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# Early Learning Division Program Summaries

# Prepared for the Child Care and Education Committee



## Preschool Promise (formerly known as Mixed-Delivery Preschool)

The 2015 Legislature approved legislation creating a new mixed-delivery preschool model for Oregon. While HB 3380 provides the framework for a mixed-delivery model, there are a number of important policy decisions the Early Learning Council will need to make in order to guide its implementation. The creation of the mixed-delivery preschool program is a major step forward for Oregon in ensuring that more low-income children have access to high-quality preschool. However, even under the most generous funding scenario currently proposed, it will only address a small portion of the current unmet need. In many ways, the work of the next biennium will be more about laying a strong foundation for future expansion than about serving more children.

## Purpose:

HB 3380 creates a mixed-delivery preschool system. “Mixed-delivery” refers to the fact that multiple kinds of entities will be eligible to deliver preschool programs through this model. These entities include Head Start grantees, public schools, licensed family and center-based child care programs and Community-based Organizations. The focus on mixed-delivery follows from the idea that it is more important what early learning experiences children have, then where those experiences happen, and that high-quality early learning can take place in any of these settings.

The mixed-delivery model is also intended to support a number of key policy goals supported by the Early Learning Council.

* Leverage community capacity
* Promote equity
* Maximize impact of public investments
* Bridge early learning and K-12

## Who Served:

Three- and four-year old children living in families with income up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Line are eligible to participate.

## Services Provided:

The mixed-delivery model will connect high-quality preschool programs through their regional Early Learning Hub which will allow for shared learning among the programs and will allow the Hub to help facilitate connections to programs for families across the region. The Early Learning Hubs are the applicants for funding and responsible for identifying and coordinating the delivery of and the providers who would deliver the preschool program in their community.

## Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization:

The Legislature approved HB 3380 in the 2015 Legislative Session and directed the Early Learning Council to administer the program.

OAR: Under Development

## Implementing the Program:

HB 3380 provides the framework for a mixed-delivery model. However, there are a number of important policy decisions coming before the Council in the coming months. The Early Learning Council will need to provide guidance on:

* Hub Selection Process
* Program standards
* Teachers, Professional Development and Salaries
* Waiver process and criteria allowing providers to participate while taking measures to meet standards

## Funding Sources:

The Legislature appropriated $16 million General Fund for the Mixed Delivery Preschool Program (Preschool Promise).

## Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten (OPK)

Purpose: The Oregon Head Start PreKindergarten (OPK) program provides preschool education, child health and nutrition, and family support services throughout the state to the lowest income and highest need preschool children ages three to five years. These services (Head Start and OPK) are available in all 36 counties in Oregon with 21 programs receiving federal and state funds and 7 programs receiving state funds only (some programs cover multiple counties). ODE and the federal Office of Head Start (in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or HHS) work together to administer the 21 jointly funded programs.

Who Served: OPK services are free for qualifying children. Currently, more than 22,000 children qualify for the services, but state and federal funds only support approximately 13,000 children for enrollment and there is a growing waiting list. Currently, there are 28 OPK programs, serving children in every county in the state.

Some programs also provide Early Head Start services for pregnant women and children birth to three. Children in foster care and children who are homeless are also automatically eligible. At least 10% of the enrollment slots in OPK programs are reserved for children with disabilities.

## Services Provided:

* provides children with the skills necessary to be successful in school;
* assists families in understanding the needs of their children; and
* encourages families to be involved in their child’s education. This is particularly important because many of the families with children in OPK did not have a successful school experience and it is important for them to be supportive of their child’s education.

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization: In 1987, the Oregon Legislature created the OPK, modeled after and designed to work side by side with the federal Head Start program to build an efficient, jointly funded program reaching additional children and their families.

ORS 329.175 directs the Department of Education, Early Learning Division to administer the Oregon prekindergarten program.

OAR: Chapter 581, Division 019

## Funding Sources:

All Oregon prekindergarten slots are funded with State General Fund. Federal Head Start funds do not flow through ODE; they are sent directly to local providers by HHS.

## Relief Nurseries

Purpose:Relief Nurseries are comprehensive therapeutic support programs serving children under age six in families experiencing multiple stresses related to abuse and neglect. Relief Nurseries intervene to keep children safe in their homes, reduce the number of children in foster care, enhance early literacy, and increase school readiness in therapeutic early childhood classrooms, home visits, parenting education and referral to other services as needed.

Relief Nurseries work to stop the cycle of child abuse and neglect through interventions that strengthen parents, build successful and resilient children and preserve families.

Services Provided: Ongoing core services for children under age 6 include therapeutic early childhood classrooms and home visits. Additional services may include parenting education, counseling for children, parents and families; stabilization services for families in urgent crisis; outreach for isolated families; parent respite, education and support; transportation and basic needs assistance; alcohol and drug recovery support; and developmental screening and assessment for children. Referrals are received from various community partners, including Healthy Start, Early Intervention, Head Start programs, and public health programs.

Who Served: Relief Nurseries serve families with children age 0 - 6. The families served by the Relief Nurseries are among the highest risk, averaging 16 risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect. In 2014, 2,533 children were served.

Currently, every Relief Nursery has a waiting list of children and families wanting to participate in these programs. There are 15 parent and 10 satellite Relief Nurseries operating around the state in local communities. There is capacity in some Nurseries for additional children, if there is funding for additional staff. Relief Nurseries are an integral part of a Statewide Home Visiting System Framework currently under development. There will be opportunities to improve performance through both the Statewide Home Visiting System and Early Learning Council oversight.

## Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization:

ORS 417.788

OAR: Chapter 423, Division 010 and 045

Funding Sources: The Early Learning Division is to provide support and funding for Relief Nurseries per ORS 417.788. Per ORS 131A.365, Relief Nurseries receive 10% of all asset forfeiture proceeds. To be eligible to receive state funds, Relief Nursery programs are required to provide matching community financial support equal to a minimum of 25 percent of any state allocation. Relief Nurseries also receive federal funds through Title IV-B2.

## Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education

Purpose: The mission of the Oregon Department of Education’s Early Childhood Education programs is to promote and provide support for various intervention programs that can improve school readiness and promote positive outcomes for children. The Early Childhood Unit within the Oregon Department of Education works with young children, their families and their community partners in a variety of settings to facilitate their success.

Who Served: The Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) program provides special services to children with disabilities and their parents. Each county in Oregon has an EI/ECSE referral and evaluation agency. All referrals for screening and evaluation pass through this agency.

Services Delivered: Early Intervention (EI) is carried out through individually designed services for children birth to three and support for parents to enhance children's physical, cognitive, communication, social or emotional and/or adaptive development;

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) is carried out through specially designed instruction for children ages 3 to the age of public school eligibility including physical, speech/language, mobility, social or emotional, and other development.

Some examples of EI/ECSE services are:

* Providing information to the family about their own child’s special needs;
* Showing the family how to meet their child’s needs at home;
* Helping the family learn how other people and agencies can help them;
* Helping the family learn how to teach the child new skills.

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization:

ORS 343.475 is the authorizing statute placing responsibility for administering the EI/ECSE program with the Oregon Department of Education, in collaboration with the Early Learning Council. Administrative rules for the program are the purview of the State Board of Education.

OAR: Chapter 581, Division 015

Funding Sources: The 2015 Legislature increased funding for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ESCE) by $4 million. This increase in funding will help address growth in enrollments in EI/ECSE that are likely to follow from the expansion of developmental screening. EI/ECSE enrollments will need to be monitored to see if the $4 million investment is sufficient to cover this growth.

Arising out of the 2015 Legislative Session, a Budget Note directs the Department of Education to use $500,000 General Fund from the Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) budget to support two to four communities in developing pathways from screening to services to make it easier for families to receive services the screening identifies. Use of this funding is aligned with best practices for how EI/ECSE programs should address the needs of children and their families who do not meet the legal requirements for eligibility and connect them to other services and supports.

The Budget Note also directs the Early Learning Council to report on the progress and outcomes of this work to the appropriate legislative committee and include any recommendations for the 2017 legislative session.

## Child Care Financial Assistance

## Teen Parents

Financial assistance is provided to parenting teens who are working toward a high school diploma or General Education Diploma. School districts and non-profit programs that participate in the Teen Parent/Child Development Program must be licensed and follow Teen Parent/Child Development Standards developed by the Department of Education. Most of the child care offered is for infants and toddlers; a certificate option is available for children that age out of the school or non-profit based child care. Income eligibility is at or below 185 percent of FPL.

Implementation Date: 1991

OAR: Chapter 414, Division 150

## Parents in Substance Abuse Programs

Financial assistance is provided to parents in both residential and out-patient alcohol and drug abuse programs. The substance abuse program must be approved by the Department of Human Services and children from infant through age 12 are eligible for subsidies or up to age 18 for a child with special needs. Income eligibility is at or below 185 percent of FPL.

Implementation Date: 1991

OAR: Chapter 414, Division 150

## Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers

Financial assistance is provided to migrant and seasonal farm worker families in agricultural that is seasonal crop or crop related. Families that transition from migrant to seasonal status are eligible for two additional years of financial assistance to help them transition to more stable employment. The program services eligible children from infant to age 12 or up to 17 for a child with special needs. Income eligibility is at or below 185 percent of FPL.

Implementation Date: 1989

OAR: Chapter 414, Division 400

## Inclusive Child Care Consultation/Supplemental Payments

The Inclusive Child Care Program assists children with special needs and their families by providing individual consultation services that enable children to participate in child care, after school programs, or one-to-one care in the provider or child’s home. The program serves children age 0-12 or up to age 18 for children with disabilities from families with parent(s) who have incomes at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level or 85 percent of the state median income. Because additional services increase the cost of care, this program provides a ‘supplemental payment’ to the provider to cover increased costs. This financial assistance is not a subsidy as it is 1) based on individual child need, and 2) is provided on top of either the subsidy provided by the Employment Related Day Care program or the parent’s private payment for care.

Implementation Date: 1999

OAR: Development of OARs is pending CECC scheduling.

## **Child Care Licensing**

Purpose: The Office of Child Care licenses 1200 Certified Child Care Centers, 714 Certified Family Child Care Homes and 2,320 Registered Family Child Care Homes. Licensure includes a criminal history background check of all individuals that work or are associated with the facility. 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 in addition to the inspection prior to licensure by the Office of Child Care. Child Care subsidy programs support low-income families, as well as migrant families or former migrant families who are in the process of “settling out” of the migrant stream.

Certified Child Care Centers

Certified Centers generally have a capacity of more than 13 children; usually in a structure designed for that purpose. A license to conduct certified child care is valid for one year.

OAR: Chapter 414, Division 300  
    
Certified Family Child Care Homes

Certified Family homes have a capacity to provide care for up to 16 children, including the provider’s own children, in a building constructed as a single family dwelling. Individuals over 18 years who reside in or are frequent visitors to the home must pass a criminal history background check completed by the Office of Child Care. A license to conduct Certified Family child care is valid for one year.

OAR: Chapter 414, Division 350  
  
Registered Family Child Care Homes

Registered Family homes may provide care for up to 10 children, including the provider's own children, in their own home. Providers must meet basic training requirements and undergo an on-site health and safety review before providing care for children. Individuals over 18 years who reside in or are frequent visitors to the home must pass a criminal history background check completed by the Office of Child Care. A license to conduct Registered Family child care is valid for two years.

OAR: Chapter 414, Division 205  
  
School Age Recorded Programs

Recorded School Age programs are similar to Certified Child Care Centers, but are not regulated by the state. Recorded School Age programs do not take the place of a parent’s care, youth development activities are provided to children during hours that school is not in session, and does not include programs that are operated by a school district. Recorded School Age Programs must notify parents they are a recorded program and exempt from licensure by the state and must conduct criminal background checks for all staff and volunteers.

OAR Chapter 414, Division 425

License-Exempt Home, Center based and Relative Child Care Accepting CCDF Subsidy Payment

Some child care is exempt from regulation. Exempt care includes providers caring for three or fewer children (not including their own children); caring for children from the same family, providing care to a child in his/her home, care by a relative (by blood, marriage, or adoption) of a child, school district programs, and limited duration programs such as summer camps. Care givers accepting CCDF subsidy payments will be regulated, including preservice and annual inspections.

# Oregon’s Quality Rating and Improvement System

Oregon’s tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) program standards encompass five domains of: Children’s Learning and Development; Health and Safety; Personnel Qualifications; Family Partnerships; and Administration and Best Practices. Oregon’s QRIS raises the quality and consistency of child care and learning programs, and improves the professional development of early childhood educators through training and incentives. It helps ensure children in QRIS programs are ready for kindergarten by connecting programs and providers with free tools, financial incentives and professional advice that they can put into practice with confidence.

### QRIS and Preschool Promise Program

While the QRIS is a voluntary system using a set of progressively higher program standards, HB 3380 requires preschool providers, to be eligible under Preschool Promise standards, to have achieved a 4- or 5- star-rating on the QRIS. Programs often have limited access to quality supports and professional development. By connecting to the QRIS, the Preschool Promise program will promote and support quality improvement methods and practices for a mixture of early learning program providers. Access to technical assistance and professional development supports provided through QRIS participation, provides pathways needed to support high-quality preschool programs in Oregon.

### QRIS and the Head Start and Oregon PreKindergarten Program

Oregon’s QRIS meets many of the components identified within the definition of a High-Quality Preschool Program.

### QRIS in Child Care Programs

The QRIS is used as the framework in supporting licensed early learning programs to provide high quality learning experiences for young children. This framework includes five components;

* Standards for children, the workforce and early learning programs
* Program and practitioners supports which include professional development and technical assistance
* Financial incentives to support and maintain quality standards
* Monitoring and accountability in meeting and maintaining quality standards
* Consumer education around quality early learning experiences

The QRIS standards for Center- and Family-Based programs include standards for Children’s Learning and Development, Health and Safety, Personnel Qualifications, Family Partnerships, and Administration and Business Practices.

Personnel Qualifications standards are based in the Oregon Registry in creating professional development plans, articulating degrees, CDA credentials and other certificates. Administration and business practices address practices such as developing or updating written policies on things like behavior management, meal times, personnel policies, inclusion, and parent engagement. Other QRIS standards include practices for assessing and screening children, and using curricula that support all children’s learning and development.

# The Role and Relationship of the Early Learning Hubs to ELD programs

## An Early Learning Hub is a coordinating body that pulls together resources focused on children and families in its defined service area, focused on outcomes for children and their families.

Through the Early Learning Hub model, all of the sectors that touch early childhood education – health care, educators, human and social services, K-12 school districts, and the private sector – have a common place to focus their efforts, resources, and strategies with a shared purpose.

The Legislature, in creating the Hubs, called out three specific goals: 1) create an early childhood system that is aligned, coordinated, and family-centered; 2) ensure that children arrive at school ready to succeed; and 3) ensure that Oregon’s young children live in families that are healthy, stable and attached. The Early Learning Council adopted metrics as a method of assisting the Hubs and stakeholders in focusing their work toward those goals. The metrics apply to a number of activities which are the responsibilities of the Hubs such as working with Coordinated Care Organizations to increase the number of children ages 0-3 years screened using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire; increasing the number of 3-, 4- and 5-star QRIS providers serving children from “hot spots” and communities of color and an increase in the number of children served; ensuring there are high quality early learning services available for children whose families receive ERDC subsidies and an increase in children served by 3-, 4-, and 5-star rated ERDC programs.

### Early Learning Hubs and the Preschool Promise program

## Under the Early Learning Hub model, all of the sectors that touch early childhood education – health care, early childhood educators, human and social services, K-12 school districts, and the private sector – have a common place to focus their efforts, resources, and strategies with a shared purpose.

HB 3380 specifies that Hubs will be the applicants for the funding and responsible for identifying the providers in their community that will deliver the preschool services. Through regional Hub coordination of Preschool Promise programs, engagement with early learning and child development programs can take place across the state to leverage the pool of knowledge and community capacity to benefit more children from ELC’s focus populations.