happier.

- Eliana Belle, Kindergarten Teacher, Gervais Elementary School, Gervais School District





The Oregon Department of Education invested in Jump Start Kindergarten as part of the recovery effort from the COVID-19 pandemic. While all incoming children benefit from a transition experience, the Jump Start Kindergarten grant focuses on children and families disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

By using an equity-centered decision tool, administrators can implement Jump Start Kindergarten as a strengths-based, responsive expanded learning option to help accelerate social-emotional learning, language development, and early literacy and numeracy learning.

An Equity Lens

An equity lens is an active tool that supports core values, commitments, orientations, and questions to become operationalizable. An equity lens must support navigating choices in the here and now. It helps translate theory into practice, focuses on assets rather than deficits, and avoids making decisions that could marginalize or harm students, staff, families, and communities.

An Equity Stance

An equity stance includes core values, commitments, orientations, principles, strategies, and frameworks that your district, organization, school, or team has decided are foundational in decision-making.

ODE's Integrated Guidance Appendix E lays out these processes of the equity cycle.

- ▶ [Integrated Guidance: Equity Lens and Tools](#)



Equity Decision Tools for Leaders

Three tools have been developed by ODE to guide school and district leaders when making decisions.

The first tool is a “Decision Tree” and is the easiest tool to use in considering difficult decisions. It can help leaders spot patterns or gaps in their planning and guide them to the use of the other two decision tools. The Decision Tree is accompanied by a set of starting conditions to review and reflect on before beginning the decision process.

- ▶ To access the Decision Tree, as well as the other tools: Deepening Questions and Dialogue and Consultancy, refer to [Decision Tools for SY 2021-22](#).



- ▶ Another key document is the [ODE Student Investment Account: Community Engagement Toolkit, 2021-22](#), which is referenced in the Introduction, as a companion resource.



Supporting Regular Attendance for Kindergarten Students

Jump Start Kindergarten can help address some of the root causes of chronic absenteeism in kindergarten by helping to foster supportive relationships and resource sharing between school and family early on.

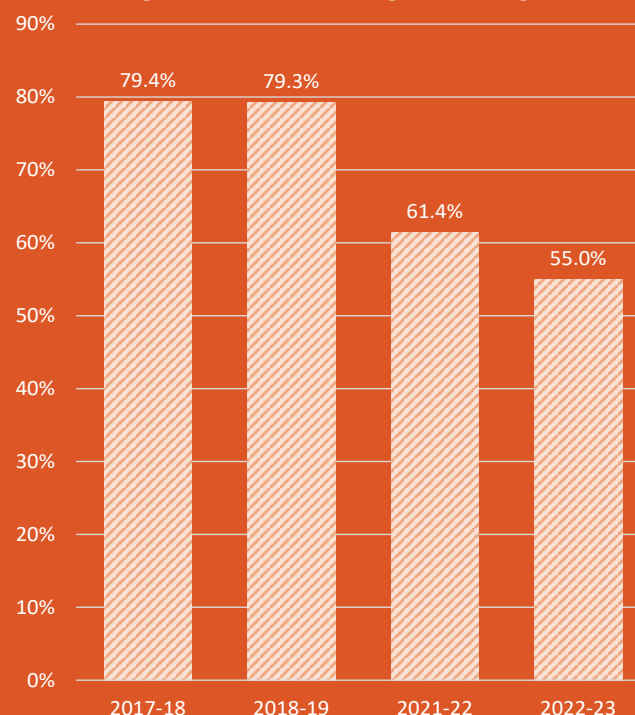
Throughout the program, school staff play a crucial role in assisting families in understanding various aspects of school operations, including opening and closing hours, enrollment in before- and after-school care, as well as navigating meal services and bus routes.

When resource sharing occurs on a foundation of respect and partnership, and in the context of an overall welcoming school community, children and families can feel more comfortable and excited about the start of the school year.

Oregon's regular attendance rates for kindergarten students have sharply declined during the pandemic years. School districts are working to improve attendance through a combination of efforts:

- Creating a school culture where all students are connected to an adult.
- Leveraging community partners to build cross-community initiatives that raise awareness around attending school regularly.
- hosting transitioning into kindergarten programs the summer prior to the start of school.

Percent Regular Attenders, Oregon Kindergartners



RESOURCES

- ▶ [Jump Start Kindergarten 2022 Brief:](#) Overview of Jump Start Kindergarten program including promising data.



- ▶ [Diagnostic tool for addressing the root causes of chronic absenteeism:](#) A critical tool for school staff to use to better understand declining attendance rates.



- ▶ [Bringing Attendance Home:](#) Tools for positive ways to message the importance of attendance in Jump Start Kindergarten.



- ▶ [Head Start Attendance Policy and Regulations:](#) This policy lists steps to support families with regular attendance and asks staff to reflect on ways to improve the climate of the program.



- ▶ [Relationships Matter:](#) Attendance Works emphasizes the importance of trusted relationships between school staff and family to support improved attendance.

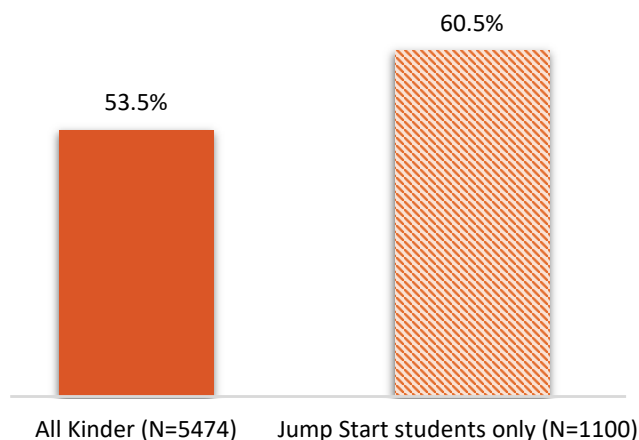


In order to determine impacts on regular attendance (attending school more than 90% of the time) ODE compared attendance rates of students who participated in Jump Start Kindergarten in Summer 2022 with attendance rates of kindergarten students throughout the district.

On average, 60.5% of children who participated in Jump Start Kindergarten attended kindergarten during the school year regularly, compared to 53.5% of all kindergarten students (“All Kinder” refers to all kindergarten students regardless of Jump Start participation).

Note: ODE is not observing a causal effect of Jump Start with regular attendance rates but rather observing an association with the data and this association could change with new data.

**Jump Start Districts 2022-23 Kindergarten
Regular Attendance Rates³**



“Missing just one or two days of preschool or kindergarten every few weeks can make it harder for children to develop reading skills, and to be prepared for kindergarten or first grade.”

- Hedy Chang, Attendance Works

Visit Attendance Works at www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools! This is especially helpful when planning to share the importance of attendance at family engagements during Jump Start Kindergarten.

- ▶ [Build the Habit of Good Attendance](#). An example of some of the resources from the Attendance Works website.

**Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool and Kindergarten
Build the Habit of Good Attendance**

DID YOU KNOW...

Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward.

Missing 10% of school (1 or 2 days every few weeks) can make it harder to:

- Gain early reading and math skills.
- Build relationships.
- Develop good attendance habits.

High quality preschool and kindergarten has many benefits!

- The routines your child develops will continue throughout school.
- Make the most of early grades by encouraging your child to attend every day.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Work with your child and his/her teacher to develop your child's strong attendance.

Talk about it – sing about it – make it an adventure!

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Share ideas with other parents for getting to school on time.

Before the school year starts

- Find out what day school starts and begin a countdown!
- Keep your child healthy and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Attend orientation with your child to meet teachers and classmates and find out about health and safety procedures.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [ODE's Every Day Matters website and Toolkit](#)
- ▶ [Attendance Works Promotional Materials](#)
- ▶ [Why Attendance Matters](#)
- ▶ [Why Kindergarten Attendance Matters for the Whole School](#)
- ▶ [Integrating Attendance into Kindergarten](#)

Attendance Tip: Lincoln County School District gives students magnets in English and in Spanish with the “no school days” listed for the school year, along with a suggestion that these are good days for scheduling appointments.

Some districts provide this information to local pediatricians and orthodontists, requesting that these days be set aside for school-aged children's appointments.

Jump Start Kindergarten Program Goals

Every school community implements Jump Start Kindergarten differently based on their unique strengths and needs. High quality programs have these goals in common:

Child-centered goals, a minimum of two weeks or 30 hours of classroom time with a kindergarten teacher (or teacher with experience teaching kindergarten) from the child's school. Classroom goals include:

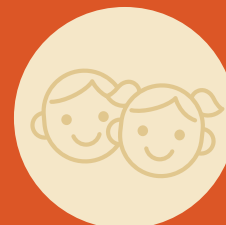
- Increasing children's social, emotional, and related skills.
- Building relationships and a sense of belonging.
- Cultivating each child's joy, connection, inclusion, and curiosity in learning.

Parent/Caregiver-centered goals, a minimum of ten hours of family engagement activities providing:

- Opportunities for families to meet each other and the school community in a collaborative and authentic space.
- Support in navigating the school environment.
- Activities to help families and school staff build positive relationships in a culturally affirming environment.

Partnership goals, a commitment to collaborative planning:

- District and school teams meet with local partners such as learning providers and community-based organizations.



Think about what planning, communication and coordination will need to take place in the spring to ensure children involved in programs such as Head Start or receiving Early Childhood Special Education services are able to thrive in Jump Start Kindergarten in the summer. Equally important, think about how information shared by families and leaders of Jump Start can be shared with school staff to connect families with resources that may be available to them.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [ESSER III](#). Information regarding the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.



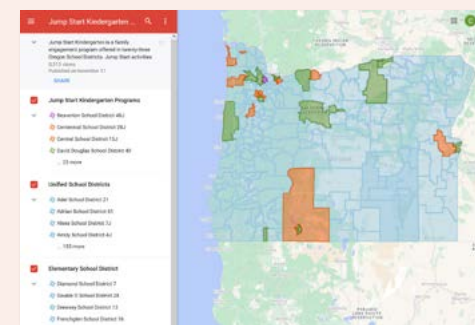
- ▶ [Jump Start Kindergarten](#)



- ▶ [Transitioning into Kindergarten](#). ODE's website with resources for both families and educators.



- ▶ [Map of Participating Jump Start Kindergarten Districts](#)



SECTION 2: PLANNING WITH PARTNERS

A successful kindergarten transition program begins with collaborative planning, including making connections with the systems and programs that serve pre-kindergarten age students.

Building Diverse and Inclusive Teams

Jump Start Kindergarten and summer learning teams should center equity in every decision, including who is invited to the team, how outreach is coordinated, developing family engagement activities, and purchasing books and curriculum. The [Integrated Guidance, Family Engagement](#) (Appendix A: Community Engagement Toolkit) is a key resource for districts and offers these considerations when planning programs:

CO-CREATE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES WITH FAMILIES



- **Assessing previous engagement activities:** Before planning new engagement opportunities, take time to reflect on previous efforts. For example, review sign-in sheets from last year's kindergarten orientation/engagement events signs. Who attended? Who did not attend? This may be an opportunity to team up with community-based partners to host events at locations like parks, Head Start centers, and libraries.
- **Feedback loops:** Create avenues for families to share their experiences, insights, and ideas for improvements. Viewing community engagement as an ongoing process, as opposed to an event (or a state requirement), is essential. The Center for Family Engagement's "[Facilitating Community Listening Sessions: A Guide for PTA's](#)" instructs teams to learn how families perceive engagement events to, in turn, continuously improve.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [Oregon's Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines](#)

- ▶ [Oregon's Transformative Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Framework & Standards](#)

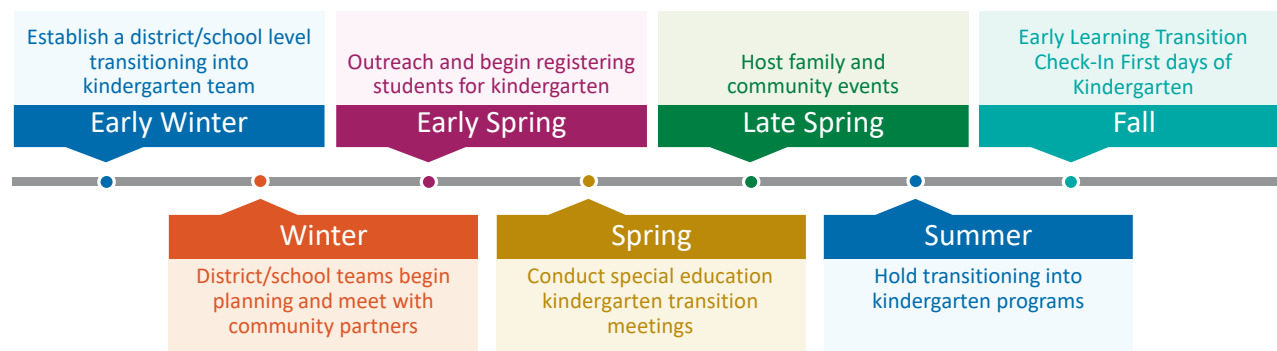
- ▶ [Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework](#). This website is a guide to what children should know and do in five central developmental domains.

- ▶ [Raise Up Oregon: A Statewide Early Learning System Plan](#) serves as Oregon's state system plan for early childhood prenatal to age five, bringing together government leaders from early care and education, public education, higher education, health, housing, and human services.


START EARLY!

Planning a program typically begins in the winter, alongside other summer learning programs. An early start helps districts form a comprehensive team, delegate responsibilities, connect with facilities and recruit staff successfully. It also gives district and school teams time to conduct culturally responsive outreach.

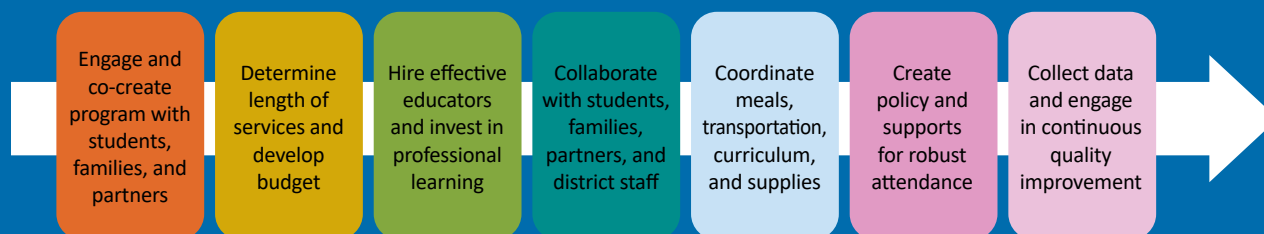
► [District Planning Timeline Example](#)



CREATING A WORK PLAN

Launching a summer program is like starting a new school year, but with less time for planning and implementation. A good planning process starts early, includes the right people, and follows best practices in outreach, budgeting and continuous improvement.

The Wallace Foundation has created planning tools to track progress, stay on budget, and coordinate teams. Go to the [Planning and Management](#) link of the [Summer Learning Toolkit](#) where you'll find helpful tools used by districts across the country.



Access to Programs for Families

Providing meals, transportation, and child care can make high quality summer programming more accessible.

SUMMER MEALS

The federal summer meals programs have always been a lifeline for the families that rely on them. For information about how to apply for the Summer Food Service Program visit [ODE Child Nutrition Programs](#).

- When children practice cafeteria routines in the summer, they feel more confident when school starts. In Hermiston School District, staff guide students to their tables after selecting their meal.



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a key factor for families to access enriching summer learning experiences. This is especially true for students experiencing homelessness and students in Foster Care.

- Safe transportation for students can be a barrier for a number of reasons: costs, the availability of drivers, and the distance from home to summer programs particularly in rural areas.

Programs overcome these barriers by sharing costs with partners, attaining transportation vouchers from local busing companies, and developing a “buddy system” for older youth to escort younger children.

CHILD CARE SERVICES

To access summer programs, families often need before and after school child care. For more information go to [Extended Day Program Providers, on page 20](#).



SPOTLIGHT ON HILLSBORO

[Hillsboro School District](#) (HSD) partners with [Adelante Mujeres](#) and [CAIRO](#) (Center for African Immigrants and Refugees Organization), two culturally specific non-profit organizations, to enhance preschool programming serving priority populations. Olga Acuña, Director of Federal Programs, believes that the key to successful early learning partnerships “is to include preschool staff in all aspects of the school community. Our principals are so excited to have a pre-kindergarten program in their building.”

Acuña shared that HSD has increased the number of preschool classrooms. They have also expanded the early learning team, including hiring teachers on special assignment (TOSAs), an education liaison who coordinates Jump Start Kindergarten, and a dual language specialist. Under Acuña’s leadership, all students in preschool have access to bilingual programming year-round. “With a blending approach, using Migrant and other federal funds, we can create a rich bilingual experience for our students,” says Acuña.

► [Hillsboro School District Early Learning Programs website](#)



Recruiting Staff

Hiring teachers and other critical staff for summer programming can be challenging. One of the most effective strategies is to start recruiting early. If a teacher can only commit to one week, consider hiring a different teacher for the second week. Be sure to plan ahead for additional staffing to support students experiencing disabilities and emerging multilingual students. Staff that have specialized skills and knowledge are often in high demand for summer programs.



Planning Team Checklist

For small and rural districts, Education Service Districts (ESD) and [Regional Early Learning Hubs](#) may be the best first point of contact for planning.

School and District Staff:

- ✓ Principal.
- ✓ Summer/Jump Start Coordinator.
- ✓ Office Support.
- ✓ Kindergarten, English Language Learner, and Special Education teachers.
- ✓ School Counselor.
- ✓ Social Worker/CARE team.
- ✓ [Migrant Education Program Coordinator](#).
- ✓ Operations: Facilities, Nutrition Services, Transportation.
- ✓ McKinney-Vento Point of Contact/Foster Liaison.
- ✓ School Nurse/School Health Assistant.

Community Partners:

- ✓ [Regional Early Learning Hub Director](#) (scroll down to the map and click your county).
- ✓ [Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator](#).
- ✓ [Local Head Start Director or Education Manager](#) (scroll down).
- ✓ [Tribal Nations Representative](#).
- ✓ [Regional Child Care Resource and Referral](#).
- ✓ Community-Based Organizations.
- ✓ Local high school(s) with Early Learning Programs of Study. See [Approved CTE Programs](#) in the Resource section.

Resources

▶ [Jump Start Kindergarten Coordinator Position](#)

Many districts or ESDs (for rural districts) hire a Jump Start Kindergarten Coordinator. This document includes a list of possible job responsibilities.



▶ [Tips for Recruiting Teachers](#)



▶ [Transitioning into Kindergarten Timeline](#)



- ▶ [Approved CTE Programs](#). When exploring summer staffing options for Jump Start, consider reaching out to your local high school to determine if the school has an Early Learning Program of Study. To see if your local high school offers this Program of Study, visit the website above.



- ▶ [Summer Learning Toolkit, Wallace Foundation](#). This website includes planning tools to help implement both summer and school year programs.



FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBAL NATIONS

Become oriented with the websites of the Tribal Nations of Oregon. Each of the websites includes tribal history, culture, language, resources, and programs. Click to visit each website.



Tribal Partnership and Consultation

Tribal Consultation is required for various covered programs under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), not solely Title VI, Part A Indian Education formula grant. It is the responsibility of the school district to initiate Tribal Consultation, which is a process required between the tribe and affected school districts or school districts in a consortium to enhance the educational opportunities of American Indian/Alaska Native students. Tribal Consultation works best when the time to build authentic trusting relationships has occurred. There is no conventional approach to Tribal Consultation; it must adapt to the needs of each tribal community, being aware of capacity and the need for on-going inclusion of tribal perspectives.

Consider the following when planning Jump Start Kindergarten with tribal nations and communities:

- Most tribal nations offer early learning programs like Head Start, preschool, and before- and after-school that are immersive in Indigenous languages and cultures.
- Most tribal nations offer summer programming. Districts may wish to explore the possibility of combining or scheduling programs separately so they do not conflict.
- HB 2055 was passed in 2021, establishing the Oregon Tribal Early Learning Alliance (OTELA) to coordinate tribal early learning programs and services statewide. To learn more visit the [Tribal Advisory Website](#).
- Reach out to the tribal leaders and education directors of the nine, federally recognized Tribes of Oregon to learn how to respectfully integrate tribal language and culture into kindergarten classrooms and family engagement activities.

Resources

- ▶ [Tribal Curriculum](#). Provides place-based lesson plans for various tribes in Oregon.



- ▶ [Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships](#)



- ▶ [A Toolkit for Tribal Consultation - Version 2.0](#)



- ▶ [Summer Learning Toolkit](#) (see page 17 - Indian Education in Oregon)



- ▶ [Indian Education Resources](#). ODE webpage listing resources.



- ▶ [Tribal Nation Website](#). An overview of each of the nine federally recognized tribes.



- ▶ [Tribal History/Shared History \(TH/SH\)](#). Provides lesson plans and information regarding implementation of Tribal History/Shared History.



Planning with Early Learning Partners

Like all summer programs, collaborative planning is essential to enrolling focal families and providing children with the support they need to thrive in the Jump Start classroom. Families should experience a warm hand-off from the staff in their early learning program to the school team. When local systems (early learning and K-12) are working together, the start of school has the opportunity to be more positive and connected for everyone involved.



DID YOU KNOW?

Head Start and Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK) programs include family advocates who provide individualized support for registered children and families. Because these relationships often span many years, advocates may be highly trusted by the family. Often, this relationship ends when a child turns five and is no longer eligible for the federal or state program.

A connected transition is critical during this sensitive window for families. Similarly, coordination with Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education partners can help ensure appropriate supports are in place for children experiencing a disability to participate in the Jump Start Kindergarten program and build a foundation of trust with families.

Early learning partners may:

- Connect districts and schools to additional partners who can enrich Jump Start Kindergarten programs with resources, expertise, experience, and additional funding.
- Help districts and schools connect early with incoming kindergarten families.
- Share school information flyers with their families during home visits or kindergarten transition meetings.
- Organize professional development opportunities for kindergarten teachers and partners in the elementary school.

Planning with early learning partners helps schools connect early with families. These websites will provide regional points of contact:

- ▶ [Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education \(EI/ECSE\)](#)
- ▶ [Early Learning Hubs](#)
- ▶ [Extended Day Program Providers](#)
- ▶ [Head Start and Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten \(OPK\)](#)
- ▶ [Migrant Education Program Directory](#)

EARLY INTERVENTION/EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION (EI/ECSE)

Districts should collaborate with EI/ECSE providers on the transition to kindergarten for children receiving special education services, as well as offer support to families who may not have strong connections to providers. Collaborative activities can include:

- Providing additional hours for teachers to meet with EI/ECSE staff to plan support for children enrolled in Jump Start Kindergarten.
- Sharing visual aids and equipment for staff to utilize.
- Hiring aides, teachers and coaches from local EI/ECSE preschool classrooms for Jump Start Kindergarten classrooms.



Learn more about [Inclusive Classroom Practices, on page 31](#) of this toolkit. Collaborative planning should begin the spring prior to the start of Jump Start Kindergarten when teams are writing Individual Education Program (IEP). Most EI/ECSE providers do not work in the summer, so consider asking about hiring staff to support classrooms.



SPOTLIGHT ON MECP AND PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Portland Public Schools (PPS) and their EI/ECSE provider, Multnomah Early Childhood Program (MECP), ensure that students receiving special education services thrive during the PPS Early Kindergarten Transition (EKT) program. MECP and PPS directors meet in the fall to coordinate program and training schedules for staff. MECP recruits coaches to support the classrooms, and PPS and MECP provide compensation for teachers to plan together. This sets the stage for all children and their families to feel confident on the first day of kindergarten.

"This partnership makes it possible for Early Kindergarten Transition families to enter kindergarten feeling confident, connected, and joyful!"

- Katrina Edwards, Academic Programs Administrator, Early Learners Department, Portland Public Schools

RESOURCES

- ▶ [Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Website](#)



- ▶ [Why every child needs a one-page profile](#)



Examples of IFSP to IEP Transition Documents:

- ▶ [Jackson County Guide to Early Childhood Special Education ENGLISH](#)



- ▶ [Jackson County Guide to Early Childhood Special Education SPANISH](#)



- ▶ [Lane County Special Education Transition into Kindergarten Letter ENGLISH](#)



- ▶ [Lane County Special Education Transition into Kindergarten Letter SPANISH](#)



EARLY LEARNING HUBS

Regional Early Learning Hubs collaborate and coordinate with local organizations that serve young children including preschool, child care providers, health, human services, and other organizations. Collaboration efforts can include:

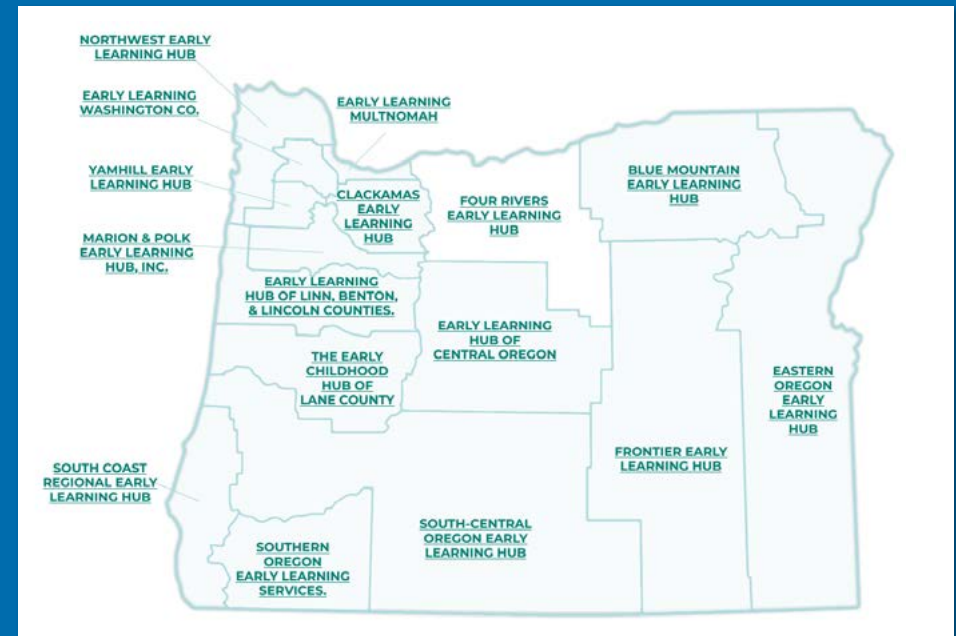
- Outreach support.
- Family engagement activities.
- Connections to organizations serving focal families.
- Professional development opportunities for staff.
- Thought partnership on Jump Start Kindergarten family enrollment prioritization.
- Connection to other kindergarten transition programs in the region.



DID YOU KNOW?

To connect with Regional Hub directors, click on the Department of Early Learning and Care's [Hub Website](#), scroll down to the map, and click the county navigator. Once on the website, look for the Hub director contact information, as well as information about kindergarten transition activities supported by the Hub.

Hubs are a one-stop shop for districts to collaborate with early learning agencies.



EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM PROVIDERS

Extended day programming can make summer learning more robust and inclusive and ensure that children of working families can participate in the program. This could include:

- On-site before and after school child care.
- Transportation to a licensed home-based or agency provider.
- Partnering with a community-based organization.

To ensure program alignment and to support a smooth transition from Jump Start to extended day programming, administrators and coordinators should schedule planning time to review the curriculum, the daily schedule, food service, use of building space, and transportation.

Child Care Providers

Many Jump Start programs operate for a half-day. For working families, this may create a barrier to enrolling in the summer Jump Start program. School leadership may want to partner with a licensed child care provider for on-site child care services before and after Jump Start and other summer programming.



Tips for Schools and Districts from Child Care Providers

Camp Fire Columbia, a licensed child care provider in the Willamette Valley area, shared these tips when planning for summer programs like Jump Start:

- ✓ Connect with child care providers as early as January.
- ✓ Discuss the scope of the program, including the number of students that will likely need child care services.
- ✓ Ask providers to share licensing requirements or have them consult with the Office of Child Care if they are uncertain of the requirements. Often there are strict guidelines around space use, staffing, number of restrooms available, and ages of students.
- ✓ Invite providers to planning meetings to address questions, challenges, and ideas.
- ✓ Clarify funding up front, including the state's Employee Related Day Care subsidy for qualifying families.
- ✓ Consider sharing staff to optimize the services and support.
- ✓ Create a document that district/school teams and providers can share. Include expectations, dates, times, points of contact, community building, language services, meals, and general coordination.
- ✓ Celebrate your work together and build a community of practice that will live and grow for future summers.
- ✓ Debrief to evaluate and reflect on the services provided for better support in the future.

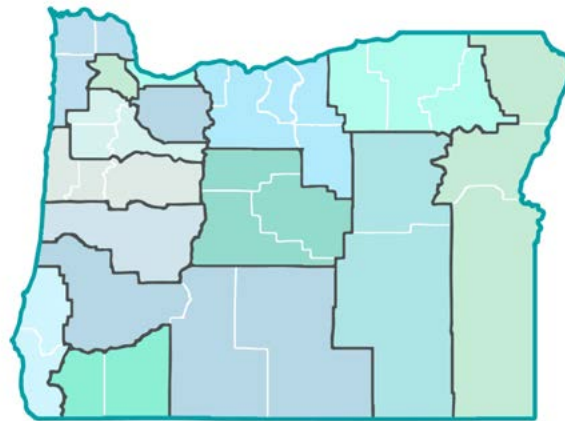


CENTRAL COORDINATION OF Child Care Resource & Referral

To learn about potential child care partners, contact the regional [Child Care Resource and Referral agency](#) for support.

Find Your Regional CCR&R

Click on the map to see
regional contact
information.



Resources

- ▶ [OregonAsk](#) is a statewide expanded learning network that identifies extended day learning partners across the state. The [OregonAsk GIS](#) maps locate extended day program providers in a given region. OregonAsk also provides training for educators serving school-age children.



- ▶ [211info](#) is a clearinghouse for access to family resources, including child care as well as housing and shelter, utility assistance, health care, and basic needs.



- ▶ [Employee Related Day Care](#) (ERDC) is a state subsidy program where eligible families receive financial assistance to pay for child care costs.



- ▶ The Transition to Kindergarten and Out-of-School Time Programs ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#)).



SPOTLIGHT ON HERMISTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Hermiston School District partners with a licensed child care business to provide on-site after-school child care services (at no cost to families) for children in Jump Start and other summer learning programs. Since many family members are farm workers with late summer hours, Hermiston extends child care before and after Jump Start until 7PM. After Jump Start Kindergarten concludes for the day, staff transition children to the child care area in the school for play-based learning activities, snacks, and meals, and communicate regularly with families and school staff to ensure children's needs are being met.

"Our child care partnership resulted in higher enrollment of our summer programs and gave parents and caregivers peace of mind during the workday until they were able to pick up their children. And best of all, children had a lot of fun, enjoying time with children of different ages and enriching activities."

- Jerad Farley, Director of Elementary Instruction, Hermiston School District

MIGRANT EDUCATION COORDINATORS

Jump Start School Teams can connect early with Migrant Education Teams to plan summer programming and strengthen partnership and outreach efforts.

Important Tips:

- [Contact](#) regional Migrant Program Coordinators to align summer program dates and outreach efforts.
- [Contact](#) the Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC), the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grantee for Oregon and other programs.
- Through the Binational Teachers Program, migrant regions can collaborate with districts to bring teachers from Mexico to support summer programming. [The Migrant Education team](#) can provide more information.



DID YOU KNOW?

Every Migrant region has a School Readiness Specialist? The Oregon Migrant Education Service Center has a [Early Childhood Education page](#) and a directory of Migrant Education Program staff by region. To find a directory of Migrant Education Program Staff by Region, Click on “OMESC Links” and then “MEP Directory.” Connect with the Migrant School Readiness Specialist, who may facilitate referrals of Migrant Pre-K students, connect with migrant families, and inform families about the Jump Start Kindergarten program.

Resources

- ▶ [Supporting Migrant Students and Seasonal Head Start Students](#). This document highlights tools in order to support migrant students and seasonal head start students.



- ▶ [Oregon Migrant Education Service Center](#). Willamette Education Service District has a school readiness page where it serves to prompt, aid, and share resources to statewide Migrant Readiness Specialists.



- ▶ [Migrant Education Summer Learning](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON ONTARIO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Every December, the Multilingual and Migrant Education Team (MME) asks districts about their need for binational teachers for summer programming. MME invites teachers to Oregon from Mexico as part of a cultural exchange. During Ontario's Jump Start program, the binational teacher not only taught kindergarten but also engaged with families.

“Families and children appreciate native Spanish-speaking teachers and the cultural connections they make.”

- Anabel Ortiz-Chavolla, Director of Federal Programs

- ▶ [Ontario School District](#)



SECTION 3: FAMILY-CENTERED OUTREACH

Developing an outreach strategy is an important step to enrolling families in summer programs. Offering culturally responsive events that draw families in is an approach districts implement in collaboration with preschools, childcare providers, and community-based organizations. To align with ODE's Equity Stance, teams should prioritize their outreach efforts to families who may benefit most from early connections with school staff, including:

- Children who are navigating poverty.
- Children of color, including Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Latino/a/x, Pacific Islander, and multiracial communities.
- Children who are emerging bilingual or multilingual.
- Children whose families are in the migrant education program.
- Children on an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP).
- Children who have not yet had a formalized education experience.
- Children in the care of an adult other than the parent or guardian.
- Children who are unhoused or are experiencing housing instability.
- Families and children who are navigating the justice system.

Early Registration

Schools need many hearts and hands to spread the word about early kindergarten registration and summer programs.



Spring Registration to School: With community partners, broadly share the importance of registering for kindergarten in the spring.



Jump Start Recruitment: Invite families to summer programs. Prioritize focal families.



Jump Start Attendance: Develop a culturally responsive protocol for contacting families when children are absent.

STRATEGIC OUTREACH TO FOCAL FAMILIES

Invite community partners to post and distribute flyers to their families and networks.

- ▶ [Migrant Education Program Coordinator](#)



- ▶ [Regional Early Learning Hub Director](#) (scroll down to the map and click your county)



- ▶ [Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator](#)
- ▶ [Local Head Start Director or Education Manager](#) (scroll down)
- ▶ [Tribal Nations Representative](#)
- ▶ [Child Care Resource and Referral](#)





SPRING REGISTRATION

Spring Registration events can be jointly planned with early learning and community partners. It can be challenging to connect with families whose children are not enrolled in publicly funded early learning programs. That's when eye-catching materials can be especially effective. See the sidebar for materials to support spring registration efforts.

For more resources, visit the [Register for Kindergarten Today! webpage](#).

Will your child be 5 years old on or before September 1st?
REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN TODAY!



¿Su hijo(a) cumplirá 5 años el 1 de septiembre o antes?
¡INSCRIBA A SU HIJO(A) EN EL KÍNDER HOY!

EFFECTIVE OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Casting a wide net in the community is critical to reaching focal families. Below are strategies to reach families:

- Where appropriate, partner with the local systems of care, tribal governments and community organizations that have strong relationships with the students and families.
- Plan to contact caregivers and families in their home language at least three times for enrollment using multiple methods such as phone calls, flyers, social media, and email.
- Personalize recruitment. This includes providing information about summer programs for all children in the family and outreach and family events in the home language.



RESOURCES

Visit the [Register for Kindergarten Today! webpage](#) to access print-ready materials that are translated into eight languages:

- ✓ Flyers
- ✓ Yard Signs
- ✓ Banners
- ✓ Stickers
- ✓ Family Engagement for Advocates and Navigators
- ✓ Social Media Tips and more!

Will your child be 5 years old on or before September 1st?
REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN TODAY!
WE CAN'T WAIT TO MEET YOU!

Registration Tips:

- Call the school to ask about the registration process, when the school's office is open, and if online registration is an option.
- Don't hesitate to ask for translation support if English is not your home language.
- Remember necessary paperwork is required for registration. Don't forget proof of the child's age (such as a birth certificate, passport, or similar document), proof of address (such as a utility bill), and immunization records.

¿Su hijo(a) cumplirá 5 años el 1 de septiembre o antes?





JUMP START ATTENDANCE

- When students are absent from Jump Start, contact the family quickly and if the child is not ill, encourage them to drop off their child. Create a script so all staff have access to positive messaging.
- When calling, ask about barriers such as transportation and help the family navigate needed supports.
- In some cases, families may not feel comfortable dropping off their child at the school. If so, invite the family to the school for a tour and to see the program in action.



Ask members of your school community to distribute flyers and share information about spring registration and summer programs at these common gathering locations:

- ✓ Faith-based organizations
- ✓ Bus stops
- ✓ Community centers
- ✓ Head Start, preschools and child care centers
- ✓ Health clinics
- ✓ Apartment complexes
- ✓ Grocery stores
- ✓ Parks & Libraries

► [Student Recruitment and Attendance](#): The Wallace Foundation provides a comprehensive toolkit on effectively recruiting students and families to summer learning programs.



Jump Start Registration/Application Checklist

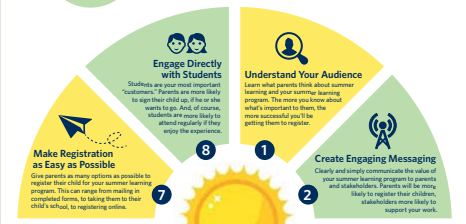
Once families have registered for school, follow up with a phone call or text inviting them to the program and including an application if that's needed. Applications should be:

- ✓ In the home language.
- ✓ Brief.
- ✓ Online and in paper form.
- ✓ Informative to families: include dates, daily schedules, and information about meals, transportation and family activities.
- ✓ Informative to schools by asking families about their child's participation in early childhood services, health concerns, and other special needs.
- ✓ Clear to families that the program is free.

As a team, decide in the spring how to manage prioritizing focal families for enrollment if there is a waitlist. A "first come, first serve" approach should not be used, since more resourced families may be able to register early.

- Sample from Hermiston School District: [Kindergarten Camp Registration Form](#)
- Hillsboro School District [Jump Start Kindergarten Interest Form](#)

8 KEYS TO SUCCESS For Summer Learning Recruitment



Families Experiencing Houselessness

Partnership and consistent collaboration between Jump Start Kindergarten teams and designated McKinney-Vento Liaisons will strengthen outreach and help ensure more students are identified and prioritized for additional services and support. Check with the district liaison to determine if families have incoming kindergarten students. If so, the coordinator may share the program application and school registration materials with the liaison and ensure there are no barriers to the family's transition to kindergarten. **It is essential that children experiencing houselessness receive priority when enrolling in Jump Start.**

Every school district in Oregon has at least one designated McKinney-Vento Liaison to provide direct assistance to families navigating housing insecurity and unaccompanied youths to access and achieve in school. To reach a district liaison, contact the district's administrative office or the state McKinney-Vento Program office.

RESOURCES

- ▶ Head Start programs also serve families experiencing homelessness. For more information contact the [Head Start Family Services Manager](#) (scroll down).



- ▶ [McKinney-Vento Act: Homeless Education Program](#) (scroll down to District Liaison Contacts to identify the liaison for your school district).



- ▶ [Supports for Early Learners Experiencing Housing Instability](#). This document provides resources for children ages 0-5 and their families who are experiencing housing instability.



SPOTLIGHT ON LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Lincoln County School District created a weighted point enrollment model that was based on the priority populations developed by their regional Early Learning Hub and used by Preschool Promise providers. Lincoln County only used the point system if they received more applications than the space available. The Early Learning Coordinator at Lincoln County School District, Lauren Sigman said, "It's been so helpful collaborating with our early learning partners like Preschool Promise and Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties. As a result of these partnerships, we are aligned when it comes to enrolling focal families in our programs. It also helps ensure that we were targeting enrollment to children and families who are furthest from opportunity as determined by the Early Learning Hub's sector plan."

For more information about family engagement activities, see [Section 5: Engaging All Families, on page 34](#).

- ▶ [Lincoln County School District](#)



LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

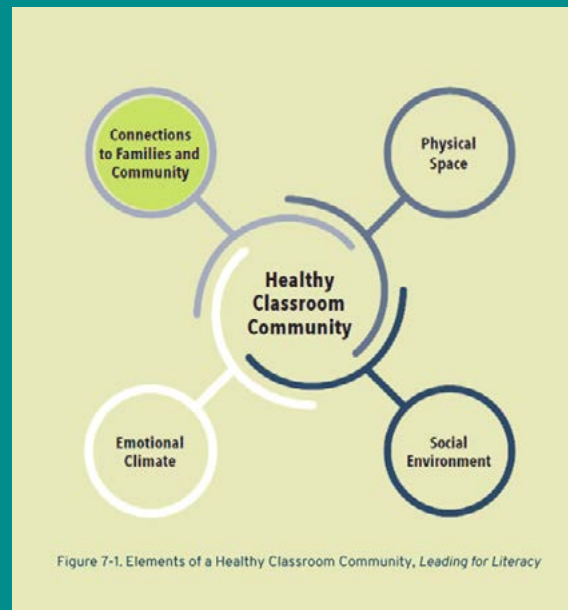
SECTION 4: PLANNING THE JUMP START EXPERIENCE

An essential component of the planning process for Jump Start Kindergarten involves developing an inclusive environment, curriculum and routines that are accessible to all children. If Jump Start Kindergarten activities help children continue to experience themselves as curious critical thinkers and doers, with their identities as cultural and social beings, AND if these activities continue into kindergarten, then schools will build a strong foundation of connection, care, and trust between children, families, and school. This section provides recommendations for program planning.

Building the Bridge From Home

The Jump Start experience is meant to give children a sense of belonging, confidence, and joy as they step into kindergarten. To do that, all of the activities and curriculum that comprise Jump Start must serve as the scaffolding or bridge from early childhood to the kindergarten classroom, gently introducing features of kindergarten that feel the most different from a home- or center-based experience.

Bridging from home to classroom means honoring families as a child's first and lasting teacher. This includes time to connect with families and caregivers to learn more about the wealth of information they have to offer. These connections are essential for meeting the diverse needs of each child in the classroom and creating culturally relevant and enriching learning experiences and identity development.



RESOURCES

- ▶ [Social and Emotional Learning: A Transformative Approach](#)

- ▶ [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations Classroom Implementation](#)

- ▶ [Mental Health: Guidance for Schools and School Districts](#)

- ▶ [Create a Healthy Classroom Community: The Home-School Connection](#)

- ▶ [Honoring Family in the Classroom](#) from the Colorín Colorado website, for educators and multilingual families. This article highlights literacy-based home to school strategies.

- ▶ [SEL with Families & Caregivers](#) from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).


Building the Bridge to the Classroom

Developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) tap into each child's innate joy of learning, creating opportunities for every child to reach their full potential. The Jump Start Kindergarten experience should include carefully planned activities and meaningful play that provides ample opportunities to explore and discover, while also explicitly giving children and families instruction about routines, and social and emotional skills.



Jump Start is an opportunity to help children build from their strengths to lay essential ground for literacy and numeracy learning. Read-alouds, math games, role playing, singing, and free play are activities to help children acclimate to a new environment.

GET OUTSIDE!

Summer learning programs offer an ideal opportunity to spend learning time outside. Whether that includes exploring the community garden, a park, or a read-aloud under a shady tree, learning can and should take place in various community locations and settings.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUILDING THE JUMP START CURRICULUM

- ✓ Is the curriculum developmentally appropriate, and play-based?
- ✓ Does the curriculum include a whole-child focus that supports growth across all areas of development and learning, including social-emotional, cognitive, physical, language, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts?
- ✓ Does the curriculum prioritize individualized instruction daily to meet the unique needs of every child along their unique progression of growth and development?
- ✓ Does the curriculum include a culturally and linguistically sustaining approach?
- ✓ Does the curriculum seamlessly increase and provide meaningful partnerships with families?

(From [Teaching Strategies](#), 2022)

RESOURCES

- ▶ [What are the Benefits of Outdoor Play?](#) This article explains how outdoor play promotes learning.



- ▶ [Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten Practice Resources](#)



- ▶ [Kindergarten: Where Play and Learning Can Meet](#). This documentary explores the advantages associated with a play-based approach in kindergarten.



- ▶ [Engaging Pre-K Learners by Following Their Interests](#). From Edutopia, teachers build upon children's excitement to reach learning objectives



Early Literacy

In the pre-kindergarten and primary years, children develop oral language skills, phonological awareness, print concepts, phonics knowledge, and decoding skills, all of which contribute to developing a strong foundation for skilled reading and writing (See Oregon's Early Literacy Framework Section 3).

Jump Start Kindergarten helps children build a literacy foundation by honoring their home language, culture, and family. When songs, books, read alouds, chants and stories are reflective of what is familiar to children, they feel seen and affirmed. Developing oral language, phonological awareness, and vocabulary across each language is particularly important for multilingual learners. Families, as a child's first teacher, also have an essential role to play in enriching literacy skills at home by singing, reading, playing and talking together.

Planning Considerations: Literacy

Literacy Leaders' Role: How do we intentionally connect literacy leaders to the kindergarten transition process? What are some roles that literacy leaders could play in the kindergarten transition process?

Jump Start Program Planning: What literacy learning activities will be included? What literacy routines will be the focus? How can there be consistency across instructors? How can the Jump Start program be leveraged to learn about the newest students as literacy learners?

Partnering with Families: How are families empowered to support their child's literacy success? How is the school/district plan for students' literacy learning shared? How are the voices and experiences of families and their role in a child's literacy development honored?

Tools to support literacy in the Jump Start Classroom:

- [Effective Enhancements for Foundational Skills Instruction](#); By enhancing foundational skills instruction with engaging activities, it is important to create learning opportunities that feel like fun and games to learners!
- [Reading Rockets Classroom Strategies](#); This library provides effective, research-based classroom strategies to help strengthen students' skills in phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing.
- [Planning for an Interactive Read Aloud](#); Interactive read-alouds — which involves not just listening to the words of the book but asking children to answer questions along the way — can support children's literacy development, extend their understanding of language, and build their comprehension skill.

Resources

- ▶ [Oregon's Early Literacy Framework](#)

- ▶ [Oregon Kindergarten English Language Arts and Literacy Standards](#)

- ▶ [Book Knowledge and Print Concepts - National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning](#)

- ▶ [National Center on Improving Literacy: Families and School Partnering for Children's Literacy Success](#)

- ▶ [Planned Language Approach \(PLA\): Big 5 for ALL](#). This website is from the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center that includes resources organized by the five key skills that lead to later school success for all children.

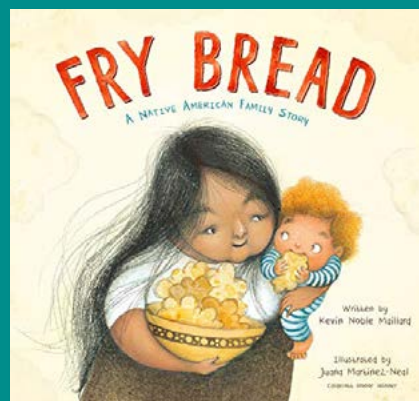
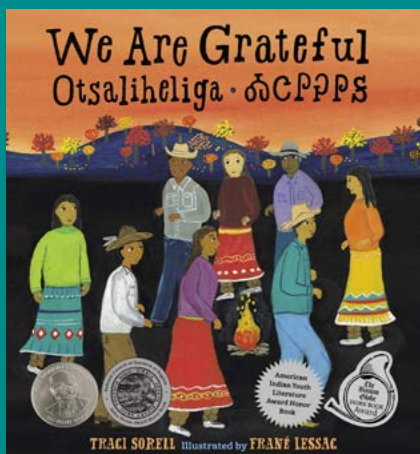
- ▶ [How Parents and Families Support Oral Language and Vocabulary](#)


SOBRATO EARLY ACADEMIC LANGUAGE MODEL (SEAL)

At the core of quality early education is the understanding that children learn and develop best in environments where they feel safe, have a sense of belonging, and are part of a caring community that embraces their identity and believes in their potential. This video demonstrates preschool environments where children's languages, cultures, and identities are welcomed, present, and affirmed.



AFFIRMING LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY



Materials that are culturally and linguistically affirming offer a valuable opportunity to bring our students' languages, cultures, histories, and voices into educational spaces.

- ▶ [First Book Marketplace](#): discounted books with bilingual and culturally diverse selection.
- ▶ [Early Kindergarten Transition Books for Families and Students](#)



RESOURCES

- ▶ [Grand Ronde Kindergarten Tribal History](#). Curriculum includes social studies, math, science, and language arts; and each lesson aligns with the Common Core State Standards.



- ▶ [Diverse Books For Children](#) from Reading Rockets.



- ▶ [iColorin Colorado!](#) A bilingual site for families and educators of multilingual learners.



- ▶ [Honoring Family in the Classroom](#)



- ▶ [Multilingual Learning Toolkit](#)



- ▶ [Multnomah County Library, Indigenous Authors & Illustrators: Board Books from Multcolib Early Childhood](#)



- ▶ [Affirming, Language, Culture, & Identity](#). This brief video showcases preschool environments where children's languages, cultures, and identities are welcomed.

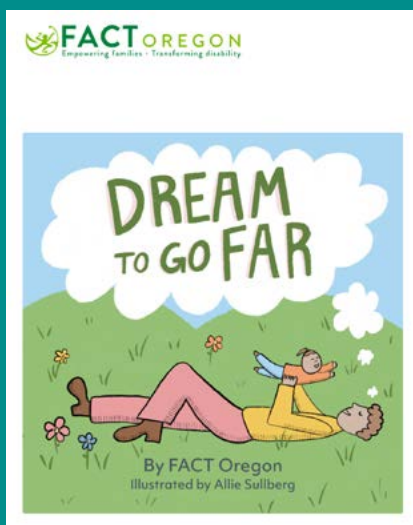


OREGON'S EARLY LEARNING AND KINDERGARTEN GUIDELINES

[Oregon's Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines](#) is a resource for early educators of children ages 3–6. This document offers a shared view of and common vocabulary for child development and learning from age 3 through the end of kindergarten.



INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICES



In Oregon, when children transition from Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) to school-age special education services, they shift from an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to an Individual Education Program (IEP). While evidence suggests that involvement in pre-kindergarten prepares both children who experience disabilities and those who do not experience disabilities for school, a pre-kindergarten experience is not universally offered to every young child.

Even for those who can access pre-kindergarten, the contextual differences between early learning and care environments and kindergarten are vast. Collaborative planning, clear communication, and a variety of transition activities, such as the Jump Start Kindergarten program, support child and family preparation for and adjustment to the new setting.

► [Fact OR](#)



Resources

- [Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Website](#). Includes resources for families, providers, and partners regarding high-quality inclusion.

- [EI/ECSE Contractor Contact Information](#). Provides Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) contractor contact information for Oregon.

- [Transition to Kindergarten - IFSP to IEP Guidance](#)

- [Transitioning from Early Childhood Special Education \(IFSP\) to Kindergarten](#). Includes tips for parents/caregivers of children with challenging behaviors.

- [Transition from Preschool Special Education to Kindergarten](#). Contains a learning guide regarding communication and coordination in transition planning from preschool to kindergarten.


Sample Program Curriculum and Schedules

The Jump Start Kindergarten curriculum is not one size fits all. Districts individualize curricula to align with their goals, kindergarten program, and most importantly, their school community. However, all Jump Start curricula prioritize Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), practicing classroom routines and transitions, and engaging in activities that embrace hands-on joyful learning.

- ▶ Early Kindergarten Transition (EKT). Portland Public School's 3-week curriculum.

[English/Spanish](#)



- ▶ [Kids in Transition to School \(KITS\)](#). A six week program developed by the [Oregon Social Learning Center](#) in Lane County, Oregon.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PPS CURRICULUM

Focus on SEL:

- Children learn a different social skill such as how to share or ask for help. The teacher models the daily skill with puppets.
- Teachers illustrate social skills while reading a book such as *The Color Monster* by Anna Llenas when discussing sharing.
- Teachers guide students from discussing the characters in the books to "I statements" such as, "I feel angry when I can't play with legos."

Self-Regulation Skills:

- Children practice yoga poses and breathing or [Freeze Dance](#) if the class is feeling especially energetic.
- The teacher ends the day with a community meeting, passing an object to indicate turns which helps children learn to wait and actively listen to their classmates.

Literacy Extensions:

- Read aloud and retelling stories from the week's anchor book that are culturally and linguistically affirming.
- Turn and talk discussion of the book.
- Table group discussion with sorting activity to explore sequence.

Math Focus:

- Counting games such as children counting each other in a circle by 1's and 5's, with every 5th child sitting down.
- Magical spoon counting activity using color paper squares and cut out spoons - color combinations, adding and subtracting colors.

Movement

- Freeze dance
- [Go Noodle](#)
- Walking field trip
- Parade with hand-made instruments

PEEP SCIENCE CURRICULUM

Celebrate curiosity and the joys of discovery! The PEEP Science Curriculum invites students to actively investigate their world by exploring water, sound, plants, color, shadows, and ramps (movement) in units lasting three weeks.

- Learn more about [PEEP Science Curriculum](#)



Color



Plants



Ramps



Shadows



Sound



Water

EXAMPLES OF JUMP START PROGRAM SCHEDULES

- [Gervais](#)
- [Hermiston](#)
- [Lincoln County](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON GERVAIS SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Very early into the program, the incoming kindergarten students began feeling comfortable at school, which helped facilitate several weeks of successful instruction in learning new rules and routines, building friendships, and meeting staff members. During our program, incoming students and their parents received school tours and met the principal, office manager, teachers, and instructional assistants.

Now that the school year is underway, we can already see higher numbers of kindergarten students feeling more comfortable at school and ready to learn. Jump Start

Kindergarten at Gervais Elementary this past summer was, by all measures, a success!”

-Dr. Creighton Helms, Director of Student Services and Federal Programs, Gervais School District



SECTION 5: ENGAGING ALL FAMILIES

When schools welcome and partner with families, families experience an increase in confidence to help support their children's learning. Additionally, teachers experience greater job satisfaction and students have better attendance and more positive attitudes toward school, as well as increased test scores. ([National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement](#)). Culturally and linguistically affirming family engagement activities are key to a successful Jump Start Kindergarten program.

Goals for family engagement include:

- Honoring families as their child's first and most important teacher.
- Developing positive and transparent relationships among families, school staff, and community partners.
- Promoting consistent attendance and understanding of school routines.
- Orienting and guiding families and children to the school and building confidence in navigating school systems.
- Connecting with existing family programs such as the Head Start policy council to bridge and align engagement activities.



SPOTLIGHT ON PHOENIX-TALENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Some schools and districts offer family engagement events for specific groups of families. For example, **Phoenix-Talent School District** hosts "Charla entre padres" for Spanish-speaking families with children experiencing disabilities, led by a community organization, Bridging Communities. The group meets regularly to support each other and share information. Additionally, elementary principals have transformed traditional school events, such as Back-to-School and Open House, into opportunities for families to meet with not only classroom teachers and staff but with each other.

Assistant Superintendent, Tiffanie Lambert, said the family engagement efforts, "help 'build the village' to support the children and families in our community. The camaraderie and collaboration between families increase friendships, support, and advocacy."



Phoenix-Talent Schools
Excellence for Everyone



STRATEGIES FOR WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES

- Create a culturally enriching and reflected family room during Jump Start with multilingual information and magazine subscriptions, a bulletin board, a lending library, and a computer.
- Post signs in multiple languages.
- Display student work on the walls.
- Enlist a multilingual morning greeter to welcome students and families.
- Ensure that your multilingual staff and volunteers are visible throughout the building and during all family engagement events.
- Include multilingual books in the [school library](#) and classrooms.
- Consider playing music in the front entryway at drop-off and pick-up time.
- Invite families with older grade students to kindergarten transition events to welcome them to the community and ask questions.



¡Colorín colorado!



THE 4 I'S OF TRANSFORMATIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parents and caregivers know that they play an important role in their child's success. However, traditional family engagement practices don't always meet the needs of every family, nor treat them as equal partners in ensuring their child's success. The [Center for Family Engagement](#) developed the "4 I's to transform family engagement events.



Inclusive: Invite diverse perspectives, question assumptions, and intentionally build relationships.

Individualized: Be responsive, personalize outreach efforts and offer tailored experiences to meet the unique needs of every family.

Integrated: Go beyond one-time events, link engagement activities to learning and collaborate with educators.

Impactful: Help families develop their knowledge and skills, offer opportunities to practice and interact, and gather feedback to measure success.

(From [Facilitating Community Listening Sessions: A Guide for PTAs](#), The Center for Family Engagement)

INCLUSIVE

Embracing and valuing diverse perspectives.



INDIVIDUALIZED

Meeting the unique needs of every family and child.



INTEGRATED

Connecting and aligning with the educational system.



IMPACTFUL

Empowering families to support their child's success.



BEST PRACTICES IN FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Co-creation of Family Engagement Activities

It is best practice for school planning teams to co-create family engagement events with community partners and a diverse group of families and caregivers. For example, schools can host listening sessions with current kindergarten families. The following questions may be helpful when meeting with families:

- What do families wish they had known before the first day?
- What challenges and successes did they experience during the first month of kindergarten?
- Are there lingering questions about school?



"I feel that my responsibility as a teacher is to be a bridge that connects our parents with the school system. When families are involved in their children's learning, children show improvement in academics, self-esteem, behavior, and attendance."

- Rosa Floyd, Kindergarten Teacher at Nellie Muir Elementary IB School in the Woodburn School District and 2022-23 Teacher of the Year.

Affirming the Home Language

Engaging families whose home language is not English is essential to the success of Jump Start Kindergarten. It is important to encourage families to continue to use their home language consistently with their children through conversations and literacy where possible.

"Using your home language connects your children to your family. Using your home language allows you to teach your children, and to learn new things together. You can talk about new experiences and words; you can practice letters and numbers. All of these things are an important part of your children's early learning— and it will be easier and more fun for you if you do it in your most comfortable language."

- From the Gift of Language

Resources

- ▶ [The Gift of Language](#): For Families is a helpful document to share with families during Jump Start Kindergarten.



- ▶ [Facilitating Community Listening Sessions: A Guide for PTA's](#) is an excellent kick-off to planning family engagement events and activities.



- ▶ [Encouraging Strong Parent-Child Relationships](#) From the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement.



- ▶ [Ensuring Focal Student Group Safety and Privacy Resource](#) "Before You Engage with Focal Groups," [Section 5: Engaging All Families](#), provides critical guidance to ensure staff is not unintentionally harming families.



- ▶ [Foster Point of Contact](#) Connect with your foster point of contact to establish community connections with programs that serve students and families involved with foster care.



Family Engagement Events

Family engagement events should feel welcoming to all families, offer time for families and children to meet one another and school staff, and provide essential school information. For more information, check out the Resource section on this page.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PLANNING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

- Are some events designed for specific language groups? For example, an event in Spanish with interpreters to support English-speaking families.
- Are events designed for families to engage with and learn from each other?
- Are events family-centered? For example, do events include child care and access to interpreters?
- Are events co-created with early learning partners, community-based organizations, and families?
- Are events scheduled at varying times to meet the needs of family schedules?



TIPS FOR INCLUSIVE EVENTS FROM SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- ✓ Help families register for school and sign-up for your summer programs at every event.
- ✓ Invite principals and kindergarten teachers as well as front office staff, counselors, social workers, the school nurse or school health assistant, and after-school providers.
- ✓ Extend a special invitation to Head Start, Preschool Promise, and other early learning educators in the community.
- ✓ Hire interpreters to attend if the event is not bilingual.
- ✓ Encourage staff to wear school t-shirts and badges to encourage families to feel more comfortable approaching staff with questions.
- ✓ Include a table with refreshments and handouts such as the school calendar, sign-up sheets for school tour times, and information about upcoming school events.
- ✓ Invite families with older grade students to answer incoming kindergarten family questions.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnerships](#)



- ▶ [6 Strategies for Effective School Family Engagement Events](#)



- ▶ [Examples of Family Engagement Events](#). Family buddy event:

Kindergarten families are paired with first-grade families for a school event such as game night, school tour, pizza party or read aloud with a local librarian.



- ▶ [iColorin Colorado!](#) This guide offers ideas to help school leaders toward a strong home-school partnership.



ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES FOR FAMILY EVENTS

This section offers tools, handouts, and activity ideas for Jump Start Kindergarten family events.



Family Engagement Curricula

- ▶ [Portland Public Schools' Early Kindergarten Transition \(EKT\) Family Engagement Curriculum](#): Activities are designed for adults to learn from each other and build relationships. Families receive books that are part of the kindergarten curriculum for a home-school connection. Includes six family meetings. [English/Spanish](#)



- ▶ [SEL Discussion Series for Parents & Caregivers](#): A step by step guide for educators to facilitate inclusive parent and caregiver Social and Emotional Learning discussions. Includes ten 60-minute sessions. From the [Oregon Department of Education's Social and Emotional Learning website](#).



Icebreakers

Icebreaker activities create an engaging and warm welcome. Whether reflective or silly, icebreakers are respectful, culturally inclusive, and easy to do.

Breathing exercises can be a restorative icebreaker for busy families. Hot cocoa breathing: breathe in the aroma of the cocoa and then breathe out to cool it down.

- ▶ [Icebreaker Activities](#)



5. **Hot Cocoa Breathing.** Imagine you are holding a cup of hot chocolate, feel the warmth of the mug in your hands, take a deep breath in to smell the cocoa, and then slowly blow out your exhale as if you are cooling it down.



Resources

- ▶ [Everyone has what it takes to be a brain builder](#). Video for families to watch during an orientation.



- ▶ 30 Things You Can Do With Your Child ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#))



- ▶ This is How I Feel ([English/Spanish](#)) ([English/Vietnamese](#)) ([English/Chinese](#)) ([English/Russian](#)) ([English/Somali](#))



- ▶ (PDF) Tips For the Parents/Caregivers of Kindergartners ([Chinese](#)) ([English](#)) ([Russian](#)) ([Spanish](#)) ([Vietnamese](#))



- ▶ [211info](#). Support for child care services, housing assistance, access to health care, and more.



- ▶ [Sesame Workshop](#). Supportive videos to help adults and communicate about health, grief, and more.



- ▶ [Music and Movement](#). Songs and the research that explains the power of music and movement in young children.

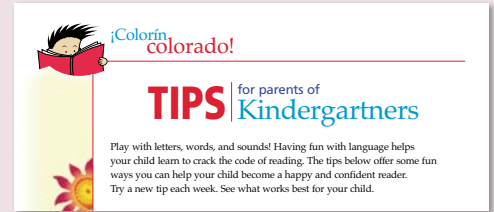


INTEGRATING LITERACY IN FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

During family events, convey to caregivers that they are the child's first and primary teacher and everyday activities they do together help build strong readers and relationships. Here are some examples:

- Singing, storytelling, silly rhyming, and daily reading.
- Ask students to write letters to a family member and take a walking field trip to the post office or a mailbox.
- For a home-school connection, give a book highlighted in the classroom to parents, guardians, and caregivers.
- Go on a "letter hunt." Together look for a certain letter in a book, on signs, at home.

RESOURCES



ENGAGING READ-ALLOUD BOOKS

- ▶ [Paletero Man](#). Ring! Ring! Ring! Can you hear his call? Paletas for one! Paletas for all!
- ▶ [Isabel and Her Colores Go to School](#). Isabel's first day is uncomfortable, until she discovers there's more than one way to communicate with friends.
- ▶ [Jabari Jumps](#). Jabari faces his fears about jumping off the diving board with the help of his encouraging father.
- ▶ [Lola Plants a Garden](#). After Lola reads a book of garden poems, she makes a garden!



- ▶ [iColorin Colorado!](#) Bilingual website of culturally and linguistically affirming materials and resources for family events.



- ▶ Your local library: If possible take a field trip to your local library or if that's too difficult logistically, invite the librarian to a family engagement event for a read aloud.

- ▶ [Reading Rockets](#): This website has a section just for families to support language development and reading skills at home.



- ▶ [My Book](#): Make a blank book (8 1/2 x 11 printer paper folded in half with a bright color cover) and a package of crayons for children and caregivers to create their own stories and read together.



School - Home Communication



At family engagement events, explain how schools and families communicate throughout the school year. Help families sign up for text messages from the school during the event and access school-based social media.



Share the school calendar and explain key dates such as the first day of kindergarten, in-service days, family-teacher conferences, and holidays.

► [Hillsboro School District](#) outlines communication information clearly on its website.



SPOTLIGHT ON WARRENTON-HAMMOND SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Every year, **Warrenton Grade School** hosts a “Kindergarten Konnect” event in the spring. This is a pirate-themed event in which teachers lead small groups of students on a treasure hunt. The treasure hunt introduces students to staff as well as our buses, cafeteria, gymnasium, library, front office, and health room spaces. Parents and caregivers register their kindergartners at the event, and every student goes home with a Warrenton High School Class of ____ t-shirt. Youth-based community agencies are on-site to form connections with families. Local businesses provide funding to offset the costs of t-shirts and prizes. Nearly 80% of incoming kindergarten families participate each year!”

- **Tom Rogonzinski, Superintendent,**
Warrenton-Hammond
School District



WARRENTON-HAMMOND
SCHOOL DISTRICT



HIGH QUALITY FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

What makes Jump Start Kindergarten a unique program? The innovative and culturally responsive ways schools and districts engage with families to welcome them into the school community. Program activities vary based on the diverse needs of the school community and prioritizes families furthest from opportunity.



HOME TO SCHOOL CONNECTION SPOTLIGHT

Gresham-Barlow School District's

Jump Start Kindergarten program highlights the home to school connection. While children are in class, parents/caregivers are invited to discuss topics like school attendance and accessing school resources. Guest speakers include county librarians, counselors, occupational therapists, and principals.

"Whenever possible, we infuse literacy into the program," said Erin Shepard, Director of Federal Programs at Gresham-Barlow School District. During a family class, a Jump Start teacher asked parents/caregivers to practice read-alouds with each other and were then given the book to take home and share with their children.

**Family engagement at
Gresham-Barlow School
District**





SPOTLIGHT! FAMILY-CENTERED ENGAGEMENT

Morrow County School District hires bilingual Care Coordinators who help families access resources during the school year and summer learning programming including Jump Start Kindergarten. These staff are key to ensuring that families have access to resources like transportation so they can attend school each day. Care Coordinator Yadira Gomez attended breakfast at the Jump Start Kindergarten summer program at Sam Boardman Elementary each day to connect with families. Vickie Pantoja, Care Coordinator, A.C. Houghton Elementary said, “Connecting with families early helps kindergartners have a strong start to school.”



SPOTLIGHT ON FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT

Gervais Elementary School hosted a Family Literacy Night in early October with over 200 students and family members attending. The school team invited a local book vendor with a large selection of bilingual books. Families made bookmarks and character puppets, participated in a read-a-thon, and read aloud with family members.

For a cozy setting, school staff added throw rugs, padded benches, rocking chairs, and bean bags to the cafeteria. “It was amazing to see all the families so engaged,” stated Dusty Price, Principal, Gervais Elementary School. School staff followed up with multiple book giveaways and the Woodburn Public Library parked their bookmobile in front of the school every Thursday.



Home Visits

Educators and counselors have shared how transformative home visits (or visits in a neutral location like a park or community center) are to their teaching practice and relationships with parents and caregivers. [Research](#) shows that home visits reduce chronic absenteeism. Nine months after the first home visit, students in grades PreK-5 experienced approximately an eight-percentage point increase in attendance.

Pairing home visits with a robust Jump Start program offers multiple touchpoints for families, more opportunities to build trust, and stronger connections between families and educators.

Jump Start Kindergarten Orientations and Reunions

Touchpoints with families before and during the kindergarten year help families continue to connect with staff, access resources, and address concerns. A brief orientation before Jump Start begins ensures families understand program logistics.

- A Jump Start Reunion is scheduled after the first day of kindergarten.
- A reunion is a celebration and a time to congratulate children and families on starting school.
- It's also an opportunity to ask families how schools can improve the program for next year.
- Finally, it is a time to remind families that they are partners in their child's education and to encourage them to continue to connect with school staff with questions and concerns at any time.



RESOURCES



- ▶ [The Sacramento Parent-Teacher Home Visiting \(PTHV\) model](#) (website) is an evidence-based approach that includes training and support for districts interested in conducting family home visits. The visit starts with this question to the parent or caregiver: “What are your hopes and dreams for your child?” This question centers the conversation around the student and grounds the relationship between educators and families. It also creates a mutual goal for teachers and families to work together.



- ▶ [Jump Start Kindergarten Family Reunion](#)



- ▶ [Jump Start Kindergarten Orientation Tips](#)



SECTION 6: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Measuring Impact

Tracking Jump Start Kindergarten data helps districts analyze the impact of the program over time as well as identify areas to improve. Below are examples of data points to measure impact.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION RATES

Students who attend Jump Start Kindergarten program 50% or more of the time will likely benefit most from the experience because they will have more time to practice routines and classroom norms, make friends, and gain literacy and social and emotional learning skills. When participation rates are less than 50%, consider potential barriers such as transportation, language, lack of trust, and food and housing insecurities.

► Tool: [Student Roster](#)



STUDENT DATA POINTS

Kindergarten student data points to consider tracking over time include:

- Demographics of students attending the program.
- School year attendance rates for participating students compared with those who didn't attend the program, and tracking student attendance data over time (as students enter first grade and second).
- Third grade reading outcomes.

FAMILY VOICE

To continuously improve, seek feedback from families about their experience. Questions to ask families include:

- How did you hear about Jump Start?
- What was the most valuable aspect of Jump Start?
- What was least helpful?
- What questions do families still have about school?
- What information do you wish you had known before your child started school?

FAMILY PARTICIPATION RATES

One way to measure the success of family engagement events is to track attendance and gather feedback from families. When attendance is low at events, especially with priority family groups, collaborate with early learning partners and families to explore the possibility of hosting events at a community center or park. Continuously monitoring this data will empower your team to customize family engagement activities to better align with the preferences and priorities of families.

Beyond Jump Start Kindergarten

A smooth transition for families from early learning to kindergarten requires strategic cross-sector work at all levels: state, district, school, early learning, and community. From outreach about registering for school in the spring, to building relationships with school staff and accessing school resources, Jump Start Kindergarten provides families with the **foundation for a successful school experience in kindergarten and beyond**. As an education system, our goal is to welcome every family to school and to convey that parents and caregivers are **essential partners in their child's education**. The Department of Early Learning and Care and Oregon Department of Education are creating alignment through collaborative special education partnerships, Oregon Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines, Migrant Education programs, Jump Start Kindergarten, and other kindergarten transition programs. But there is more to be done as we continue to develop and sustainably fund programs that build sturdy bridges from early learning into kindergarten and up through the early elementary grades.



ENDNOTES

- 1 Ehrlich, S.B., Kyle DeMeo Cook, Dana Thomson, Kristie Kauerz, Mitchell R. Barrows, Tamara Halle, Molly F. Gordon, Margaret Soli, Andrew Schaper, Sarah Her, Gabriella Guerra (2021). Understanding cross-systems transitions from Head Start to kindergarten: A Review of the knowledge base and a theory of change, OPRE Report # 2021-128, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 2 Thomson, D., Tamara Halle, Stacy Ehrich, Kyle DeMeo Cook, Kristie Kauerz, Mitchell Barrows, August 18, 2022, “Children’s Transitions to Kindergarten May Benefit from Effective Coordination Across Early Childhood and K-12 Systems.” [Child Trends Blog](#).
- 3 Children who participated in Jump Start Kindergarten are more likely to be regular attenders than children who did not participate in Jump Start Kindergarten.
The difference between the two groups of children is statistically significant ($p < .001$).
Note: ODE is not observing a causal effect of Jump Start Kindergarten with regular attendance rates. Rather we’re observing an association with the data and this association could change with new data.



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Oregon achieves . . . together!