

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY SERVICE PROVIDER READINESS ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Introduction:

This checklist is designed to help assess service provider readiness to implement outcomes focused on early childhood services as required by Oregon’s new Early Learning System, including local Early Learning Hubs.

“Readiness” refers to a state of preparedness, capacity and enthusiasm that are necessary for successful implementation of a collaborative performance orientation to service delivery. Readiness also refers to the state of a service provider as well as the ability of the community to willingly support and sustain performance approaches. A state of readiness includes the following community and provider elements:

- Processes that take stock of community needs, monitor results and budget based on needs not programs.
- Focus on prevention and/or early intervention.
- Demonstrated public financial benefit.
- History of using evidence-based outcome metrics to evaluate performance.
- Track record of success in setting and achieving challenging service delivery outcome metric targets in a compact time frame.
- Organizational capacity to “scale up” service approach.
- Capacity to readily restructure for collaborative service delivery.
- Capacity and expertise for multi-year and forward-looking planning, budgeting and financial management.
- Supportive Board of Directors or other governing body.
- Capacity to manage potential risk.
- Community history of achieving results through collaboration.
- Prioritizing families over programs

These elements involve financial, planning and service delivery issues for both providers and the communities that support them. Using the checklist below, please review areas of readiness in more detail for service providers and communities. Select the indicators that most reflect the current condition of your organization and community.

| 1. | Have leaders in your organization defined the need for change and communicated the new vision for the delivery of coordinated services? | Y | S | NY |
|----|--|---|---|----|
| 2. | Does your organization’s governing framework cover the entire organization and maintain strong relationships with related organizations in neighboring communities and state agencies? | Y | S | NY |
| 3. | Are the programs and services provided by your organization structured to show progress on key performance indicators and/or return on investment? | Y | S | NY |

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|-----|---|---|---|----|
| 4. | Does your organization effectively use evidence-based performance metrics? | Y | S | NY |
| 5. | Does your organization have the capacity to grow, engage with others, and use resources effectively? | Y | S | NY |
| 6. | Does your organization have necessary communication and data management capacity as well as stakeholder buy-in? | Y | S | NY |
| 7. | Does your organization have a strategic plan in place with a clear mission and goals? Are the assessment results used to develop a set of realistic actions that improve service delivery and/or coordination of services? | Y | S | NY |
| 8. | Is clear data systematically gathered on core performance issues such as cost per service, program utilization, outcome and satisfaction? Is the data systematically analyzed to determine how costs can be lowered and performance improved? | Y | S | NY |
| 9. | Families, their advocates and local agencies are systematically engaged in the assessment, planning, resource allocation, and decision making for coordinating service provision with other agencies. | Y | S | NY |
| 10. | Is a governing framework in place that brings together providers, agencies, and families? Are there clear guidelines that all embrace? | Y | S | NY |
| 11. | Are efforts being made to inform community members and families about available pro- grams and services? | Y | S | NY |
| 12. | Is there positive momentum? Is there growing interest and commitment to coordinating human service provision and maximizing resources? | Y | S | NY |
| 13. | Does your organization maintain an inventory of provider resources and programs that fund services? | Y | S | NY |
| 14. | Is there a process for identifying duplication of services, underused programs, and service gaps to effectively budget across a community? | Y | S | NY |
| 15. | Are the specific service needs of various target populations well documented? | Y | S | NY |
| 16. | Has the use of technology been assessed to determine whether investment may improve services, track outcomes and/or reduce costs? | Y | S | NY |
| 17. | Have service users and other stakeholders participated in a community assessment process? | Y | S | NY |

1. Have leaders in your organization defined the need for change and communicated the new vision for the delivery of coordinated services?

YES:

- Leaders from multiple agencies have expressly acknowledged that the existing network of organizations and services is not yet sufficiently efficient, cost effective, or responsive enough to meet the needs of families with young children in the community or region.
- A clear and inspiring vision statement for improved service delivery through coordination is supported by all partners and is regularly revisited to ensure its vitality.
- The vision drives planning and action.

SOMEWHAT:

- Agency leaders have expressly acknowledged the need for collaboration and may have a clear vision statement for improving service delivery through coordination, however it does not yet drive action.

NOT YET:

- Agency leaders are still ambivalent about the need for change.

2. Does your organization's governing framework cover the entire organization and maintain strong relationships with related organizations in neighboring communities and state agencies?

YES:

- The organization maintains collaborative working relationships with neighboring areas and related agencies.
- The relationships are used to address services issues such as ensuring that service users can be mobile without loss of services.
- The relationships are also used to work on policy and financial issues to create a framework that enhances coordination.

SOMEWHAT:

- The organization has collaborative relationships, but they have not been used to address service issues, policies or gaps.
- Service issues, policies and finances are addressed, but they are not done in a manner that involves/collaborates with related agencies.

NOT YET:

- There are few or minimal collaborative working relationships among related agencies and jurisdictions.
- Significant service issues (such as gaps, finances, policy challenges) exist and/or are left unaddressed.

3. Are the programs and services provided by your organization structured to show progress on key performance indicators and/or return on investment?

YES:

- Services/supports are focused on prevention and/or early intervention in one or more of our programs.
- Our preventative and/or early intervention services are recognized as best in class by both funders and the communities we serve.

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- The programs in our preventative and/or early intervention service delivery are core to our mission.
- Governmental funders of our preventative and/or early intervention service delivery programs realize an identifiable financial benefit or future cost saving from the intervention our programs provide compared to programs that focus on “back end” or “responsive” treatments and/or care. And, we are able to quantify and track these savings.
- We have worked and/or are working under one or more performance-based government contracts for our preventative and/or early intervention service delivery programs.
- Other service providers seek our assistance to replicate our preventative and/or early intervention service delivery programs.

SOMEWHAT:

- Services/supports are focused on prevention and/or early intervention in one or more of our programs.
- Our preventative and/or early intervention services are recognized as strong and innovative by both funders and the communities we serve.
- We have performance –based contracts in place, and are interested in expanding the number of services in which they are utilized. Our contracts focus on outputs (vs. performance) and/or we do not have performance-based government contracts in place, but are gearing up to do so.

NOT YET:

- Our organization is broadening its mission and/or service programs to include prevention and/or early intervention.
- We do not yet have performance-based contracts in place.

4. Does your organization effectively use evidence-based performance metrics?

YES:

- Performance evaluation for our preventative and/or early intervention service delivery is based predominantly, if not exclusively, on evidence-based, social impact outcome metrics.
- Our preventative and/or early intervention service delivery is managed to achieve annual (or more frequent) targets for our identified evidence-based, social impact outcome metrics.
- Our organization uses its evidence-based social impact outcome metrics extensively in reporting to our Board, funders, the communities we serve and other stakeholders.
- We have used outside, independent experts to help us develop, review, refine and, as appropriate, verify the accuracy and validity of our evidence-based, social impact outcome measures.

SOMEWHAT:

- We use performance evaluation that is partially based on evidence-based social outcome metrics.
- Our service delivery is performance oriented, but targets or specific metrics are not established or reported on a regular basis.
- We utilize evidence-based outcome measures, but they are not regularly validated or verified by an independent party.

NOT YET:

- Our organization utilizes outputs, but not validated/verified evidence-based social outcome measures.
- We do not set specific outcome targets or metrics for our services.
- We do not publicly report our outcomes.

5. Does your organization have the capacity to grow, engage with others, and use resources effectively?

YES:

- We have successful experience growing our preventative and/or early intervention service delivery program(s).
- We have identified and documented administrative and infrastructure support capacity requirements for growing our preventative and/or early intervention program(s) in addition to the direct service delivery requirements for growth.
- We have existing program and infrastructure support capacity or can readily add capacity in order to scale up service delivery to a higher number of clients served, if necessary, to meet minimum requirements for achieving statistical significance in program performance evaluation.
- We have experience with strategic financial management skills, policies and procedures (e.g., multi-year, forward looking planning, budgeting, cash flow, etc.) required for managing the growth capital required to scale up operations to meet requirements.
- We have interest, experience and capacity for delivering our preventative and/or early intervention program(s) in collaboration with other service providers that offer programs that complement or supplement ours (see additional service delivery and collaboration checklist).

SOMEWHAT:

- We are in the process of growing our prevention/early intervention services.
- We are aware of infrastructure needs, but have not completed a formal documentation.
- We have identified strategies to add capacity, but are unsure of requirements related to achieving statistical significance.
- We are aware of Early Learning Hub operational requirements and prepared to add related capacity.

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- We have identified partners and have agreed to provide prevention/early intervention services in collaboration with them.

NOT YET:

- We have identified a need and/or interest in expanding prevention/early intervention services.
- We are in the process of identifying our infrastructure needs.
- Our organization is in the process of identifying capacity needs and strategies to address them.
- We are learning about operational requirements necessary to successfully implement.
- We are investigating potential collaborative partners.

6. Does your organization have necessary communication and data management capacity as well as stakeholder buy-in?

YES:

- We have the experience, expertise and capacity to build, articulate and communicate a compelling business case to our Board, our community, our other stakeholders (such as government funders, private investors and other service delivery providers).
- We have sufficiently invested in data collection, data management systems and personnel to support multi-year accumulation and analysis of our evidence-based, social impact outcome metrics.
- We have analyzed organizations comparable to ours using our evidence-based, social impact outcome metrics in order to assess the relative effectiveness of our services in achieving social impact.
- Our Board as well as other key stakeholders are supportive of the potential benefits of Early Learning Hub participation, aware of the potential risks involved in Early Learning Hub participation and are willing to invest in the business model capacity requirements necessary for Early Learning Hub participation.

SOMEWHAT:

- We have begun to talk about Early Learning Hub participation, including its risks and capacity requirements with our Board and other stakeholders.
- We have identified data collection and management needs and are identifying strategies to address them.
- We use evidence to identify and utilize social impact outcome metrics, but do not compare ourselves to other organizations.

NOT YET:

- We have not discussed Early Learning Hub participation with our stakeholders and/or our Board.
- We are in the process of identifying data collection, data management and related capacity needs.

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- We are in the process of identify the appropriate evidence-based and how to use it.

7. Does your organization have a strategic plan in place with a clear mission and goals? Are assessment results used to develop a set of realistic actions that improve service delivery and/ or coordination of services?

YES:

- There is a recorded strategic plan with clearly defined mission and goals.
- Assessment results are strategically used in developing action plans.

SOMEWHAT:

- There is not a strategic plan in place, but assessment results drive action planning.

NOT YET:

- There is no strategic plan, mission, or goals.
- Assessments are either not done or their results remain unused.

8. Is clear data systematically gathered on core performance issues such as cost per service, program utilization, outcome and satisfaction? Is the data systematically analyzed to determine how costs can be lowered and performance improved?

YES:

- A data collection mechanism is readily available and regularly used.
- The data collection includes cost, utilization and outcome data.
- There is a follow up plan in place to analyze and make use of the data.
- Data is used to drive service performance and cost efficiencies.

SOMEWHAT:

- I can answer “yes” to one or more of the above, but cannot answer yes to others.

NOT YET:

- I cannot answer “yes” to any of the above.

9. Families, their advocates and local agencies are systematically engaged in the assessment, planning, resource allocation, and decision making for coordinating service provision with other agencies or providers.

YES:

- The organization actively engages families and their advocates as part of the planning, design, and implementation states of service provision.

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- Families are included in decision-making structures for the organization.
- Families are encouraged to discuss their needs, register complaints or give compliments, and offer suggestions for improvement in multiple easily accessed forums.
- Family/customer satisfaction data is collected and actively utilized to improve services and service coordination.

SOMEWHAT:

- I can answer “yes” to one or more of the above cannot answer yes to others.

NOT YET:

- I cannot answer “yes” to any of the above.

10. Is a governing framework in place that brings together providers, agencies, and families? Are there clear guidelines that all embrace?

YES:

- A shared decision-making body such as a coalition, lead agency, advisory board, local coordinating council, and/or working group is taking a leadership role.
- The shared decision-making body includes public and private providers, non-profit human services agencies, health providers, schools, early learning providers and families.
- Those at the table are clear about and comfortable with the decision-making process, whether it is based on consensus, majority rule or other.
- Roles and responsibilities are outlined in a formal, written agreement.
- The shared decision-making group communicates effectively with those not at the table.
- The group meets regularly, establishes strategic and measurable goals and objectives, follows a work plan, and regularly evaluates its progress and performance.

SOMEWHAT:

- There is active and documented communication between providers, agencies, and consumers, but it is informal and disorganized.

NOT YET:

- There is no shared decision-making body, no guidelines for collaboration, and or little communication among providers.

11. Are efforts being made to inform community members and families about available programs and services?

YES:

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- All agencies in the community disseminate information through their respective networks and programs.
- Existing avenues for information distribution (e.g. community meetings, schools, churches, etc.) are utilized for information distribution.
- New avenues are developed for information distribution.
- The effect of this outreach is documented and utilized to improve efforts.

SOMEWHAT:

- I can answer “yes” to one or more of the above cannot answer yes to others.

NOT YET:

- I cannot answer “yes” to any of the above.

12. Is there positive momentum? Is there growing interest and commitment to coordinating human service provision and maximizing resources?

YES:

- Participation in and budget support for coordination initiatives are regularly increasing.
- Agencies are actively working together to ensure that service information is coordinated.
- Momentum has been maintained even through difficult events such as budget crises and changes in leadership.

SOMEWHAT:

- The organization has seen momentum in organizing services for families, but difficult events have stalled it or momentum is not organized.
- There are informal or incremental attempts to coordinate service information among providers.

NOT YET:

- There are few or minimal attempts to coordinate services.
- There are few or minimal attempts to coordinate service information.

13. Does your organization maintain an inventory of provider resources and programs that fund services?

YES:

- All entities in the region that provide services have been identified and their scope of services catalogued.

SOMEWHAT:

- An inventory is available, but is not regularly maintained or may be missing information.

NOT YET:

- No inventory is available.

14. Is there a process for identifying duplication of services, underused programs, and service gaps to effectively budget across a community?

YES:

- All entities providing related services in the region have been surveyed and information has been collected on areas and populations serviced, spending for services, types and numbers of clients served, hours of operation, costs per service.
- The data has been analyzed to assess service duplication, underutilized programs, and inefficient service delivery.
- The data and the analysis have been shared with others.
- The data is regularly updated to ensure its ongoing value.
- Communities use the information to coordinate the delivery of services and eliminate gaps and duplication in funded agencies and organizations.

SOMEWHAT:

- Many entities have been identified and other agencies have been assessed, but information is missing and may not be regularly updated.
- Some information is collected and shared.
- Agencies review the information, but are not yet using it to coordinate service delivery or gap elimination.

NOT YET:

- Little/no information is shared regarding population served and gaps.

15. Are the specific service needs of various target populations well documented?

YES:

- Information and data that outlines the needs and expectations of individuals with disabilities, persons with low-in- comes, people of color, and others has been collected.
- Target populations who do not have access or use services have been asked (through surveys, focus groups, or similar means) to identify needs they have.
- The data has been analyzed and used by a shared decision-making body to drive the coordination and planning of regional services.

SOMEWHAT:

- I can answer “yes” to one or more of the above but cannot answer yes to others.

NOT YET:

- I cannot answer “yes” to any of the above.

16. Has the use of technology been assessed to determine whether investment may improve services, track outcomes and/or reduce costs?

YES:

- The current use of technology by service providers in the region, service agencies, and users for scheduling, billing, and documenting has been assessed.
- Research has been conducted on ways in which investments in technology can improve services, track outcomes and/or reduce costs.
- The survey and research data has guided decision making about adopting new technologies.
- Local providers are investigating ways to acquire useful technologies.
- Ongoing discussions about using technology for coordinating services are conducted among providers and client agencies.

SOMEWHAT:

- I can answer “yes” to at least one of the above, but cannot answer yes to others.

NOT YET:

- I cannot answer “yes” to any of the above.

17. Have service users and other stakeholders participated in a community assessment process?

YES:

- Stakeholder groups and service users throughout the community have been systematically included a process to assess and determine needs (through meetings, surveys, focus groups, and other means).
- Service users representing targeted populations serve on work groups and are actively engaged in the assessment and planning of services.

SOMEWHAT:

- Stakeholder groups and service users in the community are included sporadically or through informal means.
- Service users are permitted to offer input but their input is not actively sought.

NOT YET:

- There is not an assessment process in place.
- Stakeholder input is not considered in assessing and planning services.

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SCORING

After responding to all areas of the readiness checklist, please review the frequency with which your organization responded to “Yes,” “Somewhat,” or “Not Yet.”

If the answers were primarily “yes” with occasional “somewhat,” congratulations! You are a ready organization/community.

If the answers were mostly “somewhat” or “not yet,” please note these areas and consider additional organizational and community work before moving forward as an Early Learning Hub-ready community or provider.